

## PHOTO OF THE DAY



MTI/Zsolt Czeglédi

International Romani Day marked in Debrecen

## UPCOMING EVENTS

**Stats office releases March CPI data**

**PM Orbán addresses inauguration of Avicenna Institute of Middle Eastern Studies**

**Hungary PACE delegation organises roundtable on language rights in Ukraine**

**NBH presents 2017 survey of household assets**

## TOP STORY

### ‘EC PRESSURE INCREASES MIGRATION RISK’

Risks around migration are further aggravated by “strong pressure” by the European Commission “to promote the migration process”, Foreign Minister Péter Szijjártó said in Luxembourg.

“An uncertain situation in Afghanistan and developments in Libya pose a serious risk of migration,” Szijjártó told journalists after meeting his EU counterparts. European Commissioner Dimitris Avramopoulos, who is in charge of the community’s migration policy, “aims to legalise migration rather than stopping it,” he said, adding that the commissioner’s measures “are exclusively aimed at bringing more and more migrants to Europe.” If the EC sticks to its current stance on migration, then the situation in Libya and Afghanistan, coupled with the situation of the large numbers of migrants stranded along the Western Balkan route and in Greece, could generate more mass migration waves towards Europe, Szijjártó said, adding that the EU wanted to use the UN global migration compact as a pretext to legalise migration. The European Commission’s messaging regarding the document, he said, was that more and more migrants should be brought to Europe. This is “unacceptable” for Hungary, he said, adding that it would mean Europe giving up its identity.

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## **SZIJJÁRTÓ ON UKRAINE: NO HOPE OF PROGRESS WITH INCUMBENTS**

On the subject of Ukraine and its language and minority education laws, Foreign Minister Péter Szijjártó said there was “no hope for progress under the current administration”. He slammed the Ukrainian authorities for not allowing Hunor Kelemen, leader of Romania’s ethnic Hungarian RMDSZ party, to enter the country on Saturday for the 30th anniversary celebration of the founding of the Transcarpathian Hungarian Cultural Association (KMKSZ), calling the move “a provocation”. “The move is a provocation of Hungarians and Romanians, which is no accident, because it was the Romanian and Hungarian governments that stood up most firmly in the interest of protecting Ukraine’s national minorities,” he said. Szijjártó voiced hope that after Ukraine’s presidential election, Hungary’s “pro-Ukrainian government” would be met by a “pro-Hungarian administration” in its north-eastern neighbour.

The foreign ministry on Monday summoned the Ukrainian ambassador to Hungary concerning Ukraine’s decision to ban a Romanian-Hungarian leader from entering the country. In a statement protesting against “yet another anti-Hungarian provocation”, the ministry said Ukraine’s “constant anti-Hungarian measures are unacceptable”. Ukraine’s

leaders “consider Hungarians as enemies, which is outrageous and unacceptable,” the statement said. “Despite Ukraine’s dishonest measures” the Hungarian government is providing humanitarian aid to the country, it added.

Kelemen, head of Romania’s ethnic Hungarian RMDSZ party, said on Saturday that he had been banned from entering Ukraine for 18 months. He was on his way to Uzhhorod (Ungvár) to attend a ceremony marking the 30th anniversary of ethnic Hungarian organisation KMKSZ, when he was stopped at the border and denied entry without an explanation.

## **KOVÁCS IN LONDON: MANY STILL EXPECT ‘EUROPE- WIDE’ SOLUTIONS TO MIGRATION CRISIS**

The government’s communications chief Zoltán Kovács said in London that many people still awaited a “Europe-wide” solution to the migration crisis almost four years after it had begun. But no such solution is on the horizon and in any case a Europe-wide response would be ineffective given the realities, the state secretary for international communications and relations of the Prime Minister’s Office told journalists and analysts at the Hungarian embassy. EU member states, however, are making genuine and successful efforts to handle migration, he added.

Hungary has set an example, he said, referring to heightened efforts

to control the border. Italy, he added, had recently started to catch up. “This means if you have the political will, and political sense prevails, you can find a solution,” Kovács said.

He emphasised that Hungary was not the first country to take such measures, citing Britain’s similar steps in Calais and France’s in north Africa, among others.

Meanwhile, on the subject of the ruling Fidesz party’s situation within the European People’s Party, Kovács said Fidesz had freely joined the grouping and so no one had the right to suspend or exclude it. Fidesz itself had decided to suspend its EPP membership, he insisted. The government official said the EPP was moving leftwards and towards the liberals. Proof of this was EPP votes in favour of the Sargentini report critical of Hungary. He said this stance was especially the case when it came to the grouping’s Scandinavian and western European members. Fidesz, he said, was determined to follow in the footsteps of the EPP founders and continue espousing Christian-Democratic right-wing values. Kovács said criticisms of the government were tied to Hungary’s stance on migration and its unequivocal expression of it.

## **HUNGARY OPENS DIPLOMATIC MISSION IN LUXEMBOURG**

Foreign Minister Peter Szijjártó opened Hungary’s diplomatic mission in Luxembourg. Speaking

at the official opening of what is the Luxembourg office of the Hungarian embassy in Brussels, Szijjártó said the new mission, which will also handle consular duties, will be open to Luxembourg's 2,000-strong Hungarian community as well as Hungarians living in nearby parts of Belgium and Germany wishing to take care of consular matters. "The time has come to correct our predecessors' mistake of closing Hungarian foreign missions ten years ago," the minister said. Hungary believes foreign representation requires a personal presence in order to be effective, he said.

Trade between Hungary and Luxembourg "broke all previous records" last year, Szijjártó said, noting that Hungarian exports to the country rose by 28% to 100 million euros. Luxembourg firms present in Hungary are also continuously expanding their capacities, he said. Among them are a glass factory in Orosháza, in south-eastern Hungary, and cargo carrier Cargolux, which will now operate six flights a week to and from Budapest, Szijjártó added. Also, one of the low-cost airlines will launch a direct flight between Luxembourg and Budapest in October, he said.

Szijjártó noted that the Luxembourg office is Hungary's fourth diplomatic mission to open this year, following the ones in Miami, Wrocław and Jerusalem. The Hungarian government plans to open twenty similar missions in the coming period, he added.

Jean Asselborn, Luxembourg's foreign minister, said at the ceremony that Britain's planned exit from the European Union had demonstrated the need for unity and bilateral relations within the bloc. He said the Benelux states and the Visegrad Group comprising Hungary, the Czech Republic, Poland and Slovakia were capable of working together to overcome their challenges.

### **HUNGARY, CROATIA TO EXPAND DEFENCE COOPERATION**

The defence ministers of Hungary and Croatia discussed plans to expand defence cooperation in Budapest. Tibor Benkő of Hungary and Damir Krstičević of Croatia signed inter-governmental agreements on air policing and setting up a central European multinational division. Both ministers praised bilateral defence cooperation and stressed their common responsibility "for the security of European peoples". Benkő said that as both countries are NATO members, the agreements signed would help intensify NATO's air defence capabilities. Krstičević said the air policing agreement will enable the two countries to defend one another's air space without special diplomatic permission or government consent.

The two ministers also coordinated a planned multinational military exercise to be held in Hungary from April 25 to June 10.

### **END-MARCH BUDGET DEFICIT REACHES 14.2% / FY TARGET**

Hungary's budget, excluding local councils, ran a 141.9 billion forint (EUR 441.3m) deficit at the end of March, the finance ministry said in a preliminary reading of data. The deficit reached 14.2% of the 998.4 billion forint target for the full year.

### **HUNGARY TRADE SURPLUS GROWS TO EUR 891 M IN FEBRUARY**

Hungary had an 891 million euros trade surplus in February, widening by 49 million euros from the same period a year earlier, a first reading of data released by the Central Statistical Office (KSH) shows. Exports rose by 6.9% year on year to 9.117 billion euros during the period. Imports increased by 7.0% to 8.226 billion. Trade with other European Union member states accounted for 82% of exports and 76% of imports.

Takarékbank analyst Gergely Suppan said the full-year trade surplus would come to 5.2 billion euros, down from 5.6 billion in 2018. Erste Bank junior analyst Zsombor Varga attributed the February rebound to the recovery of the industrial sector. For the full year, Varga forecast a trade surplus of 4.0 to 4.5 billion euros. In 2020, the surplus could start widening again thanks to new export capacities, the analyst added.

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## **AERINX INNOVATION HIGHLIGHTED AT MRO AMERICAS**

AerinX, a Hungarian startup that is developing a better process for inspecting aircraft surfaces, is among industry innovators being showcased at Aviation Week MRO Americas. Some 15,000 representatives of 800 companies are participating at the aircraft maintenance, repair and overhaul conference in Atlanta, Georgia, on April 9-11. AerinX signed a 250 million forint funding agreement with X-Ventures Gamma Venture Capital Fund late last year. It also signed a strategic cooperation agreement with Aeroplex of Central Europe, one of the biggest aircraft maintenance companies in the CEE region.

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## **LISZT FERENC PASSENGER NUMBERS RISE 5.7% IN Q1**

Passenger numbers at Liszt Ferenc International increased by 5.7% to 3.1 million in the first quarter from the same period a year earlier, data from aviation market intelligence provider CAPA shows. Passenger growth slowed from 17% in Q1 2017. Liszt Ferenc operator Budapest Airport earlier said it expects passenger numbers to increase 5-10% this year.

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## **MAGYAR KÖZÚT SIGNS COOP AGREEMENT WITH AUSTRIAN, SLOVENIAN PEERS**

Hungary's state-owned road maintenance company Magyar Közút Nonprofit said it signed a cooperation agreement with the motorway companies of Austria and Slovenia to coordinate preparations for the appearance of autonomous vehicles. Professionals participating in the project will share experiences and coordinate efforts, focusing on areas such as traffic regulation, communication technology solutions and creating the regulatory environment for vehicle testing.

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## **HUNGARY GUEST OF HONOUR AT CHINA TRADE FAIR**

Hungary is guest of honour at the 13th China Henan Investment and Trade Fair which runs between April 8 and 11 in Zhengzhou, the centre of China's Henan province. István Joó, deputy state secretary of the foreign ministry and leader of the Hungarian delegation to the fair, told MTI by phone that the Hungarian exhibition will focus on

showcasing Hungarian innovation and the economic environment offered to investors. The pavilion will also offer Hungarian wines, food and champagne specialties, he said. The fair is expected to draw some 20,000 visitors from 89 countries.

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## **BUDAPEST TO ERECT STATUE OF 'MIGHTY MAGYAR' SÁNDOR KOCSIS**

The city of Budapest will erect a statute in tribute to footballer Sándor Kocsis, a prolific scorer of Hungary's legendary Golden Team in the 1950s, Mayor Istvan Tarlós said, marking the 90th anniversary of his birth. As Kocsis originally played for Ferencváros, the statue will be set up near Groupama Arena, the club's home, Tarlós said. Citing his personal memories, the mayor said that Kocsis had been his favourite player. "The game was everything [for him] and he never complained or faked injury." An Olympic champion and world championship silver medalist, Kocsis scored 75 goals in 68 appearances for Hungary, producing the highest all-time average of 1.103 goals/game. He finished the 1954 World Cup as top goalscorer, scoring 11 goals including two hat tricks.