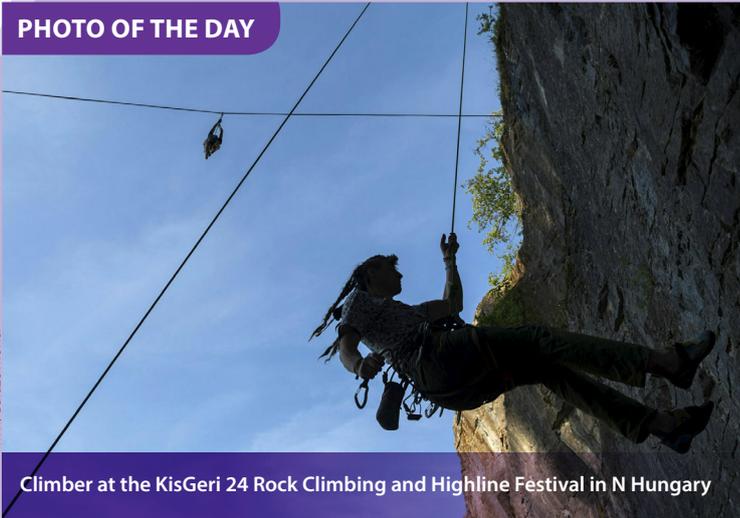


PHOTO OF THE DAY



MTV/Balázs Mohai

Climber at the KisGeri 24 Rock Climbing and Highline Festival in N Hungary

UPCOMING EVENTS

President Áder addresses R20 climate summit

Plenary session of parliament

NBH Monetary Council holds rate-setting meeting

EU leaders hold informal summit in Brussels

Stats office releases demographic data for Jan-March

TOP STORY

ORBÁN: VOTERS WISH CHANGE IN BRUSSELS

Hungarian voters in Sunday's European Parliament election "expressed clearly that they want a change in Brussels", Prime Minister Viktor Orbán told lawmakers.

Hungarians want to see European leaders "working to stop migration rather than organise it" the prime minister said. They want leaders who "respect Europe's nations and seek to protect Christian culture" and for whom the interests of the European people always come first, he added.

Commenting on the Fidesz-Christian Democrat alliance's showing in Sunday's ballot, Orbán said the ruling alliance had achieved a "record victory amid a record turnout". Fidesz won the ballot with 52.44% of the vote, handing it 13 EP seats. Orbán said Hungarians had proved that Hungary is a European nation, a European country, just as "Europe is also our homeland". He said voters had given the government a strong mandate and "entrusted us to represent change in Brussels". "It is an assignment, and we will do our utmost to represent the will of Hungarians in European politics as best we can," he said. The ballot also made it clear that Hungarian voters want the government to continue the work and follow the path it has embarked on, the prime minister said.

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ORBÁN: HUNGARY AMONG EUROPE’S THREE FASTEST-DEVELOPING ECONOMIES

Hungary’s economy has continued to improve over the past twelve months since the general election last spring, Prime Minister Viktor Orbán said in an address to lawmakers, noting that the country registered a 5.2% GDP growth rate in the first quarter of 2019. Figures of the first quarter show that Hungary’s economy has grown at the highest rate in the European Union, placing Hungary “among the three fastest-developing economies in Europe”, he said. Orbán said the Hungarian economy further improved in the past year, while the EU’s performance was “not as good”, with the bloc’s old members producing a slower growth rate than previously. The government’s goal is therefore “to protect Hungary’s economic achievements and ensure a GDP growth rate exceeding the European Union’s average by 2 percentage points.” The prime minister announced that he will submit an economic action plan to achieve these goals.

SZIJJÁRTÓ: EUROPE STATUS QUO TOPPLED

“There is a new political situation in Europe”, Foreign Minister Péter Szijjártó said, adding that the European parliamentary elections have “toppled the status quo”. Speaking on the sidelines of a meeting of EU trade ministers in

Brussels, Szijjártó said that in the next parliamentary cycle decisions would require more than “the two largest groups, the European People’s Party and the Social Democrats, sitting down with each other”. The minister envisaged huge debates concerning the European Union’s future, both in terms of “personnel and political” issues. According to the Hungarian government, none of the top candidates are suited to head the European Commission but there is hope for “suitable candidates to emerge” during the talks, Szijjártó said.

The minister said it was important for central Europe, which he called the EU’s “engine of growth”, to have strong representation in the bloc’s leadership. Szijjártó said Hungary would only back candidates “who believe in an EU built on strong member states, are ready to prioritise Christian culture and want to stop, rather than organise, migration”. Szijjártó noted that apart from the ruling party of Malta, Fidesz had won with the biggest margin of votes on Sunday. It was followed by parties like Poland’s ruling Law and Justice (PiS), Austria’s People’s Party (ÖVP) and Italy’s League party, he added.

Szijjártó said Fidesz was “by far the most successful” member of EPP, adding that it would have the third largest number of seats within the group. The minister said this would have to be taken into consideration in the upcoming debates about the EPP’s future direction.

As regards the meeting, Szijjártó said any “any kind of trade war and

all restrictive measures [on trade] are against Hungary’s interests.” He said the EU was incapable of adjusting fast enough to the constant changes in the world economy and would therefore require reforms.

Concerning the transatlantic trade conflict, he cited a European Commission official as saying that the US had no intention of negotiating the elimination of industrial tariffs, which the minister said was “a big problem”. He added, however, that it was unsurprising, noting that this was what US President Donald Trump had promised.

GYURCSÁNY WON’T DROP COOPERATION DEALS FOR MUNICIPAL ELECTIONS

Ferenc Gyurcsány, head of the opposition Democratic Coalition (DK), said his party would not terminate cooperation agreements with other opposition parties signed ahead of Hungary’s municipal elections scheduled for autumn. Gyurcsány said Sunday’s European parliamentary election demonstrated that comprehensive cooperation between parties of the opposition could “free nearly all districts in Budapest and many cities from the grip of (ruling) Fidesz”.

Asked about opposition support for Gergely Karácsony, joint candidate of DK, Momentum, the Socialist and Párbeszéd parties for the post of Budapest mayor, Gyurcsány said he saw “no reason to falter” and withdraw support from him.



Gyurcsány said Prime Minister Viktor Orbán had “suffered a defeat” because “he sought to change European politics and failed”. The European Parliament will be dominated by party groups seeking to make Europe a stronger, cooperative alliance, Gyurcsány added. He said the number of seats Orbán’s Fidesz has won “is immaterial”. What matters, he said, is “with whom the parties will be able to form alliances in the European Parliament and how many members these alliances will involve.” Fidesz, he added, will be “among the losers” because “with its current policies it will have no room in the European People’s Party and its deputies will seek to join some nationalist or far-right group, or be independent MEPs”.

Gyurcsány said his party had made a “bold and correct” decision when it made Klára Dobrev top candidate for the election, because she could “attract people who would not have voted for DK earlier”. Concerning a proposal he made back in 2014, aimed at creating a unified Democratic party, Gyurcsány said “we must not use tools with which Orbán managed to unify the right wing”.

SZÁZADVÉG: RULING PARTIES REINFORCE MANDATE

Hungary’s ruling parties have received another “unquestionable” mandate from voters “to put Prime Minister Viktor Orbán’s programme in action”, an analysis by the Századvég Institute

said. High turnout numbers show that voters “have clearly grasped” that the election was decisive in the fight of “two political blocs, pro-migration forces and anti-migration promoters of nation states,” the analysis said.

Hungarians have reinforced the ruling Fidesz-Christian Democrat alliance in its efforts to protect the country and Europe. The results were a message both to “domestic pro-migration forces and globalist Brussels bureaucrats”, Századvég said.

Among opposition parties, leftist Democratic Coalition (DK) was the clear winner of the elections, the institute said. The party has gained four seats in the European Parliament by “reaping profits from the ruins of a collapsing opposition,” Századvég said. Top candidate Klára Dobrev “managed to reach voters rejecting party leader Ferenc Gyurcsány”, they added.

The opposition Momentum Movement garnered more support than expected, winning two EP mandates mostly from disillusioned voters of green LMP and the Socialists, Századvég said. Nationalist Jobbik, the Socialist-Párbeszéd alliance and green LMP have endured staggering defeats, Századvég said, which questions the future of the Socialist-Párbeszéd alliance and greatly harms the chances of Gergely Karácsony, Párbeszéd co-leader and the parties’ mayoral candidate in the autumn local elections.

Jobbik went from being the strongest opposition party to the weakest to garner an EP seat, while

radical nationalist Mi Hazánk has “definitively placed itself on the Hungarian political map” with its results near the entry threshold, Századvég said.

NÉZŐPONT: RULING PARTIES REINFORCE TWO-THIRDS MANDATE

Hungary’s ruling Fidesz-Christian Democrat alliance took a “towering victory” in the European Parliament election, strengthening their two-thirds mandate, according to a snap analysis by the Nézőpont Institute. By winning 52.33% of the vote, the ruling parties improved on their results in last year’s general election when they won 47.36% and the 2014 EP election in which they won 51.48%, Nézőpont said.

The analysis said Fidesz’s victory was a “historic” one from multiple aspects. The ruling alliance’s vote tally was the highest ever in the history of Hungary’s EP elections, it said. Fidesz’s vote share of 52.33% is the second highest ever cast for its party list, Nézőpont said, adding that this share may still increase once mail votes are counted. Fidesz-KDNP was the strongest political force among all age groups in Sunday’s ballot, the analysis based on a phone poll said. Fidesz won one-third of the votes in the 18-39 age bracket, ahead of the Momentum Movement’s 24% share and the Democratic Coalition’s (DK) 9% share. The think tank attributed the opposition Democratic Coalition’s second place at the national level to the Socialist Party’s “collapse”.

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Breaking down the vote by educational background, Nézőpont said Fidesz was the most popular in all groups. DK performed well among the elderly (24.9%) and voters with higher education qualifications (23.7%). Momentum was popular among university graduates (15.7%) and the youngest age group (24.1%). Nationalist Jobbik and the Socialists-Párbeszéd alliance performed better than their overall result among voters with lower education levels (10.3% and 10.4%, respectively).

SZIJJÁRTÓ: HUNGARY STAUNCH SUPPORTER OF EU ENLARGEMENT IN W BALKANS

Hungary is committed to supporting European Union enlargement in the Western Balkans, the foreign ministry quoted Foreign Minister Péter Szijjártó as saying in Budapest. Szijjártó held talks with Bujar Osmani, North Macedonia's deputy prime minister and minister for EU integration, the ministry said in a statement. Szijjártó assured Osmani of Hungary's support

for EU integration in the Western Balkans, saying that speeding up the process was both an economic and a national security interest for Hungary. Hungary is in favour of a decision being made as early as July on the EU starting accession talks with North Macedonia, he said. Szijjártó underlined the importance of political stability in the Western Balkans, arguing that the region was still experiencing significant migration pressure.

FOREIGN MINISTER MEETS LEBANESE MARONITE DIGNITARY

The foreign minister held talks with Superior General Neamatallah Hachem of the Lebanese Maronite Order in Budapest. Péter Szijjártó briefed his partner about the outcome of Sunday's European parliamentary election in Hungary, noting the "epochal success" of the governing alliance, the ministry said in a statement. "The vote has reassured us that we must continue to do our utmost towards strengthening Christian culture in Europe," Szijjártó told his partner. The government will

also continue to support troubled Christian communities around the world, he added.

The superior general thanked the Hungarian government for its financial support to the refurbishment of 33 Christian churches in Lebanon.

HUNGARY, S KOREA SIGN COOPERATION AGREEMENT ON VEHICLE INDUSTRY, E-MOBILITY

The Hungarian and South Korean institutes for transport signed a research cooperation agreement on vehicle industry and e-mobility at a conference in Budapest. Addressing the "Smart Mobility for Smart City" conference, Technology and Innovation Minister László Palkovics noted the 30th anniversary of Hungarian-South Korean diplomatic ties. The agreement will further boost those relations, he said.

Korean Ambassador to Hungary Choe Kyoo-Sik praised the two countries' mutual support in smart mobility. South Korea and Hungary will be one another's best partners in the fourth industrial revolution, he said.