

PHOTO OF THE DAY



MTI/Zsolt Czeglédy

Szeged handball team celebrates victory in Hungarian Cup final

UPCOMING EVENTS

EU foreign ministers meet in Luxembourg

Hungarian, Croatian defence ministers meet in Budapest, give presser

Stats offices releases foreign trade figures for Feb 2019

State Opera's presser on new season

TOP STORY

ORBÁN: 'OUR CHRISTIAN CIVILISATION IS AT STAKE' IN EP ELECTIONS

"Our Christian civilisation is at stake in the upcoming European parliamentary elections," the prime minister said, presenting the election programme of his ruling Fidesz party on Friday.

The European parliamentary elections will decide if the European Union has "pro-migration or anti-migration" leaders in future, whether "Europe continues to belong to the Europeans or to masses from another civilisation; whether we can save our Christian, European culture or give up the ground for multiculturalism," Viktor Orbán said in his address. The prime minister said that "discontent with Europe's elite is mostly rooted in their treatment of migration". What Europe is facing is not just a migration crisis but a migration of peoples in the historical sense, he suggested. Europe, he went on to say, could stop massive migration "but it has not even made an attempt; the European Union's incumbent leaders support and encourage migration."

The EP election will be held in Hungary on May 26.

**ORBÁN OUTLINES
FIDESZ'S PLAN TO STOP
IMMIGRATION**

Prime Minister Viktor Orbán on Friday outlined his Fidesz party's programme aimed at stopping immigration.

The first part of the proposal calls for stripping "Brussels bureaucrats" of their power to manage the migration issue and giving that competency back to the European Union's member states. He said no country should be forced to take in migrants against its will and no one should be admitted to the EU without valid documents. The EU should also stop issuing prepaid debit cards and "migrant visas" to migrants, Orbán said. Neither should the bloc give any more money to organisations linked to US financier George Soros, which the prime minister said promoted immigration. Instead, he said, these groups should pay for member states' border protection measures.

Further, no one should face discrimination for identifying as a Christian, Orbán said, adding that EU institutions should have anti-migration leaders. The prime minister said these measures were crucial for stopping immigration and preserving Christian culture, and asked voters to back his party's programme.

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leaders in future, whether "Europe continues to belong to the Europeans or to masses from another civilisation; whether we can save our Christian, European culture or give up the ground for multiculturalism," the prime minister said. Orbán added that "discontent with Europe's elite is mostly rooted in their treatment of migration". What Europe is facing is not just a migration crisis but a migration of peoples in the historical sense, he suggested. Europe, he went on to say, could stop mass migration "but it has not even made an attempt; the European Union's incumbent leaders support and encourage migration."

Orbán criticised Brussels for not focusing enough on family policy, pointing out that at the same time the EU regularly emphasises the importance of legal migration. He said the EU's programme of legal migration was actually a "front" for replacing Europe's population with immigrants.

"We Hungarians have lived here in the Carpathian Basin for a thousand years ... and we want to remain here and preserve our borders for at least another one thousand years," the prime minister said. "We want the next generations, our children and our grandchildren, to be just as free to make decisions about their lives as we are."

Orbán also touched upon the relationship between Fidesz and the European People's Party, saying that "we will decide on our own future, not the European People's Party." Fidesz will wait and see which direction the

EPP will move after the elections, he said, adding that right now it appeared to be heading "left, in a liberal direction towards liberal European empire-building and in the direction of the Europe of immigrants". If this is the direction the EPP is headed, he said, "you can be sure Fidesz won't follow it."

As regards the outgoing European Commission president, Orbán called Jean-Claude Juncker an "authentic socialist" who bore heavy responsibility for Brexit, "the migrant invasion" and the "growing conflict" between central and western Europe.

"There is an error in the appliance of the Brussels elite," he said, adding that there was a "bubble", or "virtual world" in Brussels that refused to accept reality. This was why, Orbán said, it was possible for EPP group leader and Spitzenkandidat Manfred Weber, who he noted was a Roman Catholic Bavarian, to "insult" the Hungarian people. He said this was not unusual from a "Bavarian from Brussels", adding, however, that a "Bavarian from Munich would never do such a thing". Orbán noted that Hungary has been at odds with Brussels on various issues for nine years now, adding that these disputes were always about the Hungarian government's refusal to "do as Brussels dictates" if it believes that something would be against the interests of the Hungarian people.

The prime minister summed up the achievements of the Juncker commission saying "the British are leaving and the immigrants have come in".



Concerning the future of the bloc, Orbán criticised the concept of the “united states of Europe”, which he said was a power ambition of the “Brussels elite” against nation states.

“The European dream is broken,” he said, citing a recent study by the Századvég Foundation, which found that EU citizens no longer believe that future generations will be better off than the current one. Orbán said western Europeans tended to be more pessimistic about the future of the bloc. The majority of Europeans also believe in preserving the continent’s Christian culture and traditions, Orbán said, pointing out that 80 percent of Hungarians share this view. Europeans oppose immigration, he said, adding that European Commission First Vice-President Frans Timmermans, the lead candidate of the European Socialists, on the other hand, was in favour of it. “It’s understandable that Juncker and Timmermans are together all the time,” Orbán said. “The only question is how the EPP’s Manfred Weber can come together with someone like this.” The prime minister called on voters to “show Brussels” in the election that it was the European people, and not the “Soros-affiliated NGOs and Brussels bureaucrats” that had the final say in the EU’s affairs.

OPPOSITION PARTIES BLAST FIDESZ CAMPAIGN LAUNCH

Hungary’s opposition parties on Friday slammed Prime Minister Viktor Orbán’s

speech launching his Fidesz party’s European parliamentary election campaign, accusing Fidesz of being “anti-European” and of ignoring Hungary and Europe’s real problems.

The Socialist Party said that back in 2009, “the first time Fidesz had an EP election programme”, Fidesz had still been a “pro-Europe” party, but had since then become “anti-European”. István Ujhelyi, the party’s MEP, told a press conference that the Socialist-Párbeszéd alliance was offering people a choice between Europe and “Orbanistan”. Párbeszéd’s Bence Tordai said the reason why Orbán was focused on the issue of national sovereignty was because he believed certain EU policies, such as the establishment of a European prosecutor’s office, were against the interests of his party. He said the prime minister was using the issue of migration as a distraction from the emigration of Hungarians.

Péter Jakab of nationalist Jobbik said Orbán’s Fidesz was “Europe’s largest immigration-organising group”, accusing the party of driving Hungarians out of their country in a bid to replace them with economic migrants from outside the EU. On May 26, Hungarians will have to decide whether they want to see western wages or “eastern immigrant workers” in their homeland, he said.

Ferenc Gyurcsány, leader of the leftist Democratic Coalition, said in a Facebook post that out of the challenges facing Europe, Orbán was only focused on migration. “One who

only sees this is a traitor to his country,” Gyurcsány said, adding that the issue of emigration and the problems faced by Hungary’s education and health-care sectors could not be solved with “fearmongering over the no-longer-existent refugee crisis”.

The radical nationalist Mi Hazánk Movement party criticised Orbán for failing to urge the levelling of wages between the older and newer EU member states. In a statement, party leader Laszlo Toroczka said Orbán had also failed to mention that Hungary’s demographic challenges were further exacerbated by the “problem of Hungarian-Gypsy coexistence”.

SZIJJÁRTÓ: HUNGARY SHOULD BE PROUD OF HAVING REJECTED UN MIGRATION COMPACT

Hungary should be proud that it rejected the United Nations’ migration compact, Foreign Minister Péter Szijjártó said on Friday, adding, at the same time, that “the battle is not yet over”.

Addressing the official unveiling of ruling Fidesz’s European parliamentary election programme, Szijjártó said it had now become “clear” that the inflow of illegal migrants faced by Europe in 2015 had been “part of a well-conceived plan” to organise a “global population exchange”.

He said international organisations like the United Nations also had parts to play in the plan, adding that the UN’s role had been to

legalise illegal migration through its global migration compact. Though Hungary rejected the compact, Brussels “will do everything it can” to make the document mandatory for the European Union’s member states “and decide in our place whom we should allow in and whom we should live together with”, Sziijártó said.

“We won’t allow this,” the minister said, adding that this was what voters needed to make clear in the EP elections.

FIDESZ STARTS SIGNATURE DRIVE

Governing Fidesz on Saturday launched a country-wide signature drive to support Prime Minister Viktor Orbán’s seven-point programme to stop immigration. Fidesz communications director Balázs Hidvéghi said more than 20,000 activists started collecting signatures on Saturday and speaking to people about Europe, Hungary and what is at stake in the European Parliament elections. Speaking at a campaign booth at a district market in the capital, he stressed the importance of stopping a European immigration policy that endangers Europe, European nations and European cultures.

“Hungary comes first for us, in Brussels, too,” he said. Fidesz represents the nations of Europe which defend the people of Europe, he added.

SOCIALISTS-PÁRBESZÉD LAUNCHES BILLBOARD CAMPAIGN

The opposition Socialist-Párbeszéd party alliance on Saturday launched a billboard campaign highlighting their programme for a “social Europe” and will start collecting signatures on Monday for the EP elections, Socialist chairman Bertalan Tóth said at a press conference on Saturday.

Tóth noted that the Socialists and Párbeszéd were the only ones to put forward a joint opposition list of EP candidates on the first day of the campaign.

The candidates will be advertised on 300 billboards and 200 kiosks around the country, he said. The programme the parties are running with, “Homeland, Love, Europe!”, is about representing Hungarian interests, and about wanting to work together with the peoples of Europe rather than opposing the EU, he added. He said the parties are pressing for a social Europe, for a common EU minimum wage, minimum pension and minimum subsidy for children. He added that the parties do not believe in a Europe of nation states, in which populist, far-right leaning powers try to preserve their power by dismantling the European system of checks and balances.

Tóth said more common rules are necessary to ensure that the livelihoods and standard of living

of European citizens, among them Hungarian citizens, improve.

LMP FOR EUROPE OF PEOPLE, NOT MULTINATIONALS

Opposition LMP wants to build a Europe of people to replace the Europe of multinational companies, party co-leader Márta Demeter said at a press conference on Saturday, the official start of the EP election campaign. Multinationals have basically “taken over countries, taken over politics and people, too” in the pursuit of profit, Demeter said.

She said LMP wants to prevent a reduction in EU funding for Hungary, and it will fight to see that Hungarian SMEs, not multinationals, get support. The party is also calling for the introduction of a European minimum wage, Demeter added. EU funding must also be used for projects that ensure clean air and water as well as sustainable waste management, she said.

LMP wants a green, sustainable and safe Europe, Demeter said.

PÁRBESZÉD CONGRESS APPROVES PACT WITH SOCIALISTS

A congress of opposition Párbeszéd unanimously approved on Sunday a pact with the opposition Socialists on putting Párbeszéd MEP Benedek Jávor in the fourth spot on their joint list of candidates for the European

Parliament elections in May. At a press conference after the congress, Jávör said Párbeszéd's and the Socialists' campaign would "leave no stone unturned". Activists will be everywhere convincing people that the fate of Hungary depends on the degree of support the opposition wins in the elections on May 26, he added. He said governing Fidesz has stopped representing the interests of Hungary in Europe and is only seeking conflict.

Socialists chairman Bertalan Tóth, welcomed the decision of the Párbeszéd congress and noted that the Socialists' party leadership had decided on Sunday to partner with Párbeszéd in the autumn local council elections, too.

FOREIGN MINISTRY SUMMONS UKRAINIAN AMBASSADOR OVER KELEMEN ENTRY BAN

Hungary's foreign ministry has summoned the Ukrainian ambassador to a meeting on Monday to address the ban on entry to Ukraine of Hunor Kelemen, the leader of Romania's ethnic Hungarian RMDSZ party, the

ministry's state secretary said. Kelemen said in a social media post Saturday that he was banned from entering Ukraine for a period of one-and-a-half years, without explanation, on his way to attend the 30th anniversary of Ukraine's Transcarpathian Hungarian Cultural Association (KMKSZ) in Uzhhorod.

Foreign Ministry state secretary Tamás Menczer told MTI that the entry ban was "unacceptable" and "anti-Hungarian".

Kelemen told MTI by phone that he had been travelling with a Romanian diplomatic passport. He said he had informed the Romanian foreign minister of the matter and would complain and seek an explanation at the Ukrainian embassy in Bucharest on Monday.

VARGA SAYS BIGGER EU BUDGET IS CONDITION FOR SEPARATE EURO-ZONE BUDGET

Hungary can only support a separate euro-zone budget if the European Union's Multiannual Financial Framework -- the seven-

year framework for its budget -- increases, or if euro-zone members' contributions grow, Finance Minister Mihály Varga said at an extended informal meeting of euro-zone finance ministers in Bucharest on Friday. Establishing a separate euro-zone budget cannot come at the expense of existing European Union policies and frameworks, Varga said in a statement issued by his ministry.

Euro-zone finance ministers hammered out details of the euro-zone budget at the meeting, focusing on executive and decision-making elements ahead of a June deadline for agreeing on the basics of the budget. Varga said there should be no overlap between the goals of the euro-zone budget and the existing policies and goals of the EU-27. Solutions that result in the establishment of parallel goals and frameworks must be excluded in the course of talks, he added. He stressed the importance to Hungary of assuring equal treatment and a level playing field in the course of the deepening of the economic and monetary union in the EU.