

PHOTO OF THE DAY



MTI/Zoltán Balogh

Chef Levente Koppány of Budapest's newly Michelin-Starred Costes restaurant

UPCOMING EVENTS

Plenary session of parliament

Stats office releases Sept industrial output data, retail figures

Events related to war in Ukraine

TOP STORY

HUNGARY 'OPPOSES EU LOAN TO AID UKRAINE'

Hungary is prepared to continue aiding Ukraine on a bilateral basis, but will not support the European Union taking out a loan for that purpose, Foreign Minister Péter Szijjártó said in Sofia on Monday.

Referring to draft legislation the European Commission is expected to table this week which proposes 1.5 billion euros in monthly aid to cover the war-torn country's financing needs, Szijjártó told a meeting of the foreign ministers of the Central European Initiative that Hungary had supported the country's health-care, education and cultural and religious institutions "to the tune of tens and hundreds of millions of euros" even before the war. "We are ready to continue to support Ukraine based on a bilateral agreement," he said. At the same time, Hungary will "definitely not support the EU taking out a loan" for that purpose because "we have done so once already. We supported the loan the EU took out during the coronavirus pandemic, and that was more than enough," he said. Regarding the sanctions implemented against Russia in response to its attack on Ukraine, Szijjártó said the measures had had the opposite effect to what was promised when they were introduced: "The war's brutality is growing and the European economy, rather than the Russian, was the one brought to its knees."

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SZIJJÁRTÓ: EUROPE MUST ACCEPT SANCTIONS HAVE FAILED

Europe “must face the fact” that the sanctions implemented against Russia in response to its attack on Ukraine have failed, Foreign Minister Péter Szijjártó told a meeting of the foreign ministers of the Central European Initiative in Sofia on Monday. “The European economy is suffering and it seems clear who is profiting,” he said. The government will not let Hungarians be made to pay the price of war, and sees peace as the only solution, the minister said. Meanwhile, Hungary is under double pressure from migration, a significant security risk facing the country, he said. Hungary has so far accepted some 1 million Ukrainian refugees, and some 1,300 schools and kindergartens have taken on Ukrainian children. At the same time, “we can say without exaggeration that our southern border is under siege,” Szijjártó said. So far, authorities have thwarted some 230,000 illegal entry attempts there this year alone, he said. The numbers are now “similar to those during the migration crisis of 2015, and some arrivals are attacking each other and the border guards with weapons,” he said. Meanwhile, Brussels its keeping up its “hypocritical approach, encouraging migrants to set out for Europe and thereby keeping up the people smugglers’ business model, which is unacceptable,” Szijjártó said.

PARLT CTTEE CONDEMNS REMOVAL OF TURUL BIRD STATUE FROM MUKACHEVO CASTLE

Parliament’s foreign affairs committee has condemned the local council’s decision to remove the statue of a turul bird from the Mukachevo (Munkács) Castle in western Ukraine, calling on the Ukrainian government to dissociate itself from the move. In a resolution, the committee said it was “shocked to learn of the scandalous circumstances of the removal of the Turul statue in Mukachevo”. “The committee firmly condemns this pointless and barbaric move aimed at the intimidation of the Transcarpathian Hungarian community, the destruction of universal cultural heritage and the poisoning of Hungarian-Ukrainian relations,” it said. The committee said Ukraine had been “continually and methodically” dismantling the cultural, educational and linguistic rights of Transcarpathian Hungarians since the approval of the 2017 education law. The committee said Ukraine ignored its international obligations to protect the ethnic, cultural, linguistic and religious rights of national minorities.

It expressed concern over the “continued harassment” of ethnic Hungarian organisations and the “intimidation” of the Hungarian community’s democratically-elected leaders. The resolution emphasised the committee’s commitment to strengthening cooperation, dialogue

and mutual trust between Hungary and Ukraine, in which it said the Transcarpathian Hungarian community played a key role. The committee reaffirmed its support for Ukraine’s sovereignty and territorial integrity, saying it “feels the pain of the suffering” caused by the military aggression against the country by Russia, adding, however, that the war could not serve as an excuse to infringe on the rights of ethnic Hungarians. The removal of the Turul statue goes against the requirements concerning the rule of law and democracy European Union candidate countries are expected to comply with, which Ukraine accepted at the start of the accession process, the committee said.

EC APPROVES HUNGARY CAP STRATEGIC PLAN

The European Commission on Monday approved Hungary’s Common Agricultural Policy (CAP) Strategic Plan for 2023-2027, clearing the way for the transfer of some 8.4 billion euros in funding. Under the plan, Hungary will spend at least 2 billion euros of the funds on green programmes and environmental and climate objectives, while 186 million euros will be used to support farmers, according to a statement by the EC. In its justification, the commission said Hungary’s plan offers a wide range of interventions aimed at a fairer distribution of the funds and facilitates the setting-up of at least 8,800 young farmers. The plan also prioritises the upgrade of

some 7,700 farms, the statement said. Hungary allocates 38% of the rural development budget to agri-environmental interventions, 8% to the development of organic farming and about 5% to the protection of Natura 2000 sites, which cover 162,631 hectares, the EC said. The country has also committed to doubling the area of organic farms by 2027, it added. The commission said Hungary's planned schemes contribute to sustainable nutrient management, the reduction of fertiliser application and ammonia emissions. Also, the rural development measures will help boost the local crafts and artisanal sectors, as well as local ecotourism and gastronomic and cultural festivals, it added. Around 30% of the rural population will benefit from improved and more accessible services, the EC said, adding that the supported projects will create at least 7,000 jobs.

CBANK, AUTHORITIES LAUNCH CYBERCRIME INFO CAMPAIGN

The National Bank of Hungary (NBH) is partnering with four authorities to educate and inform the public about cybercrime risks, the central bank's deputy governor said. Attacks by digital criminals have become more frequent and target customers directly through psychological manipulation and scams, Csaba Kandrács told a press conference. He warned that even clients with a greater degree of financial knowledge

and experience can fall victim to the refined techniques used by cyber criminals. This has prompted the launch of the CyberShield information campaign educating the public about phishing, scam calling and texting, phony bank websites and dodgy investment schemes, said Kandrács. The programme will also involve an analysis of market trends as well as knowledge sharing on an international level and implementation of best practices, he added. Partners of the initiative include the Hungarian Banking Association, the National Media and Infocommunications Authority (NMHH), the National Cyber Security Centre and the National Police Headquarters (ORFK).

MI HAZÁNK SEEKS TO BAN RITUAL SLAUGHTER

The opposition Mi Hazánk party will submit a bill to ban the ritual slaughter of animals in Hungary, a lawmaker of the radical party told a press conference. István Szabadi said animals facing slaughter were not rendered unconscious in the kosher nor in the halal method, causing them suffering. He added the party's proposal was in line with European rules and mentioned Belgium, Denmark, Norway, Switzerland, Sweden and Slovenia as countries where a similar ban was in force. According to the practice of EU courts, a ban on ritual slaughter does not constitute a restriction of religious freedoms, Szabadi said.

MORE THAN 11,000 REFUGEES ARRIVE FROM UKRAINE ON SUNDAY

Fully 5,668 people crossed into Hungary directly from Ukraine on Sunday, while another 5,018 crossed from Romania, the National Police Headquarters (ORFK) said. Budapest received 138 people, 45 children among them, who travelled by train, ORFK said.

HUNGARIAN SOLDIERS FALLEN AT DOBERDÒ, ISONZO COMMEMORATED AT PILGRIMAGE

A pilgrimage organised by the defence ministry was paid to commemorate Hungarian soldiers who had fallen at the Doberdò and Isonzo battlefields in northern Italy in the first world war, marking All Souls Day, a state secretary of the ministry said on Monday. The pilgrims paid their tribute at a chapel at Redipuglia and later in the Austro-Hungarian military cemetery in Fogliano, Tamás Vargha told MTI. At the "Capella Ungherese" Hungarian chapel in the village of Visintini in Doberdò Del Lago, Antal Spányi, the bishop of Székesfehérvár, consecrated a new bell prepared from donations of Székesfehérvár residents, he said. They also paid their tribute to Hungarian soldiers who died at the front on the Isonzo and at Doberdò, Vargha added. The state secretary expressed thanks to his Italian and Slovene colleagues

over the maintenance of the memorial sites set up near the battlefields where several tens of thousands of soldiers serving in the Austro-Hungarian Monarchy's army died. The Battle of Doberdò was one of the bloodiest battles of the first world war. Some 100,000 Hungarian soldiers were killed in battles along the Isonzo river in 1915-16.

**GUEST NIGHTS UP 1.3%
IN SEPT**

Guest nights at commercial accommodations in Hungary rose by an annual 1.3% to 2,218,000 in September, the Central Statistical Office (KSH) said. The number of guest nights spent by domestic travellers fell by 13.4% to 1,177,000, after a surge in in-country travel by Hungarians in the base period. The number of guest nights spent by foreign visitors rose by 25.4% to 1,041,000, albeit from a low pandemic base. Germans spent 185,000 guest nights at commercial accommodations in Hungary in September, more than visitors of any

other nationality. Czechs spent 91,000 guest nights, followed by Britons spending 68,000 and Austrians 58,000 guest nights in the country. The capital was the most popular destination in September, accounting for 658,000 guest nights. Lake Balaton was runner-up, with 435,000 guest nights. Revenue of commercial accommodations rose by 23.5% to 42 billion forints (EUR 104.2m) in September. In January-September, the number of guest nights climbed 58.5% to 20,733,000. The number of guest nights spent by foreign visitors jumped 156.5% to 8,582,000.

**ECUMENICAL CHARITY
LAUNCHES CHRISTMAS
DONATION DRIVE**

Despite the increasing energy, utility and food prices triggered by the war in Ukraine, the Hungarian Ecumenical Charity will continue its aid programmes and keep their institutions open, the charity's director said on Monday, announcing the launch of their fundraising and donation campaign for Christmas.

László Lehel told a press conference that around 80,000 people in need are expected to turn to the charity seeking help this year. "In such a situation we simply cannot limit the operation of our facilities or close them. This is out of the question. There is only one solution and it is to keep and operate our institutions and even increase our efforts so that we can help in as many places as possible," he said, asking for donations by people "in a national cooperation effort". He noted that the heating costs in some of their institutions had gone up to 22 million forints (EUR 55,000) from 3 million and the monthly cost of providing meals in the charity's homeless care centre in Debrecen, in eastern Hungary, had doubled. "Because of the price increases, the charity has decided to launch its Advent donation drive dubbed *Ételt.Otthont.Esélyt* (Food.Home.Chance) earlier than usual," Lehel said. Kristóf Gáncs, the charity's communications director, said donations can be made by dialling help line 1353 or on the website www.segelyszervezet.hu.

