

PHOTO OF THE DAY



MTI/Zoltán Balogh

Students at their school leaving ceremony in central Budapest

UPCOMING EVENTS

Moody's assesses Hungary's credit rating

National Association of Large Families holds 'baby shower' event

Event marking 71 years of Israel's independence

EP election campaign events

TOP STORY

ORBÁN: SALVINI STOPPED MIGRATION

Matteo Salvini has succeeded in stopping migration at sea while Hungary has stopped it on land, Prime Minister Viktor Orbán said in a public radio interview on Friday.

The Italian deputy PM "has put the last nail in the coffin of pro-migration politicians," Orbán told Kossuth Radio in connection with the Liga leader's visit to Hungary the previous day. Orbán said Salvini, who is also Italy's interior minister, had proven that pro-migration politicians were "lying" when they said migration was impossible to stop. Ever since Salvini banned ships carrying migrants from docking in Italy, the number of drowned migrants has dropped dramatically because they have not set off in the first place, he added.

Orbán said certain European leaders easily resorted to derogatory name-calling when talking about other leaders, neglecting that this disrespected not only the individuals concerned but their voters too. He slammed German criticism of Salvini's visit and an opposition Hungarian politician who had blasted the Italian deputy PM. Anyone who insults Salvini, a representative of the Italian people, also insults Italians, he added.

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PRO- OR ANTI-MIGRATION STANCE KEY ISSUE IN EP ELECTION

Commenting on the EP elections, Prime Minister Viktor Orbán said the question of who ends up heading the European Commission and Council was more important than party affiliation. "What matters is whether they are pro-migration or anti-migration," he told public radio in an interview. He asked Hungarian voters to support Fidesz-Christian Democrats because this would be the best way to help anti-migration politicians advance to the most important positions. Commenting on migrant quotas, Orbán said Germans now wanted to rid themselves of people whom they had "sheepishly" let in. "While they argue that it is an expression of humanity, they are only showing a simple anti-migrant reflex." Orbán added that Hungary insisted on repatriating migrants and helping them in their homeland instead of redistributing them in Europe. When asked to comment on French President Emmanuel Macron's proposal to exclude countries from Schengen that refuse to participate in migrant distribution, Orbán said if Macron wanted to deviate from Schengen rules, he would first have to change the treaty. "My message to him is that such an attempt would fail."

In connection with last week's international forum of China's Belt and Road initiative, Orbán said that China's

rise presented a huge opportunity. The plan for air, road and rail connections between Europe and Asia is a global undertaking of historic proportions, he said. Addressing criticism from western Europe, he said Germany and France so far had taken the lion's share of trade with China, with the latter having sold 300 aircraft to China. No one has any business lecturing Hungary about trading with the East, he added. Commenting on the Budapest-Belgrade rail line, he said the return on investment would depend on the amount of goods transported. "The more we take part in building the Silk Road, the faster the return on investment will be."

Meanwhile, Orbán also spoke about his impending visit to Washington, DC, on May 13. He said talks with US President Donald Trump would cover "money, migration and the economy". Orbán said the US and Hungary shared the same standpoint on migration and belonged to a group within the UN that wants to stop international efforts to make migration a global phenomenon. "So a big issue in the talks will be how we can work together in the future to fight migration in international forums." Economic issues will also be on the agenda, he added, since economic bilateral ties are developing "very well".

SALVINI: EP ELECTIONS 'DAY OF AWAKENING'

The European parliamentary elections will be a "day of awakening" for the

nations of the European Union, Italian Deputy Prime Minister Matteo Salvini told Hungarian public television. During the day, Salvini had talks with Prime Minister Viktor Orbán and Interior Minister Sándor Pintér. In an interview with current affairs channel M1 broadcast late on Thursday, Salvini said "uncontrolled migration" only brought about "a cheap work force for slaveholders and votes for the left". Practices in Canada, Australia and the US show that controlled migration is the only possibility, he said. Europe needs to be able to protect its borders, Salvini said. He insisted that the continent's Christian roots were already endangered and "Europe will turn into an Islamic caliphate if we do not act". Since his government started protecting Italy's maritime borders, illegal landings have fallen by 93% and the number of disappearances and deaths have halved, he said.

POLL - FIDESZ-CHRISTIAN DEMOCRATS FURTHER INCREASE SUPPORT

The ruling Fidesz-Christian Democrats increased their support among decided voters to 57% in April, pollster Nézőpont Institute said in a representative survey of 5,000 people conducted in person between April 1 and 26. The poll showed a 1 percentage point increase compared with March and a 10 percentage point increase on the ruling party lists in last April's general election, Nézőpont said. Support for the opposition Jobbik and

Socialists-Párbeszéd parties shrank within the margin of error from March, from 12% to 11% in the case of Jobbik, and from 11% to 10% in the case of Socialists-Párbeszéd.

Nézőpont Institute projected that two-thirds of Hungarian mandates, or 14 seats, would be secured by Fidesz-Christian Democrats if the European Parliament elections were held this Sunday. As a result, they would be able to delegate two more politicians to the EP than they currently have. Jobbik and Socialists-Párbeszéd could expect to have two MEPs each.

The Democratic Coalition was the winner of the month, by increasing support from 6% in March to 8% in April, the pollster said. They could delegate two politicians to the EP if the elections were held this Sunday. Momentum and LMP swapped places compared with March. The former increased support by 1 percentage point to 5 % and the latter lost 1 percentage point, dropping to 4%. As a result, they would each be able to delegate one MEP. The satirical Two-tailed Dog party received 3% and radical nationalist Mi Hazánk 2% among decided voters, according to the April poll.

Among all voters, support for Fidesz-Christian Democrats stood at 42%, for

Jobbik and Socialists-Párbeszéd at 7% each, for Democratic Coalition at 4%, for LMP at 3%, for Momentum and Two-tailed Dog at 2% each and for Mi Hazánk at 1%, the statement showed.

SZIJJÁRTÓ: EUROPE'S SECURITY BEGINS IN TURKEY

Without adherence to the agreement between the European Union and Turkey on migration, Europe would be facing serious migration pressure from the south, Foreign Minister Péter Szijjártó said on Friday, adding that "Europe's security today begins in Turkey." At a joint press conference after talks with his Turkish counterpart Mevlüt Çavuşoğlu in Budapest, Szijjártó said Hungary saw Turkey as a strategic ally and friend. Szijjártó expressed Hungary's appreciation for the role Turkey has played in guaranteeing Europe's security. He said it was in large part thanks to Turkey that "the 30-35 million people in Europe's neighbourhood who are in a position to set off for the continent at any time have not yet done so". Çavuşoğlu said there were countries criticising Turkey when they should be focusing on more important issues, such as immigration and fighting terrorism.

CONVERGENCE PROGRAMME TARGETS STEADY GROWTH OF AROUND 4%

Hungary's economy is likely to continue growing by around 4% in the coming years, according to the country's latest annual Convergence Programme posted on the website of the European Commission. The programme targets an annual GDP growth of 4% in 2019 and 2020, 4.1% in 2021, 4.2% in 2022 and 4% in 2023. The projections for 2019-2022 vary no more than 0.1 %age point from those in the previous year's convergence report. Household consumption is seen increasing by 4.6% in 2019, by 4.7% in 2020, by 4.6% in 2021, by 4.005% in 2022 and by 4.5% in 2023. Gross fixed capital formation is set to grow by 10.3% in 2019 before slowing to 3.8% in 2020, to 3.5% in 2021, 4.6% in 2022 and to 3.1% in 2023. The programme projects inflation, harmonised for better comparison with other European Union member states, averaging 2.7% in 2019 and 2.8% in 2020, before levelling out at the National Bank of Hungary's mid-term 3% target in 2021-2023.