

## PHOTO OF THE DAY



Hungarian Prime Minister Viktor Orbán with Matt Schlapp, head of the American Conservative Union, at the Conservative Political Action Conference (CPAC) in Dallas

## UPCOMING EVENTS

**Stats office issues prelim report on trade**

**Stats office issues prelim report turnover at commercial lodgings in June**

**Events related to war in Ukraine, refugee data**

## TOP STORY

# ORBÁN AT CPAC: CONSERVATIVES MUST UNITE

“We should unite our forces,” Prime Minister Viktor Orbán told the Conservative Political Action Conference (CPAC) in Dallas, Texas.

“We Hungarians know how to defeat the enemies of freedom on the political battlefield,” the prime minister said in his keynote speech, adding that if anyone had doubts about whether progressive liberals and communists were the same, “just ask us Hungarians; we have fought them both and I can tell you they are the same.”

“Our values, the nation, Christian roots and family can be successful on the political battlefield, even nowadays, when political life is ruled by liberal hegemony. I’m here to tell you how we made these values successful and mainstream in Hungary,” he said, declaring that the key to success was to fight at one hundred percent. “We tell the truth and represent the truth, even if half the world attacks us for it.” “First and foremost, we need to trust our Judeo-Christian teachings,” he added. “Today’s progressives try to separate Western civilisation from its Christian roots once again. They are crossing a line that should never be crossed. If you separate Western civilisation from its Judeo-Christian heritage, the worst things in history happen,” he said.

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## **ORBÁN: 'WE MUST TAKE BACK THE INSTITUTIONS IN WASHINGTON AND IN BRUSSELS'**

"We must take back the institutions in Washington and in Brussels," Prime Minister Viktor Orbán said, addressing the Conservative Political Action Conference (CPAC) in Dallas, Texas, on Thursday. "We must find friends and allies in one another," he added. Orbán noted the US mid-term elections will take place later this year, followed by presidential and congressional elections in 2024. "And we will have election in the European Parliament in the same year," he added. "These two locations will define the two fronts in the battle being fought for western civilisation," Orbán said.

The US government has put Europe and the European Union under ideological pressure, Orbán insisted. "The Obama administration tried to force us to change the Fundamental Law of Hungary and delete Christian and national values from it," the prime minister said in his keynote speech. "The leading power of the free world wanted to force us to change our constitution according to a globalist liberal concept. How bizarre!" But this attempt was successfully resisted, he added.

Noting that Texas is known as the Lone Star State, Orbán said the state represented "independence,

freedom and sovereignty" as the "dearest values in this part of America". "My country, Hungary, is the lone star state of Europe," he declared. "Independence, freedom and sovereignty is what we Hungarians fought for in the last 500 years," he said. "We fought for Christianity in the Middle and Modern Ages; and we fought for Christian democracy in the 20th century, and continue to fight to this day." Orbán said he was the leader of a country that "is under the siege of progressive liberals day by day."

Hungarians, he added, were the first in Europe to say no to illegal migration and "stopped the invasion of illegal migrants". Hungarians believe that stopping illegal migration "is necessary to protect our nation", Orbán said. Hungary's government decided to ask the people whether or not they wanted illegal migration, and Hungarians rejected it in a referendum, he said. "So, they don't want to play by the rules of the progressives," he added.

Meanwhile, on the subject of the war in Ukraine, Orbán said: "Without American-Russian talks there will never be peace in Ukraine." Noting that Ukraine is Hungary's neighbour, Orbán declared that "we are in full solidarity with them". "The attack of Russia against Ukraine has forced close to one million refugees to Hungary so far," he

added. "The globalist leaders' strategy escalates and prolongs war and decreases the chance of peace," Orbán said. "Only strong leaders are able to make peace. We in the neighbourhood of Ukraine are desperately in need of strong leaders, who are capable of negotiating the peace deal," Orbán said.

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## **GOVT SUPPORTING IRRIGATION SYSTEMS**

The government is committed to strengthening the agricultural sector's resistance against droughts, the minister of agriculture, István Nagy, said in a Facebook video. "Irrigation is in the public interest, as the basis for secure food supplies". The government's efforts in recent years have included setting up local irrigation communities, and distributing a total 45 billion forints (EUR 113.5m) among farmers to develop their own systems, the minister said, adding that a further 70 billion forints will be available for the same purpose between 2023 and 2027. Since 2020, when parliament passed a law on irrigation systems, which paved the way for irrigation communities, 118 such groups have been formed irrigating over 56,000 hectares of land, Nagy said, adding that a further 68 communities had appealed for registration.

In recent years, the government has facilitated construction of eight reservoirs nationwide, with a total

capacity of 5 million cubic metres, Nagy said, adding however that the country's water management system called for a "thorough restructuring" and warned that "farming is no longer possible without irrigation amid changing climatic conditions".

### **DROUGHT COMPENSATION FOR FARMERS TO BE SPEEDED UP**

With regard to the current unprecedented droughts, the Drought Emergency Operative Body has decided to speed up insurance companies' procedures to compensate farmers, introduced a moratorium for agricultural businesses' debt service, set up a pool of 3 billion forints for fodder to animal farmers, and ensure an extra 1.4 billion forints to help farmers pay larger energy bills, the agriculture ministry said in a statement.

### **REVAMPED BUDAPEST RAIL BRIDGE INAUGURATED**

Dávid Vitézy, state secretary at the technology and industry ministry, on Thursday inaugurated the recently revamped southern railway bridge across the River Danube in Budapest. Vitézy called the bridge "one of the most important railway links between eastern and western Europe," serving three crucial trans-European railway corridors. Those corridors link Dutch harbours and Spain with Romania, the Black Sea, the Balkans, and Ukraine, he

said. The renewed bridge serves 90% of Hungary's rail traffic, and, thanks to the reconstruction project, it will be safe to use for several decades, Vitézy said.

### **OPPOSITION CALLS FOR SPECIAL PARLT SESSION TO DEBATE TAX CHANGES**

The opposition parties have called a special session of parliament to discuss proposals regarding changes to the small business tax (kata) for Aug. 8. The Momentum party said in a statement that the opposition called on parliament to withdraw the amendment to the kata tax, which limited the circle of SMEs entitled to use it. The opposition also called on government parties to adopt opposition proposals to aid people hit hard by the cost-of-living crisis in the country, Momentum said.

At the same time, Fidesz parliamentary group leader Máté Kocsis "made it clear in advance that his party won't attend the meeting, suggesting that Fidesz does not care about the fate of Hungarians and Hungarian families," the opposition statement said. Should the session have quorum, the agenda will include abolishing utility fee raises, a home insulation programme, the food crisis, a climate pass to motivate motorists to change to public transport, and VAT cuts on certain essential products, proposed by the Socialists, Democratic Coalition, Párbeszéd, LMP and Jobbik parties.

### **LMP CALLS ON GOVT TO TACKLE WATER CRISIS**

The opposition LMP party has called on the government to tackle Hungary's "water crisis", which it qualified as "graver than the energy crisis". At a press conference on Thursday, László Lóránt Keresztes, the head of parliament's sustainable development committee, called for a new approach to water management. In Hungary water is quickly drained away than retained, so more water flows over the borders than flows into the country, Keresztes said. He accused the government of not doing enough to protect rivers like the Sajó -- which has carried contamination from a Slovak mine into Hungary -- and the Transylvanian tributaries of the River Tisza. "The government has also given up preserving drinking water infrastructure, and brought the water utility system to the brink of collapse," he said. Besides helping irrigation, the green party also envisages support for farmers in restoring the soil's water retention, he said. Keresztes urged an economic policy that would not put future water supplies at risk. "The government is currently doing the opposite, with measures such as making battery manufacturing a strategic sector," he said. He proposed talks with civil organisations and experts on finding solutions to "the water crisis".

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## **FOOD BANK ASSOC SAVES 4M KG FOOD IN JAN-JULY 2022**

The Hungarian Food Bank Association saved some 4 million kilogrammes of food in the first half of 2022 in Hungary, and delivered it to people in need, the organisation said on Thursday. The food bank collects food nearing its sell-by date or with damaged packaging and delivers it to some 211,000 people in need, the organisation said. Since the beginning of the year, the food bank has added 170 stores to its partner list, a 40% increase, they said. Apart from products saved at shops, the food bank has also received some 400,000kg of products directly from manufacturers and distributors, often specifically meant for refugees fleeing the war in Ukraine, the association said. Other donations went to children's homes, family support centres, organisations helping people with disabilities or the homeless, organisations supporting large families, the elderly or those living in poorer regions, they said. Rising food prices have hit households hard, with the number of large families relying on the association doubling in places, the organisation said. The carbon footprint of the production and

decomposition of the food saved this year would have come to 9,500 tonnes, the association said.

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## **POLICE: 13,383 REFUGEES ARRIVE FROM UKRAINE ON WEDNESDAY**

Fully 7,231 people crossed into Hungary directly from Ukraine on Wednesday, while another 6,152 from Ukraine crossed from Romania, the national police headquarters (ORFK) said. Police issued temporary residence permits valid for thirty days to 274 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 99 people, 37 children among them, by train, ORFK said.

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## **MAN WANTED FOR TERRORIST ACTS ARRESTED IN N HUNGARY**

Police have arrested a man accused of terrorist acts committed as a member of the Hunnia radical movement between 2007 and 2009, according to police.hu. A Budapest court sentenced the 41-year-old man to 15 years in prison in a non-binding

ruling in March, the website said. The accused escaped before the trial and was apprehended on Tuesday in Kutasó, in northern Hungary, by local police, it said. The trial was the first in Hungary where people were accused of committing terrorist acts as members of an organisation. Members were charged with attacks against properties of then-ruling leftist Liberal politicians and other groups.

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## **TOURISM REBOUND EXPECTED IN AUTUMN**

The number of bookings at commercial accommodations in Hungary for September and October are "well over" the number in the same period a year earlier and suggest fourth-quarter guest nights could exceed levels in 2019, before the pandemic, bookings site Szallas.hu said in an analysis, noting that revenue per available room on its bookings rose by 57% in the second quarter from the same period in 2019. During that period, reservation numbers increased by 15%, while the number of guests grew by 13%, it added. In the third quarter, long-weekends are giving the sector a boost, but the lack of Russian guests, the tight labour market and bad weather has weighed, Szallas.hu spokesperson Lili Kelemen said.