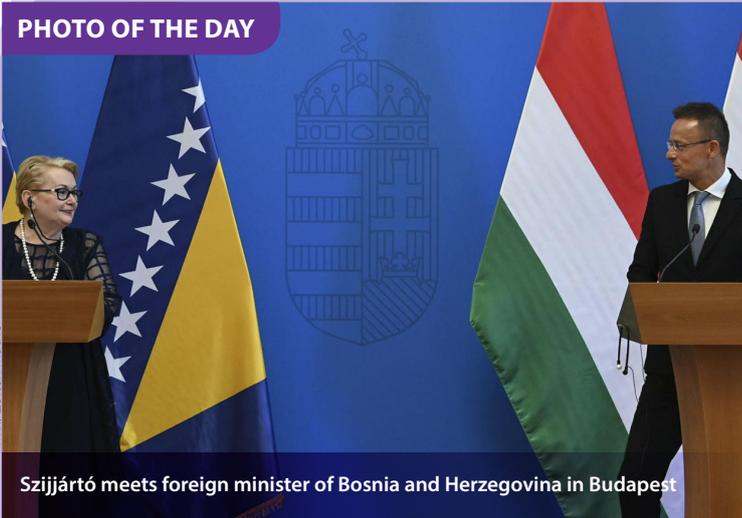


## PHOTO OF THE DAY



Szijjártó meets foreign minister of Bosnia and Herzegovina in Budapest

## UPCOMING EVENTS

**Stats office releases employment figures for June**

**War in Ukraine**

## TOP STORY

# SZIJJÁRTÓ MEETS BOSNIAN COUNTERPART

The European Union has a historic obligation to boost the integration of the Western Balkans, Péter Szijjártó, the minister of foreign affairs and trade, said on Wednesday, after talks with his Bosnia and Herzegovinan counterpart, Bisera Turković.

Abandoning that plan would seriously harm Hungary's security interests, Szijjártó said at a joint press conference with Turković. Hungary wants to avoid at all cost "having to face security challenges similar to those in Ukraine from the southern border", the foreign ministry quoted him as saying in a statement. He welcomed the EU decision to grant candidate membership to Ukraine and Moldova, and called it a "grave mistake" and "double standards" that Georgia and Bosnia and Herzegovina failed to obtain that status. "EU membership is one of the few causes over which there is a general consensus in Bosnia and Herzegovina," he said. The candidacy could have strengthened cross-party cooperation and national stability in that country, he said. Austria, Czechia, Hungary, Slovakia and Slovenia have sent a letter to the European Council, asking for the issue to be tabled in October, he said.

Szijjártó said the Hungarian government saw respectful dialogue with Western Balkan leaders as a priority, rather than engaging in "threats and sanctions".

## **ORBÁN CONGRATULATES CROATIAN PM ON NEW SEA BRIDGE**

Prime Minister Viktor Orbán has sent a letter to Andrej Plenković, his Croatian counterpart, congratulating him on the completion and opening of the Pelješac bridge, which connects the Dalmatian mainland in the south and the Pelješac peninsula, his press chief told MTI on Wednesday morning. In a letter sent to Plenković, Orbán said "I honestly believe that the completion of Croatia's most significant infrastructural project which has been carried out in an effective cooperation with international partners is a historic milestone for the Republic of Croatia," Bertalan Havasi quoted the prime minister as saying. "The new bridge which has brought an end to Croatia's infrastructural fragmentation is an excellent example how a link can serve to better interconnect the region," Orbán said in his letter. "Croatia for us, Hungarians, is traditionally one of the most favourite summer holiday destinations. This is why I am glad that through the new Pelješac bridge, our tourists and other travelers coming from all over the world can now discover the exceptional beauties of South Dalmatia under much safer circumstances and in a lot faster way," Orbán said.

## **SZIJJÁRTÓ DISMISSES ACCUSATIONS OF RACISM**

Recent accusations of racism levelled against Prime Minister Viktor Orbán's

remarks in Baile Tusnad (Tusnádfürdő), Foreign Minister Péter Szijjártó said the claims were "nonsense". "I have been working in the immediate vicinity of Viktor Orbán for 16 years, and I am fully aware that the heart and soul of his politics is zero tolerance against anti-Semitism and racism," he said at a press conference held on another subject. Attacks against Hungary's government have multiplied since the migration crisis of 2015, and "every similar statement gets twisted." He called Frans Timmermans, the European Commission Vice-President who levelled criticism at the government, "one of the most harmful politicians in the history of the EU".

Concerning the market purchase of an additional 700 million cubic metres of natural gas over the contracted volume, which Hungary hopes to conclude to boost supplies for the winter, the foreign minister said his "hopes are growing day by day ... in light of trade and political talks in both directions". "We will use the gas we bought on Hungarian taxpayer money and stored in Hungarian reservoirs as dictated by the interests of the Hungarian people and economy, he said. We will make no compromises on that," Szijjártó added.

## **POLICE: 11,563 REFUGEES ARRIVE FROM UKRAINE ON TUESDAY**

Fully 5,989 people crossed into Hungary directly from Ukraine on Tuesday, while another 5,574 from

Ukraine crossed from Romania, the national police headquarters (ORFK) said. Police issued temporary residence permits valid for thirty days to 229 people, ORFK told MTI on Wednesday. Holders of such permits must contact a local immigration office near their place of residence within thirty days to apply for permanent documents, it added. Budapest received 66 people, 27 children among them, by train, ORFK said.

## **LMP TURNS TO PRESIDENT OVER 'WATER CRISIS'**

Opposition LMP has said it is turning to President Katalin Novák with the request that she facilitate cooperation with the government on addressing the issues of increasingly long droughts, dried-up lakes and water-related problems faced by farmers in Hungary. László Lóránt Keresztes, the head of parliament's sustainable development committee, told a press conference on Wednesday that he had sent an open letter to the president asking her to take steps to allow scientists and representatives of professional and civil groups to hold talks with government officials. Keresztes said the government had failed to address Hungary's "water crisis" for over a decade, arguing that only 5% of the necessary funding had been earmarked for water management in both this year's and next year's budgets. Priority is given to making the water's passage as quick as possible instead of retaining it,

even though 95% of Hungary's water resources flow in from and out to other countries, Keresztes said. He said the government had failed to address the issue of more water flowing out of the country than the amount that comes in. The government's "bad policies" have pushed the country's public water works to the brink of collapse, Keresztes said, insisting that the government was incapable of protecting Hungary's water base. At the same time, it supports heavily water-intensive investment projects like battery production, he added.

### **CORONAVIRUS - 14,402 NEW CASES LAST WEEK, 54 FATALITIES**

Fully 14,402 new Covid-19 cases were registered last week, while 54 people died in connection with the virus, koronavirus.gov.hu said on Wednesday in a round-up of last week's data. Altogether 6,413,420 have been vaccinated, with 6,200,225 having received a second shot, 3,888,311 a third, and 315,917 a fourth. Fully 1,965,481 Covid cases have been registered in Hungary since the start of the outbreak and 46,790 have died. Currently there are 28,510 active infections and 1,345 Covid patients are hospitalised, 19 intubated on a ventilator. Fully 1,890,181 people have made a recovery.

### **INTL FOOD FAIR HOSTING 11 HUNGARIAN EXHIBITORS**

This year's Biofach, an international organic food and goods fair in Nuremberg, Germany, is hosting a stand with 11 Hungarian exhibitors, the organiser Agricultural Marketing Centre (AMC) said on Wednesday. Hungarian manufacturers have brought organic fruits and vegetables, nuts, paprika spice products, grain and cold-pressed oils to the fair, the organiser said. AMC is also presenting the Hungarian Food Business Program, designed to develop the country's food exports, they said. Biofach is held between July 26 and 29, and has drawn 3,200 exhibitors from 143 countries, organisers said. This year's focus is on resilience, sustainability, climate friendly nutrition, waste-free products and digitalisation, they said.

### **NEW STRETCH OF BUDAPEST-BALATON CYCLE PATH COMPLETED TO REACH LAKE VELENCE**

A new, 32.6km stretch of the Budapest-Balaton bicycle path was completed, with the bike route now reaching Lake Velence, the National Infrastructure Developer said on Wednesday. The first stretch between Budapest and Etyek was opened to traffic in June. The

investment involved paving 18km of existing farm roads, to be used jointly by farm vehicles and cyclists. A new bridge was built across the Bányom creek near Pázmánd. Other roads were reconstructed and bike lanes painted. A new 1.9km bike path was built between Nadap and Velence. The investment cost 2.7 billion forints (EUR 6.7m).

### **PET CUP TO START ON RIVER TISZA ON JULY 29**

The 10th PET Cup (PET Kupa) will be held to clean up an 86km section of the River Tisza and its floodplains in north-eastern Hungary between July 29 and August 7, the cup's organisers said on Wednesday. Twelve veteran PET Cup teams and several canoes will skim the river from waste between Cigánd and Tiszadada, the Termesztelme.hu society told MTI. "The Tisza Plastic Cup initiative is the first in the world in which participating teams use boats they have built from waste collected from nature. They use renewable energy, hand power, oars, sails or solar panels to move their boats," the association said. The waste collected will get sorted and some 60% of it recycled. Since it was first held in 2013, the Cup has become a major environmental clean-up programme, which has cleaned the Tisza and its floodplains of 225 tonnes of waste, the organisation said.