

PHOTO OF THE DAY



Mayor István Tarlós and Israeli Deputy Foreign Minister Tzipi Hotovely at the naming of Jerusalem Park in Budapest

UPCOMING EVENTS

Orbán meets Austrian Vice Chancellor Hans-Christian Strache

Joint opposition presser on education

Stats office releases Q1 construction, March retail data

Launch of "Bike to work" campaign

TOP STORY

ORBÁN, TRUMP MEETING OPPORTUNITY TO COORDINATE

An upcoming meeting between Prime Minister Viktor Orbán and US President Donald Trump will provide an excellent opportunity to coordinate the countries' steps against migration in international forums, Foreign Minister Péter Szijjártó said.

At the meeting on May 13 in Washington, DC, Orbán and Trump will also discuss bilateral political, economic and defence cooperation, Szijjártó said. He told Kossuth Radio that the US president and the Hungarian government share a strong position against migration. This is why Hungary defends its own borders, as does the United States, he added.

Szijjártó said the US president and the Hungarian government have similar stances on a number of global dilemmas, because both sides put national interests first and consider the security of their own citizens a priority as well as protecting Christian values and the products of Christian culture. He noted that the US and Hungary were among six countries to reject the UN's compact on migration.

Regarding the May 26 European parliamentary elections, he expressed hope that European citizens will place the continent's future in the hands of politicians representing national interests and not "those of Brussels bureaucrats". At stake is whether the political forces winning the EP will be for or against migration, Szijjártó said.

ORBÁN: TURKEY KEY IN PROTECTION OF BORDERS AGAINST MIGRATION

Hungarian Prime Minister Viktor Orbán called Turkey key in protecting the European Union's borders against migration, after receiving Foreign Minister Mevlüt Çavuşoğlu in his office in Budapest. At the talks, Orbán and Çavuşoğlu praised the development of their countries' ties and underlined their importance in the areas of policy, the economy and culture. Turkey is an important partner for Hungary: bilateral trade grew 5% to 3.1 billion dollars in 2018, and there is still much potential for economic cooperation, the ministers said at the talks. They agreed to boost the work of the Hungarian-Turkish economic mixed committee and council for strategic cooperation.

FIDESZ USES SUSPECTED TERRORIST CAUGHT IN HUNGARY AS CASE AGAINST PRO-MIGRATION POLICY

Governing Fidesz has launched a campaign video that uses the case of a suspected terrorist leader recently arrested in Hungary as an argument for stopping the current pro-migration policy of Brussels, the party's communications director said.

Balázs Hidvéghi said the Syrian, identified only as Hassan F, is suspected of being one of the Islamic

State's terrorist leaders. Hassan F was not only allowed into Europe, but was given refugee status and a topped up bank card for assistance, he added. "Brussels transferred money to a terrorist using a migrant card on a monthly basis," he said. Fidesz made the campaign video to convince as many people as possible that Brussels' pro-migration policy must be stopped, because illegal migration and terrorism go hand in hand, Hidvéghi said. He said that policy had allowed a man suspected of killing 20 people and making suicide vests an easy way into Europe.

SOCIALISTS DRAFT PROGRAMME AGAINST RUSSIAN INFLUENCE IN HUNGARY

The opposition Socialists are drafting a programme to combat Russian influence in Hungary, Socialist MEP candidate Barnabás Mester said at a press conference. Mester said state institutions, "in the manner of traitors", are doing nothing to fight Russian influence, thus the task falls to the opposition. The Socialists will launch research together with international institutions on Russian influence and then publish the results, he said. He said the relocation of the headquarters of the International Investment Bank (IIB), which he called "Putin's Trojan horse", from Moscow to Budapest is an example of Russian influence in Hungary.

SOCIALISTS CALL FOR FAMILY-FRIENDLY POLICIES

The Socialists' programme for the European parliamentary elections features measures such as a European minimum wage and minimum pension, and the construction of European social rented housing to ensure a future where all Hungarian children can be born into happy families, István Ujhelyi, a joint Socialist-Párbeszéd candidate for MEP, said. Currently, one in six Hungarian children is born to parents who have emigrated to western Europe, Ujhelyi said. The alliance's programme therefore makes demands of the Hungarian government and the EU to draw those families back to Hungary, he said. Ujhelyi said it is the experience today of hundreds of thousands of Hungarian families that the "elitist, right-wing, nationalist government" only supports its cronies and the elite of society.

Párbeszéd co-leader Tímea Szabó criticised government subsidies for credit and new cars, saying that "enticement into a trap of debt will not produce more births in Hungary", but only create "another tragedy". She said a package of Socialist-Párbeszéd bills earlier submitted to lawmakers could improve the "catastrophic" demographic situation of the country by doubling family allowances, expanding social rented housing, closing the gender pay gap, boosting job security for women and adding more places in creches.

LMP: MAY BALLOT LAST TO BRING RESULTS ON CLIMATE CHANGE

The May 26 European parliamentary elections will be the last that may result in stopping climate change, the top candidate of green opposition LMP told a press conference held jointly with Bas Eickhout, the Spitzenkandidat of the European Greens.

Hungary is especially vulnerable to climate change, Gábor Vágó said. Average world temperatures have risen by 1 degree Celsius, he said. In Hungary, the rise was 1.5 degrees. The consequences are showing in rising vegetable prices and this year's drought, he said.

Regarding the upgrade of Hungary's sole nuclear power plant in Paks, Vágó said that with a large enough number of opponents in the European Parliament the implementation of the project could be stopped. Large corporations, "the climate criminals" responsible for releasing about two-thirds of greenhouse gases, should also be confronted instead of private citizens bearing the brunt of the burdens of climate change, he said.

Eickhout said he came to Hungary for a second time during the campaign to promote green politics in the country. Several EU member states would do more to combat climate change but the incumbent Hungarian government kept blocking joint action, he said. The Dutch politician called for changes in farming, transport and energy management.

LMP URGES GREATER FOCUS ON ELDERLY CARE

The green opposition LMP is calling on the government to pay more heed to and devote more resources to caring for the elderly, LMP lawmaker Péter Ungár said. State retirement homes are struggling with a capacity shortage, Ungár said: the elderly have to wait 4-5 years for a spot in such homes, and the situation will only grow worse as the population ages. LMP is pressing the government to increase spots in state, rather than church-run, retirement homes, by at least 50% in the coming five years, he said. He said the state subsidy for caring for the elderly at home ought to be raised to 100,000 forints (EUR 309) per month from 38,000-58,000 forints at present as an initial step, then to a level that matches the minimum wage, following the example of the allowance for home care of children living with disabilities.

DK CALLS ON GOVT TO PREVENT VOTER FRAUD

The opposition Democratic Coalition (DK) is pressing the government to take steps to prevent voter fraud by dual citizens, MEP candidate Sándor Rónai said. Casting votes by mail presents a great opportunity for voter fraud, adding that DK expects the government to scrutinise those votes, he said.

He noted, as a matter of concern, that 30,000 more dual citizens residing in countries outside of the European

Union had registered to vote in the European Parliament elections on May 26 than had registered to vote in Hungary's general election last spring. Rónai suggested the government had not addressed this issue because it hopes to get more of these votes. "European Hungarians will not stand for fraudulent intervention in elections by [ruling] Fidesz this year, too," he added.

MI HAZÁNK: FAMILY-FRIENDLY UNI, EMPLOYMENT POLICY KEY TO BOOSTING BIRTH RATE

The radical nationalist Mi Hazánk (Our Homeland) party believes family-friendly higher education and employment policies are necessary to raise the birth rate in Hungary, the party's deputy leader said.

Dóra Dúró argued that the biggest reason for Hungary's "catastrophic" demographic situation is that women are going to university en masse and put off having children. She also said that the government should support atypical employment, such as working part time or remotely, with tax preferences. Dúró acknowledged government measures to improve the demographic situation, but said these were unsuccessful. She noted that the birth rate had risen from 1.27 in 2010 to just 1.48 in 2018. She said that balancing a paying job with raising children is the biggest thing preventing women from having children, and that taking a paying job is only conceivable with one or

two children. Dúró said Mi Hazánk would discourage “having children as a matter of livelihood”, a practice the party believes is notable foremost among Roma families, and would make holding a job a condition for child support after the birth of a third child. Sustaining a large family without a family member working is inconceivable, she said.

HUNGARY RATING NOT UPDATED - MOODY'S

Moody's Investors Service did not update Hungary's sovereign rating on Friday, although it was scheduled for a review. At the previous review, on November 23, 2018, Moody's left the rating unchanged at Baa3 - one notch over the investment grade threshold - with a stable outlook. S&P Global Ratings and Fitch both upgraded Hungary to 'BBB', two notches over the investment grade threshold, in February.

OVER 10,000 HUNGARIANS TO VOTE AT EMBASSIES AND CONSULATES

Over 10,000 Hungarians have already registered to vote abroad,

at an embassy or consulate, in the May 26 European parliamentary elections. Of the 10,357 registered, 946 Hungarians will vote in London, 763 in Brussels and 586 in Munich. By law, Hungarian residents wanting to vote abroad cannot vote by mail, only at an embassy or a consulate. The deadline to register for voting at one of the 132 Hungarian diplomatic missions is May 17.

HUNGARIANS COLLECT DONATIONS FOR KOLPING HOUSE IN ALEPPO

The Hungarian Kolping Association, part of an international Catholic charity, presented 10,000,000 forints (EUR 30,000) in donations it collected to set up an assistance centre for children and families in the war-torn Syrian city of Aleppo to the head of the Hungary Helps Program, a government initiative to aid persecuted Christians around the world. Tristan Azbej, who heads the Hungary Helps Program, said the Kolping House would help traumatised children and families in crisis. “This donation shows that Hungary Helps is a programme of Hungarian solidarity and much more

than just a government initiative,” he added. The Kolping Association, which also runs community centres for families and children in Hungary, has offered to send its own experts to Aleppo to run the centre there. They also count on the cooperation of the local Melkite Greek Catholic Church.

2002 POLISH BUS CRASH VICTIMS COMMEMORATED IN W HUNGARY

A Polish-Hungarian mass was held in a local church in Balatonszentgyörgy, western Hungary, to commemorate the victims of a Polish bus crash in the summer of 2002. Twenty people died and 31 were injured when the bus carrying Polish pilgrims overturned on a roundabout between the towns of Balatonszentgyörgy and Balatonkeresztúr on July 1. The mass in the Szent György church in Balatonszentgyörgy was attended by Miklós Soltész, state secretary in charge of church relations at the prime minister's office, top officials of Hungary's Polish self-government, survivors of the accident and relatives of the victims.