



# The American Hungarian Federation

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## **PRESS RELEASE, March 5, 2012: The American Hungarian Federation has Follow-Up Capitol Hill Meeting on Recent Congressional Trip to Hungary and Slovakia**

(Washington, DC). On Friday, March 3, Frank Koszorus, Jr., the president of the American Hungarian Federation (“Federation”), and Paul Kamenar, policy advisor and member of the Federation’s International Relations Committee, met with Brian Wanko, Professional Staff Member of the Subcommittee on Europe and Eurasia of the House Committee on Foreign Affairs and Brady Howell, Staff Associate, following last week’s Congressional Delegation (CODEL) trip to Brussels, Hungary and Slovakia. This was a follow up to their meeting on February 16<sup>th</sup>.

The CODEL was headed by Congressman Dan Burton (R-IN), Chairman of the Subcommittee, and Ranking Member Gregory W. Meeks (D-NY). The other members of the delegation included Representative Ruben Hinojosa (D-TX), Representative Terri Sewell (D-AL) and Representative Frederica Wilson (D-FL). Prior to the delegation’s trip the Federation submitted background information on Hungary and Slovakia to the CODEL and briefed Mr. Wanko, who accompanied the delegation, on issues of concern to the Federation.

Among such issues is the need for even-handed and factually based judgments about the state of democracy in Hungary, unlike a recent Op-Ed article implying that Hungary had silenced CNN broadcasts in that country. The facts tell a different story. According to CNN, the unavailability of CNN and other Turner channels on T-Home, a channel provider in Hungary, is due to commercial considerations. CNN added that it hopes to resolve these commercial issues. Importantly, Hungarians are able to view CNN on other channel providers, and they also have other media available to them that are critical of the government.

During their trip to Hungary on February 23 -25, the delegation met with Prime Minister Viktor Orban, Foreign Minister Janos Martonyi, members of parliament, government officials, civil society representatives, leaders of religious organizations and the American Chamber of Commerce in Hungary. They discussed a wide range of issues, including current economic difficulties; trade and investment opportunities; Hungarian domestic reforms; and equal treatment for religious organizations.

The delegation also acknowledged Hungary's contributions to the ISAF mission in Afghanistan and to NATO missions in the Balkans and participated in a ceremony at the Raoul Wallenberg monument.

During the Slovak leg of the trip, issues relating to the Hungarian minority were discussed by members of the delegation and their Slovak interlocutors.

“At a time when there is considerable misinformation being disseminated about Hungary and so little known about the discrimination against the Hungarian minority in Slovakia, we believe such fact-finding missions are most useful, welcome and greatly appreciated,” said Mr. Koszorus. “Objective analysis based on facts is imperative to advance U.S. interests in Hungary and the region,” he added.