

## PHOTO OF THE DAY



MTI/Márton Mónus

Renovated M3 metro line at Nyugati railway station stop

## UPCOMING EVENTS

**EU affairs ministers meet in Brussels**

**Events related to the war in Ukraine**

## TOP STORY

# HUNGARY WON'T SEND AMMO TO UKRAINE

Hungary is not willing to send ammunition to Ukraine, though it will not stop other European Union countries from doing so, the foreign minister said in Brussels.

Péter Szijjártó said Hungary was constructively abstaining at the meeting of the EU Foreign Affairs Council which decided to increase arms shipments and to finance one billion euros-worth of artillery shells for member states to supply Ukraine from their own stocks as part of the European Peace Framework. "Hungary is not supplying ammunition ... we want peace," he told a press conference held during a break of the meeting. "That's why we're not taking part ... We're not supplying ammunition to Ukraine, neither are we preventing others from doing what they want..." Hungary's contribution to the EPF is 1%, or around ten million euros, to be used for other purposes such as working for the stability of the Western Balkans and reducing migration pressure, Szijjártó said, adding that Hungary would not take part in procuring ammunition or delivering it to Ukraine. Szijjártó said Brussels was still fomenting "an atmosphere of war" and that countries promoting peace were under mounting pressure to fall in line. He added that a diplomatic settlement was the only way to save lives.

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## **SZIJJÁRTÓ: HUNGARY HAS RIGHT TO MAKE SOVEREIGN DECISIONS**

Foreign Minister Péter Szijjártó told journalists in Brussels that Hungary had been criticised for taking its position to the UN Security Council, adding that it had been frowned on that a country from “the European choir” should “sing solo in international organisations”. Given that the EU comprises sovereign countries, “this is quite extraordinary”, he said. “We reject any pressure that undermines the sovereignty of Hungarian foreign policy...” he added.

On the topic of the “disenfranchisement of the Hungarian minority in Ukraine”, Szijjártó said he had turned to Josep Borrell, the EU high representative for foreign affairs, with a request that, when it comes to Ukraine’s possible accession talks, he should make it clear to Kyiv that respect for national rights is one of the most fundamental European values and that the rights of the Hungarian national community should be respected. He said it was “unacceptable” that 99 Hungarian primary and secondary schools in Transcarpathia were under the cloud of closure from Sept. 1 when 1,300 schools and kindergartens in Hungary had taken in Ukrainian refugee students. The minister said Ukraine’s EU prospects would be heavily determined by whether Ukraine respects the rights of the Hungarian national minority and whether it restores the rights they enjoyed prior to 2015.

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## **SZIJJÁRTÓ: GOVT CONTINUES TO SUPPORT UKRAINE REFUGEES, PERSECUTED CHRISTIANS**

Hungary will maintain its largest ever humanitarian scheme supporting the victims of the war in Ukraine and will continue helping persecuted Christians around the world, Foreign Minister Péter Szijjártó said in Brussels. The ministry cited Szijjártó telling the European Humanitarian Forum that the government’s humanitarian strategy was determined by the proximity of the war in Ukraine and Hungary’s over thousand-year Christian statehood. Hungary was carrying out the largest humanitarian scheme in its history, Szijjártó told the forum, noting that around 1.1 million people had fled Ukraine through Hungary so far. Those that wish to stay in Hungary get help from the authorities to find jobs and access health services and education. As a result, some 1,300 schools and kindergarten have received Ukrainian children so far, the foreign minister said. “Last year we spent more than 100 million euros for this purpose and we will continue our largest ever humanitarian scheme, as long as it is necessary.”

He said that Christianity was the most persecuted religion in the world, with many communities suffering persecution and discrimination on a daily basis.

The government runs the Hungary Helps scheme, under the arrangement of which 80 million US dollars have been

provided so far to help over one million Christians to stay in their home or return there. Hungary will also continue this scheme as long as it is needed, he added.

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## **SZIJJÁRTÓ: GOVT SUPPORTS EXPANDING ABRAHAM ACCORDS**

The Hungarian government supports expanding the Abraham Accords which normalised Israel’s relations with several Arab states, Foreign Minister Péter Szijjártó said after speaking with Eli Kohen, his Israeli counterpart, by phone. Based on experience of the past decades, the Accords is the first initiative that can be instrumental in establishing peace in the Middle East, Szijjártó said on Facebook, adding that at the talks initiated by Kohen they had also reviewed the region’s security situation. “I assured my Israeli colleague that Hungary continues to support a fair and balanced approach to Israel in international forums,” Szijjártó said. He also said that economic cooperation served the interests of both countries and would be further developed. They agreed that the Israeli foreign minister would soon pay an official visit to Budapest.

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## **SZIJJÁRTÓ: HUNGARY TO CONTRIBUTE TO TÜRKIYE’S POST-QUAKE RECONSTRUCTION**

Hungary’s government has offered to finance the reconstruction of an orthodox church and a cultural

centre in Türkiye following last month's earthquake, and will help rebuild a hospital destroyed in the disaster, Foreign Minister Péter Szijjártó said on Monday. Addressing an international donors' conference in Brussels to support the victims of the Türkiye-Syria earthquake, Szijjártó said Hungary will cover the costs of rebuilding the Syriac Orthodox Church's St. Peter and St. Paul Church in Adiyaman. The Hungarian government will also finance the reconstruction of a cultural centre in Osmaniye, which houses a permanent exhibition focused on Hungarian composer Bela Bartok, a ministry statement cited Szijjártó as saying. In addition, Hungary will contribute to the reconstruction of a hospital chosen by the local authorities, he added.

Meanwhile, Szijjártó said Hungary has earmarked one million US dollars towards programmes launched by Syria's Christian churches aimed at helping those displaced by the disaster. He noted that Hungary sent search and rescue teams to Türkiye immediately after the earthquake. The 167 experts and 29 rescue dogs Hungary sent to the disaster zone rescued 35 people, Szijjártó said. Hungary also delivered 120 tonnes of hospital equipment to Türkiye, he added. Szijjártó expressed hope that Türkiye's reconstruction efforts would be successful, adding that the country's chances were good, "knowing Turkish President Recep Tayyip Erdoğan's level of determination".

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### **NAVRACSICS: METRO 3 DEVELOPMENT SERVES NOT ONLY BUDAPEST RESIDENTS**

The development project to revamp metro line 3 (M3) does more than serve the interests of Budapest residents alone, the minister of regional development said at the opening of a revamped metro station at Arany János Street on Monday. The metro development project is being carried out in cooperation between the Hungarian government, the capital and the European Union, Tibor Navracsics noted. Around two-thirds of the project's costs have been financed by the EU, he added. Navracsics said Budapest was an important hub in central Europe in terms of culture and infrastructure, so the EU resources were being put in good use.

Budapest Mayor Gergely Karácsony said the project's completion was welcome news for both Budapest and the whole of Hungary. He added that all M3 metro stations will have disabled access and they will be also safer and more attractive as a result of the revamp which will be fully completed by May.

Future transport development plans in Budapest include the modernisation of tramlines connected to the route of the M3, with an allocation of 105 billion forints (EUR 260m), and the further development of the area around the Nyugati railway station, he said. EU funding for the M3 development

project came to 172.7 billion forints (EUR 432m), state co-financing was 44.8 billion, while the municipal council contributed 7.1 billion forints. M3 trains will not stop at the Nagyvárad Square or Lehel Square stations until the full project is completed in May.

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### **OFFICIAL: JUSTICE MINISTRY JOINS CYBERCRIME CAMPAIGN**

The number of cyber scams is on the increase, and people must be equipped against the dangers of cyberspace, the justice ministry state secretary, Róbert Répássy, told a press conference. The ministry is joining a campaign dubbed CyberShield Education Programme launched by the Hungarian Banking Association, the National Media and Infocommunications Authority (NMHH), the National Cyber Security Centre and the National Police Headquarters (ORFK) at the end of last year. He said the justice ministry had an important responsibility in the fight against online risks, assisting in victim support, consumer protection, prevention, and educating people about online dangers. The best protection against cybercrime is prevention, which requires legislation as well as education, he said. Teenagers aged 14-18 and people above the age of 65 are the most vulnerable to identity theft, online harassment, abuse of financial data, and financial scams, he added. Victim support centres are run under the ministry's

supervision, offering legal advice and mental health assistance, as well as support for implementing security measures that can prevent people from becoming the victim of scams, Répássy said.

### **POTÁPI: UNITY OF NATION GIVES STRENGTH IN DIFFICULT TIMES**

One of the most important achievements of the March 15 revolution 175 years ago was that it forged national unity, János Árpád Potápi, the state secretary in charge of policies for Hungarian communities abroad, said in Edmonton. "The unity of the nation, the understanding that we can rely on one another and the mother country, gives us strength even in the hardest of times, when our most important values are under threat," he told a commemoration of the revolution's anniversary on Monday. The message of 1848 is that "even when outnumbered, we are able to achieve our goals if we join forces," he said.

Hungarians acted together also last year when the war broke out in Ukraine and 150,000 ethnic Hungarians came under direct threat, with Hungarian

communities around the world organising donation drives, he added.

Meanwhile, Péter Szilágyi, the deputy state secretary for policies for Hungarian communities abroad, said in Cleveland that Hungary supports peace "as everything needed for a worthy human life can only be provided in peacetime". Marking the March 15 national holiday, he said that "Hungary today is seeking the difficult path of representing Hungarian interests with the same unwavering consistency as it did in 1848 when it put self-determination first". Szilágyi said that the government elected in 2010 had defined promoting the preservation of diaspora Hungarians' national identity a strategic goal. "Thanks to joint efforts over the past years, diaspora Hungarians have gained new impetus: through the various programmes and grants, we have proven that Hungarians around the world can count on us."

### **OMBUDSMAN LAUNCHES STUDY ON MEASURES AGAINST CHILD ABUSE IN SCHOOLS**

Ákos Kozma, Hungary's ombudsman of fundamental rights, has launched

a comprehensive study of measures available to apply in public education institutions in the instance of sexual or any other form of abuse against children. The ombudsman has contacted some one thousand primary and secondary schools and vocational training institutions to gather information about their experiences in connection with child abuse cases and measures aimed at preventing them, his office said in a statement. A comparative review of each institution's experiences, practices, opinions, proposals and current situation is of paramount importance in order to assess the situation, it added.

### **MORE THAN 10,000 UKRAINE REFUGEES ENTER HUNGARY ON SUNDAY**

Fully 5,039 refugees entered Hungary at the Ukraine-Hungary border on Sunday, while 5,386 came to the country via Romania, according to the national police headquarters (ORFK). Police issued temporary residence permits valid for 30 days to 65 people, ORFK said on Monday. Budapest received 297 people, 109 children among them, who arrived by train.