

PHOTO OF THE DAY



MTI/Zoltán Balogh

Ukraine's Yaskrava Arena Dnipro at int'l children's circus festival in Budapest

UPCOMING EVENTS

President Novák attends funeral of Pope Emeritus Benedict XVI in Vatican City

Events related to the war in Ukraine

Stats office publishes industry prices for Nov. 2022

TOP STORY

DEUTSCH CALLS FOR CHANGE IN EU 'SELF-DESTRUCTIVE' SANCTIONS POLICY

Brussels' policy of sanctions is "ill-advised and self-destructive", Tamás Deutsch, the head of ruling Fidesz's EP delegation, said on Wednesday, calling for the sanctions to be scrapped.

Fidesz's European parliamentary group will continue to support changing Brussels' "ill-advised and self-destructive" sanctions policy, Deutsch said in a statement. Those outside Europe who support Brussels' sanctions policy consider the economic crisis about to hit EU member states along with soaring energy prices and inflation to be "collateral damage", the MEP said. "It is time for Europe to finally represent its own interests so that the Brussels bureaucracy too will admit that the sanctions policy is ill-advised," he said. "It causes greater economic damage to Europe's national economies than to those it is targeting." "Our most important task is to have our voices heard as the sober-minded minority in the European Parliament that supports ending the sanctions," he said. Hungary's government fulfilled its commitments, reaching an agreement with Brussels and clearing all legal and political obstacles to gaining access to EU funds, Deutsch said. He added, at the same time, that Brussels could throw more obstacles in Hungary's way of gaining access to the monies.

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CHIEF SECURITY ADVISOR: ILLEGAL BORDER CROSSINGS MORE THAN DOUBLE IN 2022

The number of illegal entrants apprehended at Hungary's border jumped to 269,254 last year from 122,239 in 2021, amounting to a daily average of 738 attempts, the prime minister's chief domestic security advisor said on Wednesday. Hungarian authorities last year detained 1,924 people smugglers, up from 1,277 in 2021, György Bakondi told journalists at a round-table discussion in Budapest. The number of people smugglers kept in Hungarian prisons is 2,500 and they came from 73 countries, he said, noting that related tasks cost the central budget an extra 3 billion forints. Border protection duties were carried out by a force of 500 armed security guards and 13,476 civil guards helped by 237 Czech, 70 Austrian, 50 Turkish and 39 Slovak police officers along the Serbian border, said Bakondi. Border protection cost a total of 650 billion forints (EUR 1.63bn) last year, 98.5% of which was covered from Hungary's central budget, he said. Bakondi noted violence on 265 instances when migrants attacked Hungarian patrol guards along the Serbian border in which 29 troops and 12 police officers were injured. "The number of illegal entrants is rising; Hungary is still the main route for undocumented migrants coming from the Balkans with the aid of people smugglers,"

he said, adding that the migrants came mostly from Afghanistan, Syria, Pakistan, Morocco and India.

SZÁZADVÉG SURVEY: SUPPORT FOR NUCLEAR ENERGY GROWING IN EUROPE

Opposition to nuclear technology has fallen significantly in the European Union in light of the ongoing energy crisis, according to a survey by the Századvég Foundation published on Wednesday. Whereas in the autumn of 2021, 26% of Europeans had opposed the use of nuclear energy, their share dropped to 15% by autumn 2022, the think-tank said. Following a "series of warnings" by professional organisations, the energy crisis proved that Europe needs nuclear power plants capable of providing cheap energy that is low on harmful emissions, Századvég said in a statement. "But a section of the Western political elite continues to stick to an ideology-driven anti-nuclear energy stance, urging the shutdown of existing power plants and blocking investments in new ones," it added. However, support for nuclear energy among the European public has grown significantly in the past year, they said. Fully 40% of Europeans now say the continent should use nuclear technology to produce a considerable amount or a lot of energy, compared with 26% a year ago. The share of those who say Europe should not produce too much or should only

produce a small amount of nuclear energy is unchanged at 35%, they said. Meanwhile, the share of those who completely oppose nuclear energy has fallen to 15% from 26%, Századvég said.

The think-tank pointed out that support for and opposition to nuclear power has flipped completely over the last six years. Whereas in 2016, 41% of Europeans had been against nuclear technology and 15% in favour of it, those supporting nuclear energy now represent 40% of the European public, while the share of those who oppose it has dropped to 15%. Though support for nuclear energy varies widely among EU countries, views appear to be converging, with drastic changes seen in member states that oppose nuclear power, Századvég said.

GROSS WAGES CLIMB 18.4% IN OCTOBER

The average gross wage in Hungary went up by an annual 18.4% to 510,500 forints (EUR 1,270) in October, the Central Statistical Office (KSH) said on Wednesday. The average net wage including tax benefits was 352,000 forints, 19.1% higher than in the same period a year prior. KSH attributed the wage growth mainly to last year's increase in the minimum wages for skilled and unskilled workers as well as as previously scheduled and additional wage hikes.

The average monthly gross wage of full-time employees, excluding Hungarians working full time in fostered work programmes, was

519,800 forints while the average monthly net wage bar the benefits was 339,500 forints in October. The average monthly gross wage of men working full-time went up by an annual 18.1% to 552,500 forints and of women by an annual 16.6% to 457,700 forints.

Average monthly gross wages climbed at the highest rate of an annual 28.5% to 493,800 forints in the non-profit sector. They rose by 16.2% to 445,500 forints in the central-budget operation sector and by 14.3% in the business sector. KSH attributed the above-average wage growth in the non-profit sector to the transfer of several educational institutions to this sector from the central-budget sector. During the period January-October, Hungarians employed in the financial and insurance sectors were the highest earners, receiving on average a monthly gross paycheck of 844,100 forints while people working in commercial accommodations and catering earned the least, 316,700 forints, KSH said.

Commenting on the data, Márton Nagy, the minister of economic development, attributed the continued increase of wages in October to the strong performance of the Hungarian economy. He noted that average wages had increased

more than two-and-a-half-fold since 2010 when the government entered into power. Despite the inflationary effect of war-related sanctions on the economy, real wages in the first ten months of 2022 had gone up, by 4.3%, compared with the previous year, the minister said in a statement, adding that the "harmful sanctions" should be scrapped. "The government will do everything in its power to offset the effects of the sanctions and help business survive and strengthen, as well as to ensure that wages continue to increase," Nagy said. He noted that the government has set up a 2,000 billion forint central fund providing favourable loans and extended the cap on interest rates. The minister also noted the 16% minimum wage increase as of January this year.

MORE THAN 15,000 UKRAINE REFUGEES ENTER HUNGARY ON TUESDAY

Fully 6,054 refugees entered Hungary at the Ukraine-Hungary border on Tuesday, while 9,360 came to the country via Romania, according to the national police headquarters (ORFK). Police issued temporary residence permits valid for 30 days to 204 people. Altogether 106 refugees, 47 children

among them, arrived in Budapest by train, ORFK said on Wednesday.

NUMBER OF HUNGARIAN TOURISTS IN CROATIA UP 31 % LAST YEAR

The number of Hungarians visiting Croatia in 2022 was up by 31% compared to the previous year, the head of the Budapest representation of Croatia's tourism association said on Wednesday. Ivana Herceg said 602,000 Hungarians had spent 3 million guest nights in her country last year, adding that the figures were comparable to those of the 2019 "record year". The most popular destinations among Hungarians included the Kvarner gulf, the Istrian peninsula, and the Split-Dalmatian area, she said. Herceg noted that Croatia had switched to the euro on January 1, but added that kuna, the country's previous currency, would be accepted until January 14. Concerning Croatia's joining the Schengen border regime on January 1, she said that border control at crossing points with Slovenia, Hungary, and Italy had been lifted. At Croatia's international airports, however, the documents of passengers from other Schengen countries would continue to be checked until March 26, she added.