

## **JOINT STATEMENT OF THE VISEGRAD GROUP COUNTRIES**

**BRUSSELS, 15 OCTOBER 2015**

We, the Prime Ministers of the Visegrad Group, meeting in Brussels on 15 October 2015 before the European Council adopt hereby the following Joint Statement:

The countries of the Visegrad Group express their appreciation of the fact that the October European Council follows up on the outcomes of the debate held at the informal meeting of Heads of State and Government of 23 September 2015 and thus provides further political guidance on EU long-term solutions and on effective management of root causes of migration flows with the view of a swift implementation of the relevant measures.

The key factor for success is that systemic measures are prioritised, put in practise without delay and in a spirit of solidarity. The countries of the Visegrad Group therefore declare their readiness to continue contributing to their implementation in a complex manner at national, regional and European levels. Two elements to be discussed by the October European Council are of utmost importance.

First, the protection of the Schengen border ranks high on the priority list as it represents a basic precondition to manage the current migratory pressure. Given the importance of border management, all relevant forms of its reinforcement should be considered. This includes a possible increase of collective responsibility, especially in situations where it can provide support to those Member States, which face exceptional pressure and are unable to cope with the situation by themselves.

To demonstrate their determination to act in the field of protection of the Schengen border, the countries of the Visegrad Group have come together in a spirit of genuine solidarity and provided Hungary, who currently bears the heaviest burden, with the necessary security assistance (besides the military assistance already underway, the Czech Republic will, upon request by Hungary, according to Prüm Decision, deploy 50 police officers. The Slovak Republic will deploy 50 police officers to assist Hungarian police in managing the migratory wave. Poland will deploy 50-60 police officers and 5 specially equipped vehicles).

Second, the countries of the Visegrad Group remain committed to strengthening cooperation with third countries. An effective return and readmission policy as well as incentives for third countries based on “more-for-more” principle are all integral parts of this approach. The results of the High Level Conference on the Eastern Mediterranean / Western Balkans migration route and the planned Valletta Summit pave way for a concrete action in this regard.

The cooperation with Turkey is of paramount importance and deserves special attention. Turkey is a part of the solution and the EU must be ready to tackle all the related questions. Finding answers to these questions should include all EU Member States. The draft Action Plan for Turkey is appreciated as a step in the right direction and it provides a solid basis for further discussion.

The countries of the Visegrad Group remain focused also on concrete solidarity measures addressing the needs of refugees in facilities in the vicinity of their home countries. In this respect, the countries of the Visegrad Group have strengthened their respective national schemes. On the EU level, they welcome the coordinating role by the President of the European Council and of the Commission.

The countries of the Visegrad Group committed, on the occasion of the informal meeting of Heads of State and Government of 23 September 2015, additional contributions to the World Food Programme in overall amount of 1,8 mil. EUR. The countries of the Visegrad Group stay ready to contribute further also to other funds and organizations to tackle the current migration and refugee crisis, including to the EU Regional Trust Fund in response to the Syrian Crisis – the “MADAD Fund”.

Given the complex nature of the migration challenge, the countries of the Visegrad Group reaffirm that the EU must show unity, coherence and ability to deliver on priority measures. Measures that may put this common effort at risk, including a permanent relocation scheme, should be avoided.