

## PHOTO OF THE DAY



MTI/Zoltán Balogh

Paintings by Orsolya Lia Vetó at an exhibition opening in Virág Judit Gallery

## UPCOMING EVENTS

**Election campaign events**

**Peace march demonstration**

**Events related to the wars in the Middle East, Ukraine**

## TOP STORY

# ORBÁN: EVERY WEEK 'BRINGS US CLOSER TO WAR'

Every week "brings us closer to war", Viktor Orbán told public radio, warning that Europe "might be bringing Russian forces closer" by financing Ukrainian attacks on Russian soil.

In his interview, the prime minister said one event "pointing towards a drift into war was the start of negotiations on sending French training officers to Ukraine. An even more worrying development, he added, was that an increasing number of players, including NATO's Secretary-General, had said that besides self-defence, Ukraine had the right to use Western-donated weapons to attack Russia. "The Russians have already announced they consider NATO to have a hand in the damage done on Russian soil," as Ukraine would be unable to inflict it without NATO's help. Russia had made clear its troops would advance until it had secured an area broad enough to make it impossible for Ukrainian forces to fire "into Russia's old territory", he said. "We must realise that supporting Ukraine in firing at Russia bears the risk of bringing Russian forces closer to us." Orbán said the drifting into the war had occurred in three phases: "talks, preparation and destruction". "We've moved past talks, what we're analysing now is the matter of preparation, which puts us centimetres from actual destruction," he said.

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## **ORBÁN: NATO DEFENCE ALLIANCE, NOT THERE TO 'DRAG US INTO WORLD WAR'**

NATO is a defence alliance and Hungary had joined for the original goal to ensure protection and not to interfere with a conflict outside the alliance's territory, thereby raising the threat of a world war, Prime Minister Viktor Orbán said in an interview to public radio, calling it "absurd" that "NATO is dragging its members into a world war rather than protecting them." He said western European nations were striving to win the war and they felt safer because they were geographically far from Russia. Those countries saw Ukraine and central Europe as a buffer zone, he said. "It's the same as it used to be, right? That's what they used us for." Orbán said the pressure he was withstanding from Europe was growing with every summit. Resistance, he said, depended on whether "we have the country backing us", and whether Hungary was united in its pro-peace stance, "whether we are brave enough to stand up for peace and to say we are not ready to die for Ukraine."

Meanwhile, the prime minister said that bringing back military conscription "is the internal affair of all nations", not a matter to be decided as part of "an imperial army of the European Union in Brussels", because "others making decisions on Hungarian blood is unacceptable". Hungary has

introduced defence studies into secondary school curriculum, Orbán said. "We are doing a lot of things that will make Hungary and the whole of society capable of self-defence without conscription," he said. He praised professional soldiers as the "best of society," ready to change their way of life to defend the homeland. Orbán said the values represented by servicemen such as discipline, self-sacrifice, comradeship and team work should be present in other groups, too, and reinforced by programmes such as the reserves training, military secondary education. "And summer programmes bringing young people closer to the idea bearing arms, to honour and love the homeland", without re-introducing conscription, he added.

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## **ORBÁN: PEACE MARCH AIMS TO HIGHLIGHT HUNGARY 'ON THE CUSP OF WAR AND PEACE'**

The Peace March demonstration to be held in Budapest on Saturday is being organised to emphasise that "Hungary is on the cusp of war and peace", the prime minister said in an interview to public radio, adding that it was important to declare that the threat of war was real, "contrary to what many -- especially in western Europe and the western-financed left wing -- may say". "We must also make clear that Hungarians yearn for peace and we don't think Europe could cope with another war," Viktor

Orbán said. The demonstration to be held a week before the EP election is also a reminder that "the European founding fathers, who also thought Europe could not take another war, were right", Orbán said. While the European Union was originally a peace project, created against war, "it is now marching ahead, dragging us into one," he said. It should also be made clear that "we did not enter the EU to fight a war together, to pour 100 billion euros into the war..." He added that the US Democratic administration and the EU's leaders were ready to feed "the monster" of war.

Meanwhile, Orbán said European leaders must be challenged on how the bloc's economy could possibly be restored "if we spend all our money in Ukraine". He said the EP election was about "making it clear to European leaders that democracy exists and the voice of the ever-growing pro-peace Europe cannot be ignored." European leaders, he said, must be pushed to make pro-peace decisions, and pro-war politicians must be "chased away". In Hungary, only the Fidesz-led government stood for peace, Orbán said, adding that attempts to win the war in Ukraine on the battlefield would "risk a world war". "Let's take back the initiative and let there be a ceasefire and negotiations -- before we find ourselves in the midst of a great European war," he said.

The prime minister said history showed that in the first stage of every war was "anger against the supporters of peace", while pro-war supporters

argued that no morally right solution existed other than war, “so whoever is on the side of peace is actually taking a morally wrong position”. “Then it became clear that war was not a solution to conflicts between European nations,” he said, adding that a shift towards those who favoured peace took place, and the years after the devastations of the second world war “should be saved”.

The prime minister said it was possible that “we may look back on 2024 -- as we did on 1914 or 1939 -- as a year when the big trouble started...” This, he said, could be avoided. “It’s not true at all that every war is written in the stars. Every war is a consequence of leaders’ decisions, and if the leaders are sane, there will be no war,” he said.

**EP CANDIDATES’ DEBATE  
FOCUSES ON EU DEFENCE,  
MIGRATION**

Representatives of eleven organisations running in the EP election held a debate in Budapest on Thursday, focusing on EU defence and security, migration, agriculture and the rule of law. The debate held between EP candidates of Fidesz-KDNP, the Tisza party, LMP, the alliance of Democratic Coalition (DK), the Socialists and Párbeszéd, as well as Jobbik, the Everyone’s Hungary People’s Party, Momentum, the Two-tailed dog party (MKKP), Mi Hazánk, the Megoldás movement and the Második Reformkor party was broadcast by public current affairs channel M1.

Tamás Deutsch, the head of Fidesz’s delegation to the EP, said the “terrible” war in Ukraine had killed over half a million and displaced 10 million people, including ethnic Hungarians in Transcarpathia. “And yet, the dollar left insists Hungary is at war and wants to send soldiers as well as weapons to Ukraine,” he said, accusing the leftist parties of acting at the behest of the “pro-war Soros network financing them”. “We are on the cusp of a watershed moment deciding whether Europe will enter the war,” he said.

Péter Márki-Zay of the Everyone’s Hungary party rejected the charge, saying no one wanted war in Europe. The only foreign minister who did not vote for the EU’s peace plan was Péter Sziijártó, he added. “While even Prime Minister Viktor Orbán admits that NATO is Hungary’s only protection against a war criminal mass murderer, [Russian President] Vladimir Putin, he stood in the way of Sweden’s NATO integration,” he added.

Péter Róna of Jobbik said Orbán’s “anti-EU policies” were grist to Russia’s mills, undermined the EU’s security and hindered a united security policy. He called on all contenders, “especially Péter Magyar” of the Tisza party, to re-consider “their support for Orbán’s foreign policy”, warning that otherwise Hungary may be pushed out of the European community. Magyar said the EU’s security depended on that of its member states, and he slammed the government for firing 2,000 “well-trained servicemen from the Hungarian Armed Forces, which is

already in a pitiful state”. He accused the government of using the state of emergency, which has been in force for two years, to govern by decree.

László Toroczka of Mi Hazánk called on all candidates to make clear which party family their group was planning to join in the European Parliament. Mi Hazánk will join a new group to represent a stand for peace, with parties such as Germany’s Alternative für Deutschland, he said.

Regarding migration, Péter Ungár of LMP pointed to global warming as the main cause of the issue. The problem, he said, would not be solved based on the decisions of individual consumers but only by taxing the large corporations largely responsible for it. Ungár lamented that “the Hungarian government, European liberals and the [European] People’s Party stands in the way of that step”.

Klára Dobrev, the top candidate of the DK-Socialist-Párbeszéd coalition, slammed the government for freeing 2,000 people smugglers from prison. Furthermore, although the government “loudly advertises” its commitment to protect the jobs of Hungarians, “Fidesz-tied work agencies have brought in 120,000 guest workers from the Far East, making lots of money on the deal,” she said. Dobrev insisted the companies planned to bring in another 200,000 guest workers, which could lead to Hungarians being fired and wages depressed.

Deutsch said: “Illegal migrants are flooding Europe with the help of Brussels and the Soros empire.” While

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Hungarians reject illegal migration, leftist parties in Europe “have forced through a migration pact” that would settle migrants in Hungary, he said.

### **KOVÁCS: WAR OR PEACE AT STAKE IN EP ELECTION**

At stake in the European parliamentary election will be whether war or peace prevails, Zoltán Kovács, the state secretary for international relations and communications, said during a campaign tour on Thursday. He said the Vietnam and Cambodian wars started when French military experts were sent out to these countries, and now French trainers “are going to Ukraine”.

Also, when it came to war, a similar situation prevailed as in 2015 in relation to migration, he said, citing a former Economist journalist who told him that everything the Hungarian government had predicted about migration in 2015 was now happening in Britain. “London has fallen, there’ll be a general election on July 4, there’s an Islamist organisation, and the country’s culture is changing,” Kovács said, adding that much the same was true in Germany and France and everywhere illegal migration was prevalent. From the outset the

Hungarian government has promoted peace and an immediate ceasefire, while the West had “pushed” Ukraine into a “deadly war”, he said, adding that this could have been prevented.

### **HUNGARY POSTS MARCH TRADE SURPLUS OF EUR 1.570 BN**

Hungary posted a trade surplus in March of 1.570 billion euros, lower than 1.691 billion in February, the Central Statistical Office (KSH) said in a second reading of the data. Exports fell by an annual 14% to 12.290 billion euros, while imports dropped by 19.3% to 10.720 billion. Trade with other European Union member states accounted for 77% of Hungary’s exports and 72% of its imports during the month. In the January-March period, Hungary had a trade surplus of 3.843 billion euros. Exports fell by 7.7% to 36.475 billion and imports declined by 15% to 32.632 billion.

### **MOL ANNOUNCES OIL DISCOVERY IN HUNGARY**

Hungarian oil and gas company MOL announced the successful drilling of a well at an oil field in Vecsés, on

the outskirts of Budapest, that it discovered in 2022. Test production of the Vecsés-1 well started with a production rate of 1,300 barrels per day, equivalent to around 1.5% of group-level hydrocarbon production. MOL said it expected production at Vecsés-1 to increase in the near future. After drilling two successful wells, a third will be drilled soon, it added.

### **GOVT LAUNCHES HUF 6 BN RESEARCH GRANT HUNGARY PROGRAMME**

The government is launching a 6 billion forint (EUR 15.4m) Research Grant Hungary programme to motivate foreign and Hungarian science researchers working abroad to implement their projects in Hungary, János Csák, the minister for culture and innovation, said. Research Grant Hungary’s forerunner was the HUN-REN scheme, a recruitment programme that has already brought seven successful foreign researchers to Hungary, he noted. The goal is for there to be 9,000 researchers per one million people and for Hungary to enter the top ten most innovative EU countries by 2030, Csák added.