

PHOTO OF THE DAY



MTV/Tamas Soki

Young voters in Szekler folk costume

UPCOMING EVENTS

Plenary session of parliament

Budapest mayor inaugurates St. Charbel Park in 11th district

Innovation and tech minister, head of Hungarian Equestrian Federation sign support deal

Music Hungary conference opens

TOP STORY

FIDESZ WINS EP ELECTION

Hungary's ruling Fidesz alliance with the Christian Democrats won Sunday's European Parliament election with 52%, handing it 13 seats in the 751-seat EP.

Prime Minister Viktor Orbán hailed his Fidesz-Christian Democrat alliance's win in Sunday's European Parliament election as an "epochal victory". "For us, Hungary comes first in Brussels," Orbán told crowds gathered on the banks of the Danube. "We've achieved a record victory amid a record turnout", he said. "We all know that the migration wave launched the beginning of a new era in European politics, so we can safely say that we've achieved an epochal victory." Orbán thanked voters whose support conveyed that "Hungary should remain a Hungarian country and Europe should belong to the Europeans".

He said Hungarians had entrusted the ruling alliance with three objectives: to stop immigration across Europe, to protect a Europe of nations and to protect Christian culture in Europe. Orbán said that it was now clear that Hungarians think that change is needed in Brussels. Leaders who represent the interests of European people and who respect Europe's nations are needed, he said. Also leaders "who are proud of our two-thousand-year-old Christian culture" are in demand, he said.

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HUNGARY 'A EUROPEAN NATION'

Prime Minister Viktor Orbán, reflecting on his Fidesz party's European Parliament victory, said that with the high turnout Hungary had proven that "it is a European nation, a European country; that our place is in Europe, that Europe is our home, too, and so we want to change it." The prime minister expressed his gratitude to his party's voters and supporters. He called the election a "big, one-time-only chance to unify the nation", arguing that ethnic Hungarian communities "will also be there with us in Brussels and we will be representing the interests of the entire Hungarian nation together". "For us, Hungary will come first in Brussels, too, and we will cooperate with everyone who wants to stop immigration," Orbán said. "Today we showed that Hungary is strong because Hungarians are united. In the years ahead, the aim will be to preserve this grand unity. I promise you that we will do everything we can to achieve this," the prime minister concluded.

GYURCSÁNY: FIDESZ LOST ITS TWO-THIRDS

Democratic Coalition (DK) leader Ferenc Gyurcsány, reflecting on the outcome of Sunday's European Parliament election, said it had never been in doubt that the ruling Fidesz party would win the election but the result was significant insofar as Fidesz

would have lost its two-thirds majority had the ballot been a general election. Compared with last April's general election, Fidesz has lost one million voters, while DK doubled its voter turnout despite comparatively lower participation, Gyurcsány said at a press conference.

He said his party had over 550,000 active voters, which was a testament to the work they had carried out over the past years. "With DK, a strong Europe will be even stronger and all of Hungary's citizens will be better off," Gyurcsány said.

Criticising Hungary's media landscape, Gyurcsány said "the election can't be free if the press isn't". "Hungary has a government that has brought the press under its control and is using it for lying, misleading propaganda, rather than to inform," he insisted.

Commenting on the election results across the bloc, the party leader said those who wanted a stronger Europe would have an overwhelming majority in the next EP.

DK won 16.26% percent of the vote, handing the leftist party four EP mandates.

MOMENTUM 'PARTY OF HEALTH CARE, EDUCATION AND LIVELIHOODS'

The leader of the Momentum Movement, which made a breakthrough in Sunday's European Parliament election by securing almost

10% of the vote, said his opposition party must put health care, education and people's livelihoods at the centre of its mission. András Fekete Győr told jubilant supporters that Momentum was the only party able to provide real solutions to real problems. Results show that Momentum received about 330,000 votes, but this was enough for it to send two representatives to the EP, he said, adding that humility was necessary because they had not won.

Katalin Cseh, who tops Momentum's EP election list, said "people must be given the chance to dream again". Momentum, she added, was proof that miracles still exist and that it was possible to build a party from scratch.

SOCIALISTS-PÁRBEZSÉD: RESULT 'FAILURE'

The leader of the Socialist Party called the result of Sunday's European Parliament election "a failure" for the opposition. Bertalan Tóth, who was the Socialist-Párbeszéd alliance's list leader, noted at a press conference that the two parties' joint campaign had resulted in a single mandate. However, the party's board has decided unanimously to press ahead with the autumn local elections without any changes. Tóth insisted that in many localities in which opposition election deals were already in place, today's results suggested that opposition cooperation could unseat Fidesz. "This is a responsibility that the Socialist leadership undertakes, and it will not resign," he added. Tóth said he would

not take over his EP mandate, and the party board would decide on Saturday who should receive it.

Socialist-Párbeszéd MEP candidate Benedek Jávor lamented what he called a “serious defeat” for the opposition alliance in the European Parliament election, based on preliminary results. The party alliance is projected to win just one seat in the EP. Jávor said the opposition had failed to succeed in its goal of putting a dent in the ruling Fidesz-Christian Democrat alliance’s “surge”. He said the Socialist-Párbeszéd alliance bore the brunt of the defeat compared with other opposition parties.

In response to a question, Jávor could not say how the result would affect the relationship between the Socialist Party and Párbeszéd, adding however that he did not think their cooperation was to blame for the defeat. Asked if the Socialist Party’s leadership should resign in light of the election outcome, Jávor said this was up to them to decide. Jávor said the two parties had made a rational decision when they formed their alliance, adding that they had had reason to expect to win three seats.

OPPOSITION LMP NATIONAL BOARD RESIGNS

The national board of the opposition green LMP party resigned after the party failed to secure a single mandate in the European Parliament election. Lóránt László Keresztes, the party’s

co-leader, told a press conference that the only positive aspect of the election had been LMP putting climate change, “a real and burning issue”, at the heart of the campaign. Gábor Vágo, who topped LMP’s EP election list, attributed its defeat to internal party strife after last year’s general election, which had caused the party a “crisis of credibility”. LMP’s other co-leader, Márta Demeter, said LMP’s defeat would be assessed. The party is expected to re-elect its leadership in June, she added.

JOBBIK SET TO DECIDE ON MEP ON WEDNESDAY

Jobbik’s national board will decide on who it will send to the next European Parliament on Wednesday, Márton Gyöngyösi, the nationalist party’s top candidate, said after confirmation of the EP election results. Jobbik conducted a “decisive campaign under unprecedented pressure”, Gyöngyösi said on Sunday evening, adding that “no other political community could have survived this kind of pressure”. “We have a complete programme,” he said. “We’re offering an alternative to [Prime Minister] Viktor Orbán’s platform,” he added, noting his party’s promise of the introduction of a border guard with a view to protecting the country against migration. Gyöngyösi said a consensus on a solution to protect the entirety of the European Union must be reached.

Under Jobbik’s platform, he said, migrants “unleashed” on Hungary in

recent years would be screened and deported, if necessary. As regards the emigration of Hungarians, he said levelling the playing field for wages across the EU was the solution, noting, that this however would require a new cohesion policy. For combatting corruption, he said Hungary should join the European prosecutor’s office. “We’ll look for allies, we’ll be aiming for a consensus so that Hungary’s national interests are enforced and European solutions are drawn up,” Gyöngyösi said.

Jobbik won one seat with 6.44% of the vote in Sunday’s EP election.

SZIJJÁRTÓ: LEVEL OF SUPPORT FOR A SINGLE PARTY IN EP VOTE UNPRECEDENTED IN HUNGARY

Never before have voters in Hungary given so much support to a political family in the European Parliament elections, Péter Szijjártó, the foreign minister, said on Sunday evening. “This comes along with expectations and we will meet those expectations,” he said. Speaking to journalists at Fidesz’s victory party, Szijjártó said tomorrow would start with tough debates over personnel issues, as well as over the future of Europe. But the minister said his Fidesz party’s decisive election victory “gives us enough strength to enforce Hungary’s interests in these debates”. He said at stake now was whether the European Union could be integrated into strong

nation states, and whether Christian culture could be protected. On the issue of migration was whether “we can replace the word ‘manage’ with ‘stop’”.

Szijjártó said major debates were to be expected within the EU’s various political groupings. Another question, he said, was what sort of conclusions the European People’s Party would have to draw from the election results. “The EPP’s most successful member party, the member party with the strongest support, is an anti-migration party,” he said, referring to Fidesz. The minister said the EP election had reshaped the political landscape in a number of member states, which would bring with it “a lot of movement”. Up until now, he said, the two biggest party groupings “have had it easy”, but now further talks may be needed, he said. Moreover, there have been complaints about the Spitzenkandidat system, he said, adding that electing the EU’s next leaders would not be a quick or easy process.

ORBÁN: MIGRATION ISSUE TO DETERMINE EUROPE’S FUTURE

“Migration is the most important issue facing Europe’s future,” Prime Minister Viktor Orbán said in an interview published in daily Magyar Nemzet and local papers ahead of the European Parliament election. The EP vote, he added, would decide “whether we are able to preserve the continent’s

cultural identity and its civilisation based on Christian foundations.”

“Brussels is making a very strong effort to change Europe in its entirety,” he said. “Some politicians, parties, governments, business circles, academic networks ... think that Europe should ditch Christian culture and the historical sweep of the nation and set up a united states of Europe,” he said. This would entail “mixed populations in which neither Christian nor national identity means anything.” Europe’s left wing, he said, “wants a mixed population” in Europe because “they seek to eliminate nations” even though “Europe’s success is made by successful nation states”. “If Hungary had had a leftist government ... our cities would look like some of those in Germany or France, with hundreds of thousands of migrants from Africa or the Middle East,” he said.

The prime minister insisted his government’s “values of patriotism, respect for Europe’s Christian culture, supporting families, protecting jobs, striving for full employment, raising minimum wages and having security issues as a top priority on the agenda” all accorded with the interests of the Hungarian people. The Hungarian opposition, however, is “pushing” such ideals as a united states of Europe and gender ideology “aimed at changing the traditional relationship between man and woman”. Such ideals are alien to the vast majority of society, he said.

On the subject of ruling Fidesz party’s membership of the European People’s Party, Orbán said that

“Fidesz will stay a member if that is in Hungary’s interest.” This, he added, would depend on the direction the EPP takes. The issue of migration has divided the EPP, Orbán said.

Referring to the Visegrad Group in which four prime ministers cooperate while belonging to four different party groups, he said the role of prime ministers would trump that of political parties.

Meanwhile, in an interview to Hír TV, Orbán said if he received “strong authorisation” from voters “clearly expressing their desire for the EU to have no pro-migration leaders” he would have better a chance of promoting that desire in the European Council. He insisted that many Europeans now shared Hungary’s position on migration, with the view that “Europe should belong to Europeans”. “A strong, violent, external invasion should not be allowed to change the framework of our lives,” he said. Immigration would not only “create a culture problem” and “destroy public security” but undermine Hungary’s economy, too, Orbán said.

Commenting on Heinz-Christian Strache, Austria’s former vice-chancellor, Orbán said: “The first thing the successors to anti-migration Freedom Party ministers did was to increase the remuneration for migrants.” He went on to say that Chancellor Sebastian Kurz is “under pro-migration pressure” and “many in and outside are seeking to direct the Austrian government back to the flock of pro-migration governments”.



Concerning German Chancellor Angela Merkel, Orbán noted differences of opinion on “a number of important issues” but said he “more than” respected her because “Germans elected her, she is a lady and her achievements are many”.

Orbán said he saw “no major difference” between the Spitzenkandidats of the EPP and of the Socialists because “they all talk the same Brussels blah-blah language”. He urged the EPP to take a rightwards turn. He said he did not envisage a stable political structure in the EU after the election. “Cooperation will work on a case-by-case basis rather than under large, comprehensive agreements,” he said.

Answering a question concerning Russia’s influence, Orbán said the influence of US billionaire George Soros was far more keenly felt. “The interference of that global, liberal mafia is what seems illegitimate,” he

said, insisted that it interfered with the Hungarian elections.

Asked about media freedom, Orbán said in western countries some 85% of the media were liberal with the conservative Christian media accounting for 15%. In Hungary “the ratio may be half-and-half.” “Hungary has complete freedom of the media, while that freedom is limited in the West,” the prime minister said.

PRIME MINISTER CASTS VOTE, VOICES OPTIMISM

Prime Minister Viktor Orbán cast his ballot in the European parliamentary election at a polling station in Budapest’s western District 12 on Sunday morning. The prime minister said he hoped the election would strengthen “anti-migration forces” and that their political leaders would have a greater role in Europe in the next five years. “Both in terms of voter turnout and our chances, I

am more than optimistic,” Orbán said. The migrant crisis has greatly changed the world since the last election in 2014, which could be manifested in higher participation in the election, he said, and encouraged voters to contribute. Orbán said the election would greatly impact domestic politics, too, adding: “I would like to see today’s election results as a point of reference for many years to come.”

Concerning the relationship between ruling Fidesz and the European People’s Party, Orbán said his party “will see what influence it could have on future directions for the EPP”. Fidesz will not belong to a grouping in which “it does not have a say on major strategic issues.”

Answering a question concerning his earlier remarks recommending the Austrian model to Europe, Orbán said that “I have now switched over to the Italian model” because the Austrian model “has expired”.

