

## PHOTO OF THE DAY



Prime Minister Viktor Orbán (right) and political director Balázs Orbán (centre) at a meeting with US economist Jeffrey Sachs (left)

## UPCOMING EVENTS

President Novák in Iraq

EU justice ministers meet in Brussels

Events related to the war in Ukraine

## TOP STORY

# ROMANIA, BULGARIA 'DESERVE SCHENGEN STATUS'

Hungary's foreign minister on Friday criticised the European Union's rejection of Romania and Bulgaria's bids to join the bloc's passport-free Schengen zone.

Both countries have been working hard to protect their borders and have done a lot to rein in illegal migration, Péter Szijjártó said on Facebook, adding that Romania and Bulgaria should have been allowed to join the Schengen zone. Referring to a Thursday vote in the European Parliament, Szijjártó said that Croatia had been granted Schengen status, while Romania and Bulgaria were rejected "though both were deserving". Szijjártó insisted that their rejection was due to a veto by Austria and the Netherlands, while "everybody else was in support". The minister regretted that "wailing journalists of the liberal mainstream, Brussels bureaucrats, and ministers of liberal governments" were silent, whereas all new positions presented by the Hungarian government were met with "clamorous" criticism. "The liberal mainstream has once again revealed its immense hypocrisy," Szijjártó said. "If a central European country uses their veto, that is the end of the world and destroying European unity, while a veto by western Europeans is okay."

---

## **ORBÁN HOLDS TALKS WITH US ECONOMIST JEFFREY SACHS**

Prime Minister Viktor Orbán and his political director Balázs Orbán held talks with world-renowned American economist Jeffrey Sachs at the PM's office on Friday, Orbán's press chief said. The discussion focused on the war in Ukraine, Bertalan Havasi told MTI, adding that Orbán and Sachs were in agreement on the need for an immediate ceasefire and peace talks. They also agreed that Western countries should be a lot more cautious regarding their military support for Ukraine. Orbán and Sachs said the war needed to be prevented from spreading beyond Ukraine so as to avoid "an irreversible tragedy".

---

## **NAVRACSICS: HUNGARY TO BE AMONG 'FIVE MOST LIVEABLE EU COUNTRIES' BY 2030**

By 2030, Hungary could become one of the "five most liveable countries" of the European Union, Regional Development Minister Tibor Navracsics told parliament's Sustainable Development Council on Friday. Navracsics said Hungary had a good chance to sign the deals necessary for the country to access EU cohesion and recovery funds before the end of December. He insisted that all operative programmes had been concluded and only a political approval was necessary to access the cohesion funds. As for the

recovery funds, the minister said those funds included grants and subsidised loans, adding that the government would decide at a later date if to resort to the latter. Concerning utilisation of cohesion funds, the Hungarian government has retained its earlier structure of operative programmes, Navracsics said. The allocation of recovery funds, however, is not as flexible, with nearly one half of the available monies to be spent on a "green transition" of the economy, involving projects in the areas of diversifying energy sources, modernising the infrastructure, and promoting renewable energies, he said. He added that significant sums would also need to be set aside to finance digitalisation.

---

## **DEFMIN: MILITARY EQUIPMENT MADE IN HUNGARY BOOSTS SECURITY**

Military equipment manufactured in Hungary helps bolster security, Defence Minister Kristóf Szalay-Bobrovniczky said at the signing of a joint venture agreement between the defence ministry and Germany's Dynamit Nobel Defence in Budapest on Friday. The joint venture will help start the rebuilding of Hungary's defence industry which had declined "mainly due to decades of irresponsible political decisions", Szalay-Bobrovniczky said at the ceremony. Hungary's military will now have equipment that will guarantee the security of the Hungarian people, he said. The minister said the joint venture agreement was the result of years of

hard work by many people and a milestone in strengthening Hungary's military strength and economy. The cooperation between the defence ministry and Dynamit Nobel Defence will create jobs, generate tax revenue and boost the reputation of the Hungarian economy, he added. It will also help prevent any disadvantages from potential supply chain disruptions, Szalay-Bobrovniczky said.

The agreement was signed by Dynamit Nobel Defence CEO Michael Humbek and László Palkovics, CEO of defence industry innovation holding company N7 Nemzeti Védelmi Ipari Innovation Holding.

---

## **HUNGARY-CROATIA BORDER CONTROLS TO BE DISSOLVED ON NEW SCHENGEN ARRANGEMENTS**

Border controls will be discontinued on the 344km stretch of border between Hungary and Croatia from January 1, 2023, following approval of Croatia's integration into the Schengen area, interior ministry state secretary Bence Rétvári said on Thursday.

The change will boost tourism and transport between the two countries, Rétvári told journalists after the European Council approved Croatia's accession to the Schengen zone. Also, making the Hungarian-Croatian border transparent will allow the transfer of police working there to other duties, he added.

Rétvári said Romania and Bulgaria's Schengen entry had also been very close,

and only two votes separated them from not getting approval. Hungary has always very much supported the Schengen accession, not only of Croatia, but also of Romania and Bulgaria, he said. In addition to strengthening economic ties, their accession could also strengthen the protection of the EU's external borders. Additionally, Romania's accession would make crossing the border easier for ethnic Hungarians living in Romania, he said.

### **OVER 10,000 REFUGEES ARRIVE FROM UKRAINE ON THURSDAY**

Fully 5,565 people crossed into Hungary directly from Ukraine on Thursday, while another 4,481 crossed from Romania, the National Police Headquarters (ORFK) said. Police issued 30-day residency permits to 161 people, ORFK told MTI on Friday. Budapest received 40 people, 15 children among them, who travelled by train, ORFK said.

### **HECHINGER INAUGURATES HUF 1.4 BN EXPANSION IN SE HUNGARY**

The Hungarian unit of German electronic parts supplier Hechinger inaugurated a 1.4 billion forint (EUR 3.4m) expansion at its base in Tiszakécske, in south-eastern Hungary, on Friday. Addressing the inauguration of the new workshop and storage facility, Péter Szijjártó, the minister of foreign affairs and trade, said the investment would create 70 jobs. Hechinger, a supplier of electronic components for the automotive,

machine, construction and medical technology industries, has received a 276 million forint (EUR 661.8m) government grant in support of the expansion, the foreign ministry cited Szijjártó as saying.

Szijjártó said not even the existing uncertainty in the global economy could halt the ongoing revolution in the global auto industry. "The transition to electric vehicles is a one-way street which everyone has entered," the minister said. Electric vehicles sales doubled last year to six million units and will exceed 10 million this year, Szijjártó said. Citing recent projections, he said electric vehicles will make up around 60% of new car sales by 2030. "Hungary reacted to this trend in time, becoming the European champion of the transition to electric vehicles, and we also have a good chance of turning that into a world championship title," Szijjártó said. Hungary is now the world's third largest manufacturer of electric vehicle batteries, which have by now become the country's top export item, the minister said. Investments like the one that has been carried out by Hechinger boost the output of Hungary's car industry, which has grown by around 23% so far this year, with its value reaching 8,700 billion forints by the end of September, he said.

### **MASTERPLAST PARTNERS WITH MARKET ÉPÍTŐ**

Listed building materials maker Masterplast on Friday said it entered into a strategic cooperation agreement with

Hungarian construction company Market Építő to set up jointly-owned capacity to produce insulation. Under the agreement, Masterplast and Market Építő would establish one or two 50-50% joint ventures in Hungary and/or Serbia, with Masterplast exercising management rights. New mineral wool factories would be set up, supported by state funding, and their output purchased by Market Építő for construction projects and by Masterplast for its commercial activities. The partners will work out the details of the cooperation by the first half of February 2023.

### **SCHÜSSEL HANDED PETŐFI AWARD AT HOUSE OF TERROR MUSEUM**

Former Austrian Chancellor Wolfgang Schüssel was handed the Petőfi Award at the House of Terror Museum on Thursday evening. Gergely Gulyás, the prime minister's chief of staff, said at the ceremony that Schüssel was "at heart a freedom fighter".

In 1998, Schüssel paved the way for EU membership talks with Hungary and was a reliable negotiator who backed the country's swiftest possible entry to the EU, Gulyás said, adding that he "represented the Europe that we still wanted to join". He added that whereas Brussels today was "characterised by incompetence and a lack of principle", Schüssel had been guided by his convictions.