

## **Statement**

**by Péter Szijjártó, Minister of Foreign Affairs and Trade of Hungary**

**International Migration Review Forum 2022**

**New York, 19 May 2022**

Madame Chair, Excellencies, Dear Colleagues,

Migration has been a hot topic since 2015, since an unprecedented, massive wave of illegal migration has hit Europe. My country, Hungary, was invaded by more than 400 000 illegal migrants who violated our borders, attacked our policeman, have shown total disrespect towards our regulations, laws and norms of behavior. We in Hungary had a personal experience that is why we do know that the mainstream approach which considers migration as an exclusively positive phenomenon is totally false. The developments in Europe unfortunately show, that we were right when we urged for stopping the migratory flows instead of encouraging them. The consequences of the massive illegal migratory flows in Europe are clear, parallel societies have been created and there is a massively growing threat of terror. The policies which encourage migration within any kind of criticism are dangerous both on the countries of destination, on the countries of transit, and unfortunately encouraging migration strengthens the business model of traffickers on many occasions. We also deeply disagree with the approach that whispers that all countries by definition must be one of three categories: either becoming countries of origin, or countries of transit, or countries of destination. We do think that there is a fourth category which also exists: the fourth category is that a country decides not to be one of these three at all. We do believe that as a country we have a sovereign right to decide so. Not to be a country of destination, not to be a country of transit and not to be a country of origin either. When it comes to human rights we have to speak very openly and honestly about the most fundamental right which is a right to have a safe life at home. This fundamental human right must be protected.

That's why the Hungarian authorities keep the borders strong and protect the borders strictly. And we must do so, last year our policeman stopped 130,000 illegal migrants at our borders. This year already 65000. This is the second largest pressure on our southern border since 2015 which was the peak. And we have to speak honestly and clearly that illegal migrants have no right to enter the territory of Hungary, and have no right to cross a border between two safe countries. International law speaks very clearly, if one has to escape from his or her home, he or she is entitled to stay temporarily on the territory of the first safe country, and is not allowed to violate borders between safe countries. Based on our experience, Madam Chair, I think that it would be much better to change the approach in this regard, and instead of encouraging people to leave their homes and take the risk of long journeys we should create circumstances which enable everybody to be able to stay at home, to have a safe and secure life at home. But you know, Hungary was among those five countries here, back at the end of 2018, who voted against the Global Compact on migration and we have not given our concern to the IMRF closing document either and we strongly demand that we should avoid further attempts to make parts of the Global Compact on Migration in a hidden way part of the international law.

Madam Chair, I want to underline that we in Hungary respect, we do respect the approach of countries which look at migration as a tool to tackle their demographic and labor market challenges. We follow a different approach, we rather give support to our families and we send help where that help is being needed, we send help to countries in need in order to enable their people, their citizens to have safe and secure life with dignity back at home. And as we respect the different kind of approaches of other countries we also expect others to respect our position as well that we carry out our policies regarding migration based on national sovereignty.

Madam Chair, thank you very much for this opportunity, and thank you for your kind attention.