

PHOTO OF THE DAY



MTI/György Varga

Winter

UPCOMING EVENTS

Budapest conference on WWI ending anniversary

Events marking Advent, Hanukkah

President's wife attends Budapest diplomatic fair

Harlem Gospel Choir gives concert in Budapest

TOP STORY

ORBÁN: UN MIGRATION COMPACT 'FLAWED DOCUMENT'

The United Nations Global Migration Compact is a flawed document, and whoever signs it presents a serious risk to their own citizens, Prime Minister Viktor Orbán said in Prague.

At a joint press conference following a meeting with his Czech counterpart, Andrej Babiš, Orbán said the document set down principles that would not reduce illegal migration but stimulate it. Every substantive legal case in the future will make use of the document as a point of reference, he warned. He said mass migration was a serious issue and decision-makers should not ignore the opinion of the people. Yet in Europe today, he added, people are not allowed to express their opinions, or leaders fail to take them into account. "We in central Europe, however, want to remain democrats," he said. "Migration is testing the democratic nature of political systems," the prime minister added.

Concerning the European Parliament's decision to hold another vote on "migrant visas", Orbán said that "it seems that we will have to keep on voting until we arrive at what they consider the right outcome". He added that "this institution calling itself a guardian of the rule of law will easily transgress the norms of that rule of law".

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ORBÁN PRAISES HUNGARIAN-CZECH TIES

Prime Minister Viktor Orbán said that relations with the Czech Republic “entered a new dimension” in recent years, and spoke highly of “unprecedented figures” in economic ties as well as good cooperation in defence and in other areas. He said that the turnover of bilateral trade and investments had increased and added that the two countries mutually supported investments. Hungarian pharmaceuticals were “doing well” in the Czech Republic, while Czech companies were active in Hungarian agriculture and telecommunications, he added.

On the subject of a “dynamically growing” defence industry cooperation, Orbán said “it is not just business” and insisted that “it has dimensions of confidence, because it will only work with countries trusting each other”.

Orbán noted that Czech companies had contracts in the upgrade project of the Paks nuclear plant and added that “both countries think that nuclear energy is necessary”.

Answering a question about the Czech foreign ministry’s removing its Budapest embassy from a list of foreign offices of key importance, Orbán said that “coalition government is a difficult science but Hungary seeks to remain an ally for the Czech Republic”.

SZIJJÁRTÓ: V4 PLANNING TO SUPPORT TUNISIA BORDER DEFENCE

Visegrad Group countries will help Tunisia beef up controls of its border, Foreign Minister Péter Szijjártó told MTI. Szijjártó said he had phoned his Tunisian counterpart Khemaies Jhinaoui after V4 foreign ministers in Prague agreed to set up an assistance programme for North African countries aimed at developing border control capacities with a view to withstanding illegal migration. He said the group was considering cooperation opportunities with Morocco and Tunisia, which have “done a lot so far to maintain their stability, thus contributing to Europe’s security”. “Europe’s security starts in North Africa,” he added. Preventing further migration waves is crucial to maintaining European security, Szijjártó said, adding that “Tunisia has been a reliable partner in that sense”.

TRÓCSÁNYI: CONTINUED LEGAL COOPERATION VITAL REGARDLESS OF BREXIT

Continuing smooth legal cooperation between Britain and Hungary is highly important, regardless of what direction Brexit takes, Justice Minister László Trócsányi has said.

Trócsányi held talks in London with his counterpart, David Gauke, with Baroness Natalie Evans, Leader of the House of

Lords, and with Bob Neill, the head of parliament’s justice select committee, who is also the head of parliament’s UK-Hungary friendship group.

Considering the large Hungarian community living in Britain and strong trade and justice links, the two countries are closely bound to each other, Trócsányi told MTI after the talks. Questions that need to be addressed in the upcoming period include the mutual recognition of diplomas and professional certificates. A political declaration outlining future UK-EU relations approved at last week’s special EU summit specifies certain directives but not the details, so one important element of the talks was to establish that it is in Hungary’s interest to maintain the current level of cooperation with London and to avoid any setbacks in areas of cooperation such as family law or criminal law. Both Gauke and Neill confirmed at the talks that it is also in Britain’s interest to maintain close ties, Trócsányi said.

In addition to professional matters, Trócsányi also highlighted the importance of not curbing the rights of Hungarians living in the UK, as also stated in the Brexit agreement approved at the recent EU summit.

BUDAPEST MAYOR’S OFFICE: E-TICKETING PROJECT TO CONTINUE IN LINE WITH EBRD CREDIT CONTRACT

Contrary to press reports, the Budapest automated fare collection (AFC)

project will continue in line with the conditions laid down in a credit contract with the European Bank for Reconstruction and Development (EBRD), and the completed elements of the development project can be utilised, the Budapest Mayor's Office said.

A contract for implementation was signed with the supplier Scheidt and Bachmann GmbH in November 2014, and three of the seven planned project phases have been completed in keeping with the deadline and the budget, the statement said.

At a meeting on Oct. 31 this year, the Budapest Transport Centre (BKK) board of directors proposed preparations to cancel the contract because the supplier had failed to submit a bank guarantee. The contract was cancelled at a Nov. 21 meeting, with the approval of the EBRD. The board imitated consultations with EBRD on signing a new contract for implementation with the existing conditions of the EBRD credit contract. They also proposed talks with government bodies with the involvement of the Budapest municipal council about the possibility of integrating the AFC project into national networks.

Mayor István Tarlós said that the municipal council's contract with the EBRD remains in force and the AFC project will continue. Earlier in the day, he initiated firing BKK managing director Kálmán Dabóczi because of the e-ticketing project. "It was poorly assessed and time consuming, and that must not go without consequences,"

he said, adding that "the opposition press" had mixed up the two contracts, however, and drew the wrong conclusions. The council signed a contract with the EBRD and the BKK another contract with the supplier. The latter was cancelled "after an extended period of reluctance" on Nov. 21, but the first contract remains in force, he said.

HUNGARY'S HIV+ ESTIMATED AT 6,000

There are about 2,000-2,200 people in Hungary who have tested HIV positive while an estimated 3,000-4,000 could be infected but unaware of their status, an expert told Hungarian public media ahead of World AIDS Day.

János Szlávik, senior doctor at the Del-Pest Centrum Hospital, said that between 200-300 new HIV patients are registered annually, and urged that more screening facilities should be set up and that home HIV tests should be made available in pharmacies. Szlávik also urged that people at a higher risk of HIV infection should take the test.

The World Health Organisation decided in 1988 to make December 1 a world day to focus public attention on HIV and AIDS.

LMP: FOREIGN MINISTRY 'TRAVEL BUREAU FOR CRIMINALS'

According to opposition LMP, the Hungarian foreign ministry has "turned into a travel agency for criminals", while

Hungarian embassies "carry out the prime minister's personal orders" rather than represent the country, LMP co-leader Márta Demeter said. The Hungarian diplomatic corps "is used as a cover for criminal activities", which poses "the highest degree of security risk", she insisted.

The former Socialist politician slammed the government for using the Hungarian cultural institute in Moscow to house a company that sold Hungarian residency bonds. She cited Russian press reports as alleging that some of the bonds had ended up with a businessman associated with a criminal organisation. Demeter criticised the foreign ministry for allowing "unscreened Uzbek persons" access to technical details of the Hungarian embassy in Tashkent in the course of a renovation project, as well as for allegedly destroying documents concerning the visa applications of suspected criminals. "The Hungarian state also founded a joint company with a now deceased international criminal, Ghaith Pharaon, who was wanted for financing terrorism," she said.

REPUBLICAN US CONGRESSMEN VOICE SUPPORT FOR HUNGARY GOVT

Twelve US Republican congressmen have expressed support for the "democratically elected" Hungarian government and its policies, in a letter addressed to Prime Minister

Viktor Orbán. The letter, written in reaction to the “European Parliament’s recent decision to punish Hungary for exercising their rights as a sovereign nation”, was published by Andy Harries, one of its signatories, on Twitter. “Your victory in April 2018 clearly demonstrated the strong mandate from the Hungarian people to protect the borders of Hungary and fight mass illegal migration that put at risk national sovereignty and the fundamental values of Europe: civilisation based on principles of a Judeo-Christian heritage, a free market economy and strong nations that value sovereignty. No one but the Hungarian people should decide about the policies that your government has been promoting,” the letter said.

Signatories to the letter also expressed gratitude to Orbán for speaking in the EP against anti-Semitism, and they slammed “Brussels’ support of anti-Israel sentiments”. “We commend your efforts and stand with you in supporting and defending our common ally, Israel, within the EU and other international forums,” the letter said.

The letter also voiced the signatories’ commitment to further

strengthening the alliance between the US and Hungary, and mentioned strong economic ties, cooperation against terrorism, joint efforts to assist persecuted Christians and a shared faith in the importance of defence and border security as links in that alliance.

SEPT TRADE SURPLUS REVISED DOWN TO EUR 248 M

Hungary’s September trade surplus was revised downwards to 248 million euros in a second reading of data released by the Central Statistical Office (KSH). In the first reading, published on November 11, KSH put the September surplus at 268 million euros. Imports rose by an annual 6.4% in value terms to 8.409 billion euros. Exports were down 2.4% at 8.657 billion euros. The trade surplus was down 720 million euros from the same month a year earlier.

PPI UP ANNUAL 6.4% IN OCT

Industrial producer prices rose by 6.4% in October from the same month a year earlier, the Central Statistical Office (KSH) said. Prices for domestic

sales were up 8.2% while export prices increased by 5.4%. In a month-on-month comparison, industrial producer prices were up 0.6% as domestic prices were up 0.7% and export prices were up 0.6%.

Year-on-year, factory gate prices in the manufacturing sector grew by 5.3% in October. Prices of the transport equipment segment were up 3%, and prices in the computer, electronic and optical products segment were up 4.8%. Prices in the food, beverages and tobacco segment were up 2.4%. Prices in the gas, electricity and steam supply segment rose 13.2%.

In a month-on-month comparison, producer prices in the manufacturing sector were up 0.5%. Prices in the transport equipment segment rose by 0.6%, and prices in the computer, electronic and optical products segment were stable. Prices in the food, beverages and tobacco segment fell 0.2%. Prices in the gas, electricity and steam supply segment were up 1.3%.

In January-October 2018, industrial producer prices increased by an annual 5.6% compared with the same period last year, as domestic prices climbed 5.9% and export prices were up 5.4%.