

PHOTO OF THE DAY



MTI/Zoltán Balogh

Fine Arts Museum director László Baán opening Rembrandt exhibition

UPCOMING EVENTS

State secretary for health care attends V4 meeting on organ donation

Opposition presser on direct funding for local municipalities

Inauguration of the ZalaZone research and technology centre

Szijjártó inaugurates DENSO assembly plant in C Hungary

TOP STORY

PM OPENS NEW CONSTITUTION PROTECTION OFFICES

The modern Hungarian state needs a secret service, constitutional protection and national security agencies, the prime minister said, at the inauguration of the new building of the Constitution Protection Office (AH) in Budapest.

In his speech, Viktor Orbán underscored the importance of protecting Hungary's sovereignty, noting that this was primarily the responsibility of the country's constitutional bodies and institutions.

Construction of the new building cost nearly 30 billion forints (EUR 90.0m), he said. Orbán added that it had been a long time since the Hungarian economy had been in good enough shape, and since the state had the strength and ability, and the government the determination to make this kind of investment. The new building will house every unit of the AH under one roof instead of four different premises as it had been up until now, the prime minister said.

Orbán said constitution protection and secret service had existed since the advent of organised society. "Our opponents are also active in these areas, and we can't afford ... not to be," Orbán said. "That's what secret services are for." Orbán also mentioned contemporary challenges such as cyber protection, new intelligence methods and social media, the latter of which he said was "uncontrolled and hard to keep track of".

EP FOREIGN AFFAIRS CTTEE TO HEAR TRÓCSÁNYI ON OCT 1

The foreign affairs committee of the European Parliament (AFET) will hear László Trócsányi, the Hungarian commissioner-designate selected for the Neighbourhood and Enlargement portfolio, on October 1, the EP's Conference of Presidents said. The body published the final schedule of its hearings on Thursday. Trócsányi's hearing, a three-hour question and answer session, is to start at 6.30 pm.

After the hearings, the designated commissioner can be confirmed immediately with a two-third majority of the EP parliamentary groups' coordinators. Alternatively, the committee can ask the designated members of the European Commission to answer written questions or appear before the committee a second time. The European Parliament is set to vote about the list of EC members in a plenary session on October 23. European Commission President-elect Ursula von der Leyen presented her team and the new structure of the next EC in Brussels on September 10.

SZIJJÁRTÓ: HUNGARY ALWAYS PROMOTED EAST-WEST COOPERATION

Hungary has always worked towards cooperation between East and West, which is also demonstrated by the opening of the Turkic Council office

in Budapest, Foreign Minister Péter Szijjártó said. In the new world order, only those can be winners that stand up for their national interests, preserve their cultural, religious and historical heritage, and insist on maintaining their identity, Szijjártó said at the opening ceremony. "We are proud of our historical, cultural and religious heritage and the fact that despite all attempts to pressurise us, we could preserve Hungary for Hungarians and for a secure home," he added.

Hungary has often been referred to as the easternmost western country or the westernmost eastern country, he said. This used to be considered a remark with an ironic edge to it but the world has changed and at present the pace of change in the global economy is also dictated from the east, not only from the west, he added.

Hungary's foreign policy is based on mutual respect, giving respect to partners and expecting the same from them, Szijjártó said. "We build our relations with Turkic Council members on mutual respect, too," he said. Members of the Turkic Council play an increasingly important role in Hungary's foreign policy endeavours, he said, adding that Hungary offers 675 scholarship positions to these countries in its universities. Szijjártó expressed thanks to the Turkic Council for setting up its first European representative office in Budapest.

Baghdad Amreyev, the secretary-general of the council, said the opening of the Budapest representative office was a clear

indication of the success of the organisation, offering new opportunities for cooperation with Hungary and also with Europe. The event was attended by foreign ministers Chingiz Aidarbekov of Kyrgyzstan, Elmar Mammadyarov of Azerbaijan and Mevlüt Cavusoglu of Turkey as well as Ambassador Nurbakh Rustemov of Kazakhstan in Budapest.

ORBÁN MEETS TURKIC COUNCIL FOREIGN MINISTERS

Prime Minister Viktor Orbán met the foreign ministers of Turkic Council member states in Budapest on Thursday, Orbán's press chief said. Parties in the meeting agreed that building on a shared Hungarian-Turkic cultural and historical heritage, cooperation between Hungary and the Council's countries will benefit all, Bertalan Havasi said. They welcomed the opening of the Turkic Council's office in Budapest earlier in the day, calling the event a milestone in EU-Turkic ties. Hungary received observer status in the Council in 2018.

At another event, Foreign Minister Péter Szijjártó accepted a jubilee medal from Elmar Mammadyarov, Azerbaijan's foreign minister. Mammadyarov presented Szijjártó with the medal at an event celebrating the 100th anniversary of the establishment of Azerbaijan's diplomatic service. At the event, Szijjártó said Hungarian and Azeri leaders "can always be honest to each other, and so our cooperation is efficient." Hungary is

committed to keeping up the good relations, he added. Mammadyarov said the medal is an acknowledgement of Szijjártó's "friendly openness" towards Azerbaijan. Azerbaijan awards the medal to persons with outstanding achievements in promoting Azerbaijan's diplomatic and international relations.

Foreign Minister Péter Szijjártó also had talks with Chingiz Aidarbekov, his Kyrgyz counterpart, where they agreed that Hungary would open a consular office in Bishkek next year. Kyrgyzstan will appoint an honorary consul in Hungary. Parties at the talks finalised the wording of an agreement aimed at mutual investment protection and started negotiations concerning another accord to avoid double taxation, the statement said. Aidarbekov confirmed his country's support to Hungary's endeavours to become a member of UNESCO's executive council, the document added.

GULYÁS: GERMANY LOOKING FORWARD TO NEW EC 'WITH OPTIMISM'

Germany is looking forward to the new European Commission headed by Ursula von der Leyen with optimism, Gergely Gulyás, head of the prime minister's office, told MTI by phone from Düsseldorf, where he had talks with North Rhine-Westphalian politicians. The new EC, which is to stand up in November, has "nurtured change (in Germany) ... there is

much more optimism and much less pessimism," Gulyás said, adding that "that was different a few years, or even a few months ago". Germany "grasps" the differences between east and west within the EU, Gulyás said, and so "with Ursula von der Leyen, finally not only western Europe but the whole of Europe will have an EC president."

In Düsseldorf, Gulyás met Stephan Holthoff-Pförtner, North Rhein-Westphalia's minister for international, EU and federal affairs. They discussed EU enlargement and agreed that the Balkan states needed a "realistic perspective of enlargement" putting Serbia's accession within the foreseeable future and giving a perspective also to other countries that are prepared for EU membership. Regarding the EU's budget for the 2021-2027 financial cycle, Gulyás said that Hungary "cannot accept" the draft budget proposed by outgoing EC president Jean-Claude Juncker. Hopefully, the next commission will support changes that will make the budget acceptable for all member states, the minister said, noting that the budget has to be accepted unanimously.

In the North Rhein-Westphalian parliament in Düsseldorf, Gulyás attended a commemorative session marking the 30th anniversary of Hungary's opening its border to Austria, a pivotal event in the fall of communism. In his speech at the event, Gulyás said Europe had been divided for four decades which fostered differences among the member states, next to many shared values.

"Nowadays, it is customary to interpret those differences as anti-European sentiments, authoritarianism or a lack of rule of law, which we cannot but see as unfounded intolerance towards those who think differently," Gulyás said.

GERMAN INTERIOR MINISTER THANKS HUNGARY FOR ITS ROLE IN 1989

German Interior Minister Horst Seehofer has sent a letter to Prime Minister Viktor Orbán to thank Hungary for the opening of its western border to East German citizens 30 years ago, Orbán's press chief said. "I would like to take this opportunity to thank you for the outstanding contribution Hungary has made to German and European history," Seehofer said. The German politician said that the Pan-European Picnic on August 19 and the opening of Hungary's western border to East Germans on September 10 represented a milestone on the road to a united and free Europe. Germany will never forget the courage Hungary had shown which still binds the two countries together in a deep friendship, he said. "This courageous move also calls us to stand up together for our freedom," Seehofer said.

LMP: LOCAL RESPONSES TO CLIMATE CHANGE AT STAKE

At stake in October's municipal elections is whether Hungary's cities and towns will have "green or climate-

skeptic" mayors after the ballot, opposition LMP said. Addressing a press conference in Budapest, lawmaker Péter Ungár accused ruling Fidesz's mayoral candidates of denying climate change, saying they "cast the issue as a communist, Sorosist conspiracy". He said any Fidesz candidates who did acknowledge the seriousness of the issue only paid lip service to it. Ungár lamented that many local councils have refused to even discuss LMP's proposal calling for the declaration of a climate emergency in Hungary, while green areas were being "destroyed" in a number of localities. A single municipality is capable of taking action on climate change, he said, pointing out the enlargement of green areas as an example.

WORLD PRESS PHOTO WITH HUNGARIAN CATEGORY WINNER OPENS IN BUDAPEST

The World Press Photo exhibition featuring Hungary's Bence Máté's category winning "Survival instinct"

has opened in Budapest. The exhibition shows the best 143 photos chronicling all major events in the world last year and the winners of the international contest's eight categories, the Hungarian event's organiser told a press conference on Wednesday. The main focus of this year's competition is migration and women issues, but despite the themes the images are less "dramatic" than what visitors would expect, Tamás Révész said.

Bence Máté's photo won first prize in Nature category. It shows frogs struggling to the surface, surrounded by frogspawn, after their legs have been severed for culinary purposes and they were thrown back into the water. The photo was made in Covasna, central Romania, last April.

Sophie Boshouwers, curator of the World Press Photo Foundation, told the press conference that the exhibition tours more than 100 cities each year. It generally attracts the second largest number of visitors in Budapest after Amsterdam. The exhibition in the Hungarian National Museum was

opened by Dutch Ambassador René van Hell and will run until October 23.

'REMBRANDT AND HIS PUPILS' EXHIBITION OPENS AT MUSEUM OF FINE ARTS

An exhibition showing Rembrandt's impact on his pupils opened in Budapest's Museum of Fine Arts. The exhibition dubbed Rembrandt and his pupils will run through January 5. At the opening event, museum head László Baán said the show marks the 350th anniversary of the Dutch master's death. The museum has over 40 drawings by Rembrandt and his followers, and almost all of his etchings can be found in the collection, he said. Next to Rembrandt, the show features works by Ferdinand Bol, Samuel van Hoogstraten and Gerbrand van den Eeckhout, among others, the organisers said. The exhibition offers an insight into how the master fostered independence in his pupils instead of servile reproduction, with some of Rembrandt's corrections visible on the pupils' work, they said.

