

# Weekly Media Review of Hungarian Communities Abroad

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MINISTRY OF PUBLIC ADMINISTRATION  
AND JUSTICE



## Naturalization oath ceremonies on the National Holiday

To complete the naturalization process citizenship applicants must attend a naturalization oath ceremony. In the first ten weeks of the simplified naturalization procedure more than 41 000 citizenship requests were filed, mostly from Romania and Serbia. On the day when Hungary was celebrating the 163rd anniversary of its 1848 revolution a war of independence, the first applicants of the simplified naturalization took oath in Budapest and Transylvanian consulates. In the frame of the events President of the Transylvanian National Council László Tótkés and 25 members of the Hungarian Youth Council and Free University of Bálványos gave declarations of oath of Hungarian citizenship in the presence of Deputy Prime Minister Zsolt Semjén, Deputy State Secretary for Hungarian Communities Abroad Zsuzsanna Répás and ministerial commissioner in charge of the simplified naturalization procedure Tamás Wetzel in Kolozsvár/Cluj-Napoca on March 14. The castle of Buda gave place to the naturalization ceremony of the Csángós, where the President of the Parliament's committee of National Cohesion Árpád Potápi opened a Csángó cultural festival in the spirit of the national bond. Csíkszereda/Miercurea Ciuc, Szabadka/Subotica, Berlin and London were as well on the list of places, where oath takings were scheduled during the national day. Naturalized citizens obtain their citizenship documents in an ornate portfolio portraying the figure of St. Stephen, first King of Hungary.



## Personal identification card for non-resident naturalized citizens

Based on a new law enacted by the Hungarian National Assembly, non-resident Hungarian citizens having naturalized since January 1, 2011 have to be registered. The new dual citizens will be given a card indicating their personal identification number and permanent residence. Ministerial commissioner responsible for the simplified naturalization procedure Tamás Wetzel says the current regulations enable citizenship applicants to simultaneously change foreign names into their Hungarian counterparts that will henceforth appear on Hungarian documents.

## KMKF session held in Budapest

Delegates of the Forum of Hungarian Representatives in the Carpathian Basin (KMKF) gathered for a meeting held in Budapest last Friday. In his opening speech, Deputy Prime Minister Zsolt Semjén addressed policy measures regarding the Hungarian communities abroad as the cornerstone of the government's aims. He added that the governing alliance placed emphasis on the inclusion of the sentence stating the ideal of a "united Hungarian nation" in Hungary's new constitution. House Speaker László Kövér introduced



the parliamentary committee of National Cohesion before participants. The agenda of the plenary session was comprised of issues such as the strategy for the Hungarian diasporas, the legal regulation of Hungarian-Hungarian dialogue or questions arising from the extension of the Hungarian citizenship. The forum discussed changes to Hungary's constitution. The Hungarian constitution currently has a single sentence about Hungarians living abroad: "The Republic of Hungary feels responsible for what happens to Hungarians living outside Hungary". Suggestions were made to change this sentence to "The Republic of Hungary takes responsibility for the lives of Hungarians living abroad". KMKF delegates are welcome to submit proposals for what they wish to be included in Hungary's next constitution, Semjén told delegates.

KMKF was set up in September 2004. It serves as a coordination forum for lawmakers and elected MPs from countries of the Carpathian Basin. Its president is the House Speaker of Hungary. The KMKF has laid down in its statutes that it does not wish to take the place of the Hungarian Standing Conference (MÁÉRT). Moreover, it urged the creation of a consultative mechanism similar to the MÁÉRT. Since a 2008 Parliamentary decree, KMKF is a standing institute of the Hungarian National Assembly.

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### **Hungary to double state funds for universities**

The Sapientia Hungarian University of Transylvania and the Partium Christian University will be granted 2 billion HUF (7,3 million Euros) of Hungarian state funds instead of 1 billion this year. The extra amount of money should be spent exclusively for developments – said Szilárd Ulicsák, ministerial commissioner for state subsidies for Hungarians living abroad.

### **Hungarian mayor arrested for bribery**

Ceremonial events in Kézdivásárhely/Targu Secuiesc aimed at commemorating the Hungarian national day on March 15 were cancelled. Károly Rácz, mayor of Kézdivásárhely, and also member of the Hungarian Civic Party (MPP) would have been the patron of festive ceremonies, had he not been detained by state prosecutors in a bribery case. Rácz is suspected of asking and receiving a large amount of money from the administrator of a commercial society in order to facilitate a contract with the city hall.

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### **Fico to modify Slovak Citizenship Act**

The Slovak SMER party led by Robert Fico would alleviate the strictness of the country's Citizenship Act. This may be conceived of as a surprisingly positive turn, since no other than the former radical rightwing-populist government led by then-Prime Minister Robert Fico enacted the much-contested punitive counteract as an answer to the

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amended Hungarian Citizenship Act in 2010. The Slovak opposition party proposes that those who apply for another country's citizenship should not lose Slovak citizenship, in case they have worked or studied, or have been entrepreneurs, volunteers or professional sportsmen at least for one year, or have close relatives in that country. This exception-clause would still not be impulsive for Hungarians living in Slovakia to apply for the simplified naturalization as the majority of the Hungarian minority population lives, works, studies in Slovakia being its primary community.

### State language law before the Constitutional Court?

The Slovak National Party (SNS) led by Ján Slota works on a proposal contesting the State language law before the Slovak Constitutional Court. According to the opposition party, the amended language law is in contradiction with the constitution that stipulates the priority of the Slovak language over any other language spoken in Slovakia.

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### University admission exams in Hungarian by next year

Leaders of minority organizations in Ukraine made an agreement with the Ukrainian Minister of Education Dmitro Tabacsnik enabling minority high school students to take the advanced final examination and the university admission test in the respective minority language. The new arrangement will be introduced by 2012. Despite the tangible results, there has been a steady tendency since 2004 for deterioration in Hungarian minority education. Irrespective of party belonging, the governments of Ukraine have worsened the education possibilities of Hungarians in Transcarpathia. Mihály Bayer, Hungarian ambassador in Kiev said some EU member states, the USA and Canada as well have recently expressed their concerns in a letter addressed to the Ukrainian President Viktor Janukovics over the provisions of the higher education draft proposal threatening university autonomy and minority higher education.

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### Citizenship oath in Szabadka/Subotica

The first citizenship oath ceremony took place in Vojvodina on Tuesday for those who applied for the simplified naturalization. The ceremony was held at the Hungarian Consulate General in Subotica. A total of 30 ethnic Hungarian public figures, politicians, artists, and Church representatives have made the citizenship oath in the presence of Zsolt Németh, Minister of State for Foreign Affairs. Németh said in his opening speech that "the Hungarian nation is diverse and unified at the same time. This means that there is a common Hungarian identity, found wherever Hungarians live, in every corner of the world. I must admit this identity can appear in various forms in various communities. The Hungarian nation is united, but the Hungarians live in different states, implying that



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the borders of the Hungarian nation and the Hungarian state boundaries do not coincide.” Németh pointed out that the aim of the Hungarian government was to ease the cross-border unification.





## **Bilingualism is of high importance**

President of the Republic of Slovenia Danilo Türk received the leaders of the Hungarian local governments in the region of Prekmurje. After the meeting President Türk emphasized that they reviewed the question of bilingualism. In ethnically-mixed residential areas, equal rank of the Hungarian language must be provided in every segment of life. For this end, shortcomings in the regulation of language use must be mapped and necessary steps must be taken. László Göncz, member of the Slovenian Parliament outlined two minority related legislations. According to the draft proposal regulating the issue of personal ID cards, minority registered residents of ethnically-mixed municipalities may ask for bilingual documents in any official authorities of Slovenia. Another law promoting balanced regional development would devolve state competencies to minority communities, hence enabling them to establish the grounds of their economics.



## **National holiday - US Congressmen express solidarity with Hungarians**

United States Congressmen Dennis Kucinich and Steven LaTourette of Ohio, the Co-Chairmen of the bipartisan Congressional Hungarian Caucus, on Tuesday issued a statement of solidarity and support of Hungarians around the world marking the anniversary of the 1848/49 revolution and war of independence from Habsburg rule. "We send our warmest wishes to all Hungarians and friends of Hungary who celebrate the anniversary of the 1848 Hungarian Revolution today," the Congressmen said. "We are grateful for the bonds between Hungarians and Hungarian Americans in Northeast Ohio and across the nation. They continue to be active contributors to our society, enriching the cultural diversity of the United States. May all Hungarians and friends of Hungary be united as one community throughout the world," they said.