



*As delivered*

**Statement**

**by**

**H.E. Mr. Péter Szijjártó**

**Minister of Foreign Affairs and Trade of Hungary**

**at the General Debate of the**

**72<sup>nd</sup> Session of the United Nations General Assembly**

**22 September 2017**

**United Nations**

**New York**

Mr. President, Ladies and Gentleman, Your Excellencies, Dear colleagues,

First of all, let me start with congratulating Miroslav Lajčák to be elected as the President of the General Assembly. For us, Central Europeans, it's highly important, that a Central European candidate was elected to such an important position, which shows that Central Europe is a strong region which has reached success through policies based on rationality and common sense. And if you put these together with the fact that Poland was elected to the Security Council, it is a proof that the Central European alliance is strong and can speak on a loud united voice, which is heard far away as well.

Mr. President, Ladies and Gentleman, Dear Colleagues,

During the times we are convened to the General Assembly of the United Nations, we are living extremely challenging times. Economic, political, defence and military relations change extremely rapidly. And as coming from Central Europe, I would like to highlight three very important issues from our angle, about migration and the threat of terror, about relationship between East and West, and about the rights of national minorities.

Europe is currently in the frontline of significant global changes. Europe has never had to face so many challenges at the meantime after the conclusion of the cold war than currently. The migration crisis and as the consequence of that, the most serious threat of terror ever ended up in a situation that the European Union has to face the most serious challenges ever since its foundation. The western part of Europe used to be the most secure, the safest and the most peaceful region globally. A couple years back, as we watched news on television from the Middle East, we were quite sure and certain, that such kind of events would surely not happen in Europe. But to the contrary, currently the fear of terrorist attacks became part of everyday life. Between 2015 and 2017 Europe had to suffer of 30 major terrorist attacks demanding 300 lives innocent. Churches, airports, beaches, concerts became venues of execution within couple of seconds. This development, Ladies and Gentlemen, dear Colleagues, is a direct consequence of two phenomenon:

Number one, the massive influx of illegal migrants. During the last two and a half years, 1.5 million illegal migrants entered the territory of European Union without any kind of control, check or regulation. And that definitely gave the opportunity to the terrorist organizations to take advantage of this flow and send their terrorists, their fighters to the European Continent. And number two, Mr. President and here I will break some taboos and dogmas for sure, we have to admit, that former social inauguration procedures in the western part of Europe ended up in failure. Some integration processes of former migrants who arrived to Europe earlier were totally unsuccessful and in many places of the western part of Europe parallel societies have been constructed.

Distinguished Colleagues,

To be honest, we have to admit, that we are shocked, that after the barbaric terrorist attacks in Europe, after the massive violations of national and international laws and regulations and after that thousands have lost their lives on the Mediterranean sea and the elsewhere there are still leaders of international organizations and representatives of big and strong countries who

emphasize that migration is favorable and migration is a phenomenon to be encouraged. This is an unacceptable and an extremely irresponsible way of behavior. Praising and encouraging migratory waves rushes multiple thousands of people into danger. Those ones who take a life hazard to get to a place where they think that they would find a better way of life, and rushing multiple thousands of people into danger in a way that might become victims of terrorist attacks by terrorists, who take advantage of the migratory waves.

Mr. President, Ladies and Gentlemen,

The position of Hungary is rather clear. All states have their fundamental right and responsibility to guarantee security for its people. All states have their fundamental right and responsibility to protect their own borders. And all states have their fundamental right and responsibility to make their decisions on their own, whom they let enter the territory of that given country and whom they do not let do so.

Hungary has put enormous efforts to comply with its international obligations. We have spent 800 million euros on protecting not only ourselves, not only the border of Hungary, but the external border of European Union, and the external border of the Schengen area. We built physical infrastructure and mobilized human resources. 800 million euros altogether. Although I have to tell you that the phenomenon that we do not only protect ourselves, but the western part of Europe as well, does not occur for first time in history.

But, Ladies and Gentlemen, as representing a Christian country, we of course take the obligation to help people in need and Hungary helps. But the principal for Hungary to help is that we have to bring help where it is needed. That is why we help and assist Christian communities in the Middle East to be able to stay and, or to be able to return after conflicts are over.

We have spent almost 2 million euros on reconstructing two hundred houses in Iraqi township called Telsqof making it possible for more than 1300 people to return.

We spend 4 million euros on building schools, on covering medical expenses and on helping the Christian communities to be able to stay and to get strengthen and we offer a hundred of scholarships on an annual basis for those youngsters whose families are being persecuted in the region.

Ladies and Gentlemen,

We understand that the rights of people have to be restored where they were violated. We have to help people to stay as close to their homes as it is possible and we have to help people to return to their homes as soon as possible. We urge for more support for countries which have been taking care of refugees around war-torn areas, such as Turkey, Jordan, Lebanon and the Kurdish region of Iraq.

Although Ladies and Gentlemen, Mr. President we are all aware that the complete and final solution for the migration crisis would be tackling the root causes, thus to overcome military conflicts around Europe and to eliminate terrorist organizations.

And if you do not mind Mr. President, I would like to turn to the second point to the relationship between east and west. You know, I represent a small Central European country and we are all aware that major international conflicts can be resolved through agreements between the super powers on the west and on the east, so that is why a pragmatic cooperation between east and west is necessary. A pragmatic cooperation between east and west is necessary to eliminate the most dangerous terrorist groups world-wide. Hungary is proud to contribute with 200 troops to the fight against ISIS. East and west cooperation is necessary to overcome the war and create peace in Syria, thus to make it possible for people to return and decrease the migratory pressure on Europe. And east to west cooperation is necessary to make peace in Libya and insures stability for the future. And east and west cooperation is necessary to address the extraordinary challenge posed by a communist dictator, threatening the world with a nuclear program, violating all possible international regulations and values. We Central Europeans have learnt the lesson of history whenever there is a conflict between east and west, Central Europe loses for sure. And we do not want to be losers anymore. That is why we wish and urge for a better and more pragmatic relationship and a better and a more pragmatic cooperation between east and west based on mutual trust and based on respect towards each other and based on respect towards the international law.

Mr. President as the third and final point from a Central European angle, I would like to emphasize a little bit the importance of the rights of national minorities. I have to tell you that Hungary is very sensitive on this issue as millions of Hungarians are living outside of our borders. The rights of national minorities are among the most protected rights in our national relations. There is an international consensus, we believe at least, that the rights of national minorities must be respected by all members of the international community, and discrimination against any kind of minorities is just simply unacceptable. Among rights of national minorities one of the most important elements is the right to use mother tongue and to receive education on the mother tongue. And why it is the most important: because the best way to create difficult circumstances to national minorities is to prohibit to use its native language by regulation.

It is not an accident that language rights are also elaborated in the variety of guiding documents and international standards such as the 1992 UN declaration on the rights of persons belonging to national or ethnic, religious and linguistic minorities. The UNESCO's three principles on language and education and the various recommendations of the UN forum on minority issues on implementing the declaration of the rights of persons belonging to national or ethnic, religious and linguistic minorities. These documents describe similar basic approach for state authorities to meet their human rights obligations involving language.

Unfortunately, the parliament of Ukraine has adopted a new law on education on the 5<sup>th</sup> September. This new law drastically curbs the already acquired level of minority rights in education and language use. This new law takes away the right from every kids above the age of ten to receive education on their mother tongue. It is a shame that such kind of a legislation is being passed in the 21<sup>st</sup> century in a country which makes a lot in order to be quicker on the integration process and association process to the European Union. This law is a clear discrimination against the minorities living in Ukraine. The UNESCO Convention against

discrimination in education Article 1 clearly states that discrimination includes any distinction, exclusion, limitation or preference, which being based on race, colour, sex, language, religion, political or other opinion, national or social origin, economic condition or birth, has the purpose or effect of nullifying or impairing equality of treatment in education.

Ladies and Gentlemen, it is obvious that the new Ukrainian law on education clearly violates these UN conventions and international norms, that is why it would create a very dangerous precedent if United Nations does not act in this regard and remain silent. We strongly urge the United Nations High Commissioner for Human Rights to start investigating the new Ukrainian law on education and use all means at disposal to address the severe violation of fundamental minority rights by the new Ukrainian law.

Ladies and Gentlemen, Mr. President,

Hungary will always stand by the Hungarian communities regardless where they live in the world and we will never let them down. This is our obligation, this is our responsibility and it comes from our heart as well.

Thank you very much for your kind attention.