

## PHOTO OF THE DAY



MTI/PM's press office/Cher Vivien Benko

Prime Minister Viktor Orbán and British counterpart Keir Starmer at Blenheim Palace ahead of an EPC summit

## UPCOMING EVENTS

**EP plenary session continues**

**Events related to Hungary's EU presidency**

**Events related to the war in Ukraine**

## TOP STORY

### 'EU SHOULD NOT COPY US DEMS' FOREIGN POLICY'

The European Union should not copy the US Democrats' foreign policy, but should strive for a new European approach with strategic autonomy in mind, Prime Minister Viktor Orbán said ahead of the European Political Community summit in the UK.

In response to a question concerning Hungary's "peace mission", Orbán said "we are progressing well, it is not easy when there is headwind, but for the time being we have made all the planned steps". He said he had made some proposals in the interest of the European approach. "I am progressing slowly, but they are thinking about it. I hope I can advance further with the next steps," he added. Commenting on his recent talks aiming to achieve peace in Ukraine, he said he had represented his own position. Commenting on Donald Trump, Orbán said "he is a man of peace and what we need is peace". Regarding the situation in Georgia, Orbán said the country "is doing extremely well, and the government is trying to maintain independence and sovereignty amid extremely difficult circumstances". Asked what his message was for Ukraine, Orbán said "I am with you". Peace is a long way ahead "because there are many pro-war countries who think they can annihilate Russians with military force", he said, adding that the conflict had no solution on the battlefield.

## **DEUTSCH: VON DER LEYEN MAKES 'POLITICAL DEAL' IN ORDER TO BE RE- ELECTED**

Ursula von der Leyen has made "a political deal with the European Parliament's pro-war majority in order to be re-elected" European Commission president, Tamás Deutsch, MEP of Hungary's ruling Fidesz, told a press conference in Strasbourg on Thursday. "There has been a clear political pact; the EP's pro-war majority expects von der Leyen to attack [Hungarian PM] Viktor Orbán's peace mission as sharply as possible in return for their votes," Deutsch said. Deutsch criticised the opposition Tisza party's MEPs Péter Magyar and István Tarr for having made "an oath of allegiance" to "pro-war and pro-migrant" von der Leyen, who he said was "further amplifying the gender frenzy", and insisted that Hungary's "dollar left" and its "new opposition" were now acting as "Brussels's humble servants". Asked if Russia's attack on a children's hospital in Kyiv just the day after Orbán visited Moscow had cast a shadow on the prime minister's "peace mission", Deutsch said "we hope proactive steps taken in order to achieve peace will be successful and such tragedies can be prevented; with no war, there will be no victims."

Kinga Gál, another MEP of Fidesz, said the Patriots for Europe group had not supported von der Leyen's

re-election. "Europe is now weaker than five years ago, partly as a result of von der Leyen's decisions," Gál said. "She does nothing for peace and Europe is getting closer to a conflict. She has forced the migration pact to be adopted rather than protecting the EU's external borders. She has failed to protect our children and she now continues to promote gender ideology. Through her extreme green policies she has in fact destroyed farmers, weakened Europe's competitiveness, not to mention the sanctions policy which has impacted the energy security of the whole of Europe."

## **SULYOK CALLS FOR STRENGTHENING BILATERAL DIALOGUE WITH SLOVAKIA**

Bilateral dialogue between Hungary and Slovakia should not only be maintained but strengthened so the two countries could serve their individual and joint interests even better, President Tamás Sulyok said after meeting his Slovak counterpart, Peter Pellegrini, in Budapest on Thursday. Sulyok told a joint press conference that he and Pellegrini had reviewed several areas "with a view of strengthening the [two countries'] strategic partnership". Regarding Hungary's European Council presidency, Sulyok said he had asked for Pellegrini's support to Hungary's role as a "fair mediator" in issues such as curbing illegal migration, boosting European defence policy, an

agricultural policy focusing on farmers, and "real solutions" to demographic challenges.

He said the two countries' approach to enlargement was identical, calling for speeding up the accession process of the Western Balkans countries. He added that he had told Pellegrini that it was well worth maintaining smaller groupings based on good dialogue and cooperation within the larger framework of the EU, "a larger alliance and framework of adaptation". Sulyok said he supported the Visegrad initiative and expressed hope that the community could develop into an even stronger, European engine at the Polish summit during the winter.

In his capacity as the commander of the Hungarian army, he said the continual developments of the Hungarian army would further contribute to carrying out joint air policing tasks. He said he had also told Pellegrini at a one-on-one meeting that Hungary apposed all types of aggression. "Human dignity is inviolable, it must be respected, the respect must be enforced, and it must be protected," he added.

He said they had also discussed the situation of ethnic minorities and were in agreement that it served the interests of both sides to support coexistence. He expressed hope that the ethnic Hungarian advisor to the Slovak president would further elevate this. Hungary will make every effort to ensure that significant support is provided for the ethnic Slovak community in Hungary, he said.

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## **PELEGRINI: SLOVAKIA WILL NOT BOYCOTT HUNGARY'S PRESIDENCY**

Slovakia will not join any attempt or activity that aims to boycott the Hungarian presidency of the Council of the European Union, Slovak President Peter Pellegrini said on Thursday. Pellegrini said at a joint press conference with Hungarian counterpart Tamás Sulyok that Slovak government representatives would participate in and support all Hungarian activities. He added that he did not think anyone should be punished for initiating dialogue. Pellegrini expressed thanks for Hungary's promise to extend air defence for Slovakia until the end of 2025. He also said that economic help would further increase between the two countries, not only in terms of the exchange of goods but also for labour.

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## **KÖVÉR MEETS SLOVAK PRESIDENT PELLEGRINI**

Speaker of Parliament László Kövér held talks with Slovak President Peter Pellegrini in Budapest on Thursday, parliament's press service said. At their meeting, Kövér and Pellegrini reviewed Hungarian-Slovak political relations, issues concerning their national communities, the status of the Visegrad Group cooperation, the

situation of the European Union and international challenges such as the war in Ukraine, along with the possibilities for establishing peace as soon as possible. According to the statement, Kövér said in connection with Hungary's presidency of the Council of the EU that Hungary would do its utmost to make progress on all issues on which Hungary and Slovakia held similar positions. Among the seven main priorities of the Hungarian presidency, the speaker highlighted the aim of curbing illegal migration. Pellegrini is on an official visit to Budapest at the invitation of Hungarian President Tamás Sulyok.

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## **STARMER: HUNGARY TO HOST NEXT EPC SUMMIT**

The European Political Community will hold its next summit in Hungary, British Prime Minister Keir Starmer told the closing press conference of the EPC meeting held at Blenheim Palace on Thursday. The one-day summit was dedicated to the subjects of aid to Ukraine and the fight against illegal migration. Participants in the meeting agreed that the problem of illegal migration should be addressed where the problem was generated, Starmer said, adding that the UK would launch a humanitarian aid programme worth 84 million pounds in Africa and the Middle East. Starmer said the next EPC summit will be held in Hungary

later this year, while two summits were planned for 2025, in Albania and Denmark.

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## **HUNGARIAN MEPS COMMENT ON EP'S SUPPORT TO UKRAINE**

At its plenary session on Wednesday, the European Parliament adopted its first official position in which most MEPs urged continued and firm support to Ukraine, including increased military support as long as it was needed.

Viktória Ferencz, MEP of Hungary's ruling Fidesz, said after the vote that the war was a "most trying time" for Ukraine's Transcarpathia Hungarians, and condemned last week's Russian attack against a paediatric hospital in Kyiv. "Through restoring peace, such tragedies could be avoided and Hungary has opened diplomatic channels to that end," she said. The Hungarian government has supported Ukraine's endeavours to get closer to the EU and restoration of the rights of the ethnic Hungarian community," she added.

Referring to the EP position's condemning the peace mission of Prime Minister Viktor Orbán, MEP András László said the leftist majority of the parliament and the European People's Party were "obviously scared" of the initiative and of Orbán's meeting "the leaders of the largest countries and powers". Hungary tries to facilitate a peaceful settlement in Ukraine through opening diplomatic

channels, he said. "We have seen that the European Parliament is not at all open to such an idea and has adopted a contrary position ensuring military aid in all forms and without time constraints to Ukraine," he added. According to László, the document's calling on member states to provide military aid to Ukraine in proportion to their GDP was contrary to the European integration's original goal of ensuring a lasting peace in Europe. "The EP has so far strived to facilitate a peaceful rather than a military settlement in all conflicts in the world," he said and regretted that the body "demands a penalty for Hungary for attempting to open diplomatic channels". László also called it regrettable that the EP had rejected Hungary's proposal to hold a debate on political violence. He said it was "sad" that the EP would not discuss such incidents as the assassination attempts against Slovak PM Robert Fico and former US President Donald Trump and suggested that MEPs voting

down the proposal had become "privity to political violence through their silence". "This cannot be a part of democracy and the EP has made a huge mistake," he added.

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### **ENERGY MINISTRY: HUNGARY ELECTRIC CAR PURCHASES SEE 3RD STEEPEST GROWTH IN EUROPE IN JUNE**

The number of green cars grew by an annual 123.8% to 864 in June, the third steepest climb in Europe, the energy ministry said on Facebook on Thursday. Citing data compiled by European Automobile Manufacturers' Association (ACEA), the ministry said the number of new passenger car registrations in Hungary rose by 23.9% year-on-year to 11,724 in June. Hybrid electric and plug-in hybrid vehicles accounted for 44% of sales, cars with petrol engines made up 35% and vehicles with diesel engines 14%. Fully-electric vehicles accounted for

7% of sales. In January-June, new car registrations in Hungary rose by 11.9% year-on-year to 63,337.

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### **WATCHDOG ISSUES INSTRUCTIONS TO PREVENT ONLINE PERSONAL LOANS FRAUD**

The National Bank of Hungary (NBH) has issued an executive circular instructing banks on measures to prevent fraudsters from taking out personal loans with stolen information, the central bank and financial market regulator said on Thursday. The NBH instructed banks to allow clients to prohibit any online or mobile applications in their name for personal loans. It also told lenders to put safeguards in place against illicit personal loan applications. The NBH pointed to cases of fraudsters using information stolen through online scams to take out personal loans as well as targeting victims' bank accounts.