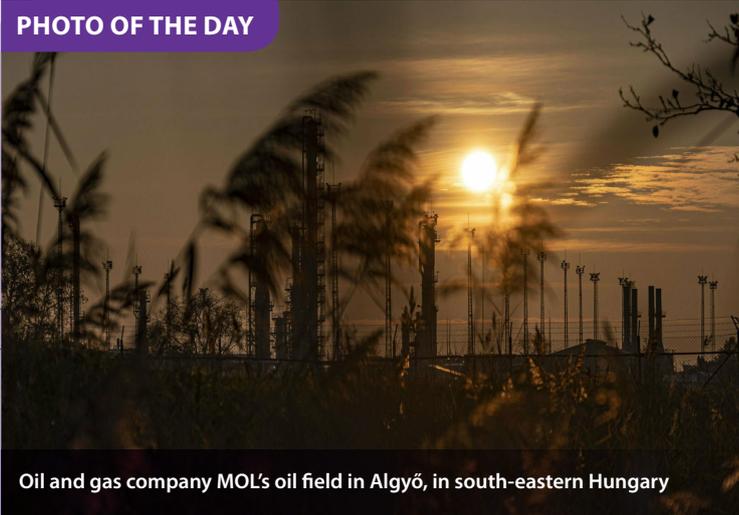


## PHOTO OF THE DAY



MTI/Zsolt Szegedvári

Oil and gas company MOL's oil field in Algyó, in south-eastern Hungary

## UPCOMING EVENTS

**Budapest general assembly meets**

**Parliamentary committee sessions**

**Stats office reports on Oct industrial producer prices**

**Events related to the war in Ukraine**

## TOP STORY

# HUNGARY 'TO KEEP BLOCKING NATO-KYIV MEETINGS'

The Hungarian government has for years made it clear that it will continue to block formal meetings of the NATO-Ukraine Commission until the rights of ethnic Hungarians are restored in Ukraine, the foreign minister has said.

Péter Szijjártó confirmed to Hungarian public current affairs channel M1 a report by the Financial Times that the government was upholding its position on the matter. The foreign minister of Ukraine will only participate in the working dinner at a summit of NATO foreign ministers in Bucharest, Szijjártó said on the sidelines of the meeting. He said that ever since the war in Ukraine had broken out, "everybody can see that our country has not been addressing the issue of the rights of Transcarpathian Hungarians". "We are not bringing the issue up but we have not forgotten about it, either" Szijjártó said, expressing hope that once the war is over, the opportunity will arise to start discussions about the matter again. At the NATO meeting, he said, an informal "non-paper" proposal had been put forward concerning the NATO-Ukraine Commission which Hungary and Turkey rejected signing. Szijjártó said the working dinner to be attended by the Ukrainian foreign minister "would provide an appropriate platform for consultations as required by NATO member states".

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## **SZIJJÁRTÓ: EVERY EFFORT MUST BE MADE TO AVOID DIRECT NATO-RUSSIA CONFLICT**

Every effort must be made to avoid a direct armed conflict between NATO and Russia, the Hungarian foreign minister has said, arguing that an escalation of hostilities could affect territories in the immediate neighbourhood. The focus must be on peace taking also into consideration that winter is coming, the foreign ministry cited Péter Szijjártó as saying at a summit of NATO foreign ministers in Bucharest. Szijjártó praised Poland for its calm stance in connection with a stray missile hitting its territory earlier this month. "It is thanks to the highly responsible behaviour of the leaders of Poland that we here today are not discussing developments of a third world war," he said. The minister warned of the possibility of escalation of the armed conflict between Russia and Ukraine as long as the conflict continues. Hungary, as a neighbour of Ukraine, is fully aware of the possible consequences, Szijjártó said, asserting that this was why the country had a vested interest in peace. He said it was clear that an escalation of the war would in the first place impact territories in the most immediate neighbourhood and not those countries that are thousands kilometres away. Szijjártó welcomed the NATO Secretary General's statement that the North Atlantic alliance is not party to

the conflict, and expressed hope that this situation would remain unchanged. Szijjártó said that "a hitherto unseen terrible and tragic humanitarian catastrophe" could unfold as winter sets in on the continent. "Peace is the only answer to every problem. This is why we have a vested interest in restoring peace in Ukraine as soon as possible," the minister said. He noted that Hungary has undertaken a humanitarian campaign of unprecedented scale, taking in over one million war refugees and welcoming children from Ukraine at some 1,300 kindergartens and schools in Hungary. Szijjártó pressed for avoiding any factors that could lead to an escalation of the war and warned against cutting off channels of communication. He also acknowledged Turkey's activity as a mediator.

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## **SZIJJÁRTÓ: PAST JOINT NATO DECISIONS SHOULD REMAIN IN EFFECT**

What is at stake for Hungarians at the Bucharest summit of NATO foreign ministers is that the joint decisions that have been approved in connection with the war in Ukraine remain in effect, Foreign Minister Péter Szijjártó said on Tuesday. The most important of those decisions is that NATO is not a part of the Russia-Ukraine conflict and that everything must be done to prevent a direct conflict between the alliance and Russia, Szijjártó told public current affairs channel M1 from Bucharest. Szijjártó said the NATO secretary general had made it clear in

his opening address to the summit that NATO is not a part of the conflict. He added that based on the responses, NATO foreign ministers were in agreement that everything needed to be done to prevent an escalation of the war.

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## **ORBÁN: SZÉCHENYI CARD SCHEME TO BE BACKED BY HUF 290 BN**

The government will support the Széchenyi Card scheme with 290 billion forints (EUR 712.6m) next year after receiving 130 billion this year, Prime Minister Viktor Orbán said on Tuesday. At an event celebrating the scheme's 20th anniversary, Orbán said the doubling of support was not purely out of "good will" as interest rates "have increased and so has the subsidy on interest". The prime minister said that since "a difficult year lies ahead of us", the government may well have decided against investing "such a large amount in the subsidy" for the state scheme that provides cheap credit to businesses. In addition, 220 billion forints is being set aside in the budget for small and medium-sized firms whose operations are energy intensive, and a factory rescue scheme will also be announced, he said. The scheme aims to ensure there are successful Hungarian enterprises, Orbán said "because then Hungary will be a Hungarian country". As well as large foreign companies, he added, there was a need for a "Hungarian entrepreneurial strand that's broad, strong and stable". Meanwhile,

commenting on the war in Ukraine, the prime minister said countries that supplied weapons were drifting ever closer to war, while sanctions were shaking the European economy and stoking inflation. Orbán said it was good that Hungary was avoiding recession and staying out of war. "We can also be glad" that the aim to bring inflation down to the single digits by the end of 2023 is viable, he added. He also said the government was successfully protecting families from bearing the burden of huge energy bills.

The prime minister said the market was not sacred, and though it has laws, state intervention may be necessary in times of need. "We're facing a year when the Hungarian economy won't be successful without a strong and timely" state support, he said. Orbán said Europe's entire industry was now threatened by the energy crisis and the bloc must work out a new economic structure. Commenting on the budget, he said that whereas the 2023 budget has been adopted, it must be adapted to the current situation in light of intervening developments. Between 2015 and 2021, Hungary outpaced EU growth, indicating the essential robust health of the Hungarian economy, he said. But the country is now weighed down by high energy prices, inflation and interest rates, he noted. Energy, Orbán said, was the hardest challenge, noting that every household received an energy subsidy of 180,000 forints each month. "It's vital we maintain this support," he said.

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## **ORBÁN MEETS HERITAGE FOUNDATION LEADERS**

Prime Minister Viktor Orbán met a delegation from conservative US think-tank the Heritage Foundation, at his office on Tuesday, the PM's press chief said. The organisation led by Kevin Roberts is today considered the most influential American conservative domestic and foreign policy research institute, Bertalan Havasi told MTI. The meeting covering current issues in global politics and the economy was also attended by Justice Minister Judit Varga and Balázs Orbán, the prime minister's political director. Hungary is today one of the most oft-criticised countries on the international political scene because of Hungarians' resistance to left-wing ideology, parties at the meeting said. Hungary has chosen a unique, nationally minded path when it comes to politics and governance, which has led to political and economic success in recent years, they added. Conservatives don't have to be afraid to fight the culture war and must not give up traditional values like sovereignty, faith, work and the family, they said.

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## **ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT MINISTER WELCOMES LOW NUMBER OF JOB SEEKERS**

The government's action plan introduced "to counterbalance Brussels's ill-advised sanctions" has stood the test and managed to

save jobs, the minister of economic development said on Tuesday, referring to the latest monthly report by the National Employment Service (NFSz). In November, 233,609 people were on NFSz's records as job seekers, "the fourth lowest figure ever", Márton Nagy said, adding that unemployment in Hungary was lower than this level only in June, July and August this year. In the first eleven months of 2022, the average number of job seekers was 239,000, below the previous record of 250,000 in 2019, Nagy said. Just before the Fidesz government came into power, there were more than 650,000 job seekers, he noted. The government has striven to build a work-based economy and ensuring full employment since 2010, the minister said, adding that it "has not given up and will not abandon those goals even in crisis situations".

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## **NAVRACSICS SIGNS STRATEGIC COOPERATION AGREEMENTS WITH 17 ORGS**

Tibor Navracsics, the minister of regional development, signed strategic cooperation agreements with representatives of 17 scientific, church, charitable, interest representation and civil society organisations on Tuesday. The minister signed 13 similar agreements with higher education institutions last week. The idea is to enhance consultations within an organised framework concerning draft legislation and common strategic goals of society and the government,

Navracsics said, noting that parliament adopted the Act on Legislation in 2010, introducing institutionalised social consultation between ministries and organisations with specialist expertise. "This was all forgotten somewhat in the initial great rush to pass laws, so we thought that ... we'd once again turn to those who know much more than we do..." Navracsics said. Agreements were signed by various charities, religious groups and social organisations, including the Baptist Charity, the Hungarian Maltese Charity, the Association of Hungarian Conservationists, the Hungarian Urban Planning Society and the Hungarian Red Cross, and the National Association of Local Governments, among others.

**STATISTICAL OFFICE COMPLETES CENSUS**

The latest census in Hungary has been completed by the deadline by 4.6 million households and 9.2 million individuals, or 96% of the estimated population, the Central Statistical Office (KSH) said on Tuesday. Questionnaires were filled out electronically in person and online between October 1 and 19, the KSH noted in a statement, in what was the last traditional census in Hungary. Fully 7 million individual questionnaires were returned from 3.2 million households online in three weeks -- an outstandingly short period of time in international comparison, it said. For the first time in Hungary, the census was carried out

fully electronically, while missing data was filled in from state databases. Data for the next census will be supplied from administrative sources, KSH said. Preliminary data will be published in the first quarter of 2023, while detailed data is scheduled to be released in the autumn. Decision-makers, researchers and economists will make use of the data, while market researchers and statisticians will also have access to the results for compiling indicators such as GDP per capita, income or consumption. The results will also provide important information about local supply, service and infrastructure needs, as well as aiding businesses to plan their activities with greater certainty.

**ECUMENICAL CHARITY DELIVERS AID TO KHERSON**

The Hungarian Ecumenical Charity has been one of the first organisations to deliver fast aid to people in Ukraine's recently liberated Kherson city, the charity said on Tuesday, adding that 30 tonnes of food, drinking water, and toiletries loaded on two trucks have reached its destination. The charity said the city had no heating, water supply or electricity, with nearly 80,000 inhabitants relying on humanitarian aid to get food, while missile and artillery attacks by the Russian army are ongoing. The charity quoted Barnabás Sztatmári, head of its Kyiv representation, as saying the aid would help the city's neediest in some 3,500 households. He added that his

organisation was making preparations for further shipments to the region. According to the statement, the Ecumenical Charity has helped some 200,000 Ukrainians both in Ukraine and Hungary since the outbreak of the war, delivering aid totalling 1,300 tonnes. The charity's programme is part of an international effort which also involves financial aid and counselling services, the statement added.

**SOCIALISTS: DEBT FINANCING AMONG BIGGEST RISKS FOR 2023**

The opposition Socialist Party says it expects debt financing to be one of the biggest risk areas of the 2023 fiscal year, and that they hope the government was going into next year with a "comprehensible budget". Zoltán Vajda, the head of parliament's budgetary committee, said the body on Tuesday discussed the final accounts of 2021 as well as next year's state budget with the participation of finance ministry state secretary Péter Benő Banai. Vajda said it had been "foolish" to approve next year's budget in the summer, arguing that it assumed an inflation rate of 5.2% and an economic growth rate of 4.1%. "With inflation, the only question is whether it will be twice, three times or four times the assumed rate, and in terms of growth we have to hope that it won't be negative," he said. Vajda said the state secretary "didn't give a clear answer as to when Hungary would have a comprehensible budget" for 2023. If there is a change in the macro path,



a new budget law is needed, which needs to be submitted to parliament again, he said. Vajda speculated that the government could amend next year's budget by issuing decrees. Vajda identified debt service as one of the biggest risks to the 2023 budget. He argued that inflation was high and that debt financing would become more expensive due to high country-specific risks. Concerning the 2021 final accounts, Vajda insisted that VAT revenues had been significantly higher than anticipated, but the government had spent it on "prestige investments" instead of "supporting families and SMEs to the extent that they should have".

**WW2 COLONEL SAVING  
JEWS COMMEMORATED IN  
FIUMEI STREET CEMETERY**

The 125th birth anniversary of Colonel Imre Reviczky, who saved the lives of

thousands of Jewish soldiers during the second world war, was marked in a commemoration held in Budapest's Fiumei Street Cemetery on Tuesday. Tamás Vargha, state secretary at the defence ministry, called the late general "one of Hungary's greatest heroes", who had risked his own life to save several thousand Jewish men doing labour service in the Hungarian military from suffering and eventual deportation to Nazi death camps. Reviczky was made commander of a forced labour battalion in 1943. On taking his post, he put an end to the harassment of forced labourers and ordered that they be treated equally with other soldiers, Vargha said. The colonel also prevented the Jews in his battalion from being deported or sent to the Russian front, the state secretary added.

Israeli Ambassador to Hungary Yacov Hadas-Handelsman said several

thousand survivors in Romania, Israel, and across the world could testify to the late colonel's courage and noble spirit, adding that the Jewish people and their state would cherish his memory.

Reviczky was made major-general after his death, and was given Israel's Righteous Among the Nations title.

**ALMOST 8,000 REFUGEES  
ARRIVE FROM UKRAINE  
ON MONDAY**

Fully 4,335 people crossed into Hungary directly from Ukraine on Monday, while another 3,648 crossed from Romania, the National Police Headquarters (ORFK) said. Police issued 30-day residency permits to 115 people, ORFK told MTI on Tuesday. Budapest received 31 people, 19 children among them, who travelled by train, ORFK said.

