

## PHOTO OF THE DAY



MTI/Zoltán Balogh

Runners at Budapest's Vivicitá half-marathon on Saturday

## UPCOMING EVENTS

**EU foreign ministers meet in Brussels**

**Coronavirus updates**

## TOP STORY

# CHILD PROTECTION LAW 'STRUCK NERVE'

The European Commission and European Parliament want LGBTQ activists and organisations to be let into kindergartens and schools, the justice minister has said.

"We've struck a nerve," Judit Varga told public broadcaster Kossuth Rádió, referring to Hungary's child protection law, which, she insisted did not breach any European norms. The minister said that whereas the European Court of Justice normally gave member states a two-month deadline when it considered that legislation was not in line with EU norms, now Hungary had been given a single week, with a June 30 deadline. Hungary, she added, refused to be dictated to by the court or any other European body over how lives should be lived in Hungary. The EU Charter of Fundamental Rights states that parents have the sole right to decide how to bring up a child, she said.

Meanwhile, on the topic of the EU recovery fund, Varga said "highly constructive" dialogue was under way regarding recovery plans, adding that Hungary's recovery package had been drawn up in line with EU rules. However, the EC has since made new demands in light of the child protection law, she said, adding that the two should not be linked since one does not impinge on the other.

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**JUSTICE MINISTER:  
PROSPEROUS FAMILIES  
KEY TO SUSTAINABLE  
DEVELOPMENT**

Prosperous families are key to sustainable development, a concept uniting environmental, social and economic aspects, Justice Minister Judit Varga said on Friday, addressing a conference on family and sustainability. Varga told the 10th Large Family Conference, a three-day event held in Keszthely, in western Hungary, that “credible climate and environment protection is the foundation of family-friendly policies” as it works to ensure a healthy environment and sustainable lifestyle for current and future generations.

Dubravka Šuica, the European Commission’s Vice-President for demography and democracy, said families should be supported “regardless of their size or structure.” The European continent is grappling with the ageing of its population, Šuica said, calling for solidarity between generations.

Addressing the 10th European Large Family Conference on Saturday, Katalin Novák, the minister without portfolio for families, said the Hungarian government’s actions taken since 2010 were proof that it supported families. “Family is the cradle of sustainability,” Novák told a conference organised by the National Association of Large Families and the European Large Families Confederation. Political will, she added,

was a chief pillar of sustainable family policy. In 2010, the government chose to link family benefits to work, thereby laying the foundations to increase sums available for this kind of support. Accordingly, next year’s budget contains triple the amount in 2010 for family benefits, Novák noted. If the economy grows by 5.5%, the government plans next year to return a large part of personal income tax to families raising children, she said. Sustainable family policy, the minister said, needs supporters and real communities, noting the three decades of work carried out by the National Association of Large Families. Novák spoke of sustaining the Hungarian nation and its culture and values from one generation to the next. Close to 700 people from eleven countries attended the European Large Family Conference. Professional events were complemented by family programmes such as arts and crafts organised for children.

**KÖVÉR: EU ABOUT  
TO BE DESTROYED BY ITS  
PROTECTORS**

The European Union is on course to be destroyed by the very people currently trying to protect it from Hungary, Speaker of Parliament László Kövér told public broadcaster Kossuth Rádió. Regarding the current state of affairs in the EU, Kövér said that “after Nazis and Communists, a new totalitarian ambition is about to destroy Europe, sometimes called Liberalism, post-Humanism or whatever... green folly.”

Commenting on claims of “uppity politicians rubbing in our faces that we would not be accepted into the EU today because of our so-called rule-of-law issues and values and views,” Kövér said he would probably vote against Hungary joining the bloc if the referendum was held today. He said he had voted for the EU in 2003 out of conviction that with its accession, Hungary would receive a favourable, democratic and civilised framework as well as funding. “That is true right up to this day,” Kövér said, stressing he did not think Hungary would fare better outside the EU.

However, “we are subjected to a degree of aggression and have been told to leave normality behind in a way that awakens resistance not only in Hungarians but also in the majority of Europeans,” he insisted. Representatives of the European left -- “sitting as often in the European People’s Party as in the far left” -- were intentionally dismantling the EU’s moral framework, he said.

Regarding the Hungarian general election in 2022, Kövér said the stakes were to protect the achievements of the “rather ambiguous” regime change in 1989-90, but also the government’s measures to reduce utility fees and wide-ranging family support schemes. He slammed the opposition for “proclaiming an open uprising against the constitutional order.” They are, however, deluded to think that the Hungarian majority will “suffer the vandalism of a terrorist minority in this country,” Kövér said.

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## **FIDESZ MEP: EU DEMOCRACY IN DANGER**

The foundations of the democratic European Union today are at risk of being overtaken by a federal union, created without legitimacy and against the will of member states and their citizens, Fidesz MEP László Trócsányi said in an article published in the daily Magyar Nemzet. The former justice minister noted a recent open letter in the Frankfurter Allgemeine Zeitung signed by 30 German constitutional judges calling on the European Commission to abandon an infringement procedure against Germany. The procedure was launched in response to a decision by the German Constitutional Court last year, saying that national constitutional courts should retain the right to review EU measures to protect their constitutional identity. Otherwise, the EU would have free hand in gradually stripping member states of their competencies, he said. "In the end, this could lead to the emergence of a federal European Union lacking legitimacy, against the will of member states and their citizens. If the EC refuses to drop the infringement procedure [against Germany], the treaties, the rule of law and European democracy, and ... European integration will be put at risk," Trócsányi said. Whereas European law derives from a consensus among the member states, its primacy over

state legislation was „something the European Court of Law stated in the 1960s in order to cement its own power and prepare the ground to assume states' rights stealthily," he said.

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## **VIROLOGIST: FOURTH WAVE POSSIBLE DUE TO LARGE NUMBERS OF UNVACCINATED**

Given the large number of unvaccinated still in Hungary, a fourth wave of the epidemic could well be on its way, virologist Ferenc Jakab told the daily Magyar Nemzet. Vaccinations are the only path to lessening the risk of a further wave, the professor who heads Hungary's coronavirus research task force told the paper's Saturday edition. The delta variant, he added, would be the cause of the next wave, which was likely to be stronger than the first though lighter than the third, and reach Hungary before the autumn. "With a bit of luck we'll still get away with August," he said. "There's a clear cause for concern," he said. The number of infections has begun to rise even in countries such as in Israel where the vaccination rate is relatively high. He noted that the World Health Organization (WHO) predicted a fourth wave in Europe on the back of the delta variant. Jakab said no one should be under the illusion that the epidemic is over. "The most we have for the time being is a litter breather."

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## **IT MINISTER IN TALKS ON COOPERATION IN BAVARIA ENERGY STORAGE PLANT**

Innovation and Technology Minister László Palkovics has discussed Hungary's cooperation in the construction of an energy storage facility in Bavaria, the ministry said. After talks with the Max Aicher group, which also owns the steel works in Ózd, in northern Hungary, the minister noted that the group was preparing the construction of a facility capable of storing 450 MW of electricity in southern Bavaria. Palkovics said storing energy from weather-dependent sustainable sources and night-time nuclear energy was an "environmental and competitive advantage". Since Hungary's geography does not allow for the construction of a gravity-based energy storage plant, the group's offer for Hungary to acquire a share in the German plant is especially attractive, Palkovics said.

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## **FIDESZ: LEFTIST PARTIES WANT HOUSEHOLDS TO BEAR COSTS OF CLIMATE CHANGE**

Leftist parties, "hand in hand with Brussels", would have private citizens bear the costs of pollution and climate change by raising utility prices, the deputy group leader of ruling Fidesz, László Böröcz, has said, adding that the party would not support any proposal that would result in rising

household energy prices. Fidesz stands by the view that large polluters, such as multinational companies, should bear the costs of climate protection, Böröcz said in a video message. Leftist parties, on the other hand, would have private citizens pay the price of the green transition, he said. He encouraged Hungarians to fill out the National Consultation survey to state their dissent.

Attila Steiner, the state secretary responsible for energy and climate policy, said in a video on Facebook that the survey's question on carbon tax referred to a proposal currently before the European Commission, which would "burden families with the costs of carbon emissions". That could mean "hundreds of thousands of forints" in additional costs to Hungarian families, he said.

**GOVT OFFICIAL: HIGHER WAGES FEED INTO INCREASED BENEFITS**

If the minimum wage goes up by a fifth, related benefits such as sick pay or and maternity benefits would also

increase, a ministry of innovation and technology official has said, adding that the salaries of higher earners would also grow further. Referring to the National Consultation public survey, Tamás Schanda, the ministry's parliamentary state secretary, said the argument could be made that raising the minimum wage to 200,000 forints (EUR 563) would strengthen Hungary's economy. An opposing argument is that the burdens on small and medium-sized firms, which employ two-thirds of workers, would become too onerous, he added. He appealed to the public to help decision-makers make an informed decision on the matter by submitting their completed forms by Aug. 25.

**KÁEL: HUNGARIAN FILM STRIVES TO GET TO LARGER AUDIENCES WITH INTL CO-PRODUCTION**

Hungarian producers want to reach larger-than-ever audiences through ambitious international co-productions, the government commissioner for developing

Hungary's motion picture industry said in an interview posted on www.screendaily.com film industry website. Csaba Káel noted the year marks the 120th anniversary of the Hungarian film industry and that four films will be featured at the Cannes international film festival. The titles include Ildikó Enyedi's new feature film entitled The Story of my Wife competing for the Golden Palm award, Olivér Rudolf's FONICA M-120, Kornél Mundruczó's Evolution and Márta Mészáros's Diary for my Children.

"Now Hungary, one of Europe's biggest production service hubs, is aiming to grow the international profile of the local industry through new co-production and distribution strategies," he said. Káel, who is also chairman of the National Film Institute (NFI), said that in 2020 the NFI supported film, television and streaming productions to the tune of 51 million dollars and the country offers a 30% rebate based on the local spending of all film and TV projects. International producers can apply for grants via their Hungarian partner, he said.

