

## PHOTO OF THE DAY



PM Viktor Orbán meets with Bálint Pásztor, acting chairman of the Alliance of Vojvodina Hungarians

MTI/Prime Minister's Press Office/Zoltán Fischer

## UPCOMING EVENTS

**Foreign minister has talks in Venezuela**

**Events linked to wars in Ukraine, Israel**

## TOP STORY

# ORBÁN: HUNGARY MUST NOT LET MIGRANTS IN

The only remedy for migration is not to allow migrants into the country, Prime Minister Viktor Orbán said in an interview to public radio on Friday.

Intelligence reports on migration “paint a dire picture” and strengthen the government’s resolve to “carry on with what we have been doing so far”, he said. Hungary was the first country which stated that “migration and terrorism go hand in hand”, and the reports also underpinned this view, he added. He said migrants were “increasingly aggressive and resort to violence against each other and the border guards”. “They apply increasingly harsh methods to cross the border fence and this radicalisation is actually backed by the appointed activists of terror organisations,” he added. He said the situation at the southern borders was becoming critical because it “is being shaped and organised” by people trained to do so. Migration, he said, was assessed differently by people without children as opposed to those who brought up children. The former, he added, considered migration to be a personal issue and thought about only whether they wanted to live in a country where migrants were around, while the latter also considered what type of country they wanted to leave behind to their children.

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>



## **ORBÁN: MIGRANTS ALLOWED IN CAN'T BE MOVED OUT**

Prime Minister Viktor Orbán, in an interview with public radio on Friday, said the issue regarding migration was not whether one would come across migrants in Budapest in the next 20-30 years but the fact that once migrants were allowed in, they could not be moved out. "And this means that our children, our grandchildren and several generations that follow will live in a world that will be unpleasant, uncertain, full of terrorist acts, crime and mini ghettos like Gaza," he said, adding that this could still be prevented. "Accepting illegal migrants and their presence in the country would lead to the people of that country not being able to live in security, peace or prosperity," he said, adding that the issue required forging a broad international consensus.

Hungary's "pro-migration" leftist opposition and Jobbik-Conservatives were undermining efforts to forge that broad consensus, he added. "Accepting migrants would lead to not being able to live in safety, wellbeing and peace in Hungary, either," he said.

This, he said, was already the situation in several western European countries that were once colonisers, and the 2015 wave of migration added to that, when even further migrants were allowed in. "In some countries, the local residents think that the country will never be the same as it was when they were born there," he added. Orbán said change

was needed in Brussels regarding a migration policy that had "ruined the western member states" and which should not be forced on Hungary. The prime minister said: "We don't want mini Gazas in the districts of Budapest, terrorist attacks or gang wars." He said Hungarians should be thankful that they should not have to think about migration rules in a country where 10-20% of the residents were already migrants. Hungary has a "tolerance offer" which is being communicated to the Germans, the French and the people in Brussels. "Hungary does not want to tell them how they go about their business but asks one thing: they should tolerate that Hungary acts differently," Orbán said.

But, he said, people in Brussels wanted a unified policy on migration and to impose the same state of affairs that pertained in the western half of Europe across the entire bloc. "They want to send their migrants here and force Hungary to build migrant ghettos, and they want to authorise Brussels to be able to send here any number of migrants when a state of emergency is cited," he said. Orbán said this issue would be the focus of a "big fight" in the coming months as well as a key issue in next year's European Parliament elections.

Referring to a planned government public opinion survey, the prime minister said that if the government received confirmation of its policies in a National Consultation, then the Hungarian government would be able to "hold out".

## **ORBÁN: NEW ASYLUM REGULATION NEEDED TO COUNTER GROWING MIGRATION PRESSURE**

Hungary must protect its southern border and it must protect its position in Brussels, he said. Additionally, regulations on migration must be tightened in response to the increasing pressure of migration, he added. The current regulations were suitable to handle the 2015 migration crisis but since the pressure of migration was now increasing, stricter rules were needed, he said. Orbán said the new asylum law must clearly define the legal grounds and the circle of people allowed to reside in Hungary, and the law must be strongly enforced, he said. The prime minister said that unless the legal grounds and timeframe for foreign stays in Hungary were clearly defined, "they will steal the country from us". "Hungary belongs to Hungarians, including jobs here and the right to decide how to live," he said. Orbán said parliament would adopt the legislation by year-end.

On the topic of the National Consultation public opinion surveys, Orbán said they served unity. "Power and the state as an entity in a community is defined by its ability to act in unison and to ensure that there is consensus on the most important issues, and that action is taken in view of the opinions formed in the process." Referendums, parliamentary elections and the National Consultation surveys "are the basis of that joint action, and strengthen it", he said.

## **ORBÁN: EU LEADERSHIP 'DOING THE BIDDING OF GLOBALIST ELITE'**

European Union leaders "are doing the bidding of a globalist elite" rather than representing the will of Hungarians or European citizens, Prime Minister Viktor Orbán said in an interview to public radio on Friday. He said the European Union had been created to ensure peace and prosperity in Europe, but "there is war now, and we lag behind in the competition with the large economic blocs of the world such as China, Asia and the US." "The Brussels leadership is making bad decisions that impact us all," Orbán said, citing migration, the issue of Ukraine's EU membership and the bloc's relationship to the Russia-Ukraine war as examples. EU leaders "are not our men," he said. Orbán said the public rejected migration and war, wanted peace as well as a well-planned green transition that did not destroy industries, he said. "The leadership in Brussels has been captured by a globalist elite and financial power interests," he said, adding that they did not represent the interests of "the Hungarian, German, French or Italian people". Change, he said, was needed to ensure that Brussels bureaucrats "finally do what's in the interest of European citizens" and not the EU itself, "because we are the union".

Regarding the situation in Ukraine, Orbán said an agreement in Istanbul had been ready to sign but "the Ukrainians didn't sign at the behest of the US, or at least that's the diplomatic gossip." Europe's stance during the 2015 Crimean crisis had been that the conflict must be contained

"because an all-European conflict is not in our interest". As the US entered the arena, a new approach replaced isolating the conflict with expanding it, he said. "That is not in the interest of Hungary or Europe," he said. "The war is ruining Europe," he said. "What we are doing now is unsustainable and should not be continued." Hungary, he added, did not support sending weapons to Ukraine and continued to oppose "sending Hungarian taxpayers' money there". Orbán said Hungary was ready to provide humanitarian aid to Ukraine but "funding the Ukrainian state and helping them to fight with weapons bought with our money" would have dire consequences for Hungary and would result in bankruptcy. Regarding economic growth, Orbán said real wages had been growing since September. An OECD report said that real wages had been growing in Hungary since the second quarter, he said.

## **ORBÁN: UKRAINE NOT READY FOR TALKS ON EU MEMBERSHIP**

"Ukraine is not in any way ready to conduct talks with a view to EU membership," Prime Minister Viktor Orbán told public radio on Friday. Orbán said the coming six weeks would be "difficult in politics", with issues of the war and migration looming "amid attacks from Brussels". He said one of the most contentious issues was talks with Ukraine on EU membership, "which must not be undertaken". Orbán insisted that Hungary's rejection of talks on Ukraine's EU membership were tied to financial issues. The EU "should give

us what it owes us", the prime minister said. The start of talks with Ukraine should not be connected to the monies Hungary is entitled to, he added.

## **ORBÁN: GOVT 'TO RESTORE ECONOMIC GROWTH' IN 2024**

Prime Minister Viktor Orbán said in an interview on Friday that economic growth would be restored in Hungary next year after having contracted to zero, "or even below that" this year. "We must provide families with help through growth," Orbán told public radio. Growth, he added, meant job protection, higher wages and a higher standard of living. The prime minister said the government had been determined this year to protect the value of pensions and jobs while curbing inflation to single digits year-end. "We undertook three things .... we have fulfilled all three," he said.

Raising the minimum wage, the wages of skilled workers and the launch of CSOK Plusz, a revamped home purchase subsidy programme, "are matters for 2024" designed to boost Hungary, its economy and the situation of Hungarian families, he said. Orbán said that if "certain economic indicators" were underperforming, "Brussels" could put forward "certain measures", which, if rejected by a member state, would be enforced anyway because they had the means to do so. "But they have no idea about Hungarian life or the laws of the Hungarian economy", he said.

"We know precisely how to restore economic growth, reduce the public debt [and] the budget deficit..."

Orbán said "Brussels" wanted Hungary to abolish its tax on excessive corporate profits, its subsidy system for household energy and its cap on loan interest rates. "But that would ruin the lives of Hungarian families," he said. "We will also have a big debate on economic policy issues", the prime minister said. "The big issues will rather concern the January-September 2024 period, though they are also connected to the European elections due in June," he added. Orbán said almost all issues could be agreed on with "a good, sensible, down-to-earth European leadership", but the current leadership was lacking and "should be replaced". "A new, better and friendlier European Union leadership is needed in Brussels," the prime minister said.

---

## **ECONMIN: GOVT MEETS PLEDGE TO CUT INFLATION TO SINGLE DIGITS BY OCTOBER**

The government has overcome obstacles to cutting inflation and reduced it to single digits ahead of time, Márton Nagy, the economic development minister, said on Friday, commenting on Central Statistical Office (KSH) data showing that Hungary's annual consumer price index fell to 9.9% in October. Nagy said sanctions and price speculation by multinationals had rocketed inflation upwards and the central bank alone

lacked the tools to deal with it. So the government took over responsibility for fighting inflation, he added, noting measures such as mandatory price cuts and an online price monitoring system.

CPI for pensioners dropped to an even more favourable 9.1%, he noted. The price of food fell by 0.1% compared with the previous month and the price of household energy by 0.3%.

Also, the ministry's talks with the Hungarian Mineral Oil Association led to more competitive fuel prices, with the price of vehicle fuels dropping by 3.8%, he noted. Nagy said there was now a fair chance of real wages growing again from September, and the government would maintain support for wage increases with the aim of 4-5% wage growth next year, and a knock-on target of higher consumption. The minister said 2023 was the year "to break inflation" and 2024 would be the year to "restore growth".

---

## **SZIJJÁRTÓ: HUNGARY, GUATEMALA 'STAND FIRM AGAINST ILLEGAL MIGRATION'**

Hungary and Guatemala stand firm against illegal migration and are resolute on their sovereign right to decide whom to live with or without, Péter Szijjártó, the foreign minister, said in Guatemala City after his meeting Guatemalan counterpart Mario Bucaro on Thursday. Notwithstanding their geographical distance, both countries see almost eye to eye regarding the

most important global challenges, he said, adding that both were "under attack" by the international liberal mainstream because they took their Christian traditions seriously, stressing the importance of protecting the traditional family model.

According to a ministry statement, Szijjártó noted that families in Hungary enjoy constitutional protections such as the statement that "the mother is a woman and the father a man". Both countries, he said, were "proud of their culture and national characteristics" and refused to give them up. Szijjártó said both Hungary and Guatemala were eying the war in the Middle East with "deep concern".

He said it was important not to lose sight of how the conflict started. "Israel was hit by a terrorist attack..." he said. "Terrorism must be eradicated; such an attack must not take place ever again." Every effort, he added, must be made to avoid the emergence of a war between countries in the Middle East, as "this could lead to unforeseeable consequences".

---

## **SZIJJÁRTÓ: COUNTRIES REPRESENTED BY ELECTED GOVERNMENTS, NOT NGOS**

The international liberal mainstream "is trying to lord it over global politics by treating NGOs as representatives" of certain countries, "which is absurd as the representatives of countries and societies are governments elected by the people," Péter Szijjártó, the foreign

minister, said in Guatemala City on Thursday. Szijjártó said the European Union, at one time a global leader, now faced multiple challenges and slacking competitiveness. Addressing high-ranking officials of the Guatemalan foreign ministry, he said challenges included “the liberal mainstream’s attacks on traditional values, illegal migration and war”.

The minister said NGOs had “no legitimacy” to speak in the name of nations as they were not elected by the people. He said the liberal mainstream also dominated the media. “We are fortunate in Hungary because half the media is right-wing, conservative, patriotic and Christian Democratic. The liberal mainstream sees that as a dictatorship because they think democracy is when 99% of the media is liberal.”

Conservative values, Christian traditions, national cultures and the traditional family model were, he said, under “attack from all round”. “Hungary, a 1,000 year-old Christian country, feels responsible to protect those values and Christian communities worldwide,” he added. The family enjoys constitutional protections in Hungary, and the protection of children “against LGBTQ propaganda” is enshrined in law, he noted.

The Orbán government has been in power for 13 years, having won four consecutive elections with a two-thirds majority, he said. “Europe sees that as a dictatorship. The European Parliament keeps adopting resolutions saying that what happens in Hungary

is not democratic. Why? Because the liberals are not in power,” he said. “Our stance is that democracy is based on the people’s will. Europe defines democracy as a liberal democracy,” he said. Szijjártó said that Hungary had no wish to kowtow to the liberal mainstream, media or NGOs but to satisfy the demands of its citizens “who decide on the future of the country”, he said.

Regarding illegal migration, Szijjártó said that as a country on the external borders of the EU, Hungary was under “enormous migration pressure”. “Unfortunately, the EU sees migration as a human rights issue rather than a legal one,” he said. Szijjártó referred to “parallel societies in Europe” and the growing threat of terrorism, adding that Hungary was fighting for the security of sovereign countries and for their right to decide whom to accept there.

Regarding the war in Ukraine, he said: “We clearly condemn the war in Ukraine. It is obvious who the aggressor is and who the victim is”. “Hungary wants peace in Ukraine and believes that a solution can be achieved at the negotiating table rather than on the battlefield,” he said.

“Hungary is the only NATO member state which has not delivered weapons to Ukraine because it stands for peace in the region,” he said. The EU has adopted 11 sanctions packages against Moscow so far, “which has harmed the bloc’s economy more than Russia’s”, he said. Szijjártó praised Guatemala as “a partner that thinks similarly to us, with

which we can cooperate on a global level to protect democracy, Christianity and the values we see as important.”

## **ORBÁN CONFIRMS ALLIANCE OF GOVT, ALLIANCE OF VOJVODINA HUNGARIANS**

Prime Minister Viktor Orbán met the acting chairman of the Alliance of Vojvodina Hungarians in his office on Friday, and they confirmed ties between the Hungarian government and the party, the prime minister’s press chief said. Former leader István Pásztor, who had headed the largest ethnic Hungarian party in Serbia for 16 years, died after a short and serious illness at age 67 on October 30, Bertalan Havasi noted in a statement. His son, Bálint Pásztor, a parliamentary group leader and head of the Subotica city council, will be acting chairman until the party’s next general meeting, he added. At the meeting, Pásztor briefed Orbán about the election campaign in Serbia and discussed opportunities to further develop Serbian-Hungarian relations, which, the statement added, had improved significantly in recent years. They agreed to continue an economic development programme in Vojvodina and were in agreement that the opening of a Szeged-Subotica railway link and the extension of opening hours at small border crossings were vitally important to ethnic Hungarians, and both sides would take steps to achieve them.

## **NOVÁK IN BELGIUM: HUNGARY STANDS BY ISRAEL**

Hungary stands by Israel and the Jewish people "in these dark hours" amid the conflict between Israel and Hamas, President Katalin Novák said in Antwerp on Thursday. Meeting representatives of the Hungarian orthodox Jewish community, Novák expressed "deepest sympathy in the name of all Hungarians ... especially with those who have family members in Israel..."

"We are praying that they find the path to peace as soon as possible, as this is in the interest of us all," the president said. She said she hoped everybody would "soon get back their children taken as hostages and those who have lost their children will find peace..." Novák noted Hungary's zero tolerance against anti-Semitism, adding that the country considered the Jewish community as a "rich resource which we want to continue to rely on".

"We are proud of the peaceful coexistence between our Jewish and non-Jewish brethren ... and we can proud that there are no anti-Semitic demonstrations or movements in Hungary, as we do not tolerate anti-Semitism in the country," the president said, adding that she would like to see the same "in Europe; moreover, all around the world". Novák expressed concern about anti-Semitic expressions in some western European countries.

## **BÓKA CALLS FOR INFRINGEMENT PROCEDURE AGAINST BULGARIA OVER ENERGY FEES**

Hungary has called on the European Commission to launch an infringement procedure against Bulgaria over recently introduced energy transit fees, the minister in charge of European affairs said on Friday. János Bóka said on Facebook that the new Bulgarian regulations imposed an energy fee on forwarded Russian gas arriving in Bulgaria, but the new rules had been approved without preliminary information or consultation with Hungary.

The fee, he said, seriously endangered the security of energy supplies in Hungary and the entire region while contravening European Union law because "it has the effect of a customs fee, which runs afoul of EU internal market directives". The regulations also violated the rules of the Energy Charter agreement, he added. Bóka said he had asked the EC in writing to launch an infringement procedure against Bulgaria without delay and to call on Bulgaria to suspend the application of the fee while the procedure is under way. If the EC does not fulfil the request, Hungary will go to the EU court before the end of this year, he added.

## **KÖVÉR: RESTORING BALANCE BETWEEN 'DEMOCRATIC STATES, PRIVATE GLOBAL POWERS' STILL POSSIBLE**

The balance of powers between democratic states and private global powers without a democratic mandate "can still be restored", the Speaker of Parliament said on Friday. Speaking at an event held in Parliament as part of the study days of the European Conservatives and Reformists' committee of regions, László Kövér said the balance could be restored only as long as "the majority in European countries still stand for normality, and there is still parliamentary democracy, and while there are political forces shouldering responsibility for their homeland, nation and Europe."

The current international financial system "is a giant pyramid scheme", Kövér told the event entitled Defending common sense and strengthening cooperation in the EU's multi-level governance. In that system, he said, state finances based on a budget saw growing debt each year while "private powers" saw their "stock of outstanding loans growing and growing". The power of states to represent their interests "is shrinking while that of private powers grows", he said. "Although the connection seems remote, that process is rooted in abnormal developments in the politics, economy and culture of the western world and Europe," he said.

Judit Varga, the (Fidesz) head of parliament's committee for EU affairs, told the meeting that Hungary had a working model to address demographic challenges. She said Hungary's family policies were seen as "exemplary" in Europe and the world. "Hungary's demographic policy is also a message to Europe. We don't want to address that challenge by settling foreigners in the country, but by strengthening families," she said. "We European conservatives have the task to lead Europe back to common sense, because that is the only way to ensure peace and security, and the only way to protect the European way of life, security and freedom," she said. CoR ECR President Marco Marsilio said preserving European values was key to the community's stability and economic growth.

### **OFFICIAL: EU HAS HISTORIC RESPONSIBILITY TO SPEED UP ENLARGEMENT WITH WESTERN BALKANS**

The European Union "has a historic responsibility to speed up enlargement" and integrate countries of the Western Balkans, an official of the ministry of EU affairs said on Friday. State secretary Barna Pál Zsigmond noted that the European Commission has adopted the 2023 Enlargement Package, adding that this is the first time that the EC has approved a report regarding as many as ten countries. The report gives a detailed assessment

of the current state of enlargement as well as individual countries' achievements in the accession process, he said. Enlargement will not involve Ukraine "because, as stated by the EC, Ukraine has failed to fulfil the conditions for candidate status which was offered in advance to the country last summer," he said. "Hungary stands up for its interests, and it is clear that the integration of the Western Balkans must not wait," he said. "A promise for an EU outlook was first offered to countries of the Western Balkans as many as twenty years ago," he added.

Hungary is dedicated to supporting accession and defining a concrete schedule, he said. This process must be given priority over other integration processes, he added. "Enlargement must be handled as a priority, and this will be the case during the upcoming Hungarian presidency," he said.

EU membership "is vital for Western Balkans countries" not only from an economic and strategic perspective but also in terms of energy and security policy, he said, adding that this was also the case given the growing pressure of migration on the region. Further delays in enlargement would severely affect the security interests of the EU and Hungary, he said. Hungary supports enlargement as long as the rules of accession based on individual countries' achievements are respected, he added. Hungary, he said, agreed with the EC that Serbia had taken great strides and welcomed the proposal to grant candidate status to Georgia, he said.

### **GULYÁS: ETHNIC GERMANS 'BELONG TO US'**

Gergely Gulyás, the head of the Prime Minister's Office, attended the inauguration of a monument dedicated to "the millennium Hungarians and Germans have spent together in the Carpathian Basin" in Budapest's 16th district on Thursday. "Germans living here belong to us Hungarians," the minister said in his address at the ceremony. At the new monument, paying tribute to Hungary's ethnic Germans, Gulyás said "a country could be captured with weapons, but a homeland could only be won through one's life". "Those we are honouring are not strangers living among us, but people who have belonged to us," he said. Gulyás called the deportation of ethnic Germans from Hungary after the second world war "shameful". "Coexistence [with ethnic Germans] not only has a past but a present and future, too," he said, noting that the latest census last year put the number of ethnic Germans at 142,000. Julia Gross, Germany's ambassador to Hungary, noted that the inauguration was held on the anniversary of the fall of the Berlin Wall.

### **INTL MIGRATION RESEARCH NETWORK SET UP IN BUDAPEST**

A memorandum of understanding to set up an international migration research network was signed by

five research institutes in Budapest on Thursday. Hungary's Migration Research Institute, the Center for Immigration Studies and NumbersUSA, the Israeli Immigration Policy Center, and the Observatoire de l'immigration et de la démographie aim to cooperate and "integrate their knowledge and skills in a network", Viktor Marsai, head of the Hungarian institute, said. The network will organise conferences and present publications in an effort to "counterbalance approaches to migration based solely on humanitarian aspects, which have in the past decades overpowered public opinion," Marsai said. Other aspects such as security and the economic and cultural impacts on recipient societies should also be considered in the discourse on migration, he said. Marsai also spoke about "the importance" of national sovereignty "so that states can determine whom they want to grant entry to and whom to deny this," he added.

## **HUNGARY CPI FALLS INTO SINGLE DIGITS**

Hungary's consumer price index fell to 9.9% in October, the Central Statistical Office (KSH) said on Friday. Food prices grew by an annual 10.4% in October, slowing from a 15.2% increase in the previous month. Household energy prices fell by 16.1%, while consumer durable prices edged up 0.7%. Prices in the category of goods that includes vehicle fuel increased by 16.5%. Prices of spirits and tobacco products

increased by 11.6% and clothing prices by 7.8%. Harmonised inflation calculated for better comparison with other European Union member states was 9.6%. Core inflation, which excludes volatile fuel and food prices, was 10.9%. CPI calculated with a basket of goods and services used by pensioners was 9.1%. Month on month, consumer prices edged down 0.1%.

## **STATE TO SELL BACK STAKE IN ERSTE BANK HUNGARY**

The state is selling back a 15% stake in Erste Bank Hungary to its Austrian parent company, Erste Bank AG, the economic development ministry said on Friday. All goals in a strategic agreement signed when the state acquired the minority stake in 2016 "have been fully achieved", the ministry said. The 15% stake, purchased by state-owned Corvinus International Investment for 38.9 billion forints (EUR 102.6m) is being sold for 87.5 billion and will be closed by year-end. The statement said the government regarded Erste Group as "an important partner" going forward, with a "long-term commitment to the country".

## **NAGY: DOMESTIC LIVESTOCK MUST BE PROTECTED FROM SWINE FEVER**

The danger of swine fever entering southern Hungary from Croatia is growing and the authorities are

maintaining heightened epidemic prevention measures to minimise the risk of introducing the disease, István Nagy, the minister of agriculture, said on Friday. Given worsening infection data, pig farmers in medium-risk southern counties must comply with priority epidemic prevention measures, the minister said after discussing the situation with the national chief veterinarian Szabolcs Pásztor and pig farmers in Baranya County. Strict regulations must be observed in slaughterhouses receiving pigs from Croatia, a ministry statement quoted Nagy as saying, adding that the past few years had seen "outstanding" health data in the domestic pig population which had been protected from the disease. The ministry "is working to make sure this remains the case," the statement added.

## **NEARLY 10,000 UKRAINIAN CITIZENS ENTER HUNGARY ON THURSDAY**

Fully 5,128 Ukrainian citizens entered Hungary at the Ukraine-Hungary border on Thursday, while 4,837 came to the country via Romania, according to the national police headquarters (ORFK). Police issued temporary residence permits valid for 30 days to 46 people, ORFK said on Friday.