

PHOTO OF THE DAY



MTV/Szilárd Koszticsák

Anniversary of Nándorfehérvár victory marked

UPCOMING EVENTS

Monetary Council holds rate-setting meeting

Events related to Hungary's EU presidency

Events related to the war in Ukraine

TOP STORY

HUNGARY SEEKS UKRAINE CONSULTATION PROCEDURE

Hungary and Slovakia have jointly initiated a consultation procedure at the European Union against Ukraine in connection with the country's move to partially halt crude oil supplies, Foreign Minister Péter Szijjártó said on Monday.

The ministry cited Szijjártó telling a press conference after an EU Foreign Affairs Council meeting in Brussels that Ukraine's decision to stop Russian oil company Lukoil's crude oil transits had severely endangered energy supplies for Hungary and Slovakia. He said Lukoil provided one-third of Hungary's and 45% of Slovakia's crude oil imports. "As a result, we have been in continual consultations with the Slovak government in order to resolve the situation," Szijjártó said. "Yesterday I also talked to the Ukrainian foreign minister by phone and he said there were naturally no problems and all transits were allowed through Ukraine, but this is obviously not true." "Today jointly with Slovakia we initiated at the European Commission the launch of consultations that precede proceedings in a chosen court," he said. "It is an urgent matter because the security of energy supplies is an acute issue, and the EC therefore has three days to carry out the consultations with Ukraine, and failing that, the chosen court will start dispute settlement proceedings," he added.

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SZIJJÁRTÓ: UKRAINE’S MOVE TO HALT LUKOIL OIL TRANSIT VIOLATES EU-UKRAINE ASSOCIATION AGREEMENT

Ukraine’s decision to halt Russian oil company Lukoil’s crude oil transits to Hungary and Slovakia violates the EU-Ukraine association agreement which states that Kyiv must not disrupt the transit of energy to members of the bloc, Foreign Minister Péter Szijjártó said in Brussels on Monday. In line with the agreement, in such case the affected member state can immediately launch a consultation procedure and the European Commission is obliged to represent the state in the matter, he added.

The minister said Hungary and Slovakia were simultaneously working on various legal and technical solutions in order to ensure that in case the consultations failed, the court dispute settlement proceedings could start. “We have been continually in contact and certain solutions have been taking shape that could secure energy supplies in the long term,” he said. Szijjártó said the Ukrainian decision was “unfriendly and unexpected” also in light of the fact that 42% of the country’s electricity imports arrived from Hungary in June. He said that despite all the criticism it was receiving, Hungary was continually aiding Ukraine’s energy supply “in these hard times”. The company that operates Hungary’s electricity network is making serious efforts to help Ukraine connect with the European network, he

said. Additionally, next to Poland, Slovakia and Hungary granted rapid aid to Ukraine for the operation of its energy system, Szijjártó said.

SZIJJÁRTÓ: HUNGARY FACING ‘AGGRESSIVE PRO-WAR HYSTERIA’ BECAUSE OF ITS PEACE MISSION

Hungary faced “aggressive, coordinated pro-war hysteria, in many cases completely neglecting reality” at the European Union Foreign Affairs Council meeting because of its peace mission, Foreign Minister Péter Szijjártó said on Monday. The ministry cited Szijjártó telling a press conference that the EU’s Ukraine strategy had failed in the past two and a half years, arguing that peace was increasingly farther away, and the sanctions were hurting the continent’s economy more and more. “Of course we can bury our head in the sand, as some of my fellow European politicians have done, and interpret the truth as Kremlin propaganda,” he said. Instead, he called for a changed approach and a peace strategy, saying that diplomatic channels must be reopened for the sake of success. Szijjártó said that last week the Swiss and Russian foreign ministers met, the US and Russian defence ministers had talks by phone and the Ukrainian president held talks with Donald Trump. “So everybody has started using diplomatic channels, it is only here in Brussels and in European capitals that they call this illegitimate, something that must not be done, and whoever argues for diplomatic solutions is labelled pro-Russian”, he said.

Szijjártó said he had pointed out the “lies”, for instance the fact that during its peace mission Hungary never said it acted representing the EU and nobody tried to make such an impression. After the first meetings of the peace mission, three proposals were presented: the reopening of diplomatic channels with Russia, political consultation with China and communications with the global South, he said. The latter had been discussed at every EU Council meeting and the importance of maintaining relations with China has also been voiced by many, he added. “If we consider how many European leaders met the Chinese president in the recent past and how many more will meet him in the near future, it is a long list,” he said. Szijjártó said there were some differences of opinion in terms of the reopening of diplomatic channels. However, he said this was a legitimate matter for debate and refusing the possibility of debate was undemocratic.

Meanwhile, he said that “a fantastic act of revenge has been devised in Brussels” which involved rendering the informal foreign ministers’ meeting planned for late August in Budapest impossible. “It is completely childish,” he added. It is the High Representative of the Union for Foreign Affairs and Security Policy that must decide if a meeting of the Foreign Affairs Council is held in a formal or informal framework, and it is an institutionalised custom that in the latter case it is held in the member state holding the rotating presidency, he said. “We are prepared for it. If the High Representative for Foreign Affairs



calls the meeting to Budapest, we will be pleased to welcome the foreign minister colleagues with the proper Hungarian hospitality," he said. "And if the High Representative decides that he does not want to call the meeting in Budapest but in Brussels, then I will come and then the meeting will be held in Brussels." He said several people had argued for the meeting to be held in Budapest but several said they would be unwilling to attend. There was even a proposal for the meeting to be held in Ukraine, which Szijjártó said would need unanimous support and the Hungarian government will not support it. He said it was only Slovakia that had clearly stood up in support of Hungary. "The Slovak deputy foreign minister who was here clearly said that they had no objection and criticism against the Hungarian prime minister's peace mission," he added.

PINTÉR: EU INTERIOR MINISTERS DISCUSS SECURITY, MIGRATION

European Union interior ministers discussed the bloc's security, linking large-scale IT systems and the external dimensions of migration at an informal meeting in Budapest on Monday, Interior Minister Sándor Pintér said. The ministers discussed "the future of the area based on freedom, security and the enforcement of law", and reviewed the tasks of the next five years related to home affairs, Pintér told a press conference. He said they had identified the shortcomings that had led to the

EU's security becoming vulnerable. The officials, he said, had been in agreement that the EU's security could not be guaranteed without cooperation and that the bloc needed to be quicker in responding to challenges. They had also agreed, he added, on the need to set up a central economic fund in the interest of carrying out the necessary tasks. Concerning the EU interoperability package aimed at linking large-scale IT systems in the fields of border control and asylum, Pintér said the bloc was expected to introduce a border control system around October-November that would "significantly improve internal security and aid the fight against terrorism". The meeting also touched on the external dimension of migration, Pintér said, adding that the meeting's participants had been in agreement that it was impossible to make significant progress without cooperation with third countries. He said they had also discussed the need to develop an institutional system for repatriating those who are ineligible for asylum as well as for speeding up repatriations and making them more effective. But this was only possible through cooperation, Pintér said, adding that it also required setting up a joint economic fund.

OFFICIAL: GOVT TO PROVIDE FINANCING FOR AC REPAIRS IN HOSPITALS

The government is using a total 1.3 billion forints (EUR 3.3m) to finance repairs on hospitals' air conditioning systems,

the state secretary in charge of health services said. Péter Takács told public media that in the recent heat wave four hospitals, out of a total 81, had to reschedule operations. He added that "there have been minor problems [with air conditioning] everywhere but no urgent case was left unattended." "Hospitals were able to resolve their problems through reorganising their services," he said. In view of heat waves occurring more frequently, the government started modernising the air conditioning systems in hospitals three years ago, having spent over 10 billion forints to that end so far, Takács said, adding that 14 major hospitals across the country now had completely new systems. On another subject, Takács noted that health ministers of the European Union would meet in Budapest on Wednesday and Thursday. The agenda of their meeting will focus on making health-care services resistant to the impacts of climate change, he said.

FINMIN: HUNGARY'S BUDGET TO GUARANTEE PROTECTION OF PENSIONS, FAMILY SUBSIDIES

In spite of unfavourable external factors resulting from the war, Hungary's economy has returned to a growth path, the finance ministry said on Monday. "Even under great pressure, the Hungarian budget will guarantee the protection of pensions and family subsidies, as well as ensure the resources necessary to maintain reduced utility prices," the ministry said in a detailed reading of data.

The budget deficit reached 107.8 billion forints for the month of June alone which is the best indicator for the sixth month in 22 years, the ministry said. Hungary's cash flow-based budget deficit reached 2,656.4 billion forints (EUR 6.8bn) at the end of June. Social security funds were 161.9 billion in the red, but separate state funds were 145.6 billion forints in the black, the ministry said. Interest expenditures, which included large payments on retail government securities, came to 2,009.5 billion forints in January-June, up 649.4 billion from the same period a year earlier, it said. Expenditures for European Union-funded programmes reached 945.7 billion forints, while transfers from Brussels came to 578.2 billion forints, it added. The ministry affirmed the government's commitment to improving balance indicators and said strengthening economic performance and improving fiscal trends would also help achieve the deficit target of 4.5% of GDP.

DEPUTY MINISTER MARKS 1456 NÁNDORFEHÉRVÁR TRIUMPH ANNIVERSARY

"Hungary needs well trained soldiers strong in spirit," Tamás Vargha, Hungary's deputy defence minister, said at a commemoration marking the anniversary of the Christian forces' victory over the Ottoman army at Nándorfehérvár (present-

day Belgrade) of 1456. "At the same time, Hungary needs modern defence equipment and soldiers with a love for their homeland," Vargha said at an event held at the statue of János Hunyadi, the defending army's commander, in Budapest. Nándorfehérvár, he said, was a key site in Hungarian history, a place "where our heroes set an example" and where the army led by Hunyadi gained "a resounding victory". The midday tolling of Christian church bells continues to mark the victory. In 2011 Hungary's parliament declared July 22 to be a memorial day of the triumph.

MAGYAR ELECTED TISZA PARTY LEADER

A general meeting of the opposition Respect and Freedom (Tisza) Party elected Péter Magyar its chairman on Monday, the party told MTI. Magyar up until now had served as the deputy leader of the party. Attila Szabó, chairman of the party until now, will act as an honorary founding chairman, Tisza said in a statement. The deputy leader of the party will be Márk Radnai and its operative director Zoltán Tarr, the leader of the party's EP group. The Tisza Party is set to hold an extraordinary congress to elect its new board members in November, it said. "Several thousand

applications submitted to join the party are being processed," it added in its statement.

DUNA MÉDIASZOLGÁLTATÓ, AZERTAC SIGN NEWS EXCHANGE AGREEMENT

Hungary's public service media service provider Duna Médiaszolgáltató and Azeri news agency Azertac signed a news exchange agreement at the second Global Media Forum in Shusha. Under the agreement, the two news organisations will send each other news reports on the most important events taking place in their countries on a daily basis, Duna Médiaszolgáltató said in a statement on Monday. The Global Media Forum held on July 20-22 was attended by around 150 participants representing media organisations, news agencies and the public sector from 50 countries. The forum, which was also attended by Azeri President Ilham Aliyev, covered topics like the impact of artificial intelligence on the media environment, preventing the spread of disinformation and fostering public media awareness. As part of the event, the Alliance of Turkic News Agencies also held a meeting to which MTI was also invited.