

PHOTO OF THE DAY



MTV/Noémi Bruzsák

EU justice ministers hold informal meeting in Budapest

UPCOMING EVENTS

Events related to Hungary's EU presidency

Events related to the war in Ukraine

Stats office reports on May wages

Announcement of higher education admissions thresholds

NBH presser on 2024 FinTech and Digitalisation Report

TOP STORY

SZIJJÁRTÓ: TRUMP BEACON OF HOPE FOR PEACE

What remains most important amid fresh developments in the US presidential race is that Donald Trump is a beacon of hope for peace in the world, Péter Szijjártó, the foreign minister, said on Tuesday.

Szijjártó said that if the former president was re-elected, then there would be "a huge chance of bringing peace to the world, including Europe ... and central Europe, too". According to a ministry statement, he said war on the Russian-Ukrainian front was "more and more brutal", and only an external actor may bring the warring parties to the negotiating table, making it clear to them that "no solution lies on the battlefield". "Only Donald Trump has such a chance," he said, adding that the Republican presidential candidate would hopefully seize it at the earliest possible opportunity.

Meanwhile, Szijjártó said the fact that the EU's foreign policy chief had changed the venue of the bloc's informal foreign affairs council to Brussels from Budapest was "not of great importance". He said those in favour of holding the meeting in Budapest outweighed those against. He said that the recent EU Foreign Affairs Council meeting had been characterised by "unbelievable hysteria", and referred to "pro-war politicians venting their frustration" at Prime Minister Viktor Orbán's "peace mission".

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BÓKA: 'OLIGARCHY' SETTING POLITICAL TRENDS IN EUROPE

Cooperation between "Europe's oligarchs" is setting the direction for European Union policymaking, the minister of EU affairs said on social media on Tuesday.

"They [the oligarchs] are attempting to suppress and question the European identity of anyone outside their circle," János Bóka said. He said Ursula von der Leyen had been re-elected as European Commission president thanks to the votes of "liberals and greens that suffered the largest losses" at the recent European parliamentary elections, but she "categorically refuses to cooperate" with strengthened right-wing groups such as ECR and Patriots for Europe.

"This indicates that the EC's political platform will be extremely vulnerable in the next five years," he added.

Bóka insisted that several components in von der Leyen's programme, such as efforts to strengthen competitiveness, defence policy and agricultural policy, "echo subjects in the policies of the European People's party and groups to the right". But her "real supporters" were to the left of the EPP, he said. The minister said the new EC was "a kind of party political committee", since von der Leyen "has clearly defined certain political forces that she does not wish to cooperate with, rather making policies against them" in the

next five years. Von der Leyen and the EU's policies "go in the direction of federalism", Bóka said, adding that "she wants to create a European investigative agency out of Europol and make Frontex a European border guard", which, he said, would "lay the foundations of a European intelligence service". "Those federalist endeavours are not supported by members unconditionally," he added.

Meanwhile, under von der Leyen's plans, the EC would be granted "complete control" over community funding, while the current budgeting system "based on programmes and projects" would be eliminated, Bóka said. "Instead, she wants a budget drafted on a political basis, which would tie access to community funding to serious reforms and political preconditions," he said, adding that the plans were aimed at a complete restructuring of the EU budget. "It will be impossible for an outsider to see what sums the commission wants to spend and for what purpose," he added.

DEUTSCH: LEFT-WING BLOC SHOWS 'BLATANT HUNGER FOR POWER' WHEN ALLOCATING CTTEE POSTS

Fidesz MEP Tamás Deutsch on Tuesday berated the left-wing bloc of the European Parliament for showing "raw and blatant hunger for power" by excluding Patriots for Europe MEPs from EP committees. The head

of the Fidesz-Christian Democrat EP group accused the left-wing bloc of "disregarding written European rules", divvying up president and vice-president posts among themselves. Deutsch also accused the Hungarian opposition Tisza Party of "actively participating" in "stealing" the posts in the environmental protection committee that, he insisted, rightfully belonged to the Patriots for Europe group.

MENCZER: UKRAINE PUNISHING HUNGARY FOR PRO-PEACE STANCE

Ukraine is "brutally attacking Hungary for its pro-peace stance", Fidesz communications director Tamás Menczer on Tuesday, referring to a decision to shut down a pipeline carrying Russian crude to Hungary. "They're trying to destroy those who support peace, using every possible means... It is dishonest, unacceptable and illegitimate," the ruling party's spokesman said in a video posted on Facebook. Menczer cited a Ukrainian MP as saying that Hungary's resistance towards arms shipments to Ukraine "must be broken". "We are being punished for being pro-peace; this time our energy security is under attack. It is quite possible that it was not Ukraine's idea alone; they may have been assisted by pro-war Brussels circles or even US Democrats," he said.

"Everyone should be prepared: Hungary won't let it go," he warned.

**TUZSON: EU LEGAL
COMPETITIVENESS
MAIN TOPIC AT JUSTICE
MINISTERS' INFORMAL
MEETING**

The European Union's legal competitiveness was the main topic at Tuesday's informal meeting of EU justice ministers in Budapest, Justice Minister Bence Tuzson said after the meeting. Tuzson told a press conference that though the improvement of the bloc's competitiveness may seem like an economic issue, the EU's legal competitiveness was also of key importance, adding that this meant that EU laws needed to serve and support competitiveness. He said he and his counterparts had identified certain areas that could strengthen the EU's competitiveness, such as streamlining the legislative process and laws, and improving their transparency. The minister said most of the member states present at the meeting had agreed with those ideas, and "creative work has started". He said they had also discussed the possibility of using artificial intelligence in the field of law. They had also reviewed best practices in connection with how AI could be used in practice with a view to making the enforcement of the law more effective, Tuzson added. Another possible use of AI, he said, was the review of legislation. He said that the increasing number of laws in the EU could lead to legal opacity, and AI

could help make things clearer. Tuzson said a project using AI to help navigate legislation was already under way in Hungary.

**DEFMIN: ANOTHER 3
HIGH-TECH TANKS ADDED
TO HUNGARIAN ARMY
HEAVY BRIGADE**

Another three high-tech Leopard 2 A7 tanks have been added to the Hungarian army heavy brigade, the defence minister said on Tuesday. The ministry cited Kristóf Szalay-Bobrovniczky as saying that three of the world's most modern tanks were arriving on Tuesday. As a result, the Hungarian army heavy brigade fleet would be expanded to include eighteen tanks, he added. Szalay-Bobrovniczky said that the introduction of the Leopard 2 tanks into service marked a new era in the development of Hungary's military force which he said was progressing as planned. A total of 44 such high-tech tanks will have been delivered to Hungary by 2028, he added.

**HUNGARIAN VICE-CHAIRS
IN EP COMMITTEES COME
FROM TISZA PARTY**

Chairs and vice-chairs of European Parliament committees were elected on Tuesday and three members of Hungary's Respect and Freedom (Tisza) Party received committee vice-chair posts. The European Parliament said in a statement that

András Tivadar Kulja had been elected fourth vice-chair of the Committee on the Environment, Public Health and Food Safety, Gabriella Gerzsenyi had been elected first vice-chair of the Committee on Regional Development, and Tisza Party leader Péter Magyar had been elected fourth vice-chair of the Committee on Constitutional Affairs.

**FIDESZ MAINTAINS LEAD
IN NEW NÉZŐPONT POLL**

The Fidesz-Christian Democrats have maintained their support, with 47% of decided voters favouring the ruling alliance, while the opposition Tisza Party has increased its backing to 29% since the European parliamentary elections in June, the Nézőpont Institute said on Tuesday. Fully 49% of respondents said they found Prime Minister Viktor Orbán the most suitable person for the post, while Tisza leader Péter Magyar had a 19% favourability rating. If general elections were held now, the leftist Democratic Coalition would garner 8% of the vote (unchanged since the EP elections) and radical Our Homeland 9% (up 2 percentage points), the think-tank said. The satirical Two-Tailed Dog party had 5% (up 1 percentage point), while the other small parties, which garnered a combined 7% of the votes in June, would now be supported by a mere 2%, Nézőpont said. The phone survey was conducted between July 15 and 17, with a representative sample of 1,000 voting-age adults.

HUNGARY CBANK CUTS BASE INTEREST RATE BY 25 BPS

Hungarian central bank (NBH) rate-setters cut the base rate by 25 basis points to 6.75%, while lowering both ends of the interest rate corridor to the same extent, at a regular policy meeting on Tuesday. In a statement released after the meeting the Council said inflation data was consistent with the projection in the June Inflation Report. It said the growth of the Hungarian economy, high foreign exchange reserves, the persistent current account surplus, the government's deficit reduction measures and a cautious approach to monetary policy all improved the country's risk perception, adding, at the same time, that geopolitical tensions and the risks to the outlook for inflation "continue to warrant a careful and patient approach". Among the favourable domestic trends, the Council highlighted the improvement in consumer confidence, the increase in real wages and growing household consumption. "With the pick-up in the production of new industrial capacities built recently, balanced economic growth is expected from 2025, and Hungary's export market share is likely to increase," the statement said. The Council put GDP growth at 2.0-3.0% for this year and inflation between 3.0% and 4.5%. It said it was "constantly assessing incoming macroeconomic data, the outlook for inflation and developments in the risk environment,

based on which it will take decisions on the level of the base rate in a cautious and data-driven manner".

SZIJJÁRTÓ: IFRC EXPANDS BUDAPEST OFFICE

The expanded Budapest office of the International Federation of Red Cross and Red Crescent Societies (IFRC) was inaugurated on Tuesday, the minister of foreign affairs and trade said, adding that this was set to further bolster the organisation's activities. Speaking at the inauguration ceremony, Péter Szijjártó noted that the IFRC had chosen Budapest as the location for its global service centre eight years ago and this was the second expansion of the office since then. Currently there are 118 Hungarian and 110 foreign citizens working at the Budapest IFRC office, he said, adding that the expansion was set to increase staff to up to 280. Szijjártó said it was important to ensure the most favourable operating conditions possible, which could help the organisation carry out its duties at the highest possible level. The government, he added, had assured the IFRC of its continued support, noting the tax exemptions for its staff members, which parliament will have to approve in the autumn.

Meanwhile, Szijjártó said mankind had entered "an era of dangers", with armed conflicts going on in more than 30 places in the world. Concerning the war in Ukraine, the minister said around 1,500 schools and kindergartens have

welcomed Ukrainian refugee children. Refugees, he added, had equal access to health care, and the government was also supporting them in finding jobs. On another subject, Szijjártó praised the work of the Hungary Helps agency which has so far carried out 360 humanitarian projects worth a combined 120 million US dollars across 64 countries. He said the organisation's aim was to ensure that Christian and other communities could survive where they have been living for centuries instead of being forced to leave their homeland. He said that as a country with a thousand years of Christian statehood behind it, Hungary felt a special responsibility for Christian communities around the world. "We believe that one's right to live in one's home in safe and peaceful conditions is one of the most important aspects of human rights," he said. "The international community's most important goal should be to restore these fundamental rights, and I think the IFRC plays a leading role in this." Szijjártó noted that Hungary has been a member of the IFRC since 1921.

HUNGARY FINALISES AGREEMENT WITH AXIOM SPACE

Hungary has finalised its agreement with US-based Axiom Space and will send the next Hungarian astronaut to space on the Ax-4 mission, the ministerial commissioner for space research said on Tuesday. Orsolya Ferencz said the Hungarian research

astronaut would spend 14 days on board the International Space Station conducting experiments that would advance Hungary's space industry. The exact date for the mission start will be determined later by Axiom Space and NASA, she added. The Hungarian astronaut picked for the mission, along with his backup, will soon start mission-specific training in the US, Ferencz said.

S KOREA'S BUMCHUN IN EUR 21 BN EXPANSION

BC GEN Hungary, the local unit of South Korea's Bumchun, is investing 21 billion forints to triple battery terminal capacity at its base in Salgótarján, in north-eastern Hungary, Péter Szijjártó, the minister of foreign affairs and trade, announced on Tuesday. The investment creating 400 jobs is receiving state support of 3.75 billion forints, Szijjártó said. He noted that Hungary is home to manufacturing bases of all three big premium German car makers, while five of the world's ten biggest battery makers are located

in the country. Hungary has become a "meeting point" for investments from the East and the West that will ensure the country is "among the frontrunners" of the electromobility transition, he added.

33RD BÁLVÁNYOS SUMMER UNIVERSITY GETS UNDER WAY

The 33rd Bálványos Summer Free University and Student Camp, better known as Tusványos, is getting under way on Tuesday at Băile Tuşnad (Tusnádfürdő) in Transylvania, under the motto "On a Better Track". The event is organised by the Transylvanian Hungarian Youth Council (MIT) and the Budapest-based Pro Minoritate Foundation. This year the event will include more than 500 programmes and 1,000 speakers on the banks of the River Olt and in sports fields. Topics for podium discussions include peacemaking, the election year, and the Hungarian EU presidency, among others. Prime Minister Viktor Orbán and László Tőkés, president

of the Hungarian National Council of Transylvania (EMNT), will give speeches and do a Q&A on Saturday morning. Tusványos also offers numerous cultural, traditional, educational and entertainment programmes, including literary and theatre events, folk music and dance gatherings. The event's official opening takes place on Wednesday morning.

NEW DUAL CARRIAGEWAY TO CONNECT HUNGARY, AUSTRIA

Hungary and Austria have signed an agreement to connect Hungary's M80 and Austria's S7 dual carriageway at Szentgotthárd, the construction and transport ministry said on Tuesday. The new link, to be completed next year, will contribute to improved traffic flows in central Europe and strengthen the Hungarian economy, the ministry said in a statement. The M80 road from Körmend to the Austrian border completed in 2021 has helped divert traffic from residential areas while providing access to industrial facilities, it added.