

PHOTO OF THE DAY



MTI/Péter Komka

Christmas lights of Jászárokszállás fire brigade

UPCOMING EVENTS

Orbán warns of consequences of EU sanctions

Orbán: EU funding blocked 'for political reasons'

Polish energy group ORLEN enters Hungarian market

Budapest to host World Karate Championships in 2023

TOP STORY

ORBÁN WARNS OF CONSEQUENCES OF EU SANCTIONS

The extension of European Union sanctions to Russian gas and nuclear energy “would have tragic consequences for Hungary”, and the government is working to obtain exemptions, Prime Minister Viktor Orbán told public broadcaster Kossuth Rádió on Friday.

Early in the war, the EU hoped to conclude the war through sanctions or at least facilitate that goal, he said in the interview. The situation in Ukraine is becoming tougher, Orbán said. Meanwhile, although Russia had suffered losses, its energy revenues are spiking. The “sanctions policy has failed to achieve its purpose”, he said. While Hungary has achieved an exemption from the restriction on crude which will come into force on Dec. 5, and so has access to the oil necessary to run the country, it cannot extricate itself from the effects of the sanctions on prices, Orbán said.

Hungary is against the EU financing the operation of the Ukrainian state from a loan taken out jointly by its members, and stands by aid through bilateral agreements between member states and the war-torn country, Orbán said. “We would not like to see the EU become a community of states amassing joint debts,” he said. Due to the war, Ukraine is now unable to finance itself. Hungary accepts that the aid is necessary, but “we are not happy with it -- without the war, we wouldn't have this expense,” he said.

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ORBÁN: MINIMUM CORPORATE TAX 'JOB-KILLING WAGE HIKE'

Orbán called the concept of the global minimum corporate tax a "job killing tax hike", and said the government refused to approve its introduction in Hungary. Tens of thousands of jobs would be lost in the country if the global minimum tax were to be introduced, he said. "We cannot afford it," he said, adding that "the tax issue is not a global one, it falls under national jurisdiction".

Every country must decide for itself what tax system it applies, he said. The reason voters like democracy is precisely that they get to pick a government which promises a certain tax policy, he added. "If we were to give this up, we would give up the Hungarian people's right to decide an important element of Hungary's economic policy: tax policy," he said. "As a result, we do not think the global minimum tax is a good idea either for jobs or for democracy and we therefore do not approve its introduction in Hungary," he added.

ORBÁN: EU FUNDING BLOCKED FOR 'POLITICAL REASONS'

Regarding Hungary's access to EU funding, Orbán said "Brussels is unfair with Hungary" due

to fundamental differences in opinion and political reasons, but an agreement must be sought regardless. The EU's refusal to approve Hungary's recovery plan for the past 18 months was "for obvious political reasons". "They don't like the Hungarian government" because of differences of opinions on fundamental issues, he added. Brussels would have preferred a left-wing government to enter power after the general election and they "rolled the dollars to the left wing to help them win" instead of giving the money to the country, he said. After the elections were won by the right wing, the European Commission was forced to negotiate with Hungary, he added.

Orbán said patience was needed because "we must seek an agreement" despite the EC repeatedly setting new conditions.

The government, however, will refuse to change its position on certain basic issues, such as migration, allowing sexual propaganda in schools and the introduction of sanctions, he said.

Meanwhile, the government is calculating with a 1.5% growth rate, which would be enough to maintain the utility price caps, which leave 181,000 forints (EUR 440) with families on average every month, Orbán said. "If Hungary's government, entrepreneurs and employees work well" in the coming years, Hungary could avoid going into recession, Orbán said.

OPPOSITION PARTIES SLAM ORBÁN REMARKS ON SANCTIONS, ENERGY SUPPLIES

Opposition parties have criticised Prime Minister Viktor Orbán's statements on European Union sanctions against Russia, energy supplies and aid for Ukraine, in his regular interview with public broadcaster Kossuth Radio on Friday.

Conservative Jobbik said that Orbán had "lost sight of reality", noting that the prime minister had voted in favour of all sanctions against Russia in the EU. At the same time, Orbán failed to address the fact that Hungarian food price growth had outstripped all other European countries' and that the forint had plunged into record depths in the autumn. The government "has cancelled the utility price cut scheme and is causing a shortage economy with its price caps harking back to the communist era," the party said. Meanwhile, "Hungary and Hungarians are stripped of the EU monies they are entitled to, because of Viktor Orbán and his government," Jobbik said.

Momentum leader Ferenc Gelencsér, reacting to Orbán's statement that "Hungarians have understood that, whether they like it or not, Ukraine needs support", said Hungarian society had taken

a “humane and fair” approach to Ukrainians and Transcarpathia Hungarians. “It was not the government but civil organisations, which the government has been persecuting for years, who took the lion’s share in helping people fleeing Ukraine and those staying in their homeland,” he said.

LMP said that contrary to what Orbán said, Russian gas was not cheap and “the prime minister said himself that the long-term contract concluded with Russia last year was no guarantee for secure supplies.” The solution would be a green transition, the party said.

ORBÁN: HUNGARY-SLOVENIA RELATIONS FREE OF PROBLEMS

Prime Minister Viktor Orbán met with Slovenian counterpart Robert Golob for a working lunch in Maribor on Friday, Orbán’s press chief said. The meeting was attended by Foreign Minister Péter Szijjártó, and the talks focused on the challenges affecting energy security in Europe, Bertalan Havasi said. The two sides were in agreement that the linking of the two countries’ electricity grids was a great success, with work already completed and a ceremonial event to be held in the presence of the two prime ministers in Cirkovce later in the day, he added. Orbán and Golob also stated that bilateral relations between Hungary and

Slovenia were free of any problems and they expressed support for further economic development in border regions.

INTERIOR MINISTER: HUNGARIAN-TURKISH COOPERATION BOOST TO PUBLIC SAFETY

Cooperation between the Hungarian and Turkish interior ministries is boosting public safety in both countries, Interior Minister Sándor Pintér said in Ankara on Friday, after meeting Suleyman Soyly, his Turkish counterpart. Pintér praised Turkish border patrol officers serving on Hungary’s borders as “one of the most disciplined and effective unit”. Hungary is ready to start working on a system of cooperation between the two countries, he said. Turkey and Hungary hold similar, often identical stances on many current issues, which will facilitate cooperation, he said.

PÁRBESZÉD: ‘IRRATIONAL WAR ON BRUSSELS A THREAT TO HUNGARY’S FUNDAMENTAL STABILITY’

The opposition Párbeszéd party on Friday slammed government policy, saying the “irrational war with Brussels is threatening Hungary’s fundamental stability.” Although the European Commission’s proposal to withhold funding

worth 3000 billion forints (EUR 7.3bn) is “not necessarily equivalent to the scrapping of the funds”, the delay will cause “grave problems in the budget”, he said. The approval of Hungary’s recovery plan means merely that the 2,000 billion forints allocated for the purpose “are not lost forever”. The proposal will have to be adopted by the member states at a meeting on Dec. 6, he added. That vote will come after decisions on two topics the Hungarian government has earlier threatened to veto, the aid to Ukraine and the matter of the corporate minimum tax, he said. “If those mutual threats are implemented, it will hurt Hungary immeasurably more,” he said.

SOCIALISTS: APPROVAL OF RULE-OF-LAW LEGISLATION ‘FIDESZ FARCE’

The government parties’ approval of rule-of-law legislation requested by the European Commission is part of a ruling “Fidesz farce” as long as the government uses the state of emergency as an excuse to govern with decrees, the opposition Socialists’ group leader said on Friday. Bertalan Tóth said on Facebook that no matter what legislation the ruling parties approve, whether it’s to fight corruption, restore the rule of law or speed up access to data of public interest, “it is clear that

they do not take it seriously". As long as the state of special legal order stays in force, which allows them to deviate from the law by way of decrees, to introduce special taxes and change the budget, their demonstration of will to agree with the EC is only part of another Fidesz farce, he said.

SOME 70% OF HUNGARIANS SAY PEACE TALKS WOULD SERVE UKRAINE'S INTERESTS

Some 70% of Hungarians believe that peace talks rather than the continuation of war would serve Ukraine's interests, think-tank Nézőpont Institute said citing a recent survey on Friday. Regardless of political affiliation, the majority in all social groups believe that the start of peace talks would serve Ukraine's interests. A total of 73% of pro-government responders and 69% of those supporting the opposition said peace talks would serve Ukraine's interests, while pro-war respondents accounted for 22% of government supporters and 16% of opposition voters, Nézőpont said. Some 84% of people aged above 70 and 69% of those aged 18-29 said peace talks would best serve the country's interests. Even 69% of

Budapest residents, who are generally more open to the Brussels mainstream's position, said peace should be sought. Nézőpont conducted the survey by phoning 1,000 people between November 28 and 30.

POLISH ENERGY GROUP ORLEN ENTERS HUNGARIAN MARKET

Polish energy group ORLEN on Thursday announced its entry onto the Hungarian market with the takeover of 143 petrol stations. ORLEN is taking over the petrol stations from Hungary's MOL in a deal linked to MOL's acquisition of over 410 petrol stations in Poland under an agreement with PKN Orlen and Grupa Lotos. MOL signed that deal in January, after the European Commission required PKN Orlen to divest assets as a condition for approval of its acquisition of Grupa Lotos. At the same time, MOL agreed to sell a number of its own petrol stations to PKN Orlen. ORLEN has already taken over 79 petrol stations in Hungary that operate under the LUKOIL brand and will take over the remaining 64, gradually, by mid-2024. ORLEN is also taking over 39 of MOL's petrol stations in Slovakia.

SOME 11,000 REFUGEES ARRIVE FROM UKRAINE ON THURSDAY

Fully 5,302 people crossed into Hungary directly from Ukraine on Thursday, while another 5,837 crossed from Romania, the National Police Headquarters (ORFK) said. Police issued 30-day residency permits to 175 people, ORFK told MTI on Friday. Budapest received 27 people, 10 children among them, who travelled by train, ORFK said.

BUDAPEST TO HOST WORLD KARATE CHAMPIONSHIPS IN 2023

The 2023 World Karate Championships, to be hosted by Budapest between October 24 and 28, is expected to draw 1,600-2,000 athletes and about as many sports officials, organisers said on Friday. After meeting representatives of the World Karate Federation for a walk-through of the hosting Papp László Arena, Márton Falusi said this would be the last championships this size before limits are introduced on the number of participants. Before the world championships, WKF will also hold trainings for judges and a conference, he said.