

## PHOTO OF THE DAY



Wildlife activists at a "Breakfast with gorillas" at the Budapest Zoo, raising awareness of shrinking habitat

MTVA/Attila Kovács

## UPCOMING EVENTS

**Conference marking 70 years of Hungarian-Chinese diplomatic relations**

**Central bank presents financial stability report for May 2019**

**Nézőpont survey on relations between Carpathian Basin nations**

**Museum of Fine Arts presents newly acquired Renoir painting**

## TOP STORY

### ORBÁN, FROMAGER ON PROTECTING CHRISTIANS

Prime Minister Viktor Orbán met Marc Fromager, the director in France of the Aid to the Church in Need organisation. Talks focused on persecuted Christian communities and protecting Europe's traditional values.

Orbán and Fromager agreed that western Europe's migration policy involves "importing the problems of the Middle East that accompany migrants", the prime minister's press chief said. France had already "lost areas" where "the law is now what Salafi preachers dictate," Bertalan Havasi added.

Each country should approach migration according to its own circumstances, Fromager said, insisting that "the media and Brussels are trying to foment a sense of guilt in Hungarians". French people are becoming "increasingly suspicious" of the media and are concerned about the "invasion of migrants" and will "easily understand that Hungarians are entitled to protect their own borders", he said. Orbán and Fromager also agreed that "the best kind of Christian help" is to work to create peace in conflict areas. War refugees in camps along the borders of their homelands will have a chance to return, while "they will never return from Europe", they said.

Concerning Europe's demographic crisis, Orbán and Fromager said western Europe's "promotion of migration... [would] endanger the future of the continent".

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## **ÁSZ HEAD SEES ROOM FOR TAX CUTS THAT BOOST COMPETITIVENESS**

Increased budget revenue from government measures to enhance tax compliance and crack down on tax evasion should be used for further tax reductions, but those cuts should strengthen Hungary's competitiveness, the head of the State Audit Office (ÁSZ) said in an interview published in Wednesday's issue of daily Magyar Nemzet.

László Domokos told the paper that measures to broaden tax compliance, such as the roll-out of mandatory electronic invoicing, were an "undoubtedly important element" of Hungary's economic growth. He said the government can use the additional budget revenue these policies generate for further tax reductions. He said digitisation and improving competitiveness are key to Hungary's sustainable economic growth.

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## **ORBÁN ENCOURAGES SLOVAKIA HUNGARIANS TO SUPPORT MKP**

Prime Minister Viktor Orbán encouraged ethnic Hungarians in Slovakia to vote for the Party of the Hungarian Community (MKP) in the upcoming European parliamentary elections. Orbán met MKP chief József Menyhárt in Budapest, and said the election would decide important issues that would "determine the

foundations of life for the next generations", Bertalan Havasi said.

Concerning MKP, Orbán said that "it belongs to our closest party family; we have shared roots, values, and thus shared goals". "We both think that our language, culture, Christian faith and the security of our families are pillars which could support not only our future in the Carpathian Basin but also that of the European Union," he added.

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## **WOMEN WITH FOUR CHILDREN TO BE INCOME- TAX EXEMPT FROM JAN**

Women with four or more children will be exempted from the personal income tax from next January on, the state secretary in charge of youth and family affairs announced. Katalin Novák told a press conference that the life-long benefit will also apply to women whose children have grown up already and also to ones who have agreed to have at least four children in future. The government measure will benefit some 40,000 mothers, Novák added.

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## **HUNGARY, JAPAN SIGN COOPERATION PACTS IN MEDICINE, EDUCATION, SPORTS**

Human Resources Minister Miklós Kásler paid a three-day official visit to Japan, where he signed cooperation agreements in education, medical research and sports, the minister said. Kásler held talks with the minister of health, labour and welfare, and that

of education, culture, sports, science and technology. The ministers said bilateral ties have blossomed in recent years and pledged to widen cooperation further. Hungary will continue to support the studies of Japanese students in Hungary through grants, Kásler said. The ministers agreed to boost the teaching of the Japanese and Hungarian languages in each other's countries. They also pledged to conduct joint research of rare diseases, as well as genomics and proteomics, he said. In sports, Hungary and Japan will prepare jointly for the 2020 summer Olympics in Tokyo, and Hungarian athletes will have an opportunity to train there, Kásler said.

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## **POLLSTERS: 4-6 PARTIES EXPECTED TO WIN SEATS IN EP ELECTIONS**

Hungary will likely send four to six parties to the next European Parliament, participants in a conference attended by public opinion research institutes concluded. Citing their latest EP election surveys, the analysts said the ruling Fidesz-Christian Democrat alliance, nationalist Jobbik, the Socialists-Párbeszéd alliance and the leftist Democratic Coalition (DK) were likely to win seats in this Sunday's ballot, with LMP and the Momentum Movement also in with a shot.

At the conference presenting the latest polls by the Nézőpont Institute, Závecz Research, the Publicus Institute, Századvég and Medián, the analysts were in agreement that the ruling

parties are the strongest with over 50% support.

Turnout is expected to exceed 32% and may even reach 40%, they said.

Endre Hann, Medián's director, projected a turnout of 35-36%. Citing Medián's latest poll commissioned by business weekly HVG to be released on Thursday, he said Jobbik could end up as the second strongest party. Citing Medián's "expert estimate", Hann said Fidesz was expected to win 13 seats in the next European Parliament, Jobbik 3, the Socialists-Párbeszéd alliance and DK 2 each and Momentum 1 seat. Fidesz is projected to win 52% of the vote, followed by Jobbik with 11.5%, Socialists-Párbeszéd with 10.5%, DK with 10% and Momentum with 5.5%. LMP is projected to get 4% of the vote and the Two-Tailed Dog Party and Mi Hazánk 3% each, he added.

Dániel Nagy, the Nézőpont Institute's director of research, put turnout between 32% and 40%. He said it was "no question" that Fidesz would win the election with over 50% of the vote and between 1.3 and 1.4 million votes. Nagy said there were three parties heading into the election with high stakes. For LMP and Momentum, he said, clearing the 5% threshold could also mean their survival, adding that Jobbik was at risk of "completely falling apart".

Tibor Závecz, the head of Závecz Research, compared last year's general election results with his institute's latest projections for Sunday. While turnout last year exceeded 70%, this year it is expected to fall around

45%, he said, noting that this would also translate to fewer votes cast for all parties. According to Závecz's calculations, Fidesz is expected to receive 27% fewer votes this year, with Jobbik's tally dropping by 59% and the Socialists-Párbeszéd alliance's by 41%. LMP is expected to see a drop of 53% and Momentum 20%, he added. DK is the only party expected to receive more votes compared with last year, with the party set for a 27% gain, Závecz said.

András Pulai, CEO of the Publicus Institute, said the leading issue among Hungarian voters was how much funding Hungary will be getting from the European Union in the next cycle, with 29% citing it as their top concern. Fully 19% of their respondents cited migration as their number one issue, Pulai added. Altogether 20% of respondents said they will vote for the parties they normally vote for.

### **SZÁZADVÉG: 'VAST MAJORITY' WANT CHANGE IN EU**

Fully 81% of Hungarian respondents in a recent poll by the Századvég Foundation expressed "withering criticism" of the European Union's leadership and dissatisfaction with the EU's handling of migration while indicating a desire for change. Seventy percent of respondents said they were "extremely dissatisfied with the way Brussels has handled the migration crisis, the weightiest European matter of recent years," Századvég's report

said on Wednesday, adding that only 26% were of the opposite view. Fully 51% of respondents who declared their intention to vote on Sunday said they supported Fidesz's ruling alliance with the Christian Democrats.

The leftist Democratic Coalition is set to gain 11% of Hungarian votes in the EP ballot, according to Századvég. The nationalist Jobbik party is likely to receive 9%, the Socialists-Párbeszéd alliance 7%, and the Momentum Movement 6%, the think-tank found. Green LMP and radical nationalist Mi Hazánk was backed by 3%, while 7% of respondents were uncertain about which party to vote for, according to the phone survey conducted between May 10-18 with a sample of 1,000 randomly selected adults.

### **JOBBIK: EVERYDAY SECURITY, WAGE UNION AT STAKE**

Opposition Jobbik deputy group leader György Szilágyi said the upcoming European Parliament elections will decide whether "predictable everyday security" and a wage union "guaranteeing equal pay for equal work" across Europe can be provided.

Voters must choose between the "irresponsible policies" of Prime Minister Viktor "Orbán driving Hungary out of the European Union" or securing a predictable future, he said. They must choose between ruling Fidesz's offer of a "semi-feudal wage slavery" involving low wages and

“those emigrating from Hungary being replaced by guest workers” or Jobbik’s proposed wage union. Hungary’s EU membership has resulted in a “price union” where Hungarians pay the same for products and services as people in Western Europe but at the same time, wages in Hungary are still around a third or a quarter of those in Western Europe, he said. More than 800,000 young Hungarians have left Hungary in the hope of better wages and if this trend continues, the local pension and benefit system could collapse within a few years, Szilágyi said.

**KURDISH COUPLE  
ACCUSED OF TERRORIST  
FINANCING APPEAL FOR  
ACQUITTAL**

A Kurdish man and woman convicted of financing terrorism by a Szeged court have appealed against the first-instance ruling. The couple are accused of serving the Kurdistan Workers’ Party (PKK), in northern Iraq, which is classified as a terrorist organisation by the European Union. The court in southern Hungary last Thursday sentenced the two Kurdish nationals to two years in prison. It also ruled that the defendants should be

expelled from Hungary after serving their term for a period of eight years. Taking into account their time on remand, they face being expelled imminently.

The man had worked for PKK managing logistics tasks as a volunteer from 2009. The woman joined PKK in 2010 aged 15 and met her future husband in 2014 in Syria. Despite threats from the organisation, they fled and got married in Iraq the following year. The couple arrived at the Hungarian border in December 2017, aided by human smugglers. They applied for asylum but they were detained in March last year.

In its justification to the ruling, the court cited the defendants’ young age, the nature of their activities in the PKK and that they had been threatened retaliation by that organisation, and set their terms “well below” the minimum five years stipulated by law. The court discontinued their detention because they had already served the minimum sentence. Erika Prágai Juhász, the court’s spokeswoman, said the Iranian-born Kurdish woman and her husband, together with their lawyers, were appealing for acquittals.

**SZIJJÁRTÓ VISITS BMW  
PLANT CONSTRUCTION  
SITE**

Péter Szijjártó, the foreign affairs and trade minister, on Tuesday inspected the construction site of the future BMW plant in Debrecen, in eastern Hungary. Speaking to the local Debrecen TV, the minister said that anyone visiting the construction site could see with their own eyes that preparatory work on the project was proceeding at a rapid pace. He said construction of the factory was moving ahead according to the original schedule. All public procurement procedures relating to the planning of the factory’s infrastructure and utility systems have been wrapped up, he said, adding that the procedure for obtaining the relevant permits was now under way. Commenting on press reports that BMW had suspended the construction of its Debrecen plant, Szijjártó warned against “buying into rumours”. “One must always see for themselves what the real situation is,” he added. BMW last summer announced plans to build a 1 billion euro plant in Debrecen. The plant will employ more than 1,000 people to turn out 150,000 cars a year.

