

Weekly Media Review of Hungarian Communities Abroad

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PRIME MINISTERS OFFICE
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Members of the Hungarian Reformed Church community are familiar with the path of survival and preservation

Speaking on the occasion of the metropolitan meeting of the General Convent held in the Kálvin Square Reformed Church, Prime Minister Viktor Orbán said that the members of the Hungarian Reformed Church community are familiar with the path that leads to the survival and preservation of the Hungarian community in the Carpathian Basin. Addressing the meeting of the General Convent – which is the joint representative body of Reformed churches of the Carpathian Basin – the Prime Minister emphasized that “we have been handed down the task of finding the path” which leads to the survival and preservation of the Hungarian community in the Carpathian Basin.” Mr. Orbán stated: “Hungary’s responsible leaders today are asking you to help the nation as you have done in the past five hundred years”. “Let us jointly stand up for Transcarpathia where there is a looming social disaster, and let us jointly stand up for Transylvania”, the Prime Minister called upon his audience, and also expressed his gratitude for the efforts, in consequence of which thousands of Hungarian families in trouble in Transcarpathia were given help.

In the closing declaration adopted at the end of the two-day meeting in Budapest on Thursday, the members of the General Convent drew attention to measures undermining Hungarian communities living in neighboring countries. The members of the General Convent note with concern the entry into force of public education laws in Slovakia, Ukraine and Romania which affect Hungarian-language education negatively, and also bring these measures to the attention of the Hungarian Government. The parish president of the Synod of the Hungarian Reformed Church István Bogárdi Szabó said that during their plenary session, the members of the convent discussed the current difficult situation in Transcarpathia, the issues of Hungarians Protestants in Romania, the situation of Reformed Church communities of the Hungarian diaspora, questions of church constitution and the celebration of the 500th anniversary of the Protestant Reformation.

Secret services may observe “anti-Hungarian” activities in some neighboring countries

Briefing parliament’s national security committee on Tuesday and giving an annual assessment of the work of the Bureau of Intelligence, Minister of the Prime Minister’s Office János Lázár said that “anti-Hungarian” activities are taking place in a number of neighboring countries, and the Bureau of Intelligence must take action to combat these. The minister added that the Hungarian government supports the Hungarian community in Transcarpathia, and strives to protect its interests. Concerning the situation of Hungarians in Romania, Mr. Lázár highlighted that the Romanian government had been carrying out “explicitly anti-Hungarian” actions under the pretext of “transparency and justice”. The minister emphasized that Hungary cannot stop protecting the interests of Hungarian communities living in the Carpathian Basin, and the Bureau of Intelligence plays an important role in this protection.



Petőfi Sándor Program to start in August

Addressing an international conference entitled Serbia and the Serbs, the kin-state and the region, State Secretary for Hungarian Communities Abroad Árpád János Potápi said that the Petőfi Sándor Program aimed at strengthening dispersed Hungarian communities in the Carpathian Basin will start in August with the full number of participants. The target areas for the program – which is based on the example of the Kőrösi Csoma Sándor Program – will include the territory of the former Austro-Hungarian Empire: Romania, Ukraine, Serbia, Croatia, Slovenia, Austria, Slovakia, the Czech Republic, Bosnia and Herzegovina, Macedonia and Southern Poland. Under the program, fifty young Hungarians will travel to dispersed Hungarian communities living in the Carpathian Basin whose task will be to organize community and cultural events and to strengthen the communities' Hungarian identity.



Washington: the Romanian Government discriminates Hungarians

In its annual report on human rights issued on Wednesday, the foreign ministry of the United States highlights several incidents of discrimination the Hungarian national minority in Romania has suffered from the Romanian Government. The document points out that Hungarians in Romania still cannot use their mother tongue in the administration of justice, several local governments refuse the installation of bilingual place name signs, and the use of the Szekler flag is also prohibited in several areas inhabited by Hungarians. The report also recalls the fact that the demand of municipalities of Hungarian-majority towns to employ officials who speak Hungarian was found discriminative by the Supreme Court of Romania. Concerning the situation of Csángó Hungarians in Moldavia, the report states that the implementation of Hungarian education programs financed by the Hungarian Government has been hindered by Romanian authorities in several towns of the region.

New Act on Election is adopted in Romania

On Wednesday, the Romanian Parliament adopted the new Act on Election, as a result of which Romania will return to the proportional electoral system based on party lists, applied before 2008. The parliamentary threshold will remain five percent, but an alternative threshold will help regional parties win mandates. Political organizations which do not reach the five percent-threshold but receive 20 percent of the vote in four counties at least, will also win mandate. The following parliamentary elections will be held in the fall of 2016.

Previously, the president of the Democratic Alliance of Hungarians in Romania (RMDSZ) Hunor Kelemen pointed out that the fact that every county will have – at least – two senators and four deputies is a step forward for counties with smaller population like Kovászna/Kovasna, Szilágy/Sălaj vagy Tulcea/Tulcea.



In connection with the new law, the deputy chairman of the RMDSZ' political group Árpád Márton said that the law will not make possible for two Hungarian parties to win mandate, therefore, if several Hungarian parties compete, the parliamentary representation of Hungarians might be endangered.



The VMSZ introduces its economic development strategy

The Committee on Business Development of the Hungarian Parliament has discussed the economic development strategy of the Alliance of Vojvodina Hungarians (VMSZ). Speaking at the session of the committee, the head of the VMSZ István Pásztor said that the financial support of the Hungarian Government spent on education and culture cannot make Hungarians remain in their homeland in Vojvodina, this is why the VMSZ has prepared an economic development strategy. Mr. Pásztor stressed that the aim of the strategy is to ensure additional sources – beyond the ones given by the Government of Serbia – which can serve their permanence and prosperity of Vojvodina Hungarians in their homeland.



Hungary will not leave Transcarpathian Hungarians alone

Speaking at the graduation ceremony of the Ferenc Rákóczi II. Transcarpathian Hungarian Institute in Ukraine's Beregszász/Berehove, Minister of Justice László Trócsányi stressed the importance of peace. The minister emphasized that "students who have just received their college degrees should live in peace in Ukraine, waiting for scholarship and job offers instead of military call-ups." At the ceremony – which was held in the Reformed church of Beregszász – the minister expressed the Hungarian Government's attention, concern and sympathy towards Transcarpathian Hungarian in the current difficult situation. Mr. Trócsányi stressed that although Hungarians are a national minority in Ukraine, from Hungary's point of view they are members and part of the Hungarian nation.

