

PHOTO OF THE DAY



MTV Zsolt Czeglédi

Wall murals on apartment buildings in Kazincbarcika (N Hungary)

UPCOMING EVENTS

Official in charge of ethnic Hungarians abroad holds presser on govt schemes

Hungarian Chamber of Agriculture demonstration against sale of cheap Slovak milk by Penny Market

Monetary Council rate-setting meeting

Stats office preliminary report on demographics in Jan 2019

TOP STORY

KÖVÉR URGES MORE EFFECTIVE EU COOPERATION

Europe can only preserve its role and weight in the world if cooperation within the European Union is made more effective in the future, Speaker of Parliament László Kövér said in Piešťany (Pöstyén), in western Slovakia.

Addressing a joint press conference with his Visegrad Group and Benelux counterparts, Kövér said the EU faced a number of obstacles to improving the effectiveness of cooperation among its member states, adding that there were many disagreements on how to overcome this challenge. He said one possible solution was for EU institutions to “take a more modest approach” to their dealings with member states, emphasising the importance of dialogue.

Slovak House Speaker Andrej Danko said the EU should not be “scared of the V4”, as the grouping was only looking to implement reforms in the bloc. Czech Parliamentary Speaker Radek Vondráček said the meeting was another testament to the strength and raison d’être of the V4. Marek Kuchciński, speaker of the Polish Sejm, said the EU must find a solution to the “crisis of its civilizational values”.

Gusty Graas, speaker of the Benelux parliament, said the stronger the EU was, the stronger its member states could be, adding that this was the reason why a strong European institutional system was needed.

Hungary Matters is an English-language newsletter produced and distributed by the Media Service Support and Asset Management Fund (MTVA) with content provided by Duna Media Service Provider exercises copyright over all content. No part of this publication may be copied, reproduced, redistributed or transmitted without prior written permission from the publisher, with the exception of copies made by individuals for private use, educational purposes or scholarly research, provided that such transmissions do not exceed the extent justified by the purpose and are not aimed at financial gain, even indirectly, and the source name are indicated at all times.

All rights reserved. Enquiries should be made to the English Help Desk at +361 441 9340
For MTI's real time coverage please visit <http://english.mti.hu>, <http://econews.hu>



SZIJJÁRTÓ: HUNGARY WON'T IMPLEMENT UN MIGRATION COMPACT

No matter the pressure, Hungary will not implement any of the United Nations' migration compact's provisions, the foreign minister told parliament. Debates over the issue of migration are not yet over in Brussels, Péter Szijjártó told a plenary session. "A new battle is to begin, this time over secretly drafted pro-migration plans," he said. The Hungarian government will fight this battle, too, the minister said, adding that it will refuse to implement the UN package which he said carried risks to Hungary and the Hungarian people. The government will not allow Hungary to become an immigrant country, Szijjártó said.

TÓTH: SOCIALISTS FIGHTING FOR MORE SOLIDARITY IN EUROPE

The Socialist Party is fighting alongside the "pro-European" forces for more solidarity in Europe, party leader Bertalan Tóth told a press conference he held jointly with Katarina Barley, Germany's justice minister and the top candidate of its SDP party, in Budapest. The Socialist Party's platform – similarly to that of the SDP – is about "a social Europe and social achievements", Tóth said. Both parties support the joint regulation of the European minimum wage and pension, deepening European integration and both want

to ensure that EU funds are spent on improving education, health care and environmental protection, he said. Tóth said the Socialist Party and the SDP have launched a joint campaign to encourage Hungarians living in Germany to vote in the European parliamentary elections. Hungarians living there have until May 17 to register to vote.

Barley said the SDP was working to extend social rights to everyone and strengthen the rule of law in the EU. They also want member states to cooperate with one another on the basis of mutual trust, she added.

ORBÁN MEETS ISRAELI PHILOSOPHER YORAM HAZONY

Prime Minister Viktor Orbán met Israeli philosopher and author Yoram Hazony, head of Jerusalem's Herzl Institute, for informal talks in Budapest. According to information from the prime minister's press office, parties at the talks touched on topical issues of European and global politics, with special regard to "the situation of nation states at a time of endeavours to build empires".

Hazony's book *The Virtue of Nationalism* was selected Conservative Book of the Year for 2018.

LMP PROGRAMME TO FOCUS ON CLIMATE CHANGE

Green opposition LMP's programme for the European parliamentary

election will focus on climate change, proposing measures in energy management, transport and against air pollution in "the greenest programme of Hungarian political history", Gábor Vágó, the top candidate on the party list, told a press conference.

A climate catastrophe is already under way, and constitutes an unprecedented threat to civilisation, Vágó said. Instead of the upgrade of the Paks nuclear plant, the government should invest into clean, cheap and safe energy resources, and decentralise energy production, he said. LMP proposes radical measures to improve air quality, Vágó said. From 2030, the party would only allow electric cars to be rolled out, and would replace discount airlines with high-speed trains, he said. He said LMP would work to synchronise minimum wages across the EU. LMP will do everything in its power to keep Hungary's development funding at the current level, but also to prevent those monies from going to "oligarchs", Vágó said.

Party co-leader Márta Demeter, who ranks second on the party list, said that the present government had become "incapable of representing the country's interests in the EU. Demeter said she would fight for measures to curb financial speculations and for EU regulations to clamp down on "offshore activities". They would also boost the social pillar of the EU, closing the gender wage gap and fighting violence and human trafficking, she said.

PÁRBESZÉD: EP ELECTION OPPORTUNITY TO STOP 'CORNERED FIDESZ'

The upcoming European parliamentary election will pose an opportunity for opposition parties to "stop and suppress [ruling] Fidesz", opposition Párbeszéd MEP Benedek Jávor said, adding that Fidesz was a "cornered and marginalised" party in Europe. He insisted that the opposition parties should aim for the best possible results to prevent Fidesz from "further destroying and undermining the EU".

According to Jávor, Fidesz "has been completely marginalised; its European People's Party membership has been suspended and [Prime Minister] Viktor Orbán's plan to take over the EPP or derail it towards the far right has miscarried". "Fidesz has in fact become a pariah in its own party group and has lost any potential to impact European decision making," he said.

Concerning the new European Parliament, Jávor said that it would need to build a community which can "find its place in the global race, reduce the gaps between members, and effectively monitor the utilisation of EU funds so that they don't go to corrupt oligarchs".

OPPOSITION SUBMITS PROPOSAL FOR HOME-CARE SUBSIDIES

The opposition submitted a joint proposal to parliament to recognise the home care of severely disabled people as full-time employment, the leftist Democratic Coalition (DK) said. The proposal was signed by DK deputy head László Varju, Attila Mesterházy of the Socialists, independent lawmaker Anett Bósz, Párbeszéd co-leader Tímea Szabó and LMP's Péter Ungár, and later joined by Jobbik's Andrea Varga-Damm and LMP's Krisztina Hohn.

The proposal calls on the government to review the law in effect since January 1 regulating the subsidies for carers of severely disabled people, saying it is "discriminative". As of January 1, home caregivers of severely disabled people or those suffering from a debilitating illness are eligible to receive 100,000 forints (EUR 311) per month. At a press conference held in January, Ungár said that the new regulation left several families without subsidies. He argued that under the new system, the carer of a child with mild autism – who is capable of eating on their own or dressing themselves – would not be eligible for support, even though one of the child's parents has to give up their job to care for the child full-time.

Ruling Fidesz said in a statement that "the opposition is hypocritical"

and insisted that the opposition parties had failed to support an earlier government bill concerning home care subsidies. "There wasn't one opposition party interested in the situation of permanently sick children or their parents", the statement said.

CARDINAL ERDŐ PRESENTS IEC2020 PROGRAMME IN ROME

Budapest will host the 52nd International Eucharistic Congress (ICE2020) next year, with a week-long programme focussing on solidarity and friendship between nations, Cardinal Péter Erdő, Archbishop of Esztergom-Budapest, said after presenting the programme in Vatican City. The congress will not be a political event but it will certainly carry a social message, he told MTI.

The congress will open with a celebratory mass in Budapest's Puskás Ferenc Stadium on September 13, to be followed by a series of programmes on the Hungexpo fairgrounds until September 18.

An exhibition will open in Budapest's Műcsarnok art gallery to present the charitable activities of the church. The closing mass will be celebrated by a papal legate on Heroes' Square on September 20, Erdő added.

"Pope Francis has also been invited to the congress and he has not refused the invitation," he said.