

## PHOTO OF THE DAY



MTV / Zoltán Balogh

Circus artist promoting the Together! festival of alternative circus performances in Veszprém on Sept 17-23

## UPCOMING EVENTS

Stats office releases July retail figures

Events related to the war in Ukraine

## TOP STORY

# SZIJJÁRTÓ CALLS FOR GEORGIA EU CANDIDATE STATUS

The European Union's decision not to grant Georgia candidate status "is unfair", Péter Szijjártó, the foreign minister, said on Tuesday, adding that the bloc's credibility was at stake if it failed to grant Georgia candidate status this autumn.

Along with Ukraine and Moldova, Georgia should have been granted this status last year, he said at a joint press conference after meeting Georgian counterpart Iliá Darchiashvili in Budapest. Hungary has assigned an expert on EU integration to Georgia and it is ready to extend it further support, he said. On the topic of energy security and environment protection in central Europe, Szijjártó underscored Georgia's growing role, noting the Azeri-Georgian-Romanian-Hungarian pact whereby "we will lay the world's longest underwater electric power cable under the Black Sea". A feasibility study on the project is expected by early next year, he said.

Szijjártó said he also discussed with Darchiashvili the security situation in connection with the war in Ukraine. Both Hungary and Georgia, he said, were committed to peace and both sought to enforce their national interests, "even under pressure of the liberal mainstream", he said, referring to the recent expulsion of Georgia's ambassador from Kyiv. He stated Hungary's full solidarity with Tbilisi on the matter.

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.

All rights reserved. Enquiries should be made to the English Help Desk at +361 441 9340  
For MTI's real time coverage please visit <http://english.mti.hu>, <http://econews.hu>



---

## **SZIJJÁRTÓ: 'TRUST IN TRUMP IF YOU WANT PEACE'**

The Abraham Accords have resurrected hopes of peace in the Middle East, "yet more proof" that people who seek peace can put their trust in Donald Trump, Péter Szijjártó, the foreign minister, said on Facebook on Tuesday. Szijjártó noted that he had been the only European foreign minister in the White House garden on September 15, 2020 when Israel's prime minister "and two of my friends, Abdullah bin Zayed Al Nahyan of the United Arab Emirates and Abdullatif bin Rashid Al Zayani of Bahrain, signed the agreement on normalising their relations". He said that whereas the accords had inspired general doubts and reservations at the time, experience had since showed that they worked, noting that Israel opened its embassy in Bahrain on Monday, "which a few years ago would have seemed quite unlikely". "The time has come to express our respect for our Bahraini and Israeli friends, and to President Trump. We trust that we can count on his peace-making abilities in the future," Szijjártó said.

---

## **SZIJJÁRTÓ: GROUNDWORK UNDER PLANNED NEW PAKS BLOCK UNDER WAY**

The expansion of Hungary's Paks nuclear power plant has reached a new milestone with groundwork under the planned number six block now under way, and the 2030 completion target

remains realistic, Péter Szijjártó, the minister of foreign affairs and trade, said on Tuesday. Initial groundwork is taking place at a depth of five metres, Szijjártó said, noting that this stage of the process for block number five was already complete. Some sections of the sixth block will be up to 23 metres deep to ensure the block's stability and safety, he said, adding that 30-40 trucks are being used to dump the soil being dug up. Meanwhile, work on the diaphragm wall is still ongoing, with 700 metres of it already built, Szijjártó said, adding that work on the reactor storage space was under way in Russia. "This means that the target of completing the project by 2030 remains realistic," he said. The expansion of the Paks power plant is vital for Hungary's long-term energy security, the minister said, adding that the new blocks will allow Hungary to produce around 70% of the electricity it consumes.

---

## **GOVT OFFICIAL: HUNGARY TO PAY INCREASED ATTENTION TO SAHEL**

Hungary is paying the Sahel region of north Africa increased attention as it is a potential source of migration in the direction of Europe, Tristan Azbej, the state secretary responsible for aiding persecuted Christians, said on Tuesday. Attending an informal meeting of representatives in charge of EU development policy in the member states in Cadiz, Azbej noted the emergence of armed conflicts

in several countries in Africa and the recent military coup in Niger. He said Hungary was the first to call on the sides in Niger "to return to the constitutional order", adding that any outbreak of chaos must be prevented through development and humanitarian aid.

Hungary and the EU have an interest in promoting a peaceful solution through "a development partnership" in a bid to pre-empt the escalation of wars in neighbouring crisis zones, he said. Participants at the Cadiz meeting agreed that the EU must close its global competitiveness gap by promoting international development partnerships under the Team Europe and Global Gateway schemes. The foreign ministry's state secretary gave an outline of the Hungary Helps humanitarian programme, noting that it had so far provided direct aid to more than 50 countries and one million people around the world.

---

## **BÓKA: HUNGARY HAS OWN VIEWS ON EU**

Hungarians have "a vision, strategy and a proposed solution" when it comes to Europe's "crisis symptoms", János Bóka, the EU affairs minister, said in an interview to the daily Magyar Nemzet, in which he also outlined what may be expected when Hungary holds the European Council presidency next year. Bóka said in the interview published on Tuesday that the establishment of an independent EU affairs ministry had been born out of the need for a

strong and effective representation of Hungarian interests amid “circumstances have changed in a fundamental way”. “The European Union is in worse shape than it was. Its immune system is weakened.” Bóka said the EU today focused its energy on finding ways to apply ideological pressure instead of nurturing the bloc’s diversity and harnessing the advantages it offers. This threatened the EU’s unity because it created rifts instead of seeking a common ground, he argued. He said the EU was also giving the wrong responses to its external challenges. EU institutions, he said, had a history of emerging stronger and with more powers from crises while depriving member states of the tools and resources to effectively manage those crises. This is something the institutions consciously aim for, and “operate as a kind of crisis factory”, the minister said, noting that this was causing a realignment of power between member states and the institutions. Despite member states having given up some of their powers, the EU’s economic power on the global market, he said, was waning, and the bloc was also failing to fulfil its ambitions on the global political stage. “This trend is unacceptable,” he added.

Bóka said the EU affairs ministry’s task was to offer solutions to these problems and generate political support for them from member states and the institutions. “That’s what sets us apart from others. We Hungarians have a vision, a strategy and proposed solutions when it comes to Europe’s crisis symptoms,” Bóka said. “And our

proposal is related to the root of the problem.” The minister said Hungary’s solution was that the bloc’s member states should be competitive and action-oriented, he said. The point of European cooperation is not to deprive member states of their economic and political tools, but rather to contribute to making them stronger, he said. “We envision a Europe of nations, not a federal Europe, and that is the alternative we will present in our decision-making,” the minister said. Concerning the EU’s operations, Bóka said Hungary was convinced that the bloc was an institutional system that must operate in accordance with its treaties and legal framework, and where the rules were enforced by checks and balances. “I disagree with the idea that if there is political will for something in the European Union, then we can somehow just find the legal and institutional solution for it,” he said. “This is inconsistent with the principles of the rule of law which they demand from certain member states with great enthusiasm.” The EU will only be successful if it can ensure the coexistence of the principles of national sovereignty and European cooperation among member states, he said.

During its presidency of the Council of the EU next year, Hungary will strive to demonstrate how its vision of the EU functions, Bóka said. “We don’t wish to lecture or marginalise other member states,” he said. “We want to give the possibility of political initiative and strategic direction back to member states. We will assess

every initiative and proposal from the perspective of whether they address real problems...” Bóka added that Hungary’s EU presidency would not be free of political conflict, however. “These are, of course, related to the principles and values we represent, but go beyond Hungary and the Hungarian government,” he said. “It is actually a new Europe policy and the possibility for a new European political majority that are at stake. Hungary’s presidency can also play a role in strengthening this alternative, which many people are rooting against.” Concerning Hungary’s EU funds, Bóka said the government was doing everything it its power to unlock the resources Hungary and Hungarians were entitled to. He said the procedures that have denied Hungary access to certain funds were political in nature. Bóka said Hungary was cooperating in the procedures in good faith and in a constructive way, but the EU institutions had been very “restrained” in their indication of the potential for an agreement, so the question was how the political negotiation process may end. But political negotiations were not new territory for Hungary, he said, “and we are not without resources”.

**AGRICULTURE MINISTER:  
KYRGYZ-HUNGARIAN TIES  
TO BE STRENGTHENED**

Kyrgyzstan and Hungary are strengthening cooperation in seed grain production, agriculture and animal breeding, Agriculture Minister István Nagy said on Tuesday, after talks

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.



with his Kyrgyz counterpart Askarbek Djanybekov. Nagy told a joint press conference after the meeting in Bishkek that the sector was looking for “answers in a quickly changing world” through joint projects that would boost all partners’ economies.

Kyrgyzstan’s seed grain imports jumped tenfold this year, Nagy said. Five Hungarian hybrids are already registered in the country, and another 12 are slated to be, he said. Hungary is ready to sell seed grain or provide the technology to produce seed grain in Kyrgyzstan, he said. Agriculture and food production in both countries could also benefit from the Hungarian-Kyrgyz development fund, he said. Safe energy supplies are a strategic issue, and a renewal of the Kyrgyz animal breeding sector could have a key role, he added. Water management and technologies with low water demand should be developed further in the country, he said.

During his visit in Kyrgyzstan, Nagy also visited the Kyrgyz National Agrarian University, where he met the rector and highlighted the importance of partnership in science. Exchange programmes for Kyrgyz and Hungarian researchers and students are ongoing, he said.

---

### **SPOX: HUNGARIAN AUTHORITIES STOP SOME 1 MILLION MIGRANTS SINCE 2015**

Hungarian authorities have stopped close to 1 million migrants at the country’s southern border since a

165km fence was erected there eight years ago, government spokeswoman Alexandra Szentkirályi said in Röske on Tuesday. Speaking at a press conference at the border crossing where border patrol officers had been attacked before, she said Hungary had been the most “militant” in protecting Europe’s external borders against illegal migration, which the country had committed to under a treaty on the Schengen borders.

She noted that while Hungary had already spent 600 billion forints (EUR 1.6bn) on border protection, only 1.5% of those costs had been reimbursed by Brussels. “Hungary has been combating illegal migration for close to a decade. The country should be acknowledged and respected for those efforts instead of being subjected to continued attacks,” she said.

Szentkirályi said Brussels still sought to force its mandatory migration distribution quotas onto Hungary with a plan to oblige a member state to pay 8 million forints for each migrant it refuses to take in. “Hungary will however not yield to any pressure to accept the quotas and migrant ghettos, but fight with all possible means against those.”

György Bakondi, the prime minister’s chief security advisor told the same press conference that people smugglers had become increasingly organised with attempts made simultaneously at 19 spots in groups of 100 or 200 illegal migrants. He said the illegal entrants and the smugglers were more violent, continuously

mounting attacks on the border fence, patrol vehicles, surveillance equipment and police officers, of whom seven had been injured this year. He said that the number of illegal entrants kept increasing, with Hungarian authorities apprehending 27,600 people in the first, 36,490 in the second and 43,300 in the third quarter of the year. Most of them were Syrian nationals, followed by Afghan, Turkish and Pakistani citizens, Bakondi added.

---

### **FIDESZ MP URGES GOVT TO RESTORE ANNUAL SETTLEMENT FOR HOUSEHOLDS WITH SOLAR PANELS**

Ruling Fidesz’s parliamentary group leader has asked the energy minister to override a new European Union directive on gross settlement for solar power and restore annual balance settlements for households using solar panels in line with their original contracts. Fidesz was given a mandate in last year’s election to protect the interests of Hungarian families, Máté Kocsis said in a post on Facebook, adding that this also meant keeping household utility prices low. The energy crisis caused by the war and the related sanctions has resulted in energy price increases and fluctuations, he said. Under such circumstances, there is no place for families who have installed solar panels in recent years in a bid to cut their energy consumption to receive worse settlement terms because of the EU’s expectations, he

said, adding that the households in question saved around 20,000 forints (EUR 52) a month on average on their electricity bills. "It is not fair to them that the rules change on the fly, and it is not fair that their previously acquired rights are violated," Kocsis said, arguing that at the time of installation, solar panel users had assumed different conditions for the return on their investment. But the Brussels directive wants to change these conditions after the fact, he added.

---

### **LMP SAYS SLASH USE OF FARM CHEMICALS**

Opposition LMP has called for the use of agricultural chemicals to

be slashed, and it will resubmit its bill on phasing out the pesticide glyphosate. The European Union is considering what to do about the potentially carcinogenic chemical and will make a decision in October, László Lóránt Keresztes, the chairman of parliament's sustainable development committee, told a press conference on Tuesday. He called on the government to consider prohibiting the chemical's use nationwide, and LMP has also turned to several ministers with a request that they review a study carried out by the European Greens and the European Plant Protection Action Network (PAN Europe) showing the large presence of

glyphosate in European natural waters. Glyphosate poses a risk to the environment, damaging aquatic organisms in current concentrations, according to the study.

---

### **SOME 13,000 UKRAINIAN CITIZENS ENTER HUNGARY ON MONDAY**

Fully 5,877 Ukrainian citizens entered Hungary at the Ukraine-Hungary border on Monday, while 6,899 came to the country via Romania, according to the national police headquarters (ORFK). Police issued temporary residence permits valid for 30 days to 97 people, ORFK said on Tuesday.