

PHOTO OF THE DAY



MTI/Balázs Mohai

Krisztina Nagypál wins Miss World Hungary contest

UPCOMING EVENTS

Head of PM's office briefs parl Europe affairs cttee

Párbeszéd leaders Karácsony, Szabó in presser related to Budapest campaign

Olga Kálmán, independent Budapest mayoral candidate, holds presser

Parliament meets

TOP STORY

'MIGRATION MUST BE STOPPED, NOT MANAGED'

Hungary wants the European Council to accept the position that migration should be stopped rather than managed, Zoltán Kovács, the state secretary for international communications and relations, said during a visit to London.

"Hungary is also firm on respecting the sovereignty of [European Union] member states and removing double standards," he told MTI, briefing on discussion of the new strategy framework by the EU heads of government and state. Respecting the basic ideas and practice of Christian culture on which the ethos of the European Union is based is key to fulfilling Hungary's standpoint on sovereignty and migration, he added. The right of every EU member state to create its own economic policy mix should also be recognised, he said.

On the topic of the current UK leadership contest, Kovács said Hungary would accept any outcome, and the government held the position that British voters exclusively had the right to decide what happens in their own country. This position is characteristic of all issues pertaining to Hungary-UK relations, including Brexit, he added. Both candidates, Boris Johnson and Jeremy Hunt, maintain ties with the Hungarian government that guarantee cooperation based on mutual respect and pragmatism, he said.

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HUNGARY INSISTS ON EU 27 UNITY ON BREXIT

Hungary insists on resolving Brexit based on the unified EU position of the 27 remaining member states, Zoltán Kovács, the state secretary for international communications and relations, said during a visit to London. "It would make no sense ... to think in terms of individual solutions." He said the current rights and status of Hungarians living in the UK under EU law should be preserved in a way allowed under international law. Kovács said the British government had given Hungary guarantees accordingly.

SZIJJÁRTÓ CALLS NORTH MACEDONIA'S EU INTEGRATION EUROPEAN INTEREST

Europe as a whole has a vested interest in North Macedonia and other Western Balkans countries joining the European Union as soon as possible, Hungary's foreign minister said in Skopje.

Hungary has taken a firm stand for immediate negotiations to start on North Macedonia's EU accession, Péter Szijjártó told a press conference he gave in the company of Bujar Osmani, North Macedonia's deputy prime minister. The EU General Affairs Council's (GAC) recent decision to postpone accession talks with

North Macedonia runs against Hungary's interests, Szijjártó said. Enlarging the European Union is a precondition for the community to regain its competitiveness, he said. The GAC decision, however, puts doubts on the credibility of the EU's enlargement policy, the minister said. Further, it poses a challenge to the credibility of Western Balkans governments that are committed to European integration, he said. "Living in the neighbourhood, we are well aware of the difference between stability and instability in the region," he said, adding that Hungary's government considers European integration the best way to maintain stability. It is unacceptable that the next round of enlargement is scheduled for 2025, he said. Hungary promotes the efforts of the North Macedonian government to pave the way for European integration, Szijjártó said.

The minister added that Hungary's parliament would ratify North Macedonia's accession to NATO on Tuesday.

Osmani expressed thanks to Hungary and the other Visegrad countries for supporting North Macedonia's European integration and for giving a boost to EU enlargement.

In response to a question, the two politicians agreed that former Macedonian prime minister Nikola Gruevski's stay in Hungary was a legal issue with no impact on foreign relations.

GOVT EXPANDS EXPORT PARTNERSHIP PROGRAMME

The government has included another ten companies as key partners in a programme aimed at promoting Hungarian exports, Foreign Minister Péter Szijjártó said at a ceremony in which cooperation agreements were signed with the new partners. Szijjártó said that the 19 participants in the programme, including new entrants, had exported goods worth a combined 213 billion forints (EUR 657m) last year, up by 8% from 2017. The programme's new participants are Agrofeed, Control-X Medical, FF Fémfeldolgozó, Gemtech, Jász-Plasztik, Kerox, Pick Szeged, Sanametal, Vajda Papír and Wellis.

Szijjártó noted that Hungary's economic output increased by 5.3% in the first quarter of this year compared to the same period in 2018, supported by a 6.4% export growth. Hungary is the world's 92nd country in terms of its population, and the 34th largest exporter, he said, noting that the government adopted a national export strategy in April, aimed at increasing Hungarian companies' share in national exports and helping Hungarian brands to international markets. He added that Eximbank had a crucial role in those efforts; the bank has 1,604 clients and has granted loans totalling an annual 300 billion forints for five years in a row. The government has also

adopted a strategy to help Hungarian companies make investments in other countries so that their profits made abroad could be used for funding development projects at home, Szijjártó said. He added that the government has set aside 10 billion forints for the first phase of the programme, and will soon put out the first bid.

Szijjártó noted that the Hungarian government had signed its first tied aid loan agreement in Africa, with Cape Verde, worth 50 million dollars. Similar agreements have been concluded in 10 other countries, facilitating Hungarian investments worth a combined 356 billion forints, he added.

HIDVÉGHI: FIDESZ TO CALL FOR DROPPING 'MIGRANT VISA' PLANS

Hungary's ruling Fidesz wants plans for a migrant visa scheme being put forward in the new European Parliament to be scrapped, Balázs Hidvéghi, a MEP-elect of the party, said. Under the scheme visas would be issued to immigrants in a fast-track procedure at embassies and consular missions of EU member states outside the bloc without any security checks, Hidvéghi told a press conference. "The aim is to open up the gates of Europe to millions of potential immigrants," he said, insisting that "pro-migration forces" had managed to have a draft adopted by the EP in December last year with support from Hungarian

leftist opposition MEPs. "Experience shows that it is almost impossible to send an immigrant back to their country of origin, even if they are staying in Europe illegally", Hidvéghi said, adding that "this poses a risk to Europe's citizens".

TARLÓS SLAMS OPPOSITION CANDIDATES FOR 'IMPOSSIBLE' PLEDGES

The candidates of the opposition parties for the mayor of Budapest have made campaign pledges that are "impossible to meet", István Tarlós, the incumbent mayor, told public broadcaster M1. Tarlós insisted that Olga Kálmán, an independent candidate supported by the leftist Democratic Coalition, had set out goals which would cost around 2,000 billion forints (EUR 6.2bn), adding that those funds "do not exist" in the city's budget. He said that if the pledges of Kálmán and Socialist-Párbeszéd's Gergely Karácsony were "added up" Budapest could "shut down" financially. Tarlós warned that levying a tax on uninhabited properties and on ones worth over 500 million forints, as proposed by Karácsony, would be illegal. Kálmán's proposal to make public transport free of charge for young people or making it mandatory for district councils to build an annual 100 housing units would also violate laws, Tarlós said.

Concerning the opposition's preselection of mayoral candidates

Tarlós said it was no more than "propaganda and marketing", a procedure which has "no legal consequences" and in which there is "no real debate" between the contenders.

AVL BUILDING HUF 12.5 BN DEVELOPMENT CENTRE IN HUNGARY

Austrian engineering company AVL laid the cornerstone of a 12.5 billion forint (EUR 38.6m) regional development centre in Érd, on the outskirts of Budapest. Hungary's government is supporting the investment with a grant of 3 billion forints, Foreign Minister Péter Szijjártó said at the groundbreaking ceremony. The centre will create 350 jobs, including 253 high-skills positions, he added.

Szijjártó said the government was committed to supporting similar investment projects and social contribution taxes will be reduced by two percentage points from next week, while several other measures aimed at simplifying bureaucratic procedures will also take effect. The minister noted 11% growth in Hungary's automotive sector in the first four months of the year, adding that the combined value of goods produced had doubled since 2010, totalling 8,500 billion forints last year. The sector employs 173,000 people, and 91% of products are exported, he added.