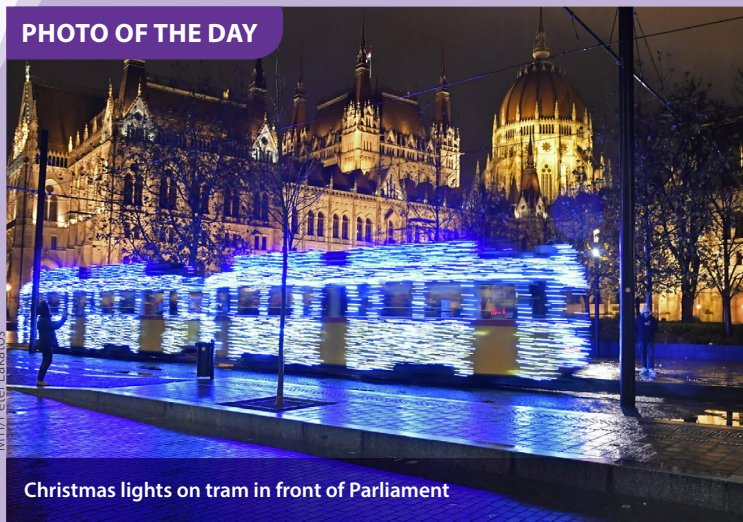


## PHOTO OF THE DAY



Christmas lights on tram in front of Parliament

## UPCOMING EVENTS

**Budapest Climate Summit**

**Events related to the wars in Ukraine, Israel**

## TOP STORY

# ORBÁN: HUNGARY PROSPERING WITHOUT EU MONEY

The “myth” that EU member states cannot prosper without community funding “has been dispelled”, the prime minister has said.

Economic growth would “visibly return” in 2024 without “a single cent of EU funding”, Viktor Orbán told an event organised by employer federation VOSZ. “The economy can be managed so that growth is solely supported by the country’s own revenues and market funding ...” he said. This did not mean, he added, that the government would “not collect those few billions that Europe owes us”. Orbán warned that in future “the traps of loans, energy prices and consumption must be avoided”. As for energy prices, he said families had been “saved from that trap” but businesses were still weighed down. At its latest session, the government decided to cut prices by 10 euros, the prime minister said, adding that the measures would soon be published. The government will continue working to implement further energy price cuts for businesses next year, Orbán said, adding that when it came to arguments over higher interest rates versus lower interest rates to stimulate investments, his government had always been “on the side of entrepreneurs and the economy”.

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## **PRESIDENT IN DUBAI: 'SUSTAINABLE FUTURE REQUIRES SUSTAINABLE DEMOGRAPHY'**

Family is not the cause but the solution of the climate crisis, a sustainable future requires a sustainable demography, the Hungarian president said in her address at the UN COP28 climate conference in Dubai. Katalin Novák called climate change one of the few issues in which world leaders shared a common understanding and were uniting their forces. Novák said Hungary expected to achieve its renewable energy target set for 2030 already by 2026, adding that the country's greenhouse gas emission target for 2030 was 50% of 1990 levels.

She pointed to the problem of welfare states witnessing a dramatic population decline. She said correlation between GDP and fertility was obvious, arguing that "the higher the prosperity, the lower the fertility. The more money, the fewer children." "Climate crisis, poverty, equality, biodiversity, water, and the phenomenon of the demographic ice age can only be understood together. What is the point in protecting the Earth if not for our children?" said Novák.

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## **PRESIDENT DISCUSSES HUMANITARIAN TOPICS IN DUBAI**

Hungary's president met Shaikha Fatima bint Mubarak, the mother of the

president of the United Arab Emirates, Mohamed bin Zayed Al Nahyan, on Saturday. Shaikha Fatima bint Mubarak is well-known and respected for her humanitarian activity in the Emirates. Her foundation supports health-care, education and welfare institutions. Katalin Novák and Shaikha Fatima bint Mubarak agreed on the importance of families and the need to support families, "which form the basis of society", the president's office said.

Novák addressed the UN Climate Change Conference (COP28) in Dubai on Friday before conducting bilateral talks with Cypriot president Nikos Christodoulides, Vietnamese PM Pham Minh Chinh, Mongolian president Uhnagin Hurelsuh, King of Bahrain Hamad bin Isa Al Khalifa, Polish president Andrzej Duda and Italian PM Giorgia Meloni, among others.

On Saturday, the Hungarian president attended the national holiday of the United Arab Emirates. December 2, the anniversary of the unification of Abu Dhabi, Dubai and the other emirates is being celebrated with fireworks and other spectacles.

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## **HUNGARY JOINS DECLARATION ON TRIPLING NUCLEAR CAPACITY**

Hungary joined the Declaration to Triple Nuclear Energy at the UN Climate Change Conference (COP28) in Dubai. The 22 signatory countries have pledged to triple global nuclear energy capacity by 2050. The

declaration was initiated by French president Emmanuel Macron, the state secretary for energy and climate policy, Attila Steiner, said, adding that the aim was to further increase nuclear capacity as nuclear energy was an important source of carbon-free energy production.

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## **SZIJJÁRTÓ: GOAL CONTINUES TO BE TO AVOID ESCALATION IN MIDDLE EAST**

The most important goal continues to be to avoid the escalation of the "worrying" situation in the Middle East, Péter Szijjártó, the foreign minister, said after phone talks with Abdallah Bou Habib, his Lebanese counterpart. Szijjártó said the anti-terrorist operations must be prevented from escalating into a war between countries and called for every possible effort to prevent the opening of further fronts in Israel and its neighbourhood. He said the Lebanese government also had an interest in preventing an escalation.

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## **DÖMÖTÖR QUESTIONS WHO WOULD END UP PAYING FOR UKRAINE'S EU MEMBERSHIP**

A senior Hungarian cabinet member has questioned who would end up paying for Ukraine's EU membership and at what cost. "This is a serious question, and we haven't yet got an answer," Csaba Dömötör, a parliamentary cabinet

state secretary, said on Facebook. Noting that Ukraine "is a huge country" whose development was well below that of the EU average, the country would require "massive amounts of support". Referring to a Financial Times article, he said a document leaked from Brussels indicated that all EU member states would have to pay more into the EU budget and receive less from it. Ukraine would receive 61 billion euros from the cohesion fund with the consequence that under the mechanism for distributing funds "at least 9 member states" would no longer be entitled to cohesion subsidies, Domotor said. Neither would Ukraine's accession have an insignificant impact on agricultural subsidies, he said. With its 41 million hectares, the country would be the EU's largest recipient of farm payments. So countries like Hungary would find subsidies per hectare falling by 20%. "Besides, how can we be expected to give extra money when we haven't received funding owed to us for years?" he said.

## **TÜTTŐ TOPS SOCIALISTS' EP LIST**

Kata Tüttő, a Socialist Party politician who is currently a deputy mayor of Budapest, has been chosen to head the party's European Parliament list.

In second place is Zita Gurmai, the party's deputy group leader, followed by Gábor Harangozó, a one-time Socialist MEP, and László Andor, a former EU commissioner, the head of the party's national board, István Hiller, told an

online press briefing. Tüttő told the briefing that her priority would be to work to ensure Hungary's European Union funding is unfrozen. Further, she said the country would have to win back friends and remain a part of the bloc. "This marriage ... must be saved," she said.

## **LMP CALLS FOR ABOLITION OF LAW ON PRIORITY INVESTMENTS**

Opposition LMP has called for the abolition of the law on priority investments, arguing that the regulation allowed the government to bypass rules when licensing major investments. The Kuria, Hungary's supreme court, recently approved LMP's referendum initiative on the matter, Máté Kanász-Nagy, the party's deputy group leader, told a press briefing. He called the law on priority investments "the law of lawlessness". It allowed the government to launch big investments anywhere in the country, he said, "ignoring the rules, the interests of the community, as well as local opinions and decisions". By scrapping the law, LMP wants to return the right to municipalities to have a say over -- or even veto -- an investment if they feel it would have an adverse impact on the lives of their residents, Kanász-Nagy said.

## **DOBREV CALLS FOR 'STRONG, HONEST ARMY'**

Klára Dobrev, the shadow prime minister of the opposition Democratic

Coalition (DK), said at a forum in the northern town of Gyöngyös that Hungary needed a "strong, well-trained and honest" military, and for that a "strong and honest homeland" was required. Referring to mass sackings and changes to the pension system of soldiers, Dobrev insisted that the government had put the army in an "impossible situation" and had "humiliated soldiers".

Dobrev said Hungary's membership of NATO and the EU provided a "security umbrella", while the strength of the Hungarian army and patriotism were the pillars of Hungary's security. The weakening of this alliance, she said, was the greatest challenge, adding that the greatest danger of all was Prime Minister Viktor Orbán government's "treasonous pro-Putin policy".

Ágnes Vadai, DK's shadow defence minister, said a priority would be to desegregate Hungary from its "international isolation generated by Orbán's security policy". A new national security strategy was needed, she said, adding that DK was working out a comprehensive national defence strategy.

Responding to DK on Saturday, the ruling Fidesz party said that it was "the dollar left" that would imperil Hungary's security, and in obedience to their "foreign clients, the Gyurcsánys would plunge the country into war", cut back the armed forces and "give away our weapons". It said the party of Ferenc Gyurcsány had already shown in government what defending the homeland meant to them, adding

that his administration had “wasted our military assets and reduced the military staff to an all-time low”.

## **HUNGARY HEAT RECORD BROKEN**

Southern Hungary experienced a hotter day today than ever on record, with the mercury reaching 18 degrees Celsius in Békéscsaba, the National Meteorological Service said on Facebook on Saturday. The previous record was 17.4 C, recorded in Békéscsaba in 1959. Elsewhere in the country it was properly wintry, the coldest place being Nagykutas in Zala County, western Hungary, where the peak temperature was -0.5 C.

## **POTÁPI ADDRESSES COMMUNITY OF HUNGARIANS IN CROATIA MEETING**

Thirty years ago Hungarians in Croatia “emerged from the hardest of circumstances”, the prime ministerial state secretary for Hungarian communities abroad, said, declaring that “everything can be started anew if there is cooperation”. After the Yugoslav war of the nineties, the region was in a state of economic and political collapse, and most Hungarians there fled to Hungary or dispersed elsewhere, Árpád János Potápi said after addressing the annual general meeting of the Democratic Union of Hungarians of Croatia (HMDK), in Beli Manastir (Pélmonostor), on Saturday.

Locals had to start life anew and move back to the villages of Baranja and Slavonia, Potápi told MTI.

He welcomed the expansion of the HMDK with three new member organisations, one in Zagreb and two in eastern Slavonia. This, he said, further strengthened Hungarian unity. Potápi also congratulated Róbert Jankovics, a Zagreb lawmaker who heads the HMDK, on their successes of the past thirty years. The state secretary noted that the Hungarian government has raised the amount of education support for children studying at Hungarian-language kindergartens and schools to 100,000 forints (264 euros) from 22,400 forints.

## **KOVÁCS: HUNGARY ‘WON’T ASSIST ZELENSKY IN POLITICAL SHOWDOWNS’**

Hungary has no intention of assisting President Zelensky when it comes to Ukrainian political showdowns, Zoltán Kovács, the state secretary for international relations and communications, said, commenting on information on the website of the Ukrainian SZBU security service suggesting that Petro Poroshenko, the former president, was barred from travelling abroad because he would have met with Prime Minister Viktor Orbán. The SZBU said that if Poroshenko met Orbán, this would make him “a tool” of Russian security services. Kovács said such “political showdowns” also demonstrated that Ukraine was not ready for European Union membership.

## **SZIJJÁRTÓ: R&D INVESTMENT FINANCING INCREASING**

Companies investing in research and development can now access higher amounts of government support, the minister of foreign affairs and trade has said. Support is going up from 15 million euros to 25 million, and maximum support will be up to 50% of the investment instead of half that, Péter Szijjártó said on his Facebook page on Sunday. Regarding subsidies for training, the amount is rising from 2 million euros to 3 million, he added. When it comes to “investment competition” around the world, Hungary is performing well, he said, noting that capital flows into Hungary via the National Investment Agency will have reached 13 billion euros this year, double the previous annual record.

Hungary aims to have among the most competitive investment systems in Europe, he said. Given increasingly fresh production capacities, R&D projects account for an increasing proportion of domestic investments, Szijjártó said, describing this as a positive spiral boosting production and R&D.

He said business service centres played an outsized role in attracting talented young people in Hungary and keeping them here. In recognition of their importance, the requirement to create 50 new jobs with high value-added is being reduced to 25 people, the minister said.

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## **HOLLIK: LEFT DOING BRUSSELS' BIDDING**

The left is doing the bidding of Brussels when it attacks the National Consultation, the ruling Fidesz party's press chief, István Hollik, told public radio in an interview. Also, he questioned whether the EU had worked out how much money would be needed to reconstruct Ukraine or where the money would come from. Money for this may be taken away from EU member states, he suggested.

Meanwhile, regarding the sovereignty protection law, Hollik said there was a general consensus that parties running in an election should not accept money from abroad. He said the left had broken this understanding in 2022 and exploited loopholes, and an amount of dollars equal to 4.5 billion forints had "rolled" in which they used to campaign. The government therefore decided to review the laws and close the loopholes. This

was the essence of the sovereignty protection law, he added. Hollik underlined that Hungary would not back additional EU budget spending for Ukraine, because the money would be used to buy weapons and would prolong the war.

Meanwhile, speaking on the same programme György Bakondi, the prime minister's chief adviser on domestic security, said there is not a single day in Europe when a terrorist act was not being committed or attempt made, or that the intelligence were working to prevent one from happening.

He said 174,000 illegal entrants and more than 1,000 people smugglers have been caught so far this year, far more than in previous years except for 2015.

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## **UKRAINE CRISIS - MORE THAN 9,000 UKRAINIAN CITIZENS ENTER HUNGARY ON SATURDAY**

Fully 5,062 Ukrainian citizens entered Hungary at the Ukraine-Hungary border

on Saturday, while 4,377 came to the country via Romania, according to the national police headquarters (ORFK).

Police issued temporary residence permits valid for 30 days to 56 people, ORFK said on Sunday.

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## **SEMMELWEIS WINS BEST FILM IN TORONTO**

Semmelweis, a feature directed by Lajos Koltai, has won the main prize, based on the audience's rating, at the 19th Toronto European Film Festival, the National Film Institute (NFI) said on Saturday. The eponymous film about the celebrated Hungarian doctor known as the "saviour of mothers", who understood the importance of avoiding postpartum bacterial infection, is on general release in Hungary and has also received its world premiere in New York and in Los Angeles. Semmelweis was produced by Szupermodern Filmstúdió with the support of the National Film Institute. Produced by Tamás Lajos and Joe Vida, the cinematographer was András Nagy, with a screenplay written by Balázs Maruszki.