

# Viktor Orbán's State of the Nation Address

*Budapest, 28<sup>th</sup> February 2016*

Ladies and Gentlemen, President Balog, Former President Schmitt and Mrs. Schmitt, Speaker of the House,

A very pleasant Sunday to all here in Budapest, and to those watching in Hungary and from beyond its borders.

In the novel “A Little Hungarian Pornography” – written by Esterházy, for the sake of the younger ones among us – we are told the ingredients of a good political speech. According to Comrade Gerő – this is set in the nineteen-fifties, for the sake of the younger ones among us – a good political speech should be about a plan which does not cost much money, which creates great surprise and which brings joy to the people. In reply, Tibor Déry says that he should have Mihály Farkas hanged from one of the pillars of the Danube Bridge, and then himself from another. This would not cost much money, it would be a great surprise, and would also bring joy to the people. Nowadays things are not that simple, of course. The Gordian Knot of writing a good political speech can no longer be cut apart with such bold simplicity. Today it would hardly be enough to bring up the evergreen theme of “how to get rid of the communists”. It is hardly enough because, although twenty-six years have passed since the scuttling of the one-party state, there is still no consensus on whether we have truly seen the back of them. What is more, it is not even clear what “seeing the back of them” actually means. Similarly, there is no final verdict over Gáspár Miklós Tamás's meditations on whether we have evolved into true democrats, from snout to tail. We are even uncertain as to whether these questions still make any sense; and if they do make sense, whether they are relevant. This is particularly true when one considers, Ladies and Gentlemen, that two million six hundred thousand fellow Hungarians have been born since the fall of communism. And if I also include those who in 1990 were no older than fifteen – in other words children – you can see that out of the ten million Hungarians in Hungary, four million eight hundred thousand have no direct personal experience of the politics of communism. Or let us consider the fact that the inner struggle embodied in the question “Shall we defect?” has been replaced with the dilemma of “Shall we go abroad to work?” Instead of the industrial policy questions of an iron-and-steel country, the issues of the digital revolution are battering on our door.

Instead of finding ways to move beyond a state-planned economy, now we are trying to find ways to move beyond neoliberal economic policy. And we no longer ponder how we should exit COMECON; instead we are concerned as to how we should protect our national interests within the European Union. Time has flown, and a lot of water has flowed under the bridges of the Danube. And so here we are, greying anti-communists, high and dry. One should not be surprised if there is speculation on a change of the guard and of the generations. What is more, there is already an opposition party which demands that we anti-communists who were responsible for the fall of communism should make way for young blood. Déjà vu, fine old heroic times. On this our renowned wine-maker Ferenc Takler, perhaps feeling personally affected, simply said – or rather quoted – the following: “Before passing on the flag to the generation following us, let’s hold onto it a little longer”.

Today, Ladies and Gentlemen, I must first of all talk about time. We are reviewing the past year and contemplating the months ahead, and above all we must therefore answer the following question: Where do we stand today? Where does Hungary stand, where does the Hungarian community in the Carpathian Basin stand? We have freedom and national sovereignty; we have as much of both as has rarely been seen by us in the past one hundred years. We are not under oppression or occupation. We elect our leaders ourselves. The Fundamental Law provides the balance for, and defines the boundaries of our individual and collective freedom and responsibility. The people’s freely-elected representatives create our laws. There is freedom of opinion and speech, and it is not only possible, but advantageous – and indeed invigorating – to exercise our freedom of association. The tougher question is where Hungary stands in a historical context. We who lived half our lives under communism, and the other half in a free Hungary – in my case, for instance, I lived twenty-six years in the former and twenty-six in the latter – are prone to delusions. At times we find ourselves living our lives as if we were still in the 20th century – or in some kind of extension of it. This is despite the fact that we have already lived through one seventh of the 21st century. If we imagine the 21st century to be one week, today is Tuesday already. The week ahead is still long, but it is well under way. Or let us consider that more time has passed since the first free elections – since the end of communism and foreign occupation, since 1990 – than passed between the two world wars. Have you ever stopped to consider that the period since the fall of communism is now longer than the entire Horthy period? And have you thought that in only another seven years this period will be as long as the Kádár period of our communist past? The passing of the years demands that we should also say something about Hungary’s

current situation from a historical perspective. I am one of four Members of Parliament who have been in Hungarian politics since 1990, meaning that I have been at the coal face of domestic and international politics for over thirty years. This gives me a certain vantage point, and perhaps gives me the right to speak in terms of historical perspectives. There is, however, a special circumstance here which we must face up to. When we define the civic era as our goal in politics or in the life of our nation, we must acknowledge that this goal is not some kind of landmark. Therefore there are no distances to it which we can measure, and it is difficult – if not impossible – to say how much of the route we have already covered. We can say that we are halfway through our third term in office, but we cannot say what percentage of the civic era these ten years represent. When Columbus sailed the Atlantic Ocean he had no way of knowing when he had reached the halfway point. We do not know either – and it is perhaps not worth wondering – whether we have covered one fifth or one half of the distance. I remember this being the case in the mid-eighties, in the last years of communism. No one knew how long the agony of the Kádár regime would last, and how long it would be before we arrived in a world of freedom and independence. We only knew that at that time it was possible: that at that time there was some point in fighting bravely, that we could act because the time may be ripe, and the rest was in the hands of the Lord of History. As Bismarck, the founding chancellor of Germany, said: “One must wait to hear the sound of God’s footsteps as he advances through history, and then to try and catch on to His coat-tails as He marches past.” This is all we can do. I can see this today as well. Now we can act and create; this is the time to be brave, to carry on and to persevere; this is the time to move forward with purpose and self-confidence. Because this is the time when we may finally build what we think of as a civic Hungary, civic consolidation, a national Christian era, Hungary itself.

Ladies and Gentlemen,

If we are brave enough to look back through the last one hundred and fifty years, all the way back to the Austro-Hungarian Compromise, we can see that it took us almost fifty years to enter the ranks of Europe’s successful countries. We created wonders in those fifty years. We turned Budapest – and I greet the Mayor of Budapest here today – into a city which the whole world came to marvel at. Industry was booming, agriculture was flourishing, in a multi-ethnic Hungary the Hungarian population grew to more than fifty per cent and, despite all our troubles, we were strong, educated and prosperous. And had the Imperial Court in Vienna not lost its head and had it not dragged us into the Great War alongside them, who knows what

we would have been capable of here, in the middle of Europe. Here and now, the only thing that matters is that in fifty years we managed to find our best form. If we compare this with our Hungarian world today we are not there yet, as so far we have only had twenty-five years to make headway, rather than fifty. We could also define our current situation in comparison with the Horthy era. This, however, is rather perilous, swampy and nightmarish terrain, and is best avoided. We can nonetheless say that, despite our losses, the dismembering of our country and the Great Depression, we managed to stand up, and, though all but severed at the waist, we started flourishing and achieved outstanding diplomatic, military and economic results. Our gross national product per capita exceeded that of Spain, Ireland, Finland and Portugal – not to mention Poland, Yugoslavia and Romania. And though the war, the Second World War, interrupted this era and came crashing down on it, we can say that twenty-one years of peace were not enough to bring forth the talent and the achievements that we could have thought ourselves capable of – judging by the success of the previous era. Under communism we were neither free, nor independent; we were moving forward at a snail's pace, and our achievements back then, springing from an instinct for survival and life-force, are no yardstick for today's free and independent Hungary. The communist regime only adds yet another question to the issue of where we stand now. This is the most important and most serious question of our lives. If we walk into the depths of the forest for forty-five years, how many years will it take for us to walk back out?

Ladies and Gentlemen,

With regard to our twenty-six years since 1990, we must begin with the surprising fact that at the beginning of the nineties we found ourselves even further behind the western half of Europe, compared with our previous status. This was despite the fact that Hungary had joined the West as a democracy and a market economy. A similarly shocking fact of economic history is that when the countries in the region acceded to the EU in 2004, all of them except Hungary seized the resulting economic opportunities. It is hard to explain why we Hungarians became so pathetically incompetent. While the others were rising, we found ourselves mired in growing sovereign debt, crippling foreign currency mortgage loans, high budget deficits, rampant inflation, a balance of payments deficit and rising unemployment. This was eventually followed by financial ruin, a dog-collar and leash held by the IMF, and debt slavery. As I have spoken of this many times before, if you will allow me I shall not now repeat how within three years the civic-Christian government had led the country out of this

hopeless, ruinous situation with a new economic policy and a new national policy. Here it should suffice to say that within three years we had consolidated the budget, stabilised the economy, avoided bankruptcy, curbed inflation and reduced unemployment – the latter not marginally, but from 11.5% to 6.2%. We sent the IMF packing, repaid our loan ahead of schedule, and this year we shall also repay the last blessed penny of our debt to the European Union. All in all, in 2014 we rounded off this period of stabilisation with economic growth of 3.7%, and opened a new chapter. We made a flying start, and embarked on the path of closing the gap with other economies. In summary, we have reached the stage of having regained the chance of accomplishing yet another historic feat in narrowing the gap with the advanced world.

Ladies and Gentlemen,

Do not believe that successfully narrowing the gap with other economies is a simple, easy and commonplace thing to achieve. On the contrary: it is rarer than you would think. In the past fifty years, fewer than ten countries have succeeded in joining the ranks of the most advanced economies. Fewer than ten countries in the past fifty years. Whatever the future, we can already say that we have managed to open up a course ahead of ourselves. In five years we have reduced personal income tax from 35% to 15%, and in five years we have left 1,300 billion forints in the pockets of families. We have reduced household utility bills by 25%, and in five years the minimum wage in Hungary has increased by 50%. We have achieved this together: the state and the market; the Government and the business sector; employers and employees; Hungarian micro-, small and medium-sized enterprises and the local subsidiaries of global conglomerates. We have achieved this together, and together we can be proud of this achievement. The Hungarian reforms are working. And we shall need this fighting spirit and cooperation over the next few years – over even the next twenty years. With work, investment, trust and support Hungary may continue its upward course.

Therefore, Ladies and Gentlemen, all the politics of class struggle is narrow-minded and pointless. Though it may emerge in a new guise from the pages of *The Communist Manifesto*, *Marx's Capital* or some trendy left-wing university, it must still be rejected in the strongest possible terms, and adherents of common sense must combine their strength to keep it from the helm. In place of infantile day-dreaming, the romance of class struggle, and the fuelling of discord between employers and employees, small businesses and corporate giants, we need

alignment of interests, reconciliation and cooperation. To this end, we need a large, strong and stable people's party, and a government which serves the best interests of the people.

So where do we stand now? Many things have already happened, and a great many have yet to happen. We have carried out a large swathe of reforms in the economy, public administration, education, health care and culture, and in the transformation of land ownership. We have protected pensions and pensioners, and have gone the extra mile in supporting families. We have restored public order and the self-esteem of the police, and have also created a counter-terrorism and disaster management system. We have rescued our schools and hospitals. By 2010, local governments, which had previously operated schools and hospitals, were going bankrupt. This is a simple economic fact, the recognition of which does not require any special genius. If an operator went bankrupt, so did the institutions operated by it. And this is still true – even though neither teachers nor doctors have been at fault. The Government took over a total debt of 1,264 billion forints from local governments, which had been brought to their knees under the weight of their debts. Those who are now predicting the end of the world because of the few billion forints of debt built up by the schools' central operating institution KLIK have nothing to worry about. Having managed to cope with the IMF, having managed to cope with municipal debts totalling 1,200 billion forints, an institution such as KLIK is surely no serious challenge for us. Compared with 2010, we have allocated forty per cent more funding to health care. We have halved waiting lists. We have allocated more than five hundred billion – more than five hundred billion forints – to the development of our hospitals. This is surely unprecedented in our history. The majority of hospitals outside Budapest are treating patients in 21st century surroundings. But there are problems in Budapest: we must build a large new metropolitan hospital.

On the whole, I can say that we are grateful for and acknowledge the hard work of teachers and healthcare workers. They are right that the pay rises – though ongoing and considerable – are insufficient. It is cold comfort that in Hungary today this is the case in almost every profession. What Hungary is able to offer, in good conscience and with common sense, is that every year everyone can take a step forward. The length of each step – that is, the rate and pace of the pay rises – is limited to the performance of the economy. I also like to have things clear and straightforward. In both the state and the private sectors I only support pay rises – but when I do, I support them very much – for which we already have the funds, and which are supported by the growing performance of the Hungarian economy.

And with this, Ladies and Gentlemen, we have arrived at the most important question of the next few years. The current pace of economic growth is insufficient, and is not guaranteed to last. This is the case because the Hungarian economy is still not competitive enough. For instance, in Hungarian agriculture – which we are so proud of, and which has set historic records in the last few years – one hectare of arable land is still only able to generate 48% of the EU average value. And I could also cite a great many examples in industry. We therefore have plenty to do in the interest of increased competitiveness: tax reductions, reduction of bureaucracy, more practical vocational training, swifter administration of justice, digitisation, better organisation, new technological advances, and a more advanced corporate and business culture. There will be plenty more to do in the remainder of our present term in government.

Ladies and Gentlemen, President Balog,

In politics, if we are asked where we stand, everyone automatically thinks in terms of time, rather than space. This seems natural, because a country cannot just uproot itself and relocate somewhere else. It is necessarily where it is, and it will remain there. Politics, however – and especially international politics – is a thing of complexity and cunning. At times countries are pushed one way or the other – say by two hundred kilometres, as happened to the Poles. But this is hardly typical of Europe in peacetime. And of course, we are also familiar with the hoary old joke that Hungary is the only country in the world which has borders with itself – in fact all the way round, in every direction. But in world politics an entire country may also change its location without its borders moving an inch. We, for instance, were occupied by the Soviet Army, and from one minute to the next we were shifted from the West to the East. Later they withdrew, and we found ourselves back in the West again. Therefore today we are justified in asking ourselves where Hungary stands on the world political map. It seems that, despite the passage of centuries, some things remain the same. We observe fixed stars against which we can gauge the position of our own ship. In the West the German-speaking nations are the land of iron chancellors. In the East are the empires of martial, Slavic peoples a hundred times larger than ours. South of us are the colossal multitudes of the Crescent: the incessant hum and ferment of a wasp's nest. Today, also, these are our triangulation points: Berlin, Moscow and Istanbul – or Ankara, to be more precise. We are inclined to forget that Bosnia is only seventy kilometres from our southern borders.

Ladies and Gentlemen,

The Hungarians can only be independent, can only live in freedom, and can only run the course mapped out by their own talent and hard work if none of the great powers are our enemies. To be more precise, we can be independent if all three at once have an interest in the independence and economic growth of Hungary. This does not mean that we must always agree with them on everything. Nor does it mean that we should enter into alliances with all three at the same time. Only naive souls could think that. That way of thinking is the preserve of politicians who are always eager to submit, and seek shelter under the wing of a larger and warmer body; but we can hardly expect such people to pursue domestic and foreign policy which serves the interests of the nation. Naturally, there are times – around here we have seen such times – when the winds of war blow, and politics is reduced to the question of “who sides with whom”. In such bleak times we have always come to grief: we have been laid low, and there have even been times when we were given the last rites. Such times are sick and nightmarish. At such times one is plagued by night terrors of hyenas, vultures circling over the country, deportees, evacuees, and hundreds of thousands transported to death camps. It is therefore the iron law of Hungarian foreign policy that we Hungarians have an interest in peace. It may be sarcastic and ironic, but it is true: our place is in the camp of peace. The same logic tells us that we should not allow ourselves to be drawn into any international campaign against Germans, Russians or Turks. It does not serve Hungary’s interests to join international campaigns which abuse, insult or injure the national self-esteem of one country or another – whether due to a country’s tragic role in World War II, or a failure to follow Western democratic models, or an ambition to become a regional leader in a Muslim region, in reaction to the rejection of European Union accession efforts, with all the associated political implications.

Ladies and Gentlemen,

One cannot change Germany’s past. Even if it wanted to, Moscow would not be able to place freedom at the centre of its politics, because the imperative of holding together vast territories overrides everything other intellectual and historical consideration. And why do we want to measure Turkey against our precious political yardstick, instead of recognising that - despite its Islamic foundations – it is mobilising an incredible amount of energy in order to westernise itself? No, my friends, our approach is not one of arrogance and bombast, rooted in feelings of

moral superiority – an approach so tempting, and often so popular, in the western half of the continent, and also at times beyond the ocean. This is not our approach, this is not our path, and this is not in our interest. Peace, cooperation, trade, mutual investment, a favourable regional equilibrium and defence of our interests. These are the fundamental principles of Hungary's nationally-oriented foreign policy. I also know that this is harder and more complicated than nestling unseen on the soft, warm, furry back of a host animal, but it is surely more worthy of our one thousand one hundred-year history in the Carpathian Basin.

Ladies and Gentlemen,

I would now like to explain why I have said all this. In summary, it is because all of this is now in danger. The financial stability we have worked so hard for is in danger. The only recently evident closing of the gap between us other economies is in danger. Our nationally-oriented foreign policy – which has been built with such painstaking attention to detail – is in danger. Restored public order and public security free of terrorist threats are in danger. And our national culture – which is slowly finding its feet once again – is also in danger. What is more, not only does this danger threaten the things which we have, but also the things which we may have in the future: our prospects; the possibility of a promising future; and our children's expanding European potential, which is only beginning to unfold.

The name of this danger is mass migration. I believe that European and Hungarian history will still be taught in a hundred years' time. I am not risking much when I say that, in books on European history, 2015 will be a year which future students will be required to commit to memory – as a year which marked the beginning of a new era. The year 2015 brought to an end an age in which, believing that it was under Europe's control, we took the protection and safety of our continent for granted. One year ago, on this same occasion, we were already warning that a new age of mass migration had begun. We were mocked mercilessly, and insulted by friends, allies and rivals alike. The thing is, however, that the new mass migration is now a historical fact. No one in their right mind disputes this any longer. Why were we – or, to be more precise, why were the Central Europeans – the first to see this? There could be several reasons for this, and several in parallel: perhaps the storms and seismic waves of history; perhaps the sweaty struggles in the years after the fall of communism; perhaps the experience that we must be on our guard, because something may happen at any time – as it has so many times in the past – which could unexpectedly and irretrievably ruin our plans.

When we Central Europeans move forward, we put our ear to the rails every now and then for any suspicious noises which could signal a source of danger: for any fleeting sounds transmitted by the unscheduled train of ill fate. In the West, the past fifty or sixty years have been different – very different: prosperity, a reliable future, well-trodden paths, stable tracks, reliable timetables. At times this seems like a dream world to us – one in which ideologies, desires and real life are all mixed up. A well-heeled, safe and pleasant world in which clarity evaporates, and boundaries disappear. A world in which there is a blurring of the boundaries between nation and nation, culture and culture, man and woman, good and bad, holy and profane, freedom and responsibility, good intentions and actions. A world in which there is a blurring of the boundary between what is and what should be. It is as if the sense of reality has been damaged or deadened. In contrast, our sense of reality is as sharp and cold as common sense, or March winds. We have learnt that reality is that which does not disappear – even if we no longer believe in it. This is why we always measure everything against reality, and why we do not confuse reality with our desires.

Ladies and Gentlemen,

The second and third decades of the twenty-first century will be the decades of mass migration. An era is upon us which we were not prepared for. We thought that something like this could only happen in the distant past or was confined to the pages of history books. In fact, however, over the next few years more people than ever – multitudes outnumbering the entire population of some European countries – could set out for Europe. It is time to face reality. It is time to separate that which exists from that which we would like to exist. It is time to discard illusions, sophisticated theories, ideologies and utopian dreams.

The reality is that for a long time a world of parallel societies has been evolving with steady persistence, deep beneath the surface in a number of European countries. The reality is that, according to the natural order of things, this is forcing back our world – and with it us, our children and grandchildren. The reality is that those coming here have no intention whatsoever of adopting our way of life, because they see their own as more valuable, stronger and more viable than ours. And why, indeed, would they give it up? The reality is that they will not provide the supply of labour needed by the factories of Western Europe. Facts show that, across entire generations, the unemployment rate is much higher – sometimes several times higher – among those born outside Europe. The reality is that the European nations have

been unable to integrate even the masses who arrived from Asia and Africa gradually, over a number of decades. How could they succeed in doing so now, so rapidly and for such large numbers? The reality is that we are unable to use the Muslim world to solve the demographic problems of an undeniably shrinking and ageing Europe, without losing our way of life, our security and ourselves. The reality is that unless we put our foot down very soon, we will see an unmanageable level of tension between an ageing Europe and a young Muslim world, between a secular and faithless Europe and an increasingly fervent Islamic world, between a Europe which is unable to employ its own trained young people and an underqualified Muslim world. This is not happening in a remote part of the world which is therefore no threat to us, but here, in the heart of Europe.

Ladies and Gentlemen,

It is still not too late for the European elite to understand General De Gaulle's lesson: "Politics must be based on realities. Politics, when it is an art and a service, not an exploitation, is about acting for an ideal through realities." Realities are historical, cultural, demographic and geographical. It is perhaps not too late for us to understand that realities are not limits on freedom. The lesson which we are learning now is that freedom cannot exist in opposition to reality; without reality, the most there can be is political delirium and political intoxication. We may well build our world on our desire for the noblest ideals, but if it is not based on realities it can only ever remain a desire. When one stands in opposition to reality there is neither individual advancement, nor communal advancement; there is only failure, disappointment, bitterness, and finally cynicism and self-destruction. Perhaps this is why one sees so many high-minded, unhappy liberal politicians needlessly reduced to roaming the streets of Brussels. Whether we like it or not, mass migration waves are never peaceful in nature. Whenever large masses of people seek new homelands this inevitably leads to conflicts, because they want to occupy places where people are already living: people who have made those places their own, and who wish to protect their homes, their cultures and their ways of life.

Ladies and Gentlemen,

History has kicked down the door on us: it has laid siege to the borders of Europe and the security of European cultures and European citizens. Although emergencies do not favour

nuanced thinking – and refined feelings even less – it is hardly the migrants whom we should be so angry with. The majority of them are also victims: victims of their countries' collapsing governments, victims of bad international decisions, victims of people smugglers. They are doing what they see as being in their own interests. The problem is that we Europeans are not doing that which would be in our own interests. There is no better word for what Brussels is doing than “absurd”. It is like a ship's captain heading for collision who, instead of wanting to take avoiding action, is more interested in deciding which lifeboats should be non-smoking. It is as if, instead of repairing the leaking hull, we are arguing about how much water should flood into which cabins.

My Friends,

Mass migration can indeed be stopped. Europe is a community of half a billion – five hundred million. There are more of us than the Russians and the Americans combined. The situation of Europe – its technological, strategic and economic development – gives it the means to defend itself. It is a big enough problem that Brussels is not capable of organising the defence of Europe, but it is an even bigger problem that it lacks the intent to do so. In Budapest, Warsaw, Prague and Bratislava it is difficult for us to understand how we have reached a point at which it is even possible that those wanting to come here from other continents and other cultures can be let in without controls. It is difficult to understand the weakening of our civilisation's natural and fundamental instinct for the defence of ourselves, our families, our homes and our land.

But, Ladies and Gentlemen, we really do have something to defend: the co-existence of Europe's free, Christian and independent nations; shared roots, shared values, shared history, geographical and geopolitical interdependence; equality between the sexes; freedom and responsibility; fair competition and solidarity; pride and humility; justice and mercy. We are these things: this is Europe. Europe is Hellas, not Persia; it is Rome, not Carthage; it is Christianity, not a caliphate. When we say this we are not claiming that we are better, but that we are different. To point to the existence of an independent European civilisation does not mean that it is better or worse; it only means that “we are like this, and you are like that”.

A few years ago it seemed as though these ideas were obvious to us all. A few years ago it seemed as though there was agreement among us. A few years ago it seemed as though things

were in order: as though the hearts and minds of Europe's leaders were in accord with our sense of what is right. One after another they declared that multiculturalism was dead. A few years ago we still believed that they had realised that immigrants arriving in massive numbers could not be integrated into the life of their countries. But in 2015 everything changed. The earlier harmony disintegrated. We went into free fall, back down into the intellectual chaos from which we had struggled to escape. One morning, out of the blue, we woke up to the sound of "Willkommenskultur". Europe's leaders tell us that we must help. From the highest places we are urged to show solidarity and to offer our assistance.

My Friends,

This is natural. We do not have hearts of stone either. It is also true that we do not have heads of stone. We keep in mind the most important rule when offering help: if we help them here, they will come here; if we help them there, they will stay there. Instead of heeding this rule, Brussels has started to encourage those living in the poorer and less fortunate parts of the world to come to Europe and to change their lives for something different. Every evening, across half the world – or at least half of Europe – people sit at home struggling to understand what can have happened and what lies behind all this. Soon enough every family in Europe will have come to its own explanation – and I don't want to miss out on the chance of pitching in with mine. The way I see it, in Brussels and some European capitals the political and intellectual elite see themselves as citizens of the world – in contrast to the majority of people, who have a strong sense of nationhood. The way I see it, the political leaders are also aware of this. And while there is no chance of them agreeing with their own peoples, they would rather turn their backs on them. As used to be said in this part of the world, "they know what to do, they dare to do it, and they do it". But this means that the real problem is not outside Europe, but inside Europe. Those who do most to endanger the future of Europe are not those who want to come here, but the political, economic and intellectual leaders who are trying to reshape Europe against the will of the people of Europe. This is how, for the planned transport to Europe of many millions of migrants, there came into existence the most bizarre coalition in world history: the people smugglers, the human rights activists and Europe's top leaders.

Ladies and Gentlemen,

To this day, we are admitting without vetting and selection hundreds of thousands of people from countries with which we are at war, on the territories of which European Union Member States are engaged in military operations. There was no chance of us screening out those who posed a danger to us. Today, also, we have no idea who are terrorists, who are criminals, who are economic migrants, and who are really running for their lives. It is hard to call this anything but madness.

Ladies and Gentlemen, President Balog, Hungarian citizens,

Spring winds bring spring floods, but it seems that they also swell the flood of immigrants. The weeks and months ahead will be difficult, tiring and nerve-racking. The pressure on our southern borders is increasing. The impotence of Brussels is causing increasing chaos. The Balkan countries are caught in a trap: from the south the Greeks are pushing up many thousands of people, who are being lured on by siren voices in German heard from the north. We must prepare for every eventuality. We are giving personnel, border guards, technical hardware and equipment to the Balkan countries, because it is they who are in reality defending Europe's borders. And while they are resisting, we will also be able to defend our own borders more easily. We have known this since the time of Hunyadi. We trust in our success, but this is not enough on its own. We must also reinforce our own lines of defence. These defensive measures swallow up money. So far they have cost around eighty-five billion forints, and for this we can only draw on our own budget. I have sent new military units to the border, I have deployed regular forces in Csongrád and Bács-Kiskun counties, and I have ordered the defence and interior ministers to prepare for the erection of a line of defence on the Hungarian-Romanian border. The police and military have performed outstandingly – we thank them. They have now committed to doing everything they can and everything humanly possible. This, however, may not be enough. The country expects them to provide results and a reliably defended border. The leaders of our military, police and anti-terror forces must accomplish this task. If needed, we shall defend the borders along their full extent from Slovenia to Ukraine. We shall teach Brussels, the people smugglers and the migrants that Hungary is a sovereign country, and its territory can only be entered by those who will obey our laws and accept the authority of our law enforcement and military personnel. The defence of our southern borders will not be enough. We must stand our ground on another battlefield – fortunately this is not the realm of soldiers, but of diplomats.

My Friends,

We must halt the advance of Brussels. They have got it into their heads that they will distribute among us – compulsorily and with the force of law – the immigrants who have been transported to Europe. This is known as “the compulsory resettlement quotas”. They have made one such wretched, unjust, irrational and unlawful one-off decision in relation to one hundred and twenty thousand migrants. Contemptuously bypassing and evading the principle of national sovereignty represented by the prime ministers of Member States, they arranged for the adoption of this law in the European Parliament. We dispute this decision, and we are fighting for its nullification in the European Court. It seems that, in Brussels as well as Hungary, eating increases the appetite. Therefore they want to build a system applied to every immigrant and every Member State, which will ensure the compulsory, permanent and continuous distribution of immigrants.

My Friends,

The EU clearly divides into two camps: on the one side are the federalists, and on the other are the supporters of sovereignty. The federalists want a United States of Europe and compulsory resettlement quotas, while the supporters of sovereignty want a Europe of free nations, and will not hear of any form of quota. This is how compulsory resettlement quotas have become the essence and symbol of the times we now live in. This is important in itself, but it also encapsulates everything which we fear, which we do not want, and which has the potential to prise apart the alliance of European peoples. We cannot afford to allow Brussels to place itself above the law. We cannot afford to allow the consequences of madcap policies to be expanded into those countries which have complied with every treaty and every law – as we have done. We cannot afford to allow them to force us or anyone else to import the bitter fruits of their misguided policies. We do not want to – and we shall not – import crime, terrorism, homophobia and anti-Semitism to Hungary. In Hungary there shall be no lawless urban neighbourhoods, there shall be no street violence or immigrant riots, there shall be no arson attacks on refugee camps, and gangs shall not hunt our wives and daughters. In Hungary we shall nip any such attempts in the bud, and we shall be consistent in punishing them.

Ladies and Gentlemen,

We shall not surrender our right to decide who we want to live with, and who we do not want to live with. This is why we must resist those who seek to popularise the idea of the quotas in Europe, and we shall resist them. “A risk is always risky”, as the corny Budapest joke has it, and we must indeed summon up all our courage. We must summon it up because for the greater glory of European democracy we must face up to censorship, blackmail and threats. Books by the Hungarian Justice Minister are being withdrawn from bookshops in Belgium, and the press in some Member States are spreading blatant lies. The tone being used against Hungary is crude, coarse and aggressive. Furthermore, we are also being threatened with financial retaliation, being accused of ingratitude for the support we receive. They think like the priest in a tale, who was asked to eliminate inequalities in wealth. “Fine”, he said, “let’s share out the work: you convince the rich to give, and I’ll convince the poor to accept”. This is how they imagine things. The reality, however, is that we do not owe each other anything – not a single penny. Weakened, bled dry, uncompetitive and starved of capital after forty-five years of communism, Hungary opened its doors to Western companies. Everyone profited from this: Western companies repatriated as much money from Hungary as the European Union sent here. We are quits, and we have nothing to call each other to account for.

Ladies and Gentlemen,

Finally, how shall we stop Brussels’ resettlement quota offensive? I suggest that we rely on the ancient source of European democracy: the will of the people. If it is true that the people do not want the current insane immigration policy from Brussels – and indeed they oppose it – we should make room for their voice, and listen to what they have to say. After all, the European Union is based on the foundations of democracy. This means that we must not make decisions which will dramatically change people’s lives without consulting people and against their will. This is why we are holding a referendum in Hungary. This is not about the quota which has already been decided on, and which is being challenged in court by Hungary; that is the past. The referendum is about the future: we call the citizens of Hungary to battle, in opposition to the new European immigration system’s compulsory resettlement quotas, which will be on the agenda for March. We believe that, even in its present state, Brussels must not overstep the boundaries of its own conceptions. It must not turn against the European people. The European Union must not be a kind of Soviet Union reloaded. We Hungarians shall not reject Europe, despite all its weaknesses, emaciation and unsteadiness; and we shall not abandon it, despite its current bout of vertigo. We are the citizens of the same

historical and spiritual Europe as Charlemagne, Leonardo, Beethoven, Saint Ladislaus, Imre Madách or Béla Bartók. Our Europe is built on Christian foundations, and we are proud that it has accomplished fulfilment of human and spiritual freedom. There are many of us in Europe, with many different ways of thinking. There are those who believe in the ideals of liberty, equality and fraternity, and there are those who believe in the trinity of God, homeland and family, and the kingdom to come of faith, hope and love. But whatever our personal beliefs, none of us can want our Europe to submit when faced with a torrent of people deliberately channelled towards us, and when faced with aggressive demands for the assertion of different morals and different customs. We do not believe that Europe is doomed to this fate, we do not believe that Europe will choose to surrender the values of a millennium. We do not believe this; but, President Balog, what we know and declare is that Hungary will not take a single step down such a path.

Go for it Europe, go for it Hungary!