

Weekly Media Review of Hungarian Communities Abroad

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COMMUNITIES ABROAD

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Zsolt Semjén: The Hungarian nation is able to survive if every constituent part of the nation survives

With respect to the fact that Hungary bears responsibility for Hungarian communities abroad as it is stated in Hungary's Fundamental Law, on 3 November 2015 the Hungarian National Assembly declared 15 November, the day of birth and death of Transylvanian prince Gábor Bethlen (1580-1629) the Day of dispersed Hungarian communities. On this occasion, Deputy Prime Minister responsible for Hungarian communities abroad Zsolt Semjén said that "the Hungarian nation is able to survive if every constituent part of the nation survives." Mr. Semjén stressed that "to this end, we need a strong kin-state, must reinforce the historically Hungarian-inhabited regions of the Carpathian Basin and must strengthen Hungarian communities living in the Western diaspora." In the context of the decline in the number of Hungarians living in dispersed communities, Mr. Semjén said it is important that there should be Hungarian schools as „bridgeheads” everywhere, and that there should also be boarding facilities in the vicinity of large school centers in order to ensure that everyone has access to Hungarian education.

Speaking at the central event on the day of dispersed Hungarian communities held in the House of Hungarians in Budaepst, State Secretary for Hungarian Communities Abroad Árpád János Potápi said that dispersed Hungarian communities must deserve as much attention as other nation parts. The state secretary stressed that in recent years, Hungary started to think about these communities in a different way, and it is also due to the establishment of the day of dispersed Hungarian communities. He added that in 2010, a paradigm shift took place in the Hungarian Government's policy concerning dispersed Hungarian communities. The Hungarian Government declared that every Hungarian community is equal, and these communities must receive as much attention as others. The state secretary added that in recent years, Hungary allocated huge sums of financial assistance for the reinforcement of dispersed Hungarian communities' organizations and institutions which can be considered the bastions of Hungarians living outside the kin-state.

HUF 17 billion financial assistance for Hungarian nursery schools in the Carpathian Basin

Speaking at his annual hearing before the Committee on National Cohesion of the Hungarian National Assembly, Minister of Human Capacities Zoltán Balog said that the Hungarian Government decided to allocate HUF 17 billion (EUR 54 million) for the building and development of Hungarian kindergartens in the Carpathian Basin. The minister said that the program was developed in cooperation with the Prime Minister's Office. The financial assistance will concern every Hungarian community in the Carpathian Basin, including both the building of new nursery schools and the renovation of old ones. Mr. Balog added that in the first phase of the program, church owned kindergartens will receive help.

The official hearing of Minister of Foreign Affairs and Trade Péter Szijjártó also took place last week. Speaking about Hungary's relations with neighboring states, the



minister said that “While there are countries with which relations are at present worse than before, relations with other countries are better, and consequently, relations with the neighboring countries have on the whole never been as balanced and positive as they are now.” Concerning the Hungarian community in Transylvania, Mr. Szijjártó said that Hungary must seek to achieve positive cooperation with Romania as Romania is Hungary’s second largest export market and we share the same view on a number of EU issues. He added that – at the same time – it is unacceptable for Hungary and the Hungarian Government that with reference to their anti-corruption legislation, the Romanian authorities systematically harass officials and people of Hungarian nationality. Mr. Szijjártó stressed that the language law, the use of national flags and symbols and restitution are issues which must be kept on the agenda continuously, but as expected, there will be no progress as elections will be held in Romania in the near future.

The economic policy approach must be strengthened in the policy for Hungarian communities abroad

On Thursday, speaking at a workshop of the Hungarian National Trading House focusing on the Central European region (held as part of the Week of Young Entrepreneurs), Deputy State Secretary for Hungarian Communities Abroad Péter Szilágyi said that their state secretariat is striving to strengthen the economic policy approach in the policy for Hungarian communities abroad. The deputy state secretary said that one of the most urgent problems in the Carpathian Basin is the terrific decline of the number of Hungarians which is partly due to the fact that a lot of Hungarians leave their homeland. Mr. Szilágyi said that the main objective of the State Secretariat for Hungarian Communities Abroad is to strengthen Hungarian communities living outside the kin-state, and also strengthen the economic policy approach in the field. He added that the amount of financial assistance the state secretariat allocates for these communities is continuously growing: while in 2012 this sum was 12 billion HUF (EUR 38 million), in 2016 it increased to 27 billion HUF (EUR 86 million).



Archbishop György Jukibinyi and the RMDSZ’s president Hunor Kelemen protest against the DNA’s actions

The Roman Catholic Archdiocese of Gyulafehérvár and the Democratic Alliance of Hungarians in Romania (RMDSZ) is protesting in a joint memorandum against the current situation of the Roman Catholic Theological High School of Marosvásárhely/Targu Mures. The document – which was presented on Wednesday – was signed by Archbishop György Jakubinyi and the president of the RMDSZ Hunor Kelemen and was sent to Romanian President Klaus Ihoannis and Prime Minister Dacian Cioloş. The parties declare in the memorandum that in the issue of the theological high school, the Romanian authorities question existing and operating



laws. The signatory parties also emphasize that “the smooth functioning of a Hungarian school is not only an issue of justice, but also a serious political issue affecting relations between ethnicities, which is also the responsibility of political leaders.”

As is known, some days ago the Romanian National Anticorruption Directorate (DNA) brought the director of the Ferenc Rákóczi II Roman Catholic High School of Marosvásárhely József Zsolt Tamás under official supervision on suspicion of abuse of office and launched criminal proceedings against him. The Romanian public prosecutor’s office also arrested the chief superintendent of Maros county Ștefan Someșan on suspicion of abuse of office and two counts of exceeding his power. Both actions are in connection with the establishment of the school.



Serbian-Hungarian cabinet summit begins in Niš on Sunday

On Sunday afternoon Prime Minister Viktor Orbán travelled to Serbia’s Niš for a two-day Serbian-Hungarian intergovernmental cabinet summit. In Niš he was received by the Serbian Prime Minister. In addition to Prime Minister Viktor Orbán, the summit will be attended by almost every minister of the Hungarian Government. The event will consist of a joint plenary session and bilateral meetings between the concerned Hungarian and Serbian ministers. After the plenary session, the adopted agreements will be signed and the two prime ministers will hold a joint press conference.

Minister of Human Capacities Zoltán Balog on official visit to Vojvodina

Minister of Human Capacities Zoltán Balog made an official visit to Vojvodina, the last stop of which was Szabadka/Subotica. In Újvidék/Novi Sad, the minister visited the Apáczai Student hostel and the Europa College (dormitory). After talks with the president of the Alliance of Vojvodina Hungarians (VMSZ) István Pásztor, Mr. Balog and Mr. Pásztor held a joint press conference. The head of the VMSZ expressed his gratitude to the Hungarian Government for the support it gives to the region. Speaking at the press conference, Zoltán Balog said that the Hungarian community in Vojvodina is strong and is willing to expand and prosper. He added that in order to enhance this development, intensive political support is essential, and this can be provided by the VMSZ.

Levente Magyar: “We must make use of opportunities”

On the invitation of the Prosperitati Foundation, State Secretary for Economic Diplomacy at the Ministry of Human Capacities Levente Magyar made an official visit to Vojvodina. On Monday evening, he arrived in Temerin, where – similarly to the previous stops – he had an opportunity to meet the winners of a call for application launched by the Prosperitati Foundation as part of the Hungarian Government’s economic development program in Vojvodina. During his meeting with Hungarians in Vojvodina, the state secretary stressed that the fact that he can be there conveys the



message that Budapest takes care of Hungarians living in Temerin and other towns of Vojvodina.



New dormitory building inaugurated in Transcarpathia

On Wednesday, State Secretary for Hungarian Communities Abroad Árpád János Potápi inaugurated a new dormitory building in Transcarpathia's Nagydobrony/Velyka Dobron', which was built from the Hungarian Government's HUF 40 million (EUR 128,000) state support. The building will give home to 50 Hungarian students studying in vocation educational institutions in Transcarpathia. The dormitory was built as part of the development program of the Vocational Institution of the Ferenc Rákóczi II. Transcarpathian Hungarian Institute. Speaking at the inauguration ceremony, Mr. Potápi said that the "2015- the year of Hungarian vocational education abroad" program was extremely successful in Transcarpathia. Rector of the Ferenc Rákóczi II. Transcarpathian Hungarian Institute Ildikó Orosz expressed her gratitude to Hungary and the Hungarian Government for the support it gives not only to Hungarians but also Ukrainians living in Transcarpathia.

The 1944 deportation of Transcarpathian Hungarians is commemorated in Szolyva

On Saturday, a large-scale commemoration and wreath laying ceremony was held in Ukraine's Szolyva/Svalová, at the town's memorial park which was established at the place of a former transit camp where Transcarpathian Hungarian men were collected in November 1944 before they were deported to Soviet forced labor camps (Gulag). Addressing the event, Prime Ministerial Commissioner Jenő Megyesy conveyed the message of Prime Minister Viktor Orbán to the relatives of those Transcarpathian Hungarian men who became the victims of the communist terror 70 years ago. Mr. Megyesy said that it was extremely important that the Hungarian National Assembly declared 2016 the Memorial Year for Gulag Victims. He stressed that through the commemorations organized as part of the memorial year, younger generations receive an opportunity to understand what happened after World War II.

