

PHOTO OF THE DAY



MTI/Zsolt Szegedváry

President János Áder greets Hungarian participants in EuroSkills competition

UPCOMING EVENTS

Plenary session of parliament

11th Budapest legal forum on human rights

Defence minister gives lecture on security

Presser on Rákóczi Memorial Year

TOP STORY

SZIJJÁRTÓ: HUNGARY NEEDS STRONG EUROPE

Foreign Minister Péter Szijjártó, in a lecture at the University of Bonn, argued for a strong Europe composed of strong nation states.

"If there is any country that needs a strong Europe, it is definitely Hungary," Szijjártó said, noting that Hungary, located in the middle of Europe with an open economy, has a history of losing out in conflicts between east and west.

Europe, he added, faces historic challenges, so it is natural that there are debates about its future and on how to secure a strong Europe.

Whenever "someone strays from the mainstream" in the debate on the European Union's future, it is wrong that they immediately get labelled "un-European", he said.

Szijjártó said some wanted weak EU member states within a kind of united states of Europe. Yet strong integration between weak countries is hard to achieve, he argued, adding that Hungary believes strong member states are needed.

Szijjártó named migration among the EU's ongoing challenges. He said migration had heightened the threat of terrorism in Europe. When hundreds of thousands are allowed to enter the continent unchecked, certain terrorists take advantage of such a lax policy, he said. This is why migration is also a security issue, he said.

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SZIJJÁRTÓ: EU MEMBER STATES HAVE SOVEREIGN RIGHTS

Every country should have the opportunity to provide its own solutions to its demographic challenges, and this did not necessarily have to be in the form of immigration, Péter Szijjártó, the foreign minister, said in a lecture at the University of Bonn. Border protection is also a question of sovereignty and even the Schengen Agreement mandates the protection of Europe's external borders, Szijjártó said.

The minister also said Europe should return to its Christian roots. He called it "unacceptable" that Christian symbols were being removed in certain places in western Europe.

He also touched on the issue of the EU's next budget, saying that its implementation should be preceded by a fair debate. The distribution of EU funds does not depend on the generosity of western European countries, Szijjártó said. "We have a right to these funds," he said.

The minister also said the EU should place greater emphasis on the bloc's enlargement. The larger the EU, the stronger it will be, he argued. Hungary knows what it is like when there is peace in the Western Balkans and also when there is instability, he added.

In response to a question, Szijjártó noted that a few years ago several thousand people crossed Hungary's border illegally "and it is not clear how they would have had the right

to do that". He said the migrants had rejected any sort of cooperation with the authorities and "took over public spaces".

Hungary does not judge another country if it wants to build a multicultural society, but other countries should not judge Hungary, either, for following a different path, Szijjártó said.

SZIJJÁRTÓ: HUNGARY GOVT MONITORING UKRAINE SITUATION

The Hungarian government is in "continuous communication" with Ukraine's ethnic Hungarian KMKSZ party over recent developments in Ukraine, Foreign Minister Péter Szijjártó said. Speaking in Bonn, Szijjártó called it "obviously bad news" that "martial law has been declared in a neighbouring country". It is in Hungary's interest that peace should prevail "in countries in which lots of Hungarians live", he said, adding that security for Ukraine's 150,000-strong Hungarian community was "crucially important". Szijjártó said hopefully the situation in Ukraine would be resolved soon.

SZIJJÁRTÓ: HUNGARY-NORTH RHINE-WESTPHALIA ECONOMIC COOPERATION IMPORTANT

Economic and trade cooperation between Hungary and North Rhine-Westphalia will have a major influence on the growth path of the Hungarian

economy in the future, the foreign minister said in Düsseldorf.

North Rhine-Westphalia has become the source of Germany's biggest business investments in Hungary, Péter Szijjártó told a press conference. A total of 49,000 people in Hungary are employed by companies from North Rhine-Westphalia and their annual turnover is over 11 billion euros, he noted. Among Germany's states, North Rhine-Westphalia attracts the third largest Hungarian export, he added.

He said it was very important that companies from North Rhine-Westphalia, having invested in Hungary, clearly welcomed the government's amendment proposals that aim to improve the country's competitiveness and address labour shortage problems. As a result of the challenges caused by low unemployment in Hungary, these companies had long been asking the government to ensure the sufficient workforce required for carrying out their investment projects, he added.

Hungary's attractiveness for German investors can be maintained by making its labour market more competitive, he said. Companies from North Rhine-Westphalia are mainly involved in keeping Hungary's car industry cutting-edge, and are glad to make investments in Hungary that are innovative, he said. Such projects are important to the Hungarian economy because the car industry currently accounts for 28% of the manufacturing sector's output and its competitiveness largely depends on the extent of advance investments, he added.

DK CALLS FOR ÁSZ AUDIT ON GRUEVSKI ASYLUM CASE

Opposition Democratic Coalition is calling on the State Audit Office (ÁSZ) to carry out an extraordinary audit that establishes the costs of Hungary assisting former Macedonian Prime Minister Nikola Gruevski flee from his country.

Foreign Minister Peter Szijjártó has admitted that Gruevski, who had been sentenced to prison on corruption charges in his home country, was assisted by Hungarian diplomats to flee across the Balkans, DK group spokesman Zsolt Gréczy said.

According to press reports, at least four Hungarian diplomats and two vehicles were used in the operation, he added. DK would like to know who approved the costs of such an operation, he said.

The Hungarian government denies that it played a role in Gruevski's escape from Macedonia.

Gruevski held office between 2006 and 2016. An arrest warrant was issued on November 12 after he had failed to start a two-year prison sentence for corruption. He announced on his Facebook page two days later that he was in Budapest and has submitted a request for political asylum.

ÁSZ responded by saying that it is independent of all other organisations

and does not carry out the orders of political parties or any other organisation. It added that it conducts its audits based on a predetermined and publicly available biannual audit schedule. It said it was only obliged to change that schedule based on a decision of parliament.

HUNGARIANS DEPORTED TO SOVIET LABOUR CAMPS COMMEMORATED

Hungarians deported to forced labour camps in the Soviet Union in the aftermath of WWII were commemorated at a ceremony in Budapest on Sunday. The ceremony was held at a monument to the victims of the Gulag erected in Honvéd Square in central Budapest in 1993. State secretary Bence Rétvári noted that one in twelve Hungarians had been impacted by the deportations to the labour camps in the Soviet Union. Under a declaration by parliament made in 2012, November 25 is the Memorial Day of Hungarian Political Prisoners and Forced Labourers Transported to the Soviet Union.

NNG DEVELOPING HYBRID NAV SYSTEM IN HUF 2 BN PROJECT

Hungary's NNG is developing hybrid navigation software in a 2 billion

forint project supported with almost 1 billion from the National Research, Development and Innovation Fund. The project has created 60 jobs for software developers. The software, which has both online and offline elements, is Navigation Data Standard (NDS) compliant. More than 30 million vehicles around the world use NNG navigation. Last year, the company had after-tax profit of 12.4 billion forints (EUR 38.5m) on revenue of 36.4 billion forints.

BUSINESS CONFIDENCE CONTINUES TO IMPROVE

The business confidence index of the Hungarian Chamber of Commerce and Industry's (MKIK) economic research institute GVI rose to 55.5 points in October from 52.6 points in April. GVI said this is the highest figure the index has taken since it launched its quarterly confidence surveys in 2010.

The survey is based on interviews with 2,830 company managers, MKIK GVI said. The company managers interviewed became slightly more optimistic about their current and prospective business position. Expectations concerning both machine and construction investments became significantly more positive over the past six months. However, respondents were slightly more pessimistic regarding prospective orders.