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The Verecke Memorial is re-inaugurated in Ópusztaszer

The millenium memorial which was removed from the Verecke Pass in the 1960s was re-inaugurated in the National Heritage Park in Hungary's Ópusztaszer on Saturday. Speaking at the ceremony, the Speaker of the Hungarian National Assembly László Kövér said that "the Verecke Memorial was intended by our ancestors as a landmark, but the 20th century redrew the borders with blood and tears". The house speaker stressed that the fate of the memorial illustrates the vulnerability of the Hungarian nation in the 20th century: it was mutilated, remade, demolished and used for marking foreign memories. Mr. Kövér emphasized that "today, in the 21th century, we, Hungarians must become stronger than we believe ourselves to be." He added that "this is possible only if we never give up our right to self-determination." Mr. Kövér recalled that "in 2010 and 2014, Hungarian voters made it clear that they would never give up their state and nation, identity and sovereignty. They made it clear that they want a renewed state which is able to make the Hungarian nation and Europe strong."

The millennium memorial of Verecke was erected by Bereg county (a county of the former Hungarian Kingdom) at the Verecke Pass (a pass through which Hungarian tribes entered the Carpathian Basin and during the next century established the Kingdom of Hungary) on 20 July 1896 to commemorate the millennium of the Hungarian conquest of the Carpathian Basin. After the Second World War, the region of Transcarpathia was attached to the Soviet Union. In the 1960s, the memorial was demolished and transferred to the village of Tuholka in Galicia. In 1975, the upper part of the memorial was inaugurated as a Soviet military monument. In 2014, the leaders of the Skolei district and Tuholka village decided to offer the remains of the monument to Hungary, as a sign of good neighborly relations between Ukraine and Hungary. Due to the financial support of the State Secretariat for Hungarian Communities Abroad of the Prime Minister's Office, the monument was placed at a symbolic venue, at the National Heritage Park in Ópusztaszer. In the place of the original monument in Verecke, a new memorial was erected in 2008.



Hungary welcomes Kovászna court overturning national anthem fine

In its final decision adopted on Tuesday, the Court of Kovászna/Kovasna county (Romania) found that the Hungarian Civic Party (MPP) was illegally fined 5000 lei (1,130 EU) by the prefecture of Kovászna county because the Hungarian National Anthem was sang at an event organized by the party on 4 June 2014, the Day of National Cohesion.

Deputy Prime Minister for Hungarian communities abroad and president of the Christian Democratic People's Party (KDNP) Zsolt Semjén has welcomed the second-instance decision of the Kovászna County Court to annul the fine against the MPP. The official ruling of the court said the organizers did not break the law by singing the national anthem and rejected the county prefect's appeal of the first-instance decision



to annul the fine. Deputy Prime Minister Zsolt Semjén stressed in his statement that the Tuesday ruling made it clear that the earlier decision by the county prefect to fine the party was unlawful. Mr. Semjén stressed it would be “unacceptable” for anyone in a European Union member state to be punished for singing their national anthem. He said that Hungarians living in Kovászna county rightfully expect an apology from the county prefect.

Romanian Minister of National Defense: Autonomy has no place in the Romanian public discourse

On Saturday, at a meeting with the representatives of Romanians living in Szeklerland held in Marosfő/Izvoru Mureşului, Romania’s Minister of National Defense Mircea Duşa declared that “Autonomy has no place in the Romanian public discourse, since in a democratic country minorities must comply with the constitution and the laws.” The minister stressed that “speaking about territorial autonomy is like adding fuel to the flames”, since endeavors for autonomy contradict the first article of the Romanian constitution which declares the sovereignty of Romania. The minister reminded Hungarians who are in various public positions that their oath of office obliges them to protect the constitution and the laws, and highlighted that Hungarians often violate this oath. Mr. Duşa also called on Hungarians “not to generate conflicts between their community and the Romanian majority”.

Bishops of Hungarian historic churches urge the restitution of church properties

At a conference held in Bucharest on Wednesday, the seven bishops of the four Hungarian historic churches of Transylvanian urged the restitution of church properties confiscated by the Communist regime. The participants of the conference analyzed the causes of stops in the process of restitution with the participation of legal experts. The initiator of the conference, the bishop of the Transylvanian Reformed Church District Béla Kató stressed at the event that Romania adopted the reparation laws not voluntarily, but because it served the interests of its NATO and EU accession, however, today Romania is hindering the process of restitution with administrative tools and the intimidation of public servants. It was declared at the conference that Hungarian historic churches in Transylvania reclaimed 2500 properties from the state which had belonged to them earlier, but only half of these properties have been returned to the original owners during the past 25 years since the fall of the Communism.



The MKP launches a petition on refugee quota system and local censuses

On Thursday, the president of the Party of the Hungarian Community (MKP) József Berényi announced that the MKP launched a petition aimed at reforming the system of local censuses in Slovakia, since there have been several examples in the recent



period when the Government of Slovakia ignored the results of local censuses. The aim of the petition (collection of signatures) is to amend relating laws so that the results of local censuses are binding for the government. In the recent period, there have been two instances when the government ignored the results of local censuses. In the case of Pered/Tešedíkovo (a town in the south-western part of Slovakia) the government disregarded the results of a referendum in which the residents of the town voted in favor of using the Hungarian name of the town. Another incident was the one in Bős/ Gabčíkovo, in which a further refugee camp was opened – against the will of the residents of the town. The petition of the MKP focuses on two issues. On the one hand, it is initiating the adoption of an amendment to the current laws concerning local censuses, in particular, in issues concerning public safety, environmental conditions and change of names. The second part of the petition concerns refugee quota system. In this issue the MKP agrees with the government, and believes that it is impossible to make refugee quotas compulsory.



The Cultural Association of Hungarians in Transcarpathia (KMKSZ) holds committee meeting

The Cultural Association of Hungarians in Transcarpathia (KMSKZ) held its serial committee meeting on 24 September, in the building of the Ferenc Rákóczy II. Transcarpathian Hungarian Institute in Beregszász/Berehove. The meeting focused on the approaching municipal elections in Ukraine which are scheduled to take place at the end of October, as well as the planned election campaign of the KMKSZ. The president of the KMSZ László Brenzovics stressed at the meeting that the approaching period would not be an easy one for the Hungarian community in Transcarpathia. Concerning the cooperation agreement between the Cultural Association of Hungarians in Transcarpathia (KMSKZ) and Democratic Union of Hungarians in Ukraine (UMDSZ) the two organizations entered into recently, Mr. Brenzovics said that the electoral threshold to the Transcarpathian County Council has been raised from 3 % to 5 %, which reduces the possibilities of Hungarians to win seats in the body, as a result, a cooperation agreement between the two parties was necessary in order to ensure Hungarian representation. The vice-president of the KMKSZ Géza Gulácsy announced at the meeting that the education aid (provided by the Hungarian Government to support children taking part in Hungarian-language education abroad) has been transferred to Transcarpathian Hungarian parents concerned. The vice-president added that further two new aid programs would be launched in October aimed to support Hungarians working in the field of health care, as well as schools of arts and music schools.

