

## PHOTO OF THE DAY



MTI/Nándor Veres

Deputy PM Zsolt Semjén at the Bálványos Summer University

## UPCOMING EVENTS

**PM Orbán addresses 30th Bálványos Summer University in Băile Tușnad**

**Innovation minister attends ZalaZone ground-breaking in Zalaegerszeg**

**Hungarian-Croatian Cycle in a Network 2.0 project closing conference**

## TOP STORY

# SEMJÉN: STATE SUPPORTS ETHNIC HUNGARIAN PARTIES, ORGANISATIONS

The Hungarian state supports ethnic Hungarian parties and organisations abroad because this serves Hungarian interests and it is in line with the constitution, Deputy Prime Minister Zsolt Semjén said at the summer university in Băile Tușnad (Tusnádfürdő), central Romania.

Semjén told a podium discussion held with representatives of Hungarian communities that the Hungarian state is currently spending an annual 130 billion forints (EUR 400m) on ethnic Hungarian communities as against 9 billion forints in 2009. The initial aim for supporting these communities was to help them preserve their identity, he said. Then, a few years ago, economic development schemes were launched and these have created win-win situations, he added. "This is good for [ethnic] Hungarians, for the majority nation, and also for Hungary because every forint invested resulted in another forint of growth and this had a positive impact also on the growth of the Hungarian economy," he said. Semjén said the number of individuals who were granted Hungarian citizenship in a fast-track naturalisation process was near 1.1 million. In contrast with 1990, when Hungary was one of the weakest states in the Carpathian Basin, it has become the strongest in the region. "We are strong, we have self-awareness and we are progressing further," he said.

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## **DATE OF LOCAL ELECTIONS SET FOR OCT. 13**

President János Áder has set the date of Hungary's 2019 local elections for October 13. "The strength and stability of our democracy is ensured by the nation's voters expressing their will freely and responsibly," Áder said in a statement published on the website of the Presidential Office. "Ever since the first free elections held in 1990, all constitutional conditions have been in place for us to decide on our own fate and on the issues affecting our present and future." Áder noted that Hungary will organise its eighth municipal elections in the autumn. He encouraged voters to exercise their rights and cast their ballots in the Oct. 13 election.

The election of ethnic minority representatives will be held on the same day.

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## **SZIJJÁRTÓ: TRIESTE PORT TO STRENGTHEN HUNGARY**

The port and logistics base Hungary is establishing in Trieste will strengthen the country, Foreign Minister Péter Szijjártó told news portal Origo in an interview, arguing that Hungarian companies had a fundamental interest in shipping their goods directly out to sea. The Trieste port will provide reliability and predictability for Hungarian firms, which will guarantee profitability, Szijjártó said. He said the

interest generated by the project among exporters made it "obvious" that it would be profitable, arguing that Hungarian and international companies would pay significant sums of money for storage and shipping at the site. Szijjártó said the government had chosen Trieste because it is one of the closest ports to Hungary with enough capacity to meet the needs of Hungarian exporters.

He said the port would be used by medium-large sized freight vessels. The largest ships tend to dock either in Rotterdam or Piraeus where they transfer their goods onto smaller vessels before sending them off to Trieste, he added. The turnover of goods between Trieste and Hungary has grown four-fold in recent years, with at least one freight train a day running between them, Szijjártó said. Hungary expects this to double once the Hungarian port starts operating, he added. The minister said Hungary had also been in talks with Slovenia on setting up a port in Koper. However, those talks fell through due to opposition from some of the parties in Slovenia's minority government, he added.

The state of Hungary has already signed the agreement on establishing the port and logistics base in Trieste, Szijjártó said. That deal, which enters into force in the autumn, will be followed up by another one detailing the effect of upgrades that began in the port in 2016 on the plot purchased by Hungary. Later, a Hungarian company will be set up to

oversee further investments worth 100 million euros to be carried out at the site, he said, adding that the port will have to be completed within three years. Szijjártó said Hungary is in talks with the other three Visegrad Group countries on bringing them into the project.

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## **BALOG EXPECTS 'NEW CHAPTER' IN HUNGARY- GERMANY RELATIONS**

Zoltán Balog, the prime minister's commissioner for social affairs, said a new chapter could open in Hungary-Germany relations, with Germany and the Visegrad Group together representing the view that external borders must be protected and migration rejected. After attending a panel discussion in Stuttgart late on Thursday about the approaching 30th anniversary of Hungary opening its borders, Balog told MTI by phone that a thousand years of Hungarian-German friendship must not be allowed to deteriorate. At the event organised with the participation of the Konrad Adenauer Foundation which has close links with the Christian Democratic Union (CDU) of Germany, Balog said Guido Wolf, the justice and European affairs minister of Baden-Württemberg, told around 400 participants that more attention must be paid to countries that joined the European Union after the end of the communist era.

Wolf said he fully agreed that these countries should not be handled

as “second-class” and “eastern” Europeans, “getting lectured about democracy and freedom”. It must be accepted that these countries “want to follow their own way within the European Union” and “while they are ready for compromises and finding consent, they still expect to be handled as partners,” he said. Balog said “we trust that a new chapter could start”, with the values of central European countries being allowed to prevail and the approach of the “old” outgoing European Commission losing its dominance. Germany could play a “central role” in this process because it “understands” not only western Europeans but also eastern Europeans, through the former German Democratic Republic, Balog said. He added that on Wednesday he met another senior CDU politician Thomas Bareiss, a member of the Bundestag, and addressed an event about the future of European Christian democracy.

### **RATE OF POPULATION DECLINE INCREASES IN JAN-MAY**

The rate of population decline increased in the first five months

of 2019 after 2.1% fewer births and 0.5% more deaths were registered compared with the same period last year, the Central Statistical Office (KSH) said. In the first five months of the year, 34,823 children were born, 745 fewer than in the same period last year, while 57,799 died, 267 more than in Jan-May 2018. The rate of natural population decline was 4.6% (22,976) higher than in the same period a year earlier, KSH said. The number of marriages increased, with 16,289 couples tying the knot, 4.4% more than in the same period last year.

### **WW2 BOMB REMOVED FROM CITY PARK AREA**

Transport restrictions have been lifted and traffic resumed in Budapest's City Park area after a Soviet-made unexploded second world war bomb had been successfully lifted and removed by the army bomb disposal unit, the municipal government office said on its website. Sections of István, Marek József, Dembinszky, and Peterdy streets between Dózsa György Road and Murányi Street, as well as Cházár A. Street had been closed for traffic. Buses and trolley buses in the area were rerouted. The

authorities had evacuated some 3,500 residents from the area. They provided temporary shelters as well as transport and personal assistance to the sick and elderly, the government office said earlier. The 100kg bomb was discovered at a construction site on Thursday.

### **LIFE EXPECTANCY GENDER GAP SLIGHTLY DIMINISHES**

Life expectancy at birth in Hungary was estimated to be 76.0 years in 2017, reaching 79.3 years for women and 72.5 years for men, a difference of 6.8 years, fresh data from Eurostat showed. The life expectancy gender gap was down from 7.1 years in 2016 and just somewhat above the 6.7 years in 2015.

The gap has been mostly closing in Hungary since 2000 when it was at 8.7 years as life expectancy for men was at 67.5 years and 76.2 years for women.

In 2017 life expectancy at birth in the EU was estimated to be 80.9 years, reaching 83.5 years for women and 78.3 years for men, a difference of 5.2 years. The biggest difference, at 9.9 years in favour of women was in Latvia, the smallest in the Netherlands, still favouring women by 3.2 years.