

PHOTO OF THE DAY



State Folk Dance Ensemble's new show in Palace of Arts

UPCOMING EVENTS

National Election Committee meets

EP election campaign events

Europe Day events in Budapest

**12th Intl AVENTICS Pneumobil
Competition in Eger**

TOP STORY

ORBÁN FOR BOLSTERING C EUROPEAN COOPERATION

The prime minister said that Hungary is working to strengthen cooperation in central Europe, adding that “all that cooperate with the Hungarians” will benefit.

Addressing the opening of a fodder plant built by UBM Feed Romania in Sanpaul (Kerelőszentpál), Viktor Orbán said that Hungary has developed an excellent economic cooperation with Serbia and Slovakia. “The lag in Hungary-Romania ties could also be fixed,” he added.

“Central Europe is made up of nations and the realisation can no longer be delayed that these peoples have a shared destiny, they are linked by shared interests and they must choose the way of cooperation,” Orbán said. He called for more infrastructural links, motorways and railway services, between Hungary and Romania, and said that talks with the Romanian government were under way. A high-speed railway is needed between the two capitals, which would also provide economic benefits for Cluj-Napoca (Kolozsvár), he said.

Referring to the importance of the upcoming EP elections, Orbán said the region needed European leaders and deputies who “will stand up for Hungarian, Romanian and central European interests”. Closing his speech, the prime minister encouraged voters to cast their ballot and “be a part of Europe and use its opportunities”.

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.

SZIJJÁRTÓ: TIMMERMANS MUST TAKE RESPONSIBILITY FOR MIGRATION

European Commission First Vice-President Frans Timmermans must take responsibility for the influx of more than 1.5 million illegal migrants into Europe over the past years, the foreign minister said. Timmermans, a Socialist politician, is “personally responsible for the EC’s appallingly poor performance” over the past five years, Péter Szijjártó told public Kossuth radio. The EC vice-president is also responsible for the continued decline of Europe’s competitiveness and the deteriorating security situation on the continent, he said. In connection with the upcoming European parliamentary elections, Szijjártó said all top candidates of the various European party groups were unfit to lead an EU institution.

In a separate interview, Szijjártó told public news channel M1 that the meeting of US President Donald Trump and Hungarian Prime Minister Viktor Orbán on May 13 would serve as an excellent opportunity for the two leaders to coordinate their positions in major international organisations on migration.

The United States and Hungary are among the six countries that rejected the United Nations’ Global Compact on migration, the minister said.

In connection with his talks with Ernesto Araújo, his Brazilian counterpart, in Budapest on the previous day, Szijjártó said Brazilian President Jair Bolsonaro has accepted Viktor Orbán’s invitation to visit Hungary.

TRÓCSÁNYI: EU MUST RESTORE TRUST

The European Union must restore trust in the bloc, Hungary’s justice minister told a conference on central Europe in Budapest. There can be no European integration without trust, Laszlo Trócsányi told the conference organised by the Neozopont Institute and the Waclaw Felczak Foundation. After the European Parliament elections, the number one task before member states will be restarting dialogue free of prejudice, he added.

The minister said stakes were high in the elections, pointing out that the vote would decide the direction of European politics for the coming cycle. Trócsányi said it was important to elect leaders who are capable of recognising “the real problems” and providing adequate solutions to them.

Greeting Polish Deputy Prime Minister Beata Szydło, Trócsányi said Hungary and Poland’s relationship had always been and would always be friendly. The minister underlined the importance of the two countries working together when it comes to the future of central Europe. He

said support for EU membership in the region was “remarkably high”. Hungary and Poland both value their membership, Trócsányi said, adding, at the same time, that they were also aware of the problems with the functioning of EU institutions. He said the EU would only be able to fulfil its mission if it functioned as a community governed by the will of its member states where national independence is respected. The minister also emphasised the importance of regional cooperation.

Szydło talked about the importance of reforming the EU so that it could avoid crises and respond to new challenges. She said voters would get to decide if they want to see the EU continue to head towards closer integration, dealing with crisis situations based on the principles of equality and partnership, or the continuation of policies “that cause more and more disappointment to an increasing number of member states and voters”. The EU can operate only if there is consensus, Szydło said, calling for the community to define its common tasks, promote cohesion and prevent disintegration. She called sovereignty important, adding however that the sovereignty of the EU as a bloc should not be achieved by limiting the sovereignty of individual member states. Szydło expressed concern over a “democracy deficit” and protectionism Europe may face. Protectionism is a threat to “the core of European integration” to the effect

that it will block the free movement of goods and capital, she said. It also gives cause for concern that there are attempts to "exclude" countries outside the euro zone from the EU's banking and monetary unions, Szydło said, adding that this would create a divided European Union. "A two-speed Europe would certainly prevent that the bloc could become stronger," she said.

SZIJJÁRTÓ: HUNGARY AMONG WORLD'S TOP TEN INVESTMENT DESTINATIONS

Hungary is among the world's ten most attractive investment destinations, the foreign minister said. Citing a fresh report by American corporate magazine Site Selection, Péter Szijjártó told public current affairs channel M1 that the Hungarian Investment Promotion Agency (HIPA) was ranked as the best such agency across the region comprising central Europe and central Asia.

The minister said Hungary's rank was also in recognition of the Hungarian workforce, noting that Site Selection also takes into consideration the state of a country's labour market and the skill level of the workforce.

"The knowledge and motivation of the Hungarian people is fully competitive," Szijjártó said. He also pointed out that the Hungarian economy saw a total of 98 major

investments worth a record 1,380 billion forints (EUR 4.3bn) last year.

Germany remains Hungary's largest foreign investor followed by the United States, Szijjártó said.

"But it can also be seen that the pace of the changes in the global economy is being set at least as much by the East as the West," he said. "Japanese, Chinese and Korean firms are all eager to bring in their developments which will also determine the trajectory of the European economy."

KÖVÉR: CHRISTIANITY 'STATE-BUILDING, NATION- SUSTAINING FORCE' FOR HUNGARIANS

For Hungarians living in the Carpathian Basin, Christianity has been "a state-building and nation-sustaining force" for more than a thousand years, László Kövér, Speaker of Parliament, said.

Speaking at an event in Parliament in preparation for the 2020 International Eucharistic Congress in Budapest held together with representatives of the episcopal conferences, Kövér said the thousand-year history of Hungarians showed that the state and the nation always progressed or floundered according to whether the Christian world and thought provoked hope or worry.

Quoting the watchword of the congress, Kövér said: "All my sources derive from you." "For Hungarians, Christianity is a source, spirituality and

historically, from which we all derive," he added.

The Hungarian state has provided funding worth more than 2.3 million euros from the central budget to support churches in Hungary since 2010, Kövér noted. He added that close to 100 million euros worth of funding had been allocated to support Hungarian Christian communities in the Carpathian Basin.

Since 2016, Hungary has provided a total of 30 million euros to support persecuted Christians in their home countries around the world under the government's Hungary Helps scheme, Kövér said. The International Eucharistic Congress will be held between September 13 and 20 in 2020.

SZIJJÁRTÓ: EU MUST START ACCESSION TALKS WITH ALBANIA IN JUNE

The European Union must open accession talks with Albania next month, Foreign Minister Péter Szijjártó said, adding that the bloc's failure to start the negotiations would be "unacceptable" to Hungary. At a joint press conference after talks with Gent Cakaj, Albania's minister for European and foreign affairs, in Budapest, Szijjártó underlined the importance of stability in the Western Balkans. Tensions in the region would only provide new opportunities for terrorists and terrorist organisations to enter the EU's territory by taking advantage

of migration waves, he said and quoted reports of “many thousands of migrants in Bosnia-Herzegovina about to set off for the EU”. Szijjártó reiterated Hungary’s support for EU enlargement towards the Western Balkans and Albania’s EU integration. He said that on June 18, the EU’s General Affairs Council would have to decide on starting accession talks with Albania. It would be “unacceptable” if it did not happen, Szijjártó said. “

He called it “shocking” that the European Commission, “under pressure from France”, has decided not to disclose its enlargement package before the EP elections. The minister voiced incomprehension at not publishing the package earlier. The EU will only be strong and successful “if it not only talks about enlargement but implements it, too”, he insisted. Answering a question, he said that pro-enlargement members of the EU were in minority because “the large Western countries are sceptical”.

Cakaj said his country was working to meet the EU’s accession criteria and its achievements were recognised by the European Council.

Earlier, the two ministers signed an agreement on cooperation in

waste and water management, climate policy, renewable energies and energy efficiency projects.

TWO-TAILED DOG ADVOCATES ‘CHEERFUL, COOL’ EUROPE

The extra-parliamentary, satirical Two-tailed Dog party would build an “able, true, cheerful and cool” Europe, deputy party leader Zsolt Victora told public news channel M1, using the slot allotted to his party to present its programme for the May 26 European parliamentary elections. Victora said his party would win “all elections of all European countries and European parliamentary elections by 2034”. He said his party programme was based on “siesta each day, more days off work and making Hungarian the EU’s official language”.

Two-tailed Dog would introduce all the holidays of other European countries in Hungary, leaving only 40-50 working days a year. Victora argued that people work too much, and added that the initiative was in line with his party’s motto demanding “more of everything, less of nothing!” Victora said his party would represent those voters in the EP that would not vote for any other party.

GUEST NIGHTS FALL IN MARCH, ALBEIT FROM HIGH BASE

The number of guest nights at commercial accommodations in Hungary fell by an annual 4.4% to 1,963,000 in March, the Central Statistical Office (KSH) said. KSH noted that the decline was from a high base. In March 2018, Hungarians enjoyed a four-day weekend for the March 15 national holiday, as well as the start of the Easter holiday. The number of guest nights spent by foreign visitors dropped by 4.1% to 998,000, while the number spent by domestic guests declined by 4.7% to 965,000. Adjusted for seasonal and calendar year effects, guest nights spent by foreign and domestic travellers rose by 1.7% and 3.7%, respectively, KSH said.

Revenue of commercial accommodations increased by 3.2% to 35 billion forints (EUR 107.9m). At hotels, revenue per available room (REVPAR) edged up 0.6% to 10,145 forints. The average room rate rose 3.2% to 18,375 forints. The occupancy rate at hotels slipped 1.5 percentage points to 55.2%.