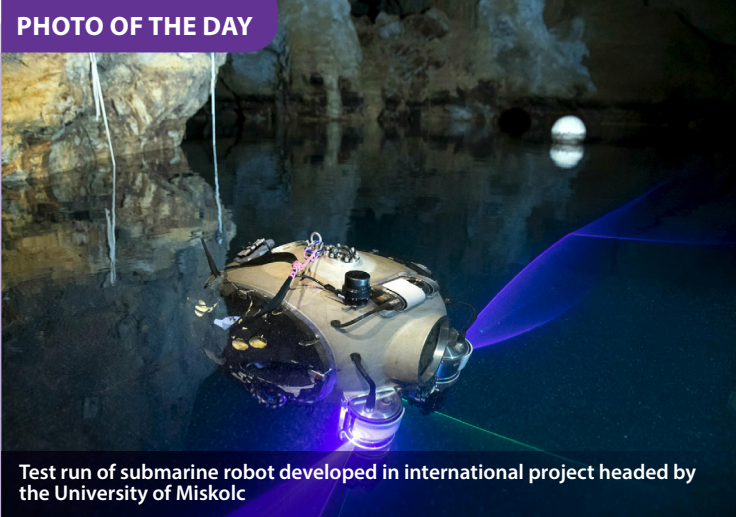


## PHOTO OF THE DAY



MTI/Balázs Mohai

Test run of submarine robot developed in international project headed by the University of Miskolc

## UPCOMING EVENTS

**Parliament's European affairs, justice committees hold joint session**

**Stats office releases retail figures for May**

**European Parliament plenary continues**

## TOP STORY

# GULYÁS VOICES SUPPORT FOR EU TOP JOB PICKS

The European Council's picks to head the bloc's top institutions should be "granted trust in advance", the head of the Prime Minister's Office has said.

Gergely Gulyás told a regular press briefing that the Hungarian government and ruling Fidesz disagreed with some of the candidates on a number of issues, but "the head of the European Commission should act as guardian of the treaties despite those differences". It is important that "our goals of stopping migration, protecting Christian culture and ensuring respect for a Europe of nations should not be the targets of attacks", Gulyás said.

Meanwhile, Gulyás said that neither Frans Timmermans nor Manfred Weber had the ability to promote consensus between member states. "In light of recent developments the Spitzenkandidat system has failed," he said. Gulyás said he saw a good chance that Ursula von der Leyen, as head of the European Commission, would "mediate fairly between member states" and perform well in the role of guardian of the treaties. "We don't have a problem if someone has different views on migration, unless they want to force their position on us," Gulyás said. "We just expect tolerance."

## **ORBÁN: FUTURE 'STILL HOLDS BATTLES' AFTER EU LEADERSHIP NOMINATIONS**

Serious mistakes were made in the European Union in the past few years which will have to be set right, Hungarian Prime Minister Viktor Orbán told public media after the extraordinary meeting of the European Council to nominate the new heads of EU bodies after the May elections.

The extraordinary session was convened for Sunday, and postponed on Monday after the heads of state and government failed to reach an agreement in a marathon session. The meeting resumed on Tuesday, when the council nominated German Defence Minister Ursula von der Leyen for the position of head of the European Commission, Belgian Prime Minister Charles Michel for head of the European Council and Spanish Foreign Minister Josep Borrell for High Representative for the Union for Foreign Affairs and Security Policy.

Orbán told current affairs channel M1 that although economic policy, migration policy and "respect for the nations" were still problematic issues, the chances of finding a solution were much better now. The talks were tense because the stakes were high, Orbán said. The council decided who would lead European bodies in the years to come, and that was important for all member states, he said.

The question was whether those positions were given to people who "love and respect Hungary, know the history of central Europe and appreciate the importance of Christian culture", Orbán said. "There is a good chance" that the new leaders will pursue policies beneficial for Hungary, he said. "However, the job is not small or easy, and we are but starting."

The future still "holds battles" as differences in opinion prevail, he said. "An important victory has been achieved but new debates keep coming up in international politics," he said. "At least now we have the strength to stand up for ourselves," he added.

The Visegrad Group's role is especially important, and not only in light of the recent events, Orbán said. The alliance of the Czech Republic, Hungary, Poland and Slovakia is a "success story", he said, as the group of nations showing the most solidarity with each other within the bloc. Orbán praised Andrej Babiš, prime minister of the Czech Republic which currently holds the V4 rotating presidency, for keeping the group united. The Visegrad Group leaders represent 62 to 63 million people together, their combined trade volume with Germany exceeds that of France or Italy, and these countries also have the fastest economic growth and fastest falling unemployment rate, he noted.

At the selection process for the EU leadership nominations, two politicians were considered for EC head who would have been "more

than bad" for Hungary, as they had demonstrated that they did not respect the country or its citizens, Orbán said. Their nomination was successfully "thwarted", he said, and they were replaced with a German mother of seven. "This in itself shows that change is afoot in Europe," he said.

## **SZIJJÁRTÓ: HUNGARY IN FAVOUR OF RESTORING UKRAINE TIES**

Hungary will propose to Ukraine's new president that bilateral relations should "return to the old path", an era when the Hungarian community in the neighbouring country's Transcarpathia region could fully exercise their acquired minority rights, the foreign minister said on the sidelines of an international conference on Wednesday. Péter Szijjártó attended a conference on reforms in Ukraine in Toronto.

Speaking to MTI by phone, Szijjártó noted that the previous president, Petro Poroshenko, pursued an anti-Hungarian policy. The education and language laws adopted during his term violate the Hungarian community's rights, he said. The laws are in conflict with European standards, as well as with international law and bilateral obligations, he said.

Now with a new president in office there is hope that Ukraine will not continue to pursue an anti-Hungarian policy, he said, adding that Volodymyr Zelensky's statements "had so far been encouraging", giving hope for optimism.

The question is whether Zelensky will make sure that legal changes are implemented to “return the rights of the Hungarian community” after the autumn parliamentary elections, Szijjártó said. “Should this happen, Hungary will then support convening a meeting of the NATO-Ukraine committee,” the foreign minister said. Hungary will then also be ready to carry out a comprehensive economic cooperation plan with Ukraine including a 50 million euro tied aid programme supporting road construction in Transcarpathia, Szijjártó said.

Hungary also stands ready to resume the work of the joint economic and environment protection committees, and to continue its Transcarpathia economic development programme, he added. Szijjártó said he had held bilateral talks with Stepan Kubiv, the deputy prime minister of Ukraine, Kurt Volker, the US’s special representative for Ukraine and Pekka Haavisto, Finland’s foreign minister.

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## **GULYÁS: HUNGARY, NORWAY IN TALKS ON GRANT FUNDS**

Talks are ongoing between Hungary and Norway on the distribution of funds to Hungarian civil groups from the Norwegian government under its Norway Grants scheme, but it is uncertain if an agreement will be reached, the head of the Prime Minister’s Office said. Gergely Gulyás said in response to a question that negotiations between the

two countries had been made more difficult by the Norwegian government’s “insistence on supporting the civil organisations of [US billionaire] George Soros”. Hungary, however, intends to spend the entirety of the grant on schemes aimed at improving the integration of the Roma community, he said. In response to a question, Gulyás said he had no knowledge of the US president having been asked to mediate in the talks between the two countries.

On the topic of the government’s family protection action plan, Gulyás said the scheme’s implementation was going smoothly. He noted that the first four of the plan’s seven measures entered into effect on Monday. The measures are attracting a lot of interest, Gulyás said, adding that the government expects the number of applications for the various support schemes to reach record levels by the end of the month.

Gulyás was also asked about reports by news portal Index saying that the ruling parties were planning to draft a constitutional amendment proposal that would include a ban on adoptions by same-sex couples if Budapest Mayor István Tarlós won re-election in the autumn. Gulyás commented on the reports by saying that “Index has gotten started on the election campaign as a member of [Párbeszéd candidate] Gergely Karácsony’s team.” The PM’s Office chief said it was “completely absurd” to try to link the planned constitutional amendment with the municipal elections. He said

there were no plans to change the rules around adoption, which currently allow adoption by heterosexual couples only.

On another subject, Gulyás said he did not think the move to relocate research institutions of the Hungarian Academy of Sciences (MTA) to a new body with its own, independent budget chapter violated any European Union laws. He added that he did not expect the EU to launch an infringement procedure against Hungary over the amendment.

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## **TARLÓS TOPS MAYORAL CANDIDATE POPULARITY SURVEY**

Budapest Mayor István Tarlós holds an eight-point lead over his nearest opposition rival in a new favourability survey released by the Századvég Foundation. In the phone survey conducted between June 15 and 18 on a sample of 1,000 voting-age adults, Tarlós had a 51% favourability rating. Of the opposition candidates, 43% had a favourable opinion of Olga Kálmán, who was the Democratic Coalition’s (DK) candidate in an opposition primary to select a single challenger for Tarlós in the autumn municipal election. Gergely Karácsony, the candidate of the Socialist-Párbeszéd alliance who won the opposition primary between June 20 and 25, was backed by 38% of respondents. Róbert Puzsér, an independent candidate who did not participate in the primary, and the Momentum Movement’s Gábor

Kerpel-Fronius were popular with 21% and 20%, respectively, Századvég said.

The pollster also surveyed respondents on their opinion regarding the possible outcome of the October ballot. A substantial majority, 68% of respondents, said Tarlós would win another term. Fully 13% expect Karácsony to win. Kálmán and Kerpel-Fronius got 8% and 1% respectively, Századvég said. Puzsér was predicted as the winner by 1%.

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### **FIDESZ'S JÁRÓKA, DK'S DOBREV ELECTED EP VICE-PRESIDENTS**

Ruling Fidesz's MEP Livia Járóka and the opposition Democratic Coalition's Klára Dobrev were both elected vice-presidents of the European Parliament on Wednesday. Járóka, who has been vice-president of the EP since November 2017 and nominated

again by the European People's Party, was re-elected with 349 votes in a plenary session in Strasbourg. The Fidesz-Christian Democrat alliance said in a statement that Járóka "has earned the recognition of her fellow representatives with her work aimed at eliminating poverty in Europe, advancing the integration of Roma citizens and improving the situation of women". Járóka, they noted, was the EP's first-ever Roma member and vice-president. Dobrev, who had been nominated by the Socialists and Democrats group, was backed by 402 MEPs. Both MEPs were elected in the first round of voting.

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### **BUDAPEST 'DETERMINED TO BECOME MORE LIVEABLE CITY'**

Budapest, similarly to other large cities, is determined to become

increasingly liveable, deputy mayor Gábor Bagdy said at a conference dubbed Budapest and Vienna - Smart Cities for a Sustainable Future. Programmes that involve the opening of public spaces, their improved accessibility, and promoting cycling and walking in cities are important for increased liveability, he said. Budapest and Vienna show many similarities and Vienna also serves as an excellent example for "a path we would like to follow", he added. He said Budapest Mayor István Tarlós agreed with his Viennese counterpart last year to further strengthen bilateral relations.

Marcus Schobert, a representative of Vienna's provincial parliament and the Vienna general assembly, said that if Vienna was the world's most liveable city then a common vision for the future must be to form the most liveable region in the world.