

Weekly Media Review of Hungarian Communities Abroad

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Ten people receive the Award for Hungarian Communities Abroad

On the occasion of Saint Stephen's Day and the foundation of the Hungarian state, the Awards for Hungarian Communities Abroad were presented this year again in the building of the House of Hungarians (Magyarság Háza) in Budapest. The awards were presented by Deputy Prime Minister responsible for Hungarian Communities Abroad Zsolt Semjén and State Secretary for Hungarian Communities Abroad Árpád János Potápi. In his address, the Deputy Prime Minister said that "the Award for Hungarian Communities Abroad" is given in recognition of "magnificent people", but it is also to express appreciation for Hungarian communities abroad as well as the Government's commitments to support ethnic kin." Mr. Semjén said that Hungarians living beyond the kin-state's borders are a constituent part of the nation and he pledged that "we will never let go of our ill-fated fellow-Hungarians". He stressed that this year's awards have a clear and conscious political message, since they are awarded to "our Transylvanian friends who were persecuted." The Deputy Prime Minister added that these people were harassed because of their Hungarian nationality, and were used as a kind of warning to other Hungarians living in neighboring countries to not play an active role in public life. With these sentences Mr. Semjén referred to the mayor of Sepsiszentgyörgy/Sfântu Gheorghe, Árpád András Antal, former mayor of Gyergyószentmiklós/Gheorgheni János Mezey, mayor of Csíkszereda/Miercurea Ciuc Róbert Kálmán Ráduly and deputy-mayor of Csíkszereda Domokos Szőke, against whom the Romanian authorities have launched several proceedings recently. The Deputy Prime Minister added that the Hungarian nation can only remain if all of parts it remain. This year ten people received the Award for Hungarian Communities Abroad, which is awarded by the Prime Minister of Hungary at the recommendation of the Deputy Prime Minister for outstanding results in work for Hungarian communities abroad in the fields of public life, education, culture, church activities, science or economic self-organization.

Árpád János Potápi: 2017 will be the memorial year of Hungarian king Saint Ladislaus

Speaking at a press conference in Budapest, State Secretary for Hungarian communities abroad Árpád János Potápi announced that 2017 will be the memorial year of Hungarian king Saint Ladislaus. Mr. Potápi said that the memorial year will start on 1 January and will last until the end of the year. The state secretary highlighted that seeing the success of the Saint Márton Memorial Year and Márton Áron Memorial Year (2016), on the initiative of the Báthory Bem Association and the Council for Human Dignity, his state secretariat decided to launch a new memorial year which will mark the 940th anniversary of Saint Ladislaus becoming the knight-king of Hungary and the 825th anniversary of his canonization. Mr. Potápi added that Saint Ladislaus was the first ruler from the House of Árpád who linked central



European peoples, so Hungary expects that Croatian, Polish, Romanian and Slovak civil organizations, churches and politicians will also be involved in the planned series of events. He added that the State Secretariat for Hungarian Communities Abroad is allocating HUF 80 million (EUR 260,000) for the memorial year and is asking the Deputy Prime Minister for Hungarian Communities Abroad to be the main patron of the event series. Mr. Potápi said that they are also relying on the contribution of the Márton Áron Memorial Committee. Speaking at the press conference, one of the initiators – the head of the Council for Human Dignity Zoltán Lomnici – said that in addition to Saint Stephen, Saint Ladislaus was the greatest “nation-builder”, who created cooperation between the nations living in the Carpathian Basin.

Árpád János Potápi: this week Kolozsvár is the capital of the entire Hungarian nation

On Monday, a large-scale event series entitled Hungarian Cultural Days in Kolozsvár/Cluj Napoca began. Speaking at the opening ceremony, State Secretary for Hungarian Communities Abroad Árpád János Potápi said that during the week of the event series, “Kolozsvár is the capital of the entire Hungarian nation.” The state secretary said that the Hungarian Cultural Days in Kolozsvár help Hungarians living in the town build a future for themselves, and be proud of their Hungarian identity. Speaking at the cultural days the head of the Democratic Alliance of Hungarians in Romania (RMDSZ) Hunor Kelemen said that after the period of former mayor Gheorghe Funar – who was well-known for anti-Hungarian statements – Kolozsvár regained its self-confidence, and the Hungarian Cultural Days played a significant role in this process. Mr. Kelemen added that culture can connect Romanians and Hungarians only if each of them respects the culture of the other. He added that, however, there is still a lot to do in the field of mutual respect. As an example, he mentioned that Hungarians in Kolozsvár have not yet been permitted to install bilingual place-name signs in their town. The main organizer of the event, Balázs Gergely, said that the one-week event series is organized on a “reciprocal basis”, and shows the cohesion of the Hungarian community in Kolozsvár.

The European Parliament endorses a petition submitted related to the issue of Ilonka Tamás

The head of the Council for Human Dignity Zoltán Lomnici – who is representing the interests of Hungarians living in Slovakia who have been deprived of their rights – has announced that the European Parliament has endorsed a petition submitted in relation to the issue of Ilonka Tamás. Mr. Lomnici recalled that the petition was submitted more than a year ago. He added that Ilonka Tamás, who is a 104-year-old lady living in Slovakia, asked him for help six years ago, when – after she became a



Hungarian citizen under the Hungarian simplified naturalization procedure – she was deprived of all of her rights in Slovakia. Mr. Lomnici added that the petition committee of the European Parliament decided to call on the European Commission to carry out a preliminary examination of the issue, and also asked for the standpoint of Slovakian authorities. He added that this can be considered a clear step forward in the issue. Mr. Lomnici recalled that the current form of Slovakia's law on citizenship was adopted in June 2010 as a reaction to the simplified naturalization procedure adopted by Hungary. As a result of this law, more than 1,000 people have been deprived of their Slovak citizenship, many of them as a result of becoming Hungarian citizens. The Slovakian law on citizenship states that Slovakian citizens who acquire the citizenship of another country are deprived of their Slovakian citizenship.

A Hungarian MP might become the new minister of transport in Slovakia

The Hungarian-Slovak mixed party Most-Híd ("Bridge") will nominate one of its Hungarians members, Árpád Érsek, for the post of the minister of transport in Slovakia. The national council of the party decided on this question on Sunday in Pozsony/Bratislava. The former minister of transport Roman Brečely resigned at the coalition meeting on Friday, after the party led by him, the Siet (Net) weakened significantly due to internal debates. Since the elections held in March, it lost 8 members: the number of its representatives has decreased from 10 to 2. Árpád Érsek is currently the state secretary responsible for transport, therefore he has experience in the field. Five MPs who quit the Siet party joined Most-Híd on Thursday. As a result of this, the number of Most-Híd representatives rose to 15, and the party signaled its claim for the position of the minister of transport. If the Most-Híd receives this position, it will have three ministers in the Slovakian government, just like the Slovakian National Party.



The VMSZ introduces its state secretary candidates

The Alliance of Vojvodina Hungarians (VMSZ) presented its candidates for state secretary posts. The party will have four state secretaries in the Serbian government. Out of the five officials the party had earlier, three will remain. Therefore, no changes will take place at the ministry of health, the ministry of construction, transport and infrastructure and the ministry of agriculture. State secretaries will be appointed officially in some weeks. The Alliance of Vojvodina Hungarians will be part of the Serbian government coalition, after it signed a coalition agreement with Serbian Progressive Party (SNS) on Sunday. The agreement consists of 11 points and – among other fields – focuses on the strengthening of the economy and the development of Vojvodina.





New university dormitory supported by the Hungarian government opened in Ungvár

On Friday Government commissioner at the Prime Minister's Office István Grezsa handed over a renovated part of the dormitory of the Ungvár/Uzhhorod National University. The renovation was supported with 40 million HUF (EUR 130,000) by the Hungarian government. Speaking at the ceremony, the government commissioner said that the renovated fifth floor of the dormitory is the third development realized at the Ungvár National University this year, due to the financial support of the Hungarian government. He added that this shows that cooperation between Hungary and Ukraine in the field of higher education is extremely close. Mr. Grezsa added that these developments also indicate that Hungary is committed to Ukraine's EU integration.



Árpád János Potápi: We must believe in our joint future

Speaking at the central commemoration of the Democratic Community of Hungarians in Croatia (HMDK) on Saint Stephen's day in Croatia's Kiskőszeg/Batina, State Secretary for Hungarian Communities Abroad at the Prime Minister's Office Árpád János Potápi said that "Saint Stephen's Day draws our attention to the fact that we must believe in the joint future of our Hungarian community." The state secretary recalled that a thousand year ago King Stephen— who created Hungary's counties and founded its church – established a strong, stable and timeless state. Since then, many of Europe's nations and countries have disappeared, but Hungary's Baranya county and the bishopric in Pécs still exist. Mr. Potápi added that "Due to his achievements, we Hungarians can celebrate here today, in Kiskőszeg, in the Hungarian language, just like our compatriots do today throughout the Carpathian Basin and the diaspora."

