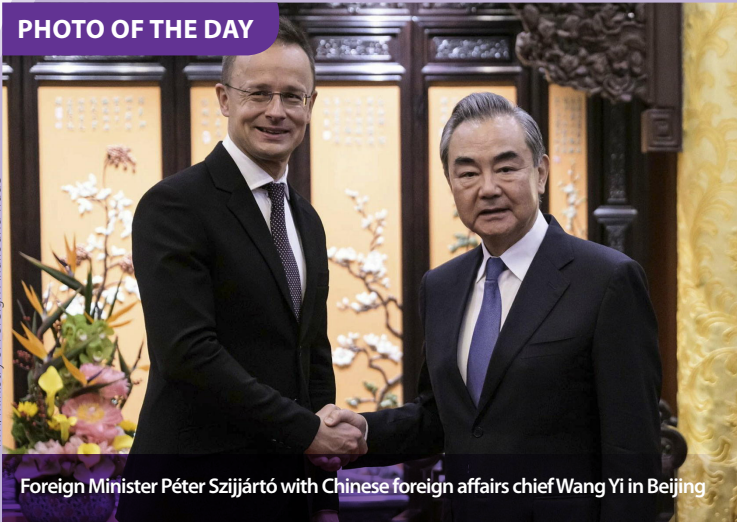


PHOTO OF THE DAY



MTI/Ministry of Foreign Affairs and Trade

Foreign Minister Péter Szijjártó with Chinese foreign affairs chief Wang Yi in Beijing

UPCOMING EVENTS

Stats office releases first estimate on Q1 GDP

President Novák attends Council of Europe summit in Reykjavik

Events related to the war in Ukraine

TOP STORY

CHINESE CAR INDUSTRY INVESTMENTS UNVEILED

China is investing 3 billion euros in Hungary's automotive industry in the coming period, Péter Szijjártó said after talks with Minister of Commerce Wang Wentao in Beijing.

The projects will further strengthen Hungary's position as a top investment destination in central Europe, the minister of foreign affairs and trade said. Szijjártó had talks with the chief executives of five major Chinese companies, four of which will implement investments in Hungary's electric car industry which supplies German manufacturers. The new investments will make a significant contribution to Hungary's ability to maintain its economic growth, the minister said, adding that the projects would be implemented in the interest of renewing Europe's automotive industry and meeting the demands of German manufacturers. Chinese companies, Szijjártó said, consider the country a top destination for their investments in central Europe, noting that by the end of 2022, Hungary had the largest volume of Chinese investments in the region. "We want to continue maintaining this trend ... so we'll encourage additional investments from China, giving them the maximum possible support," he said.

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SZIJJÁRTÓ: 'WE WANT CONNECTIONS, NOT BLOCS'

Foreign Minister Péter Szijjártó said that among the most negative consequences of the war in Ukraine was the re-emergence of blocs in the world which, he added, went against Hungary's interests. After talks with Minister of Commerce Wang Wentao in Beijing, Szijjártó said: "We want connections, not blocs, to be a basis on which the world operates in the coming period ... We think that China's global initiatives serve to achieve this goal, so we support these." He emphasised the need to build EU-China cooperation based on mutual trust and benefits. "We do not agree with the position that brands China as a threat. Our position is that there are enormous opportunities in cooperation with China as a partner." "For this reason, we'd like to develop steady cooperation between the EU and China, and placing Chinese companies on a list of EU sanctions or introducing restrictions on their exports would be insupportable," Szijjártó said. He noted that in 2022 China's GDP expanded to a new record, exceeding the total GDP of the European Union, while it created 12 million urban jobs within a single year. "These results indicate that Europe can only benefit from cooperation with China, and this is why we are urging strong cooperation built on mutual respect," the Hungarian foreign minister said.

SZIJJÁRTÓ: HUNGARY, CHINA CAN COUNT ON EACH OTHER ON INCREASING 'VOICE OF THE PEACE CAMP'

Hungary and China can count on each other in "increasing the voice of the peace camp" and the two countries closely cooperate towards achieving a ceasefire in Ukraine as soon as possible and the start of peace talks, Péter Szijjártó, the minister of foreign affairs and trade, said after meeting Qin Gang, his Chinese counterpart, in Beijing. The war in Ukraine poses particularly serious challenges to the country, which is why Hungary "is arguing for peace" and wants the fighting to end as soon as possible, Szijjártó said. "Unfortunately, the war rhetoric is extremely strong globally, particularly in the Transatlantic world," he said, adding that "therefore we need to constantly raise the voice of the peace camp" to make it clear that the global majority support peace. Szijjártó said that Hungary "does attach due significance to the role of the People's Republic of China" in increasing the voice of the peace camp and appreciates the efforts China has recently taken towards peace. "We highly appreciate the peace plan China has put forward," he said, welcoming the existence of such a plan in itself, arguing that when it comes to Ukraine, generally everybody talks only about war. Szijjártó said he agreed with his colleague to closely cooperate in "amplifying the voice of the peace camp".

SZIJJÁRTÓ: HUNGARY LEADER IN DIGITALISATION, WITH HUAWEI PLAYING DECISIVE ROLE

Hungary is a leader in digitalisation in which Huawei plays a decisive role, the minister of foreign affairs and trade said after the signing of an agreement on the SEEDs scholarship scheme by representatives of the company and Hungary's National University of Public Service in Beijing. Péter Szijjártó said on Facebook that with Huawei's help, Hungary was continually developing its 5G network, the level of technology in the economy was improving, and progress was being made to ensure that over 90% of households in Hungary have advanced internet coverage by 2050. "We continue to maintain the position concerning global telecommunications providers that nobody should be excluded from competition based on their country of origin," Szijjártó said. Hungary will continue to provide an open and fair economic and business environment for foreign investors in which the only powerful view is that companies must respect Hungarian laws and regulations, he said.

"Huawei appreciates all of this and consequently our cooperation is further expanding, with the company's scholarship scheme being launched at the National University of Public Service, focusing on research and innovation linked to 5G," he added.

Huawei said in a statement that the SEEDs scholarship scheme is aimed at talent support in technology, including support for student research linked to 5G. Huawei Technologies launched the SEEDs scholarship scheme in Europe in twelve countries in 2021. In connection with the scholarship agreement, Szijjártó said that economic relations with China remained to be one of the main pillars of the government strategy for foreign trade. "Companies, such as Huawei play the most important role in this because they not only invest and create jobs in Hungary but share technology know-how and actively support higher education in Hungary," he said.

SZIJJÁRTÓ: CATL BATTERY PLANT ENCOURAGES FURTHER CHINESE INVESTMENT IN HUNGARY

The building of the battery plant by China's CATL in Debrecen, in eastern Hungary, is already stimulating other Chinese investments in the country, too, Péter Szijjártó, the minister of foreign affairs and trade, said in Beijing on Monday. This is helping to boost Hungary's competitiveness within Europe, given that Chinese investments bring the most cutting-edge technology to their new bases, Szijjártó said ahead of a working dinner with CATL CEO Robin Zeng. Moreover, investments in the electric vehicle industry ensure that Hungary remains a leader in the fight against

climate change, according to a ministry statement quoting the minister. "This is something everyone who feels a responsibility for the environment can be proud of," Szijjártó said. He noted that 14 percent of global harmful emissions are linked to public road transport, adding that all green and climate goals would remain "a naive illusion" without the transition to electric vehicles. The minister said competition for Chinese investments in Europe remained fierce. "It's clear that besides the competitiveness of Hungary's investment environment, the excellent political relations between Hungary and China also play a major role in us winning these investment bids over much stronger western countries..." Szijjártó said.

ONE DIES, 55 INJURED IN HUNGARY BUS COLLISION IN W SLOVAKIA

A Hungarian bus crashed on the D2 motorway in Slovakia, the state secretary for bilateral relations of the foreign ministry said on his official Facebook page on Monday afternoon. Tamás Menczer also told public broadcaster M1 that 59 Hungarians from Budapest and Miskolc were traveling on the bus, and it was thought that they were pensioners. Based on current information, one person died, 13 were seriously injured, 8 were moderately hurt, and 37 sustained light injuries. Slovak ambulance units transferred the injured to 4-5 hospitals. Menczer said

Hungarian diplomatic staff from the Bratislava embassy were at the scene of the accident. Two drivers tested negative for alcohol, according to M1. The ministry asked relatives to contact the Hungarian consular service's call centre for inquiries concerning the injured.

According to earlier reports, one passenger died and more than 55 were injured when a Hungarian bus collided with a lorry on Slovakia's D2 motorway on its way to Czechia. The accident occurred nearby a parking lot at Závod (Pozsonyzávod), in western Slovakia, TASR news agency said, adding that more than 30 firefighters were dispatched to the scene of the accident.

OFFICIAL: GOVT PROVIDING HUF 160 BN FOR ELECTRICITY NETWORK DEVELOPMENTS

The government is contributing 160 billion forints towards the development of the electricity network to enhance its flexibility, an energy ministry official said on Monday. Parliamentary state secretary Zsófia Koncz said at an event held in the southern Hungarian city of Szeged that the government aimed to ensure that as much energy as possible is produced from domestic sources. Hungary's proportion of solar energy in the electricity mix is the sixth highest in the world and the third highest in Europe, and 1,100 MW of solar capacity was built here last

year, she said. Solar capacity exceeded 4,000 MW at the end of 2022, while more than 700 MW has been added in the first four months of this year, she added. Plans are to build 6,000 MW of solar capacity by 2030, though it is possible that this goal may be doubled, Koncz said. On May 1, carbon-neutral sources covered domestic electricity demand for 15 minutes, she added. The completion of the Fehér Lake substation in Szeged "is the first phase in a series of investments aimed at developing the energy network", she said at the inauguration ceremony. Koncz highlighted the importance of achieving the right energy balance, adding that three combined-cycle gas turbine power plant blocks are being built. The Ministry of Energy is also supporting the development of battery energy storage, she said.

HUNGARY EMBASSY IN WASHINGTON HOSTS THOUSANDS OF VISITORS ON EU OPEN HOUSE EVENT

Hungary's embassy in Washington, DC welcomed some 3,000 visitors at the EU Open House event organised

on the weekend to mark Europe Day. The programme is organised every year by the embassies of European Union member states in the capital city with the aim to present European cultures to visitors. Programmes at the Hungarian embassy on Saturday included folk music concerts, folk dancing, food and wine tasting, a dog show and a screening of popular children's cartoons. Szabolcs Takács, the ambassador, told Hungarian public media that the EU Open House event "is about the EU as well as about European unity, offering an excellent opportunity to present a country's national culture, heritage, history and traditions to visitors".

MORE THAN 11,000 REFUGEES ENTER HUNGARY ON SUNDAY

Fully 5,656 refugees entered Hungary at the Ukraine-Hungary border on Sunday, while 5,747 came to the country via Romania, according to the national police headquarters (ORFK). Police issued temporary residence permits valid for 30 days to 87 people, ORFK said on Monday.

EC SPRING FORECAST PUTS HUNGARY GDP GROWTH AT 0.5% IN 2023

Hungary's GDP contracted and inflation increased in the second half of 2022, the European Commission said in its spring forecast. The EC forecast Hungary's annual GDP growth to slow down from 4.6% in 2022 to 0.5% in 2023, and then pick up to 2.8% in 2024. "HICP inflation appears to have peaked at 25.9% in 2023-Q1, following the phase-out of the motor fuel price cap in December 2022," the EC said. "The inflation rate is set to ease in the subsequent quarters, driven by base effects, lower commodity prices, the recent currency appreciation and weak consumer demand," it added. The EC projected that the annual average inflation rate is to increase from 15.3% in 2022 to 16.4% in 2023, and then drop to 4.0% in 2024. The budget deficit remained high at 6.2% of GDP in 2022, and it is projected to decrease to 4.0% this year and to 1.5% in 2024, the EC said.