

PHOTO OF THE DAY



MTV/Zoltán Balogh

Commemorative stamps featuring characters from a Hungarian 1970s cartoon

UPCOMING EVENTS

EU foreign ministers hold informal meeting in Ljubljana

Stats office releases prelim July retail figures

Coronavirus updates

TOP STORY

HUNGARY'S IDEAS ON EUROPE 'GAINING TRACTION'

More and more people look to Hungary as an example to follow, and the country's ideas on building Europe are gaining traction, Hungary's justice minister has said.

Speaking ahead of an international forum in Alpbach, central Austria, Judit Varga said on Facebook that whereas the international media and certain politicians "enjoy portraying Hungary as the black sheep" of Europe, the country is a regular guest at the European Forum in Alpbach. Varga said that despite a push by some to "exclude Hungary" from the event, "Hungary is alive and well" and "there are no traces of exclusion at the Forum". Many are curious about Hungary's perspective and solutions, she said, adding that "more and more people consider us an example and accept our advice on how to build Europe." Varga said she is later scheduled to hold talks with European Commission Vice-President Dubravka Šuica and take part in a panel discussion on the challenges facing Europe at the invitation of Karoline Edtstadler, Austria's federal minister for the European Union. Other topics at the forum include migration, climate change, the post-Covid recovery and the ongoing conference on the future of Europe. Hungary remains committed to Europe and the EU, she added.

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FIDESZ MEP DECRIES 'LEFTIST PROPOSAL' TO SET UP LEGAL MIGRATION ROUTES

Autumn in Brussels has started with a decidedly pro-migration bent, Fidesz MEP Balázs Hidvéghi said, citing a proposal supported by left-wingers in the European Parliament to establish legal migration corridors into the European Union. Hidvéghi said on Facebook that the aim of their proposal was to make up for falling birth numbers and a dwindling workforce in parts of the bloc. "Only a few right-wing MEPs remained rational," he said, noting unemployment of around 15% in Spain and Greece. "This might not be the right time to flood the continent with thousands of immigrants," he added. "The leftists want to turn Europe into an immigration continent," the Fidesz MEP said. Meanwhile, Hungary's ruling party "believes solely in Hungarian families and the work of Hungarian workers". "While Fidesz-KDNP holds power in Hungary, this will remain the case" he added.

NOVÁK: 4TH BUDAPEST DEMOGRAPHIC SUMMIT TO HOST NEARLY 70 SPEAKERS

The fourth Budapest Demographic Summit will be held on Sept. 23-24 and will host some 70 speakers, according to Katalin Novák, the minister without portfolio for family affairs.

Like all developed countries, Hungary is facing a demographic crisis, Novák said. However, its government sees the solution in supporting families rather than in mass immigration, she said. Results of this approach include the largest growth in the number of marriages and a growing readiness to raise children, she said.

The list of speakers includes Prime Minister Viktor Orbán, former US Vice-President Mike Pence, Serbian President Aleksandar Vučić, as well as the prime ministers of Poland, the Czech Republic and Slovakia. Milorad Dodik, the Serbian member of Bosnia and Herzegovina's presidential troika, will also attend. Scientists, researchers, religious leaders and the heads of civil organisations will also attend, Novák said. The summit is being organised by Hungarian pro-family NGOs around the connections between demographics and sustainability, Novák said. "The world is sustainable if there are children born and we pass the world on to them in a better state than in which we received it," she said.

The biannual demographic summit, which was first organised in 2015, aims to showcase Hungary's achievements and for Hungary to exchange experiences with other countries, Novák said.

CJEU RULES HUNGARY LAW ON FX LOANS COMPLIES WITH EU DIRECTIVE

The Court of Justice of the European Union (CJEU) on Thursday ruled that

Hungarian legislation that prohibits the annulment of a loan agreement denominated in a foreign currency on the ground that it contains an unfair term relating to exchange rate differences complies with EU law. In the case referred to the CJEU by an appeals court in Győr, in north-west Hungary, a consumer argued that FX loan contracts with members of the OTP Group should be voided because of unfair conditions stipulating different exchange rates for disbursement and repayment. The court in Győr noted that Hungarian legislation had replaced the contested unfair terms with the official exchange rate fixed by the National Bank of Hungary (NBH) for both disbursement and repayment. It also pointed out that the legislation prohibits invalidation of loan contracts on the basis of such unfair conditions, even though such a solution would be more favourable to the borrower.

In its ruling, the CJEU said the Hungarian legislation is in line with the objective of the EU's Unfair Contract Terms Directive which is to restore the balance between parties while maintaining the validity of the agreement as a whole, instead of annulling all agreements containing unfair terms.

SEMMELWEIS UNIVERSITY AMONG WORLD'S 300 BEST

Budapest's Semmelweis University (SE) has leapt 149 places since last year and is now among the 300 best

universities of the world, according to the Times Higher Education's (THE) university ranking. SE head Béla Merkely told MTI that his university was second in Europe in terms of the improvement it had made in a single year, and noted that SE had been placed 426th in last year's ranking. "This confirms that the institution is going in the right direction thanks to our ambitious goals and the outstanding performance of students," he said. SE has improved all its indicators since last year, with special regard to its educational environment, while the number of references and indicators of international orientation also put the university among the best 25% in the world. This year's THE ranking includes 11 Hungarian universities, with Budapest's ELTE in the 601-800 range, while Pécs, Debrecen, and Szeged universities are in the 801-1000 range.

HUNGARY REGISTERS 262 NEW CORONAVIRUS INFECTIONS

One Covid patient died over the past 24 hours, while 262 new coronavirus infections were registered, koronavirus.gov.hu said on Thursday. So far 5,781,121 people have received a first jab, while 5,510,678 have been fully vaccinated. Fully 342,000 Hungarians have already received booster jabs.

The number of active infections stands at 4,824, while hospitals are treating 138 Covid patients, 16 of whom need respiratory assistance. Since the first outbreak, 812,793

infections have been registered, while fatalities have risen to 30,060. Fully 777,909 people have made a recovery.

GOVT OFFICIAL: 185,000 STUDENTS VACCINATED

Some 185,000 students have been inoculated against Covid-19 in Hungary over the summer, and another 50,000 have registered for the government's vaccination campaign in early September, a government official said. István György, a state secretary of the Prime Minister's Office who also heads the national vaccination working group, said that the vaccination rate among teachers was at 85%. While 66% of Hungarians have already received the vaccine, the "worrying" spread of the virus's delta variant worldwide means Hungary has to brace for a fourth wave, György said. The government is conducting vaccination campaigns in elderly care homes and among schoolchildren, György said. The government expects in-person education will be possible throughout the year, and has not ordered a mask mandate or temperature checks in schools, he said.

PPI CLIMBS CLOSE TO 15% IN JULY

Factory gate prices in Hungary climbed an annual 14.8% in July, the fastest rate in years, data released by the Central Statistical Office (KSH) on Thursday show. KSH said the

increase was driven by dearer raw materials, base materials and vehicle fuel, as well as by the forint-euro exchange rate.

TWO BUDAPEST RESTAURANTS AWARDED MICHELIN STAR

Two restaurants in Budapest have been newly awarded one Michelin star according to the Michelin Guide Budapest 2021, and six new restaurants have been added to this year's recommended venues, Michelin Hungaria said. Essencia and Salt are included in the Michelin Guide for the first time and bring the total number of one-star restaurants in the guide to seven, the statement said. The other restaurants are Babel, Borkonyha Winekitchen, Costes, Costes Downtown and Stand. Commenting on the new additions, International Director of the Michelin Guides Gwendal Poullennec said "both these restaurants are wonderful examples of Budapest's dynamic restaurant scene". "They not only offer fantastic food and are doing something a little different, but they also do so while paying respect to Hungary's culinary traditions," he added. The six new restaurants added to this year's Michelin Plate selection are Hoppál! Bistro, Felix, Stand25 Bisztró, Spago by Wolfgang Puck, Rumour and Pasztell.