

PHOTO OF THE DAY



MTI/PM's Office/Vivien Cher-Benkó

Viktor Orbán, Petr Fiala, Alexander De Croo and Robert Golob

UPCOMING EVENTS

EU summit in Brussels

Events related to the war in Ukraine

1956 commemorations begin

Pannonhalma Archabbey hosts intl ecumenical conference

TOP STORY

WAR AUGURS 'RISE IN MIGRATION, TERRORISM'

The global food crisis caused by the war in Ukraine could lead to a rise in migration waves which could then be infiltrated by members of terrorist organisations, the foreign minister has said.

Péter Szijjártó told a meeting of the working group of the global coalition fighting the Islamic State terrorist group dealing with foreign fighters that even when international attention is being focused on the war in Ukraine, other security challenges must not be forgotten. Terrorist organisations always try to use such unstable situations to their advantage, Szijjártó said, noting that Islamic State leaders had recently called for new attacks to be carried out in Europe. This was why, Szijjártó said, it was crucial to end the armed conflict in Ukraine as soon as possible. Szijjártó also noted that Russian and Ukrainian grain exports were critical to the food supply of countries that were "already prone to instability". "It is a lot easier for extremist ideologies to spread in times of famine," Szijjártó said. "Violence rears its head, which leads to serious emigration waves, creating the best breeding ground for terrorism" adding that migration waves could be infiltrated by terrorists.

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SZIJJÁRTÓ: 215,000 ILLEGAL MIGRANTS STOPPED AT BORDER

The Hungarian authorities have prevented some 215,000 people from crossing the border illegally so far this year, Foreign Minister Péter Szijjártó said at a conference on terrorism, adding that proceedings have been launched against 1,500 people smugglers this year alone. Also, the number of migrants arriving via the Western Balkan route is increasingly reminiscent of the situation seen during the 2015 migration crisis, he said. "These migrants bring a new dimension of violence and aggression, given that they're now armed ... they're shooting at each other and threatening the Hungarian police officers and soldiers protecting the Hungarian border," he said.

Szjijártó urged support for the Western Balkans to ensure their own security and the rest of Europe's, adding that the European Union should make it clear to would-be migrants that they should not set off for the continent. Security, stability and the fight against terrorism have always been important to central Europe, Szjijártó said. It is important in the current security crisis to join forces with the Western Balkans in the fight against terrorism, he added.

Szjijártó also referred to Hungarian protection of persecuted Christians, noting that the Hungary Helps humanitarian programme has so far

helped some half a million people remain in or return to their homelands. The government will carry on with the scheme in spite of the current economic difficulties, he said.

SZIJJÁRTÓ: EUROPE-CHINA ECONOMIC COOPERATION MUST REMAIN UNHARMED

Hungary rejects all proposals that risk fracturing economic cooperation between the European Union and China, Foreign Minister Péter Szjijártó said in Budapest, arguing that such a development would have a "tragic impact". Though the world is on the brink of a new era and there is much uncertainty, what is certain is that the revolution of the auto industry is moving forward, the foreign ministry cited Szjijártó as saying at the second Hungarian Battery Day conference. The auto industry accounts for 30% of Hungary's economic output, Szjijártó said, adding that this presented the country with a lot of tasks but also "a huge opportunity". The minister said the European economy was "moving towards a big recession" and the Hungarian government's goal was for Hungary to be a "local exception" to the economic downturn. This, he said, required Hungary to attract as many investments as possible. He highlighted electromobility as an area with great potential, noting that the government had supported 44 investment projects in this sector in the last five years. The Hungarian government has made it very clear

since 2010 that its strategy is to be "the meeting point between Western and Eastern investors, the Western and Eastern economy", he said.

Szjijártó noted that Hungary was the only country besides Germany and China to have plants from all three big German premium car makers. Hungary also has the third biggest electric battery production capacity in the world and ranks fifth in the export of EV batteries, he added. Two of the world's six leading battery makers have plants in Hungary, Szjijártó said, noting that Chinese battery maker CATL's construction of a plant in Hungary was the biggest investment in the country to date. The fact that the Hungarian economy has seen record investments both this year and the last shows that Hungary has remained a "local exception" to the recession, the minister said. He said the rise in investments was a vindication of the government's policy of opening up to the East. Szjijártó praised Hungary's investment environment, its low taxes, financial incentives, and secure energy supply. The Hungarian government considers the latter a physical issue rather than an ideological or political one even though it "generates sometimes a pretty heated debate", he added. Concerning the negative effects of the war in Ukraine, Szjijártó said the ties between Russia and the European Union were being "cut one by one". He said a similar trend needed to be avoided in the case of China. Szjijártó said those who "are operating on a common-sense basis" would do

everything in their power to reject political proposals that would destroy economic cooperation between Europe and China.

FIDESZ MEP CONDEMNS 'PROFITEERING' FROM BRATISLAVA SLAYING

Hungary's ruling Fidesz firmly condemns the recent murders in Bratislava, Balázs Hidvéghi, an MEP of the party, said, expressing sympathy with the families of the two victims shot dead in front of a gay bar. "Any violence based on sexual orientation must be condemned," Hidvéghi said on the sidelines of a vote in the European Parliament. He added, however, that his party would not "accept the EP practice of cynically profiteering from a tragic incident and proposing extreme decrees violating the EU treaties". He insisted the proposed decree contained "unfounded and unacceptable declarations" concerning Slovak politicians and the church, as this would "interfere with Slovakia's constitutional rules" and "stigmatise the whole of Slovak society". Fidesz will "not support leftist ideological proclamations", he added.

RUSZIN-SZENDI MEETS N MACEDONIA CHIEF OF STAFF

Peace and security in the Western Balkans is of paramount importance

for Hungary, Romulusz Ruszin-Szendi, commander of the Hungarian military, said after talks with Vasko Gjurchinovski, chief of staff of North Macedonia's armed forces, in Budapest. North Macedonia is key in keeping peace and security in the region, the Hungarian commander said. At their annual meeting, the two military leaders reviewed the situation in the Western Balkans and agreed that Hungarian troops serving in the region will participate in exercises organised in North Macedonia. They also discussed the future of the EUFOR Althea mission, Hungary's military reform and North Macedonia's military plans, Ruszin-Szendi said.

Referring to the war in Ukraine, Ruszin-Szendi said he had shared with Gjurchinovski information Hungary had gained as "a NATO front country". Concerning illegal migration, Ruszin-Szendi said North Macedonia's experience was indispensable for Hungary to prepare for a possible increase in the pressure posed by migration. He expressed the Hungarian government's support for the EU integration of the whole of the Western Balkans.

DEUTSCH: EP VICE- PRESIDENT'S BEHAVIOUR 'POISONING EUROPEAN COOPERATION'

The "extremist behaviour" exhibited by Katarina Barley, the Socialist vice-president of the European Parliament, is "poisoning European cooperation

and undermining the authority of the European Parliament", an MEP of Hungary's ruling Fidesz said in a letter to EP President Roberta Metsola. Tamás Deutsch, the head of Fidesz's EP delegation, insisted that Barley's latest "communication rampage" against Hungary "must not be allowed to go unchallenged". In his letter, the MEP protested Barley's remarks about Hungary and the Hungarian prime minister in recent interviews which he saw as "disparaging and disingenuous", going "far beyond the bounds of civilised political debate and the behaviour expected of a vice-president of the European Parliament". Deutsch noted that there had been a precedent for the EP removing a vice-president from office for "making an unacceptable statement". "In my view, Katarina Barley has crossed the line with her behaviour, making her unworthy of being vice-president. I expect Madam President to take the necessary measures to preserve the dignity of the House," Deutsch wrote.

MI HAZÁNK CALLS FOR MPS' DUAL CITIZENSHIP DISCLOSURE

Opposition Mi Hazánk has called for parliament's approval of a proposal to make the dual citizenship status of lawmakers and their family members public.

Deputy leader Előd Novák told a press conference that it was necessary to reveal "what alternative obligations" members of parliament might have

and “which one of them has built an escape route, for instance to an African banana republic”, he added. Suspicion of holding dual citizenship has been raised in connection with several politicians, Novák said. He cited Péter Márki-Zay, former prime ministerial candidate of the united opposition at the election this spring, adding that his Canadian citizenship was revealed only after his appointment. Holding citizenship of another country represents a national security risk, especially if it is kept a secret, he said. Novák cited the Israeli example where lawmakers must decide whether to return their mandate or their second citizenship.

The rules proposed by Mi Hazánk would be “almost unacceptably moderate” but they would serve as a compromise solution to the parliamentary parties, he said.

SZIJJÁRTÓ WELCOMES RECOVERY OF HUNGARIAN CHURCH BELL FROM US

A church bell stolen from a chapel in Jásztelek, in central Hungary, 21 years ago, was recovered in the United States and has now been returned to Hungary under cooperation between the two countries, Foreign Minister

Péter Szijjártó said on Facebook. A member of Louisiana’s Hungarian community discovered the bell made in 1937 in an antique shop in February. The Hungarian foreign ministry alerted the FBI and provided local authorities with documents ascertaining that the bell had been stolen in Hungary and illegally exported from the country, and the artefact was eventually seized from the shop. The bell is expected to be taken back to Jásztelek in a few days, Szijjártó added.

MORE THAN 9,000 REFUGEES ARRIVE FROM UKRAINE ON WEDNESDAY

Fully 5,207 people crossed into Hungary directly from Ukraine on Wednesday, while another 4,279 crossed from Romania, the National Police Headquarters (ORFK) said. Police issued temporary residence permits valid for thirty days to 191 people. 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 40 people, 19 children among them, by train, ORFK said.

CHAMBER CALLS FOR RATE FREEZE, REPAYMENT MORATORIUM FOR FIRMS

The Hungarian Chamber of Commerce and Industry (MKIK) has requested that the government should consider freezing the rate on corporate loans between 5-10% and introducing a repayment moratorium for existing floating-rate loans “as long as the economic situation warrants”. MKIK said that pass-through of a decision by the National Bank of Hungary (NBH) almost a week earlier to raise the rate for its O/N deposit facility to 18% -- well over the 13% base rate -- was “lightning fast”. With the three-month BUBOR at 16.5% and lending margins around 4%, borrowing businesses face rates of over 20%, it added.

MKIK pointed to a mortgage rate freeze and a repayment moratorium in place for retail borrowers that cushioned the negative impact of higher lending rates, but said dearer credit is a “huge blow” for businesses struggling with the energy crisis while on the brink of recovery from the pandemic.