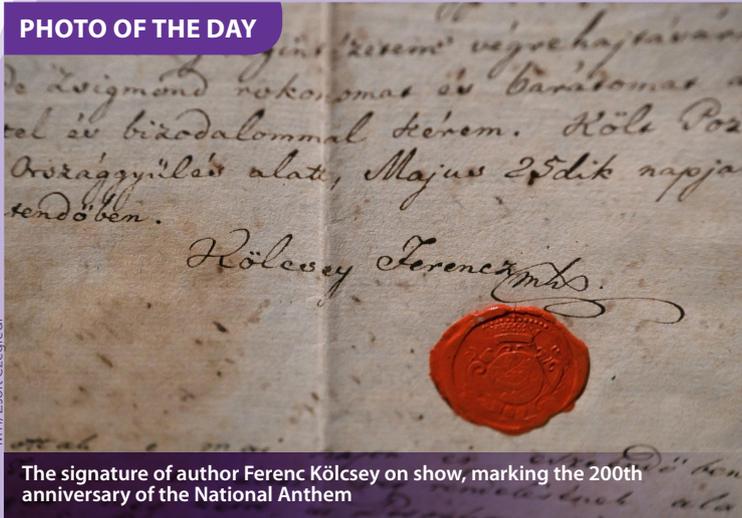


PHOTO OF THE DAY



The signature of author Ferenc Kölcsey on show, marking the 200th anniversary of the National Anthem

MTI/Zsolt Czeglédi

UPCOMING EVENTS

European Parliament holds plenary session

Events related to the war in Ukraine

TOP STORY

FIDESZ MEP: EP EMPLOYING 'DOUBLE STANDARDS'

"Double standards" are clearly present in the European Parliament's handling of rule-of-law issues, which have resulted in procedures against Hungary but not Spain, a Fidesz MEP said on Wednesday in Strasbourg.

Speaking to journalists after an EP session on the state of the rule of law in Spain, Balázs Hidvéghi said a Spanish Socialist politician was appointed to the constitutional court, but the EU decided against disciplinary procedures and no funding is being withheld, as it happened in the case of Poland and Hungary. The EP's double standards are a "dead end and ruin European unity" Regulations should pertain to everyone equally, "even to left-wing, Socialist governments", he said.

Jorge Buxadé Villalba of the Spanish Vox party said they did not want Spanish people to be sanctioned because of the Socialist government. He slammed Prime Minister Pedro Sánchez for "making Spain a country of impunity" and called for abolishing double standards against Hungary and Poland in the European Union. "Double standards are implemented by politicians who have decided there are good and bad Europeans," he said.

SZIJJÁRTÓ: SANCTIONS POLICIES ‘FUTILE’

Blocades and sanctions are “futile in terms of meeting their own goals”, while they will “cause difficulties to people who have nothing to do with the causes”, Foreign Minister Péter Szijjártó said in Havana, adding that the peoples of Europe and Cuba were now facing such difficulties.

Coping with difficulties arising from the war in Ukraine, high inflation, erratic food supplies and waves of migration requires “restoring international politics to a basis of mutual respect” while “the age of sanctions and blocades should be replaced by an era of dialogue”, he said. Sanctions and blocades have often proved to be “more painful for those introducing them”, Szijjártó said, adding that Hungary supported lifting the US blockade against Cuba. Hungary, alongside with the other European Union members, votes each year in support of a United Nations decree aimed at removing the blockade, he noted.

The Hungarian economy could “profit a lot” from cooperation with Cuba, Szijjártó said, adding that the country was in need of highly developed farming, food processing and water management technologies. Talks are under way on joint projects in poultry and swine processing as well as natural disaster management, he added. Szijjártó also noted a broad cooperation in higher education, with

special regard to agricultural studies, adding that cooperation would be extended to medicine and the health industry. Erlier on Wednesday, Szijjártó was received by President Miguel Díaz-Canel. He is scheduled to meet Bruno Rodriguez, his Cuban counterpart, and Rodrigo Malmierca, the minister of foreign trade and investment.

SZÁZADVÉG: MAJORITY OF EUROPEANS CONCERNED ABOUT ILLEGAL MIGRATION

Illegal migration remains a concern for a majority of Europeans, according a survey by the Századvég Foundation published on Wednesday. Fully 78% of the survey’s respondents said they found the influx of illegal migrants into Europe concerning, with 56% saying Europe’s Christian culture and traditions should be preserved, Századvég said. Albania was the only country surveyed where those concerned about illegal migration were not the majority (49%). Illegal migration was even a concern for most of the respondents in “traditionally pro-migration countries” and those that apply a humanitarian approach to the issue, like Sweden (78%), Germany (75%), France (73%) and the Netherlands (68%), they said.

A majority of Europeans also say that the continent should preserve its Christian culture and traditions, Századvég said. This view is most common in the former socialist countries (65%), but is also agreed

on by 54% of respondents in the founding members of the European Union. Of the 38 countries surveyed, those who favoured preserving European Christian culture were in the minority in the Balkan states, Turkey, Finland, the Netherlands, Ireland and Spain. Overall 57.4% of respondents favoured preserving Christian culture, while 33.4% said Europe should go in a secular direction, Századvég said. In addition to the EU member states, Századvég’s Project Europe research covered the United Kingdom, the Balkans and Turkey.

LMP CALLS FOR REGULAR WATER SAMPLE CHECKS IN BATTERY PLANTS

Opposition LMP is calling for legal regulations to stipulate regular checks of water samples in battery plants and wants a committee hearing of the energy minister concerning reports about a battery plant in Göd. LMP lawmaker László Lóránt Keresztes, head of parliament’s sustainable development committee, told a press conference on Wednesday that according to information acquired by investigative website Átlátszó through a court procedure, no water samples had been taken from a well at the God plant since 2016 and it was covered over in 2018. Hazardous substances used by the plant had been found in local water resources according to tests ordered by the Göd-ÉRT organisation at the time, he added.

Hungary Matters is an English-language newsletter produced and distributed by the Media Service Support and Asset Management Fund (MTVA) with content provided by Duna Media Service Provider exercises copyright over all content. No part of this publication may be copied, reproduced, redistributed or transmitted without prior written permission from the publisher, with the exception of copies made by individuals for private use, educational purposes or scholarly research, provided that such transmissions do not exceed the extent justified by the purpose and are not aimed at financial gain, even indirectly, and the source name are indicated at all times.



MI HAZÁNK URGES COMPREHENSIVE HEALTH STRATEGY

The opposition Mi Hazánk party proposes preparing a comprehensive strategy to improve the overall health status of Hungarians, Dóra Dúró, deputy leader of the party, told a press conference on Wednesday. Dúró slammed the government for a recent, "insufficient and hypocritical" campaign against energy drinks, and insisted that in recent years the government had used billions of taxpayers' forints to support Hell Energy Hungary, a company producing such drinks. The sum of 18 billion forints (EUR 45.7m) should have been used "to promote companies producing healthy food", she said.

2022 THIRD HOTTEST YEAR IN HUNGARY SINCE 1901, SAYS WEATHER SERVICE

Last year was the third hottest year in Hungary since 1901, the weather service said on Wednesday. Several months were at least 2 degrees hotter than the average of previous years, with the summer mean temperature being the highest since the beginning of the 20th century, the statement said.

The national annual mean temperature averaged 11.83°C last year, 1.1 degrees above the average mean between 1991 and 2020.

Most of the hottest years on record have been in the last decade, with warming rising by close to 1.5 degrees since the beginning of the 20th century.

Only March, April and September were cooler than the 1990-2020 average, with April being 2.0 degrees cooler. All the other months were at least 1 degree warmer than what would have been considered normal for Hungary's climate, with February being 3.1 degrees hotter. The lowest daily temperature in 2022 averaged -11.2°C for the country, the ninth highest since 1901, making 2022 the fourth year in a row to have the average minimum temperature be above -12°C. Daily maximum temperatures averaged 17.6°C, the second highest behind 2019. The national summer average high reached 30°C for the first time last year. The hottest day of 2022 was July 23, with 41.5°C recorded in Hódmezővásárhely-Szikáncs and Kiskunfélegyháza, in southern Hungary.

NEARLY 10,000 UKRAINE REFUGEES ENTER HUNGARY ON TUESDAY

Fully 4,587 refugees entered Hungary at the Ukraine-Hungary border on Tuesday, while 5,178 came to the country via Romania, according to the national police headquarters (ORFK). Police issued temporary residence permits valid for 30 days to 162 people, ORFK said on Wednesday. Budapest received 20 people, 4 children among them, by train.

CORONAVIRUS - 866 NEW INFECTIONS, 51 DEATHS LAST WEEK

Fully 866 new infections were confirmed last week, while there were 51 fatalities in connection with Covid-19, the Coronavirus Press Centre said on Wednesday. The number of active infections stands at 8,597, they said. Currently, 523 coronavirus patients are being treated in hospital, 61 intubated on a ventilator. Altogether 6,421,176 people have been vaccinated against the coronavirus, with 6,207,670 having received a second jab, 3,904,179 a third, and 418,600 a fourth. The number of registered infections since the start of the pandemic has reached 2,191,200 in Hungary, while there have been 48,629 deaths. Fully 2,133,974 people have made a recovery.

MUSEUM OF FINE ART'S EL GRECO SHOW DRAWS OVER 100,000 VISITORS

An exhibition of the work of El Greco (1541-1614) at Budapest's Museum of Fine Arts has attracted more than 100,000 visitors since it opened late in October. The show of over 50 of the artist's works, including ones on loan from the Prado, the Louvre, the National Gallery in London and the National Gallery of Art in Washington DC, runs until February 19.