**Like a church - the fountain of the belief and the strength**

(interview with the president of the CSEMADOK - Gyula Bárdos)

*Thousands of deported Hungarian people were still waiting in the Czech Republic, thousands of them were trying to solve their problems according to their citizenship, fields were taken from them because of the BENES decretes, "reslovakizated" people couldn´t get back their Hungarian nationality. In these days, esp. on the 5th of March in 1949 in Bratislava a new group was formed - the Cultural Union of Hungarian Workers living in Czechoslovakia.*

*The Csemadok´s first organization was founded on the 20th of March in 1949 in Érsekújvár. It is a paradox that it was founded only one day after the occasion, that the Slovak Minister of the Interior published a law about the houses which were confiscated. The law said that the houses could be given back only for those who could prove their Czechoslovakian citizenship.*

*Till the end of the year 1949 other 62 organizations were founded, and other100 in the next year. Schools with Hungarian teaching language were also founded in these years, because the activists of the Cultural Union considered it important to organize a mother-tongue education system. Hungarian books and newspapers were printed, choirs, drama groups, folk dance groups were formed.*

*The Csemadok is celebrating its 65th birthday. From now on its full name is: Association of Hungarians Living in Slovakia for Social and Public Education – CSEMADOK.*

*Interview with Gyula Bárdos, the president of the Association of Hungarians Living in Slovakia for Social and Public Education – CSEMADOK.*

-**Sándor Csoóri, the famous poet once said, that the CSEMADOK is something like a church for the Hungarians living in Slovakia: It can be foud anywhere and it gives belief and strength to the Hungarian communities. Do you think it is still true?**

-Sándor Csoóri´s words clearly depict the truth about this association, and I have to admit, that he was right. The CSEMADOK considers it important to keep our traditions for the next generations. Its nearly 500 organizations consist of more than 56 thousand members. If somebody wants to become a member of this association, he/she has to face the facts that being a member doesn´t mean any financial benefits. That´s why our members are people who are using their personal relationships and different other sources to fulfill the association´s main goal: to protect our history, our traditions, and our language. We always organize different events to remember those important dates which had a great effect on our future: the war of freedom in years 1848-1849, the anniversary of the establishment of our state, or the events which happened in year 1956.

**-According to the recent surveys the number of the Hungarians living in Slovakia has decreased by 110 000. Is it possible to stop this decrease in the future?**

-Also the demographers told us that there would be a decrease in the end of the 80s. There were lots of reasons why this could happen: the law which protected the language of the state, the country-dividing procedure, the economic neglect of our regions. I don´t know we will be able to stop this decrease, but I do know one thing for sure. We must do something against it. That´s why we are in contact with the teachers and with the representatives of different churches.

**The main quest or goal of the Csemadok is the protection of the cultural traditions. How can this goal be fulfilled in the era of the electronical development and the internet? How can you draw the attention of people living among these social and economic circumstances?**

Our events attract many citizens to participate. These are:

* + **Folklore festivals:**
    - Tavaszi szél vizet áraszt
    - Bíborpiros Szép Rózsa

* + **Drama festivals**
    - Jókai - Days
    - Egressy Béni National Drama Festival
    - Duna-Menti Tavasz
  + **Prose and poetry competitions**
    - Tompa Mihály -Prose and poetry competition
  + **Festivals of choirs**
    - Kodály- Days
    - Csengő Énekszó
  + **Piano competition**
    - Kadosa Pál – piano competition
  + **“Meet the author/writer” events**
  + **Other events**
    - Czuczor Gergely - Days
    - Szepsi Csombor Márton - Days
    - Fábry Zoltán - Days
    - Kazinczy – Linguistic Days

**The Csemadok is celebrating its 65th birthday. What will be the programme of the celebration?**

-First of all we would like to evaluate the result, and the fails. Furthermore we must talk about our future goals and organize a national conference to share our ideas with the others.

The formal ceremenony will be on the 8th of march 2014.