

## PHOTO OF THE DAY



President Katalin Novák during a visit of Kosovo Force at Camp Film City, Pristina

## UPCOMING EVENTS

War in Ukraine

Stats office prelim report on construction in July

## TOP STORY

# HIDVÉGHI: EP WANTS TO BLACKMAIL, NOT SEEK CONSENSUS

The European Parliament does not seek consensus with Hungary but wants to blackmail the country because it is unable to accept the Hungarian people's decision, ruling Fidesz MEP Balázs Hidvéghi said on Wednesday.

At the elections this spring, Hungarians said no to the left-wing and lecturing by Brussels, and voted for the fourth time on a right-wing, civic-conservative government, he said. Hidvéghi said during an EP plenary on the report dubbed Existence of a clear risk of a serious breach by Hungary of the values on which the Union is founded that it was shameful and unforgivable that a significant part of the EP including Hungarian left-wing MEPs were attacking the country with lies, even during a crisis situation caused by the war in Ukraine, and pursue a campaign of false accusations against Hungary. The MEP said the EP was preparing to adopt a report condemning Hungary "under an order by the Hungarian Left", including a proposal that EU funds should not be paid out to Hungary. The EP should drop its "political witch-hunt against Hungary" and find answers to the problems of "sky-rocketing electricity and gas bills, failing businesses, an impending employment crisis and uncertainty", Hidvéghi insisted. "We will continue protecting our children and our borders," he said.

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## **FIDESZ MEP: NEW EC PROPOSALS NO SOLUTION TO CRISIS**

The measures of the European Commission in response to the Russia-Ukraine war have backfired, weakened the European economy and caused “rampant” inflation, MEP Tamás Deutsch of ruling Fidesz told the plenary session of the European Parliament on Wednesday. “The commission’s new proposals won’t solve the emerging crisis,” he added. EC President Ursula von der Leyen told the EP that EU sanctions had caused the Russian financial system “to fight for its life” and its industry to collapse. She said the EU was committed to standing by Ukraine in the war and would support the country’s reconstruction for the long haul to the tune of hundreds of billions of euros, noting the EU’s decision to donate 100 million euros for the reconstruction of Ukraine’s schools. The EC president said she will meet President Volodymyr Zelensky in Kyiv later today to discuss Ukraine’s access to the EU’s single market. Meanwhile, the EC is proposing a price cap for electricity companies whose costs are low, as well as fossil fuel companies raking in large profits, she said. The measure will be temporary, though she also called for “comprehensive reform” of the electricity market. Regarding the rule of law, Von der Leyen said that maintaining the rule of law in member

states was the EC’s “duty and most noble role”. Conditionality in respect of EU funding would protect the EU’s budget, she said, adding that the EC will also work to protect judicial independence and draft measures to “refresh” the EU’s anti-corruption regulations. On the issue of migration, Von der Leyen said that as well as respecting fundamental human rights, the EU’s external borders must be protected. She also called for a Europe that handles migration “with respect and dignity”. All member states must take responsibility for tackling shared challenges, she said.

In his contribution to the debate, Deutsch said that Hungarians who had endured occupation by both Germany and Russia knew what it was like to fight for independence against aggression. “As the son of a Holocaust survivor, I very well know what the inhuman destruction of war means. We are all on the side of those who are attacked,” he said. The EC “promised” that the EU sanctions would bring Russia to its knees when they were adopted early in the summer, he said. “They promised the sanctions would cut to the bone in Russia, not in Europe. They promised the sanctions would bring an end to the war,” he said.

“The end of the war is still nowhere in sight, but the energy bills of Europeans have skyrocketed.” Meanwhile, he added, Russia was raking in unprecedented revenues due to sky-high energy prices. “Since sanctions were introduced, inflation has soared, Europeans have become

poorer, and Russia richer. Europe is on the brink of a crisis and energy shortages,” he said.

## **EU COMMISSIONER: ENERGY MARKET ‘UNSUSTAINABLE’, GYÜRK: SANCTIONS HAVE BACKFIRED**

The energy market is stretched to breaking point and the situation is unsustainable, Kadri Simson, the EU commissioner responsible for energy affairs, told a plenary session of the European Parliament. Meanwhile, Fidesz MEP András Gyürk said in a press statement in connection with Tuesday’s plenary that the European Commission had been tardy in reacting to the energy crisis and its sanctions against Russia had “backfired”. Moreover, its latest proposals were “irresponsible and absurd”.

“Brussels has not risen to the task” of dealing with the crisis, he said. “The commission sat on the sidelines while gas and electricity prices rose during the summer ... and a price cap on imported natural gas would reduce already scarce supplies of natural gas even further,” Gyürk said, adding the measure would be “absurd” going into the heating season. Due to the sanctions, Europe’s economy has weakened, he said. “Instead of new sanctions packages ... Brussels should focus on helping European industry, its small and medium-sized businesses, and citizens,” the Fidesz MEP said.

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## **REYNDERS: NO POSITIVE DEVELOPMENTS CONCERNING RULE OF LAW IN HUNGARY**

The European Commission has seen no positive developments regarding the state of the rule of law in Hungary, Didier Reynders, the European Commissioner for Justice, told a plenary session of the European parliament on Wednesday. Speaking at a debate entitled "Existence of a clear risk of a serious breach by Hungary of the values on which the Union is founded", Reynders said the EC agreed with most concerns voiced by the European parliament on the matter, and will use all tools at its disposal to protect the shared values of the EU. Gwendoline Delbos-Corfield, MEP of the Greens and rapporteur on the rule of law in Hungary, said Hungary "cannot be considered a full democracy". Since the European Parliament invoked an Article 7 procedure against Hungary in 2018, the rule of law, democracy and fundamental rights in Hungary have further deteriorated, the report said.

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## **MI HAZÁNK: ABORTION LAW DECREE 'AIMS TO INFORM, NOT TIGHTEN REGULATIONS'**

The aim of the interior minister's decree making abortion conditional on the mother listening to the foetus's heartbeat is to inform women of the

weight of their decision rather than tightening regulations, the deputy leader of the radical Mi Hazánk told public radio on Wednesday. Dóra Dúró told Kossuth Rádió that the decree published in the official gazette Magyar Közlöny on Sunday evening "may be the beginning of a pro-life turnaround". The decree is also in line with Hungary's Fundamental Law, which says a foetus is entitled to protection from the moment of conception, she said. "If Hungary defines itself as a Christian country, it will have to shape its legislation in harmony with the Christian worldview," she said. The last "pro-life step in birth regulation in Hungary" dates back to 1956, she said.

Dúró said many women applied for abortions without knowledge of how well-developed a foetus is by the 12th week of pregnancy, the legal deadline for abortions in Hungary. "It already has organs, hands, feet and a heartbeat," she said. Abortions also increase the risk of breast cancer by 193%, and the risk of miscarriage, premature birth and infertility, she said. Noting she was the first to submit the proposal to parliament six years ago, Dúró said the decree raised hope that "lives will actually be saved" and that it would usher in a gradual change in approach. In North Macedonia, where similar regulations are in force, 20% of mothers change their minds after listening to the foetus's heartbeat, she said.

Speaking on public current affairs channel M1, Dúró said the decree

would not increase the administrative burden on the procedure, and she dismissed criticism that the measure was aimed at impeding the process past the 12-week deadline. Responding to criticism that the decree exacerbated the already difficult situation of women seeking abortion, Dúró said many women in hard life situations are often pressured by their partners, families or employers to abort the child. Dúró said pregnant women should turn to civil and church organisation if they need help in keeping their babies.

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## **MEDICAL CHAMBER: NEW ABORTION RULES NOT AGAINST CODE OF ETHICS**

Hungary's new abortion rules are not in contradiction with the Hungarian Medical Chamber's (MOK) code of ethics, the chamber said on Wednesday, but added that no consultations had been held before introducing the changes.

On its website, the chamber said the new rules would "change existing protocols only administratively; doctors have been obliged to ascertain vital signs of the foetus and inform the mother". Abortions, protecting life of the foetus, the importance of women's dignity and self-determination are "complex social and philosophical issues, and simplifying and politicising those issues will only do harm to all concerned", the chamber said. MOK expressed regret over the lack of social or professional debates prior

to the changes and said it was open to consultations on the subject, to "represent medical and ethical aspects". Under the new rules, before every abortion, pregnant women must obtain a certificate attesting to hearing their baby's heartbeat.

### **HUNGARIAN ARMY UNIT SETS OFF FOR IRAQ**

A Hungarian military contingent, including reservists, is starting a six-month mission to train Iraq's armed forces. The 139 soldiers were seen off by relatives and military leaders in a ceremony on Wednesday in the main square of Nyíregyháza, in north-east Hungary. This is the first contingent to include a large -- 41-strong -- group of reservists, Gábor Gion, the defence ministry's state secretary for strategic planning, noted in his speech at the ceremony.

"Operational duties are an important part of Hungarian diplomatic, security and defence policy; the Armed Forces are participating in numerous missions -- together with NATO, the European Union and the United Nations -- and our coalition partners see us as reliable allies," Gion said.

### **DK: EP APPROVED MINIMUM WAGE REGULATIONS**

The European Parliament has approved European regulations on the minimum wage, opposition Democratic Coalition MEP Klára Dobrev said on Wednesday.

Like all European Union governments, the Orbán government will be obliged to introduce the regulations, which will significantly increase the minimum wage in Hungary, she told an online press conference. "This is a large step towards the United States of Europe in which Hungarians are not secondary to other Europeans, and their work is not worth less than that of other Europeans," she added. The legislation would tie the government's calculations of the minimum wage to EU guidelines, and deviation would only be possible after consulting the EC, Dobrev said. Dobrev said the aim was for the minimum wage to reach 60% of the median wage in Hungary. Then it would be over 30,000 forints (EUR 75) more than the current amount, she said.

### **HUNGARY INDUSTRIAL OUTPUT UP 4% YR/YR IN JULY**

Hungarian industrial output grew by an unadjusted annual 4% in July, quickening from growth of 1.5% in the previous month, the Central Statistical Office (KSH) said in a detailed release of data on Friday. Adjusted for the number of working days, July output was up 6.6%. Month on month, output grew by 1.1%, based on seasonally and working day-adjusted data. Output of the automotive industry, Hungary's biggest manufacturing sector, increased by an annual 16.6%, and was up 2.9% from the previous

month. Output of the computer, electronics and optical equipment segment rose by 14.4% year on year. The food, drinks and tobacco segment rose by an annual 7.4%. In the January-July period, output increased by 4.9% from the same period a year earlier.

### **HUNGARY C/A DEFICIT EUR 1.673 BN IN JULY**

Hungary's current account posted a deficit of 1.673 billion euros in July, more than double the 806 million deficit in June, the National Bank of Hungary (NBH) said in a release of preliminary data on Wednesday. The trade balance was 908 million euros in the red in July, resulting from a 1.490 billion euro deficit in the trade of goods and a 582 million surplus in the trade of services. The primary income balance showed a deficit of 635 million euros, as investors repatriated 449 million from direct investments. Capital transfers from the European Union came to 301 million.

### **HUNGARY RECEIVES MORE THAN 12,000 REFUGEES FROM UKRAINE ON TUESDAY**

Fully 5,960 people crossed into Hungary directly from Ukraine on Tuesday, while another 6,333 from Ukraine crossed from Romania, the national police headquarters (ORFK) said. Police issued temporary residence permits valid for thirty days to 192 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. Fully 76 people, 31 children among them, arrived in Budapest by train, ORFK said.

### **HUNGARY RECORDS 11,596 NEW CORONAVIRUS CASES LAST WEEK, 42 FATALITIES**

Fully 11,596 new Covid-19 cases were registered last week, while 42 people died in connection with the virus, koronavirus.gov.hu said on Wednesday in a round-up of last week's data. Altogether 6,417,307 have been vaccinated, with 6,203,509 having received a second shot, 3,895,939 a third, and 338,689 a fourth. Fully 2,070,443 Covid cases have been registered in Hungary since the start of the outbreak and 47,409 have died. Currently there are 34,275 active infections and 831 Covid patients

are hospitalised, 10 intubated on a ventilator. Fully 1,988,759 people have made a recovery.

### **1956 FREEDOM FIGHTER WITTNER DIES AGED 85**

Mária Wittner, a 1956 freedom fighter and former Fidesz MP, has died at the age of 85, her family announced on Wednesday. Wittner died early on Wednesday in Budapest after a brief illness, according to her family. Her funeral will be arranged later.

Born on July 9, 1937, Wittner was raised in a Carmelite convent and later went into state care. She dropped out of secondary school and worked as a typist in Szolnok, central Hungary, before moving to Budapest in early 1956. During the 1956 Hungarian revolution, Wittner participated in the siege of the radio station and tended to the wounded in Corvin Circus, the site of ferocious fighting. She was hospitalised with shrapnel wounds on November 4 as the Soviet Army overran the city.

After the revolution, she spent a few weeks in Austria but returned to Hungary and worked as a manual worker until her arrest in the summer of 1957. She was sentenced to death on July 23, 1958 and spent 200 days in prison before her sentence was reduced to life in 1959. Wittner was released in March 1970, but was not granted an amnesty. She worked as a seamstress and cleaning lady until she retired in 1980 on a disability pension. After the 1989-90 change in political system, she took an active role in the work of various 1956 organisations. From 2006 to 2014, Wittner was an MP of the now ruling Fidesz party. She wrote several memoirs of her role in the revolution and of her years in prison.

Wittner received the Grand Cross of the Hungarian Order of Merit in 1991, along with the 1956 Medallion. She was decorated with the Hungarian Order of St Stephen, the highest honour in Hungary, in 2006.