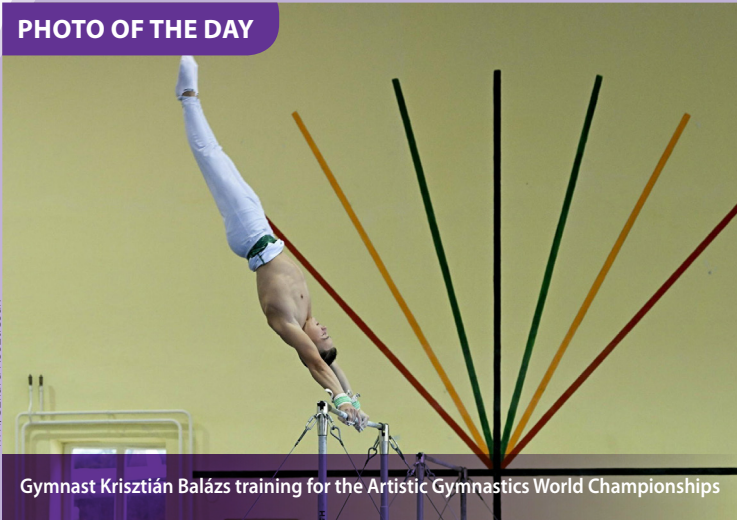


## PHOTO OF THE DAY



MTI/Szilárd Koszticsák

Gymnast Krisztián Balázs training for the Artistic Gymnastics World Championships

## UPCOMING EVENTS

Events related to the war in Ukraine

Presser on 28th International Book Festival

## TOP STORY

# HUNGARY 'PRO-PEACE STANCE APPRECIATED'

Hungary's "values-based, pro-peace, honest" stance, which doesn't aim to cater to the international liberal mainstream, is greatly appreciated worldwide in countries outside Europe, Foreign Minister Péter Szijjártó said in New York.

Speaking on the evening of the first day of the UN General Assembly, Szijjártó said he had used the gathering of delegations from nearly 200 countries to discuss issues mainly with foreign ministers of non-European countries. He also attended an informal meeting of EU foreign ministers focusing mainly on the Sahel, where recent conflicts are threatening to spill over to other regions, the ministry said. Instability, he said, led to stronger waves of migration, and since Europe already faced a serious security risks from the east, another threat from the south could have severe consequences, he said. Szijjártó said that in his meetings with several Asian, Latin American and African counterparts it had become clear that Hungary's position rooted in "honesty and the representation of national interests" was greatly appreciated outside Europe, as it did not kowtow to the international liberal mainstream or seek "pats on the back". Szijjártó said the international community was all the more understanding of Hungary's stance as Hungarians were also losing their lives in the war.

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## **SZIJJÁRTÓ HOLDS BILATERAL TALKS IN NEW YORK**

Foreign Minister Péter Szijjártó held talks with several of his non-European counterparts in New York on Monday, the first day of the United Nations General Assembly. In talks with the leaders of Sierra Leone and Bangladesh, the leaders agreed that Hungary will offer 50 scholarships to students of each country. Hungary and Bangladesh also aim to strengthen economic ties, including cooperation opportunities in the nuclear industry, as the two countries are building similar power plants, he said. Szijjártó and his Uzbek counterpart agreed to continue cooperating in the Organization of Turkic States, which set up its Drought Prevention Institute in Budapest in appreciation of Hungary's water management technologies, he said. Exports to Malaysia could also grow thanks to a recent agriculture agreement, he said. At the meeting with Ecuador's foreign minister, "it felt especially good to talk about our shared Christian values and traditions", especially since Quito is slated to host the International Eucharistic Congress which was held in Budapest in 2021. "We have held important talks ... and this is only the first day," Szijjártó said.

## **NOVÁK HIGHLIGHTS PEACE, SUPPORT FOR FAMILIES AT UN SDG SUMMIT**

Without peace, efforts to advance sustainable development could be imperilled or remain ineffective, President Katalin Novák told the UN Sustainable Development Goals Summit in New York on Monday. Novák co-moderated the leaders' discussion with Kazakh President Kassym-Jomart Tokayev. Brokering peace in all conflict-hit areas in the world must be a priority because without peace, the level of threat rises, an arms race can ensue, and international ties are disrupted, Novák said. She said she wanted to strengthen the voice of those suffering from wars around the world, and said she had brought "the message of the people living in Ukraine to New York" after her visit to the war-torn country in August.

Another message regarding the threats to societies, was that if families were destroyed, schools neglected, and the church discredited, then "we lose the moral compass of our lives and humanity," she said, adding this would be "a fatal mistake".

She also urged responsible childbearing and parenting, saying this was in line with the principles of sustainability. "We must nurture children for the world, because there is no point in fighting for a world of empty cradles," she said. Hungary is committed to sustainable

development and ranks 22nd of the 166 countries in the UN's 2023 Sustainable Development Report, she said.

On the sidelines of the UNGA, Novák held bilateral talks with Tokayev, where they discussed bilateral ties, cultural cooperation and opportunities offered by Hungary's EU membership. Novák also attended a working lunch on the rights of women in view of sustainable development, hosted by UN Deputy Secretary-General Amina Mohammed, chair of the UN Sustainable Development Group. She attended a reception celebrating the 50th anniversary of Germany's UN membership, and the gala dinner of the Jewish organisation Appeal for Conscience.

## **SZIJJÁRTÓ CALLS FOR EXPANDING ABRAHAM ACCORDS**

International organisations should do everything in their power to expand the Abraham Accords to other states, the minister of foreign affairs and trade said on Monday in New York. Péter Szijjártó said "normalised" relations Israel has with several Arab states had "brought the hope of peace to the Middle East for the first time in decades". He told a high-level meeting on the peace process at the UN General Assembly that the situation in the region had an impact on the security of Europe, especially central Europe. The minister said instability in the region strengthened migration pressure on

Europe, and the EU would not be able to handle another severe security challenge alongside the war in Ukraine.

Szijjártó called on the warring parties to start negotiations and to keep channels of communication open. Also, international organisations should avoid taking “one-sided, biased measures and resolutions” pushing all responsibility on one of the parties, he said. The Abraham Accords brought a hope of peace after “decades of failed attempts to broker peace in the Middle East”, he said, adding that they had brought about tangible and significant results such as new embassies being opened, direct flights and a boost in economic and trade. He praised Donald Trump, the former American president, for bringing the accords about, along with the signatory countries, Israel, Bahrain, the United Arab Emirates and Morocco.

### **NAGY: BRUSSELS’ MANOEUVRING ON UKRAINIAN GRAIN ‘UNACCEPTABLE’**

The decision of Brussels not to prolong the ban on the import of Ukrainian agricultural products in the five bordering member countries “is outrageous and unacceptable”, István Nagy, the minister of agriculture, said in Brussels on Monday. After taking part in a meeting of EU agriculture ministers, Nagy told Hungarian journalists that the European Commission’s decision not to prolong the import ban had caused “serious

problems”, and also raised political questions insofar as EC president Ursula von der Leyen chose to discuss the matter with Ukrainian President Volodymyr Zelensky rather than the elected leaders of EU member states.

Nagy said the interests of a third country appeared to be more important to the EC than those of EU member states. The EU, he added, had allowed Ukraine carte-blanche over import controls, which he said was “laughable”.

The ban on the import of Ukrainian grain is a matter of 6 billion euros for the five EU member states involved, he said. “Brussels refuses to understand this, which is why brave, tough and unilateral national measures had to be taken,” he said, adding that otherwise the countries would be flooded with Ukrainian grain before harvest. The minister said the import ban must be reinstated, and if any country chose to relax it or request an exception, they were free to do so.

The grain can be transported through solidarity corridors to third countries, but it must not end up in European markets, he said. Nagy said financial support was needed for land transport so that the grain reached sea ports and on to traditional market in Africa. “We warned the commission that if Ukrainian grain does not arrive there, Russian grain may take its place,” he added.

### **MINISTER: EU MUST CREATE PEACE IN ITS NEIGHBOURHOOD**

The European Union must create peace in its neighbourhood and protect

its external borders against illegal migration, János Bóka, the minister for European Union affairs, said in a statement on Tuesday. Further, the EU should cease applying double standards to Poland and Hungary, he said ahead of a meeting of EU affairs ministers. At an informal working breakfast, Bóka outlined Hungary’s position on the rights of the Transcarpathian Hungarian minority and their current situation. He said the government demanded solutions related to the education of the Hungarian minority as well as under headings connected with the language and minority law, in line with the recommendations of the Venice Commission. The situation should be restored to the state of affairs in 2015, he added. President Katalin Novák’s recent visit to Ukraine reanimated discussions about the situation of the Transcarpathian Hungarian minority, he said, adding that it was important that momentum should be combined with sincere political intentions, leading to palpable results. Meanwhile, Bóka said he had talked to senior European Commission officials regarding preparations for Hungary’s EU presidency.

### **SZIJJÁRTÓ: V4 COOPERATION IN NATIONS’ INTEREST**

At the first meeting of Visegrad Group foreign ministers under the Czech presidency, the participants said that continued cooperation was in their

nations' interest, Foreign Minister Péter Szijjártó said on Facebook on Monday. The ministers discussed the ban on Ukrainian grain, which the EU lifted on Sept 15, Szijjártó said. "Many expressed their disappointment at the European Commission's actions," he said. The EC failed in its obligation to protect the interests of member states, he added.

"I reiterated that Hungary would keep to the original agreement and allow the transit of Ukrainian grain across the country so that it can reach African countries that need it ... but will not allow it to ruin Hungarian farmers," he said. While Czechia, Hungary, Poland and Slovakia approach the issues of the war in Ukraine differently, "international politics is awash in issues where a shared stance and joint representation is in the nations' interest. We agreed to keep ministerial-level cooperation active and to meet regularly to work together," Szijjártó said.

### **MENCZER: 'PRESS RUMOUR' GOVT LINKING NATO RATIFICATION TO SWEDISH VISIT**

A report that the Hungarian government expects the Swedish prime minister or foreign minister to visit Budapest in connection with the ratification of Sweden's NATO accession "is a press rumour", Tamás Menczer said in a statement on Monday. The state secretary for bilateral relations at the foreign ministry was responding to an article carried by news portal Szabad Europa.

### **FIDESZ MP CALLS FOR RIGHTS OF TRANSCARPATHIAN HUNGARIANS TO BE PRESERVED**

Hungary will not support Ukraine's European integration until Kyiv guarantees the rights of the Hungarian minority living there, the head of the Hungarian parliament's committee for EU affairs said in Madrid on Monday. "We unequivocally support Ukraine's European integration, but Ukraine received a strict list of conditions when it was granted candidate status," Judit Varga told MTI after the Conference of parliamentary Committees for Union Affairs (COSAC). The rights of Hungarians living in Ukraine must be restored to at least the level it was in 2015, she said. "Developments lately, however, are pointing to [Hungarians in Ukraine] being completely stripped of their rights," she said.

The European Commission will publish a report in October serving as a baseline for member states' decision on the matter, she said. According to an opinion published by the Venice Commission, the status of Hungarian minorities in Ukraine "could be regulated with a simple amendment," she said.

Regarding the bloc's enlargement, Varga told the conference that Hungary was a long-standing champion of the EU's integration of the Western Balkans. "It is very important that we offer a real outlook.

We can only accept an enlargement procedure based on merit," she said. The integration process should respect national integrity and subsidiarity, she said, noting that Serbia and other countries in the region have been negotiating with the EU for over a decade. The focus in the east was on Ukraine and Moldova, she said, yet Georgia also deserved an outlook on joining the EU.

Varga also praised Spain's programme for the EU presidency, calling it a "balanced programme up to handling current challenges facing the EU." Spanish Foreign Minister José Manuel Albares highlighted demographic issues, a priority for Hungary too, she said. Demographic challenges will be one of the focal points of the Hungarian presidency in the second half of 2024, and the government highlight competitiveness when approaching it, she said. The government aims to "make its family policy measures more popular" during the presidency, she added.

### **GOVT OFFICIAL: MIGRATION WAVE NOT ABATING**

The migration wave shows no signs of easing, with the Hungarian authorities having prevented 125,000 people from crossing the country's southern border illegally so far this year, a senior interior ministry official said at a farewell ceremony to a Hungarian police contingent on Tuesday. The contingent being dispatched to

serve in Serbia for the next month will also be protecting the Hungarian people, state secretary Bence Rétvári said, sending off the latest group of officers. He noted that Hungarian authorities thwarted on average 485 illegal border crossing attempts per day throughout this year so far with the number of violent acts totalling 168 at the country's southern border. Without Hungary's help, the migration pressure on both Austria and Slovakia would be significantly greater, Rétvári said, relaying the Serbian authorities' thanks for Hungary's assistance. He said the fact that migrants and people smugglers had been forced out of the better guarded areas was proof that border protection was working.

### **MI HAZÁNK PROTESTS AGAINST BLACKROCK- BACKED STATE PURCHASE OF BUDAPEST INTL AIRPORT**

Opposition party Mi Hazánk has strong misgivings about the reported planned takeover of Liszt Ferenc International Airport by the Hungarian state and US investment giant Blackrock, László Toroczkai, the party's parliamentary group leader, said on Tuesday. Whereas the airport should be under national control, 1,500 billion forints (EUR 3.9bn) of public money should not be spent on

such a deal in the current economic situation, he told a press conference. Toroczkai said it was worrying that, based on reports, in addition to the 50-50 ownership share, Blackrock would have management rights, so the management's work would lack transparency.

### **JOBBIK URGES TIGHTENING RULES FOR AIRBNB LETS**

The opposition Jobbik-Conservatives want rules for Airbnb-type short-term lets of apartments bought by foreign investors tightened, the party's deputy leader said on Tuesday. Properties let out to tourists in Budapest and big cities distort the rental housing market, Dániel Z Kárpát told a press conference, proposing a 90 day annual limit for such lets and owners paying 27% VAT instead of the current 5. Owners could then rent out apartments to university students, say, in the remaining nine months, he said, adding that Jobbik will soon submit a related bill to parliament.

### **MORE THAN 11,000 UKRAINIAN CITIZENS ENTER HUNGARY ON MONDAY**

Fully 6,751 Ukrainian citizens entered Hungary at the Ukraine-

Hungary border on Monday, while 4,803 came to the country via Romania, according to the national police headquarters (ORFK). Police issued temporary residence permits valid for 30 days to 58 people, ORFK said on Tuesday.

### **PATRIARCH BARTHOLOMEW I TO VISIT HUNGARY**

Bartholomew I, the Ecumenical Patriarch of Constantinople, will start a five-day visit to Hungary at the invitation of the Pannonhalma Archabbey, in western Hungary, on Thursday. Bartholomew will visit the remote Benedictine monastery in Bakonybél, in western Hungary, and will celebrate holy liturgy in Pannonhalma. The focus of his visit is ecumenical and interreligious dialogue, as well as peace-creation. He will also attend a conference on the protection of the created world in Budapest next Monday, organised by Ludovika University of Public Service and Pázmány Péter University. Péter Erdő, Archbishop of Komárom-Esztergom, and Michael Wallace Banach, apostolic nuncio for Hungary, will also give speeches, along with religious dignitaries from Hungary and other countries.