

## PHOTO OF THE DAY



A truck bearing a billboard on migration presented in front of the Prime Minister's Office

## UPCOMING EVENTS

**Orbán attends Friends of Cohesion meeting in Bratislava**

**Szijjártó announces investment projects of Korea's Hanon Systems**

**Plenary session of parliament**

**Presser on military exercise along southern border**

**Stats office releases investment figures on Q3 2018**

## TOP STORY

### GULYÁS REJECTS EP VOTE ON 'MIGRANT VISAS'

The European Parliament's holding another vote on "migrant visas" is "unacceptable", the head of the Prime Minister's Office said, and called the procedure "anti-democratic".

Gergely Gulyás insisted that the proposal, which has been once rejected, would be put to vote "without any real changes" and added that its proponents would "keep on trying until they get the right answer". Gulyás warned that large masses could come into Europe by way of the proposed travel documents.

On another subject, Gulyás said he did "not receive daily reports" concerning the whereabouts of former Macedonian PM Nikola Gruevski. Gruevski is not ensured personal protection but "services due to refugees under the law". He added that Gruevski, as a refugee, has a right to free movement within the European Union. He insisted that Hungary had "not violated the sovereignty of any country" and "had no role" in Gruevski's flight from his country.

Regarding Russian arms dealers Hungary extradited, Gulyás said that it was the justice minister's decision to extradite them to Russia after a court ruled that they could be extradited either to Russia or the United States. The move was in full compliance with international agreements, Gulyás added.

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## **SZIJJÁRTÓ: HUNGARY NOT TO RECOGNISE UN MIGRATION COMPACT**

Hungary will not enforce “a single passage” in the United Nations’ global migration compact, Foreign Minister Péter Szijjártó said in Geneva after talks with Antonio Vitorino, head of the International Organization for Migration (IOM). He said the package was contradictory to Hungary’s interests because “it encourages migration rather than seeking to stem such processes”. The compact, similarly to the European Union’s mandatory quotas, would be “practically equal to an invitation”, Szijjártó said, and insisted that in countries around the EU there are some 30-35 million people “whose conditions could easily motivate them to leave their homeland”.

“We are not going to pay for courses for migrants... we will not hide that mass migration will have serious security impacts and we will not provide the same services to migrants as to tax-paying Hungarians,” Szijjártó said.

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## **SZIJJÁRTÓ: HUNGARY REJECTS ENDEAVOURS TO ENCOURAGE MIGRATION**

Hungary supports political efforts to stop migration and rejects any endeavour to encourage illegal migration, Foreign Minister Péter Szijjártó said during a general debate

at the International Organization for Migration (IOM) council meeting in Geneva. He noted that Hungary disagreed with several basic tenets of the United Nations global compact for migration, adding that Hungary has withdrawn from its approval process. Just as the migration policies of Brussels have failed, so have the UN’s, he added.

Szijjártó said that Hungary had submitted several amendment proposals to the UN compact aimed at curbing the migration process and taking into consideration the situation and interests of target countries and transit countries. Migration is not a basic human right, and illegal border crossing is a criminal act. Countries’ sovereignty must be guaranteed and the development of parallel societies prevented, he said.

Mass migration is one of the most important of the unprecedented challenges that the world currently faces because it can destabilise entire regions, he said. He also highlighted terrorism as a challenge, noting that since the migration crisis started, more than 30 terrorist acts have been carried out in the European Union by “people with a migration background”.

Hungary disagrees with the assumption that migration is a basic human right which should be encouraged because it is beneficial, he said, stressing Hungary’s position that people forced to flee their countries should receive help, but the problem must be addressed at its root by overcoming the hardships of

the countries of origin. “Help should be taken to where it is needed,” he added. The international community should focus on guaranteeing peace and security to people in their homelands, and if that is not possible, in the countries closest to them. The Hungary Helps scheme is Hungary’s contribution to these efforts, he added.

Despite rejecting the UN compact, Hungary wants to cooperate with the international community in the fight against human smugglers, Szijjártó said. IOM Director-General Antonio Vitorino said he agreed with several of Szijjártó’s remarks, such as the need to make efforts to handle the problems at their root. However, he said terrorist acts should not be presented as directly linked to migration because a significant part of them were not committed by migrants.

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## **GOVT SPOX: HUNGARY TO ANSWER IN KIND TO POLITICAL ATTACKS**

Hungary will answer in kind to political attacks, Government Spokesman Zoltán Kovács said, presenting to the press a mobile billboard saying “Hundreds have died in terrorist attacks since 2015 ... but Guy Verhofstadt says: ‘we don’t have a migration crisis’. This is insane!”. The billboard is a reaction to a mobile billboard campaign set to circulate around Brussels showing Hungarian Prime Minister Viktor Orbán with the legend, “first he took our money, now he wants to destroy Europe”.

The Hungarian billboard, which is mounted on a small truck, will be visible around Hungary and later in Brussels, Kovács said. The truck is an “unequivocal message of our thoughts on migration and liberal migration policy.” In the past few years, Hungarians have expressed clearly that they would not let Hungary become an immigration country at national consultation surveys, referendums and the general election, he said.

### **NÉMETH: MIGRATION STILL A THREAT**

Migration still poses a threat, with reports by Hungarian and European secret services suggesting that more than 70,000 people in the Balkans are ready to move to the European Union, Szilárd Németh, parliamentary state secretary of defence, said. Meanwhile, tensions between migrants are high. Hungary is prepared to deploy thousands of soldiers to the border, he said, adding that 2,300 soldiers are on 72-hour standby exercises on the 175km Serbia-Hungary border. Exercises with the participation of soldiers and police officers are under way so that the armed forces involved in border management tasks are ready for action, he added.

Németh said the Hungarian armed forces were the main guarantee of Hungary’s sovereignty as well as the security of the Hungarian people. He said that 10-30 people made an illegal attempt to enter the country every day. “Hungary has shown that migration

can be stopped on land. Hungary has successfully defended Christian national culture while fully fulfilling its obligations under international law.” Over the past three years, thanks to Hungary’s technical and legal border protection measures, the southern border is now Europe’s best-protected Schengen border. Further, Hungary has become one of Europe’s safest countries. To keep it that way, Hungary’s border protection measures must be fortified and maintained. Hungary will never give up the right to use its own border guards.

### **FIDESZ SLAMS BRUSSELS FOR FURTHER ‘PRO- MIGRANT’ PROPOSALS**

European Union decision-makers “are going full steam ahead with their pro-migration plans”, János Halász, parliamentary spokesman for ruling Fidesz, said. “Not only do they want to snatch border control from member states, they now seek to make decisions on asylum procedures, too,” Halász told a press conference in Brussels, referring to recent proposals made by the European Parliament’s civil liberties, citizenship and home affairs committee (LIBE), which he called “extremely pro-immigration”.

Concerning details, Halász said that providing entrants with a “migrant visa” would be equal to providing illegal migrants with a travel document outside the EU, without any controls, ensuring them free entry. Meanwhile, setting up a European migration

agency would mean that Brussels “could easily override” a member state’s decision concerning whom to allow to enter. “Every move by the current leadership in Brussels is aimed at letting even more migrants into Europe and grabbing even more power for themselves,” Halász said. Referring to billionaire George Soros, he said this narrative had panned out all according to “Soros’s plan”. Halász warned that the “import of migrants to Europe will become automatic” unless the EU’s current decision-makers are voted out at the upcoming EP elections.

### **SZIJJÁRTÓ: AFGHANISTAN STRATEGIC ALLY IN FIGHT AGAINST TERRORISM**

Hungary considers Afghanistan a strategic ally in the fight against terrorism and extremism, Foreign Minister Péter Szijjártó told a ministerial conference on Afghanistan held in Geneva. Developments in Afghanistan, with special regard to a terrorist attack in Kabul last week, indicate that those efforts should be stepped up, Szijjártó said. He assured the Afghan leadership of Hungary’s support in resolving the conflict between the Afghan government and extremist Taliban groups, with a view to creating stability in the country.

Hungary will continue its presence in NATO’s Afghanistan mission and continue its financial contributions to Afghanistan’s security forces, Szijjártó said. He added that Hungary will send

early next year another 30-strong contingent to join 106 Hungarian troops already serving in the country, and noted a donation of 500,000 US dollars to Afghanistan. Hungary will be ready to “give new impetus to economic and cultural relations with Afghanistan” once security has improved there, the minister said.

### **GULYÁS WELCOMES IMPROVING EMPLOYMENT DATA**

The minister heading the Prime Minister’s Office, Gergely Gulyás, welcomed improving employment data which the Central Statistical Office (KSH) released on Wednesday. Gulyás also said the government will only support amendments to overtime regulations which keep overtime work contingent on the employees’ consent.

Hungary’s rolling average three-month jobless rate was 3.7% in August-October, down from 3.8% in the previous period, KSH said. The rate covers unemployment among those between the ages of 15 and 74. In absolute terms, there were 172,900 unemployed in Hungary in August-October, 5,300 fewer than in July-September and 10,600 fewer than in the same period a year earlier. The employment rate was 60.6%, slightly up from 60.4% in the previous period and up from 59.7% from a year earlier. The number of employed included 132,800 Hungarians in fostered work programmes and 108,000 working abroad. The number of those

employed on the domestic primary labour market rose by 2.6% from a year earlier to 4,261,300, while the number of fostered workers dropped 28.8%. The number of those working abroad was up 2.1%.

On another subject, Gulyás said that pensions would be raised by 2.7% on January 1. He added that the government was monitoring inflation and would “make corrections if necessary”.

Employment in Hungary has reached a record high while the jobless rate has fallen to a historical low, and the trend will continue to grow due to new investments, Finance Minister Mihály Varga said in response to the data, in an interview to public television’s current affairs channel M1.

The minister said that taking into account the number of public works employees, the unemployed and inactive workers, altogether there are 360,000 people making up Hungary’s labour reserves, which means the country is very close to achieving full employment. Varga noted that whereas in 2010 the employment rate stood at 56%, this ratio has now risen to 69.8%.

### **KÓSA: GOVT NOT TO INCREASE WORKING HOURS WITHOUT EMPLOYEES’ CONSENT**

Increasing the number of hours employees may be required to work overtime is “not possible without their consent”, according to an amendment

proposal attached to a recent bill of changes to the labour code, ruling Fidesz’s Lajos Kósa said after talks with union representatives. Concerning the bill, of which he is a proponent, he said it was “aimed at dismantling administrative barriers in the labour code to allow employees to earn more through more work done on a voluntary basis”.

Under current regulations, employees could be required to work an annual 250 hours overtime, or 300 hours under a collective agreement. The bill before parliament seeks to increase that amount to 400 hours, Kósa said, noting that the European Union’s upper limit was 416 hours.

Kósa dismissed criticism by the opposition parties, who slammed the bill, saying that it would lead to “exploitation and slavery”. He stressed that the bill would leave basic principles unchanged, such as working 8 hours 5 days a week and having two days off. He also insisted that if the bill is passed into law, employers would continue to settle payments for overtime work once a year. “Any allegations that employees would only be paid for their overtime once every three years is nonsense,” Kósa said.

### **BUDAPEST HONVÉD HOSPITAL’S NEONATAL UNIT NOT TO CLOSE**

The neonatal intensive care unit of Budapest’s Honvéd hospital will not have to be closed, the defence ministry said, dismissing press reports.

Weekly hvg.hu's online edition said on Tuesday that the ward would have to be closed on December 15 due to a shortage of doctors.

Expectant mothers and preterm newborn infants needing special care will temporarily be transferred to relevant units in the capital's Semmelweis University and St János hospitals over a short period of time from December 16 on to ensure them "continued care", the ministry said. The hospital is increasing efforts to offer doctors and nurses wage incentives with the aim to settle staff shortage without delay, it said, adding that the unit would resume regular operation within a matter of weeks.

Earlier, the leftist Democratic Coalition (DK) called on Human Resources Minister Miklós Kásler to join DK members in visiting the hospital in the wake of news reports saying that the hospital's neonatal ward would have to be closed on December 15 for lack of funding.

DK lawmaker Lajos Oláh said that Honvéd's NICU ward is one of only four in Budapest equipped to care for children born before the 33rd week of pregnancy and under 1,500 grams.

## **EXHIBITION DEDICATED TO HUNGARIAN EXPLORERS OF SILK ROAD**

An exhibition guiding the visitor through explorations in central Asia and the Silk Road by Hungary's archaeologist Aurél Stein and travelling count Béla Széchenyi opened in Budapest's Ybl Budai Kreatív Ház cultural centre earlier this week.

Béla Széchenyi, the son of 19th-century reform politician István Széchenyi, and Aurél Stein led four major expeditions between 1877 and 1916 to the region noted for the route connecting China with the Mediterranean, the exhibition's curator Ágnes Kelecsényi said. Széchenyi arrived in China's Tun Huang region along the Silk Road first in 1879 to work on geological explorations, which Stein resumed later on. The exhibition features their numerous writings, manuscripts, photos and maps left behind from their explorations along with films and documents. The exhibition marking the centenary of Széchenyi's and the 75th anniversary of Stein's death will run until January 7, 2019.

## **TRADITIONAL BLUEPRINT TECHNIQUE ADDED TO UNESCO WORLD HERITAGE LIST**

Blueprint dyeing, a traditional cloth dyeing technique, has been admitted to the UNESCO intangible world heritage list, the UN educational, scientific and cultural body's committee said at meeting in Port Louis, Mauritius. The technique, which was nominated jointly by Hungary, Austria, the Czech Republic and Slovakia, spread in central Europe in the 18th and 19th century. A pattern was traced on cotton or silk with a water resistant material and then the fabric dipped into indigo dye, giving it a characteristic and often intricate beauty. UNESCO countries signed an agreement on preserving intangible world heritage in 2003. Of Hungarian achievements, the Kodály music education method, the Mohács Busó festival, the "dance house" method to preserve Hungarian folk dances, Matyó folk art and traditional falconry had been admitted to the list.