

PHOTO OF THE DAY



PM Viktor Orbán with Ukrainian President Volodymyr Zelensky in Kyiv

UPCOMING EVENTS

President Tamás Sulyok on official visit to Vienna

Events related to Hungary's EU presidency

Events related to the wars in Ukraine, Middle East

TOP STORY

ORBÁN ASKS ZELENSKY TO CONSIDER CEASEFIRE

Prime Minister Viktor Orbán, visiting Kyiv on Tuesday, asked Ukrainian President Volodymyr Zelensky to consider a ceasefire tied to a deadline.

At a joint press conference with the Ukrainian president, Orbán thanked his host for the invitation, noting that they had agreed to today's talks in Brussels last Thursday. He said it was his first foreign trip after Hungary assumed the European Union's presidency, adding: "Peace is important not only for Ukraine but for the whole of Europe." Orbán said he appreciated Zelensky's initiatives aimed at creating peace, but added that those initiatives would take a long time to come to fruition. "The ways of international diplomacy are slow and complicated ... I put it to the president that we should consider whether the order may be reversed by speeding up peace talks with a quick ceasefire," he said. "A ceasefire tied to a deadline, which could offer the opportunity to accelerate peace talks; I have assessed the options for that scenario," he added. Orbán said he had cleared those issues up with Zelensky, adding he was grateful for the honest talks and answers. He said he would prepare a report for the European Council "that could be a baseline for the necessary European decisions".

ORBÁN: HUNGARY 'AT UKRAINE'S DISPOSAL' DURING EU PRESIDENCY

Hungary is "at Ukraine's disposal" during its six-month presidency of the European Union and will help the country wherever it can, Prime Minister Viktor Orbán told a joint press conference with Ukrainian President Volodymyr Zelensky in Kyiv on Tuesday, wishing Ukraine success. Orbán said he had come to Kyiv to achieve progress in bilateral ties. He called the talks constructive, adding a meeting had been long overdue in view of the many issues needing resolution, "over which we have negotiated and debated a lot in the past years". "We are trying to put the debates of the past behind us and concentrate on the period ahead of us," he said.

Orbán said he wished that ties between Hungary and Ukraine were much better, and Hungary wanted to sign a comprehensive cooperation agreement with Ukraine, similarly to many of its other neighbours. Hungary is also willing to take part in the modernisation of the Ukrainian economy, he said, adding that the process required a regulated framework. Regarding the situation of the ethnic Hungarian minority in Ukraine, Orbán said he saw a chance for progress. He welcomed Zelensky's proposal to set up a Ukrainian school in Hungary. Hungary will fund the schools, "and set up as many as necessary. If there's need for one, then one, and if there's need for ten, then ten", he said. Ukrainians have always

been present in Hungary, which also has a Ukrainian minority self-government, he said. At the same time, there are many more now with the influx of refugees, he added. Those families need care, work, a livelihood and security, and the children need adequate schools and good teachers, he said, adding it was important that Ukrainians in Hungary felt at home there.

ZELENSKY, ORBÁN AGREE TO PREPARE BILATERAL AGREEMENT TO OVERCOME DISAGREEMENTS

Ukrainian President Volodymyr Zelensky on Tuesday said he and Hungarian Prime Minister Viktor Orbán had agreed to prepare a bilateral agreement aimed at overcoming disagreements between their countries. "Everything we discussed today serves as a basis for a future bilateral document between our states which will regulate all segments of our relations and will be mutually beneficial for both countries," Zelensky told a press conference after talks with Orbán. He added that this agreement would make it possible for Ukraine to benefit from "all the positives of European unity". Zelensky said he had proposed opening a Ukrainian school in Hungary for the Ukrainian children there, adding that Orbán had assured him of his support for the initiative.

He welcomed that the Hungarian prime minister's first foreign trip after Hungary assumed the

European Union's presidency was to Ukraine. "This demonstrates our joint European priority," he said. "It is important for there to be peace, so that we can put the strengthening of Europe on new foundations," he said.

Zelensky expressed his gratitude to Hungary for its humanitarian support for Ukraine, underlining that he believed that saving lives was the most important consideration. "Hungary is prepared to cooperate effectively in the interest of achieving long-term security in our region and Europe," he said. Zelensky said he and Orbán had discussed in detail the ways Hungary could participate in the organisation of a second global peace summit, which Kyiv hopes could take place as early as later this year. "We will be grateful to Hungary if it supports us in this," he said. "It is important for Hungary's EU presidency to be effective. Though our political views don't always align, we both serve the strengthening of Europe, social progress and the economic prosperity of European businesses." Zelensky said Ukraine's accession to the EU would be a long process, underlining the importance of Europe's continued support for Ukraine and his country's beneficial cooperation with all of its neighbours.

ORBÁN: HUNGARY'S PLAN TO MAKE EUROPE COMPETITIVE AGAIN - FT

In an article published in the Financial Times on Tuesday on the occasion of

Hungary's assuming the European Union's rotating presidency, Prime Minister Viktor Orbán elaborated on the topic of restoring the EU's competitiveness. He noted that Hungary was now serving its second EU presidency 13 years after its first one.

"During my time as prime minister, a role I held between our two presidencies, I have had a unique vantage point from which to witness the erosion of Europe's competitiveness," Orbán said. He said he had been "fortunate enough to know the great architects of the European integration of the 1990s," making special mention of Helmut Kohl. Quoting the former German chancellor, Orbán said that Kohl once remarked: "We all need Europe in order to remain competitive on the world markets," adding that "his words have never been as relevant as they are today".

"The loss of the EU's competitiveness has been a growing tendency in recent decades," the prime minister said. "This decline can be attributed primarily to misguided Brussels decisions that go against the realities of the world economy." He said that "Europe has become a far less attractive investment destination, even prompting European companies to consider relocating to other markets," and noted Hungary's experience, which he said "shows that economic success requires competition and a business-friendly environment". "We aim to negotiate a new competitiveness deal to relaunch European economic expansion, while promoting an open economy

and international co-operation," he said. Orbán concluded the article by underlining Hungary's belief "that a competitive Europe serves the interests of all member states". "Hungary is gearing up for an exceptionally active EU presidency. It's time to set aside ideological disputes and kick-start Europe's engine. Let's make Europe competitive again."

PRESIDENT SULYOK: HUNGARY INTENT ON STRENGTHENING EUROPE

Hungary is intent on strengthening Europe and its communities as well as conserving peace in the bloc, President Tamás Sulyok said in Brussels. Giving a speech late on Monday on the occasion of the opening of the Hungarian presidency of the Council of the European Union, Sulyok noted that Hungary held the rotating presidency "successfully" 13 years ago.

Hungary, he said, was committed to defending Europe's interests and the rights and obligations stipulated in the founding treaties, as well as overcoming the challenges it faces, adding that Hungary would do so responsibly and serve the citizens of Europe. He said the union was "Europe's hope and promise" after the tragic events of the 20th century, and described the EU as a "remarkable and unique economic and political union; less than a state but more than a simple federation", based on "our common Christian culture and values" and the equality and sovereignty of

its member states. Its strength lay, he said, in the diversity of its nations and the values and characteristics of its member states. The "common European will", he added, derived from the "separate will of its members" and values deeply rooted in the singularities and constitutions of member states. He said unity did not equate with uniformity and common action was not an automatic given. "Differences of opinion and debates help us understand each other to better find solutions to common challenges," the president said, adding that it was desirable for member states to seek mutual respect and for all opinions to be considered, as the EU would never have been created had it not been established on the basis of mutual understanding.

SZIJJÁRTÓ: UN INTRODUCES WORLD FAIR PLAY DAY AT HUNGARY'S INITIATIVE

The General Assembly of the United Nations has adopted a Hungarian initiative with a full consensus to mark World Fair Play Day on May 19 each year, Foreign Minister Péter Szijjártó said on Facebook from New York on Tuesday. "Today has started with a great Hungarian success," the minister wrote, adding that 92 UN members had joined and co-authored the Hungarian proposal, "making a symbolic commitment and signalling their full support for our initiative". He said the initiative

was backed by a “global coalition”, including China, the US, Germany, South Korea, Indonesia, Argentina, and the United Arab Emirates. The Hungarian initiative “promotes an approach to reinforce sportsmanship and the values it represents, such as abiding by the rules, respecting the adversary and combatting violence and doping,” Szijjártó said. Referring to the peace-promoting role of the Olympic Games, Szijjártó said: “We want the whole world to remember ... when athletes hugged after a competition even when they came from countries at war with each other.” “With less than three weeks before the 33rd Summer Olympics, it is no exaggeration to say that this has been the greatest demonstration globally of support for the independence of sports and against the tendency of the world falling into blocs again ... and all this is associated with us Hungarians,” Szijjártó said.

GOVT OFFICIAL HAILS RECORD LOW NUMBER OF JOB-SEEKERS

The number of registered job-seekers dropped to 222,800 in June, the lowest number since 1989, Sándor Czomba, the state secretary for employment policy at the national economy ministry, said on Tuesday citing figures from the National Employment Service. Czomba said the figure had dropped by nearly 1,500 from June 2023, and by over 3,000 compared with the previous month.

The state secretary highlighted the government’s measures aimed at labour activity, and added that the number of those economically active had increased by some 70,000 during the past year. Those entering the labour market “can find jobs almost instantly”, he said. Since 2010, the number of the employed has increased by one million, earning “three times as much on average”, while the number of registered job-seekers has dropped by over 400,000, Czomba said. The government continues working to mobilise a labour potential of 300,000, and increase employment in the 20-64 age group from the current 81 to 85%, Czomba said.

MINISTRY: OVER 100 NEW ELECTRIC VEHICLE CHARGERS TO BE INSTALLED NATIONWIDE

The government is planning to add over 100 new chargers to Hungary’s public network serving electric vehicles across the country, the national economy ministry said on Tuesday. According to a ministry statement, the new charging points will be financed from 28 billion forints (EUR 71m) of REPowerEU funding. The programme to be launched in August invites businesses with a licence to operate electric chargers to build at least one charger in areas lacking such facilities, the statement said. Bidders will be awarded with preferential loans between 100 million and 6 billion forints each, and expected

to come up with a co-payment of at least 10% of the project, the statement said. Large companies may receive a grant to cover 35% of the total cost, while medium-size companies could benefit from a grant to cover 55%. SMEs could be awarded grants to cover 65% of the cost of their project, the statement said.

Bidders will be eligible for a grant if the chargers are planned for a “preferred region” or if they are designed to include an energy storage facility or equipped with a renewable energy generator, or connected to the TEN-T network making it suitable to charge heavy vehicles, the statement said.

GOVT OFFICIAL: BUDAPEST-BRASOV FLIGHT IMPORTANT STEP FOR BOTH CITIES

The launch of a Budapest-Brasov (Brassó) service by Wizz Air is an important step for both cities and countries, a government official said at Liszt Ferenc International airport on Tuesday. Ferenc Antal, a deputy state secretary at the national economy ministry and a member of the board of Liszt Ferenc International operator Budapest Airport, said the flight operating three times a week would contribute to the further strengthening of business and cultural ties between Hungary and Romania. Wizz Air corporate and ESG officer Yvonne Moynihan said the flight is the sixth new route from Budapest announced

by the airline this summer, adding that more services will be launched later. Budapest Airport deputy chief executive Balázs Bogáts noted that borders controls with Romania have been lifted as the country has joined the EU's passport-free Schengen zone.

BUDAPEST GOVT OFFICE: PASSENGERS MUST GET REFUND OR REBOOKING IF FLIGHT CANCELLED OR SEVERELY DELAYED

Airlines must fully reimburse passengers if a flight is cancelled or allow the possibility of a rebooking on the next available flight, the Metropolitan Government Office said in a statement on Tuesday. The office said it stressed the importance of airlines complying with the rules on flight delays and cancellations during the main tourist season. Unless the cancellation is caused by circumstances beyond the airline's control such as a technical error, a strike by airline employees, dangerous weather conditions, air traffic control

decisions, and collisions with flocks of birds, passengers may claim compensation of between 250 and 600 euros depending on the length of the flight. In cases of a delay by more than five hours, the airline must refund the price of the ticket if the passenger opts for that, it added. If the final destination is reached with a delay of over 3 hours in the absence of force majeure conditions, passengers must be offered compensation of between 250 and 600 euros.

GOVT OFFICIAL: POLICE UNIT DISPATCHED TO CROATIAN SITES MOST POPULAR WITH HUNGARIAN TOURISTS

A Hungarian police unit has been dispatched to Croatia to help provide for the safety of Hungarian tourists during the summer season, the interior ministry's state secretary said on Tuesday. The Hungarian police officers will team up with their Croatian colleagues and carry out patrols on foot and by car at the most popular

sites frequented by Hungarian tourists, Bence Rétvári told MTI in a statement.

Their duties include providing advice and general patrol as well as helping Hungarians turning to them by phone, Rétvári said, adding that the officers would also help secure event sites on their mission running from July 1 until August 31 in Pula and Zadar. According to data released by the Croatian National Tourism Board Office in Hungary in January this year, the number of Hungarian tourists visiting Croatia last year had increased by 13% to a record 728,000 compared with 2019, the last record year.

HUNGARY Q1 GOVT SECTOR DEFICIT 5.4% / GDP

Hungary's government sector posted a 1,068 billion forint deficit in the first quarter, or 5.4 % of GDP, the Central Statistical Office (KSH) said on Tuesday, presenting preliminary data. Government sector revenue increased by 10.5% to 7,952 billion forints, while expenditures grew by 1.7% to 9,020 billion.