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NOTE

From: Presidency
To: Working Party on External Aspects of Asylum and Migration (EMWP)
Subject: Budapest Process – Draft Ministerial declaration and Call for Action 2025-2030

With a view to the discussions at EMWP meeting on 21 October, delegations will find attached the current version of:

1. The draft text of the Ministerial Declaration (Annex 1)
2. The draft text of the Call for Action 2025 - 2030 (Annex 2)

THE BUDAPEST PROCESS MINISTERIAL DECLARATION

WE, the Ministers and Representatives responsible for migration and migration-related matters from the Budapest Process participating and observer States:

Albania, Armenia, Australia, Austria, Azerbaijan, Bangladesh, Belgium, Bosnia-Herzegovina, Bulgaria, Croatia, Cyprus, Czech Republic, Denmark, Estonia, Finland, France, Georgia, Germany, Greece, Hungary, India, Iran, Iraq, Ireland, Italy, Jordan, Kazakhstan, Kyrgyzstan, Latvia, Lebanon, Lithuania, Luxembourg, Malta, Moldova, Montenegro, Netherlands, North Macedonia, Norway, Pakistan, Poland, Portugal, Romania, Serbia, Slovakia, Slovenia, Spain, Sweden, Switzerland, Tajikistan, Türkiye, Turkmenistan, Ukraine, United Kingdom and Uzbekistan¹ in the presence of the European Commissioner responsible for migration, and representatives from international organisations ;

Gathered in Budapest on 12th November 2024 at the 7th Ministerial Conference of the Budapest Process, at the invitation of Hungary;

Thanking the Chair, Türkiye and Co-Chair, Hungary, for their timely initiative and support, and the Secretariat, the International Centre for Migration Policy Development (ICMPD), for its administrative and substance preparations;

Recognising the unique role and strong impact of the Budapest Process and the Silk Routes Partnership for Migration since its inception in 2013 as well as the substantial progress made regarding migration cooperation with and within the Silk Routes Region;

Affirming the need for a renewed political commitment, translating global commitments into regional realities and practical measures;

¹ Australia, Bangladesh, Canada, China, India, Iran, Jordan, Lebanon and the United States of America are observers to the Budapest Process and participate in relevant events and activities.

Taking into account the main developments in the Budapest Process regions since our 6th Ministerial Conference in 2019 in Istanbul which have a tangible and direct influence on migratory movements along the routes in and within the Budapest Process States;

Acknowledging that migration and international protection issues should be handled in accordance with relevant international law, as stipulated inter alia in the UN conventions, while taking full account of national laws and competences;

Recognising existing frameworks and instruments which affect the governance of migration at national, regional and international levels, including the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development adopted in September 2015;

Taking into account the adoption of the Global Compact for Safe, Orderly and Regular Migration and the Global Compact on Refugees² by several Budapest Process States in December 2018, reflecting the commitment of the respective States to migration governance and international protection, while taking full account of national competences;

Recalling the adoption of the EU Pact on Migration and Asylum³ by the EU and its relevance to the external dimension of migration and migration cooperation platforms, such as the Budapest Process dialogue;

Considering the efforts taken to strengthen international cooperation against migrant smuggling, in particular the Global Alliance to Counter Migrant Smuggling launched by the European Commission in November 2023 and existing various initiatives at local and regional levels as well as lessons learned;

Conscious that the States of the Budapest Process have been historically affected by largescale movements of migrants, refugees and other persons in need of international protection and have historic experience and a constructive role in finding solutions to managing large movements of people;

² Without prejudice to the position of each participating or observer state of the Budapest Process towards the Global Compact for Safe, Orderly and Regular Migration and the Global Compact on Refugees.

³https://eur-lex.europa.eu/resource.html?uri=cellar:85ff8b4f-ff13-11ea-b44f-01aa75ed71a1.0002.02/DOC_3&format=PDF

Recognising the importance of cooperation frameworks for migration and mobility among the Budapest Process States and the bilateral cooperation which ensues;

Concerned about protracted crises, conflicts and wars, [notably in Afghanistan, the Middle East and Russian aggression against Ukraine], including their migration-related consequences, such as displacement and irregular migration;

Taking into account the multiple drivers of irregular migration and forced displacement, inter-alia related to wars, conflicts, economic instability, environmental degradation and climate change and the importance to mitigate their impact in the most affected regions, including the Silk Routes Region;

Recognising the numerous efforts undertaken and commitments made by the Budapest Process States to prevent irregular migration and fight against smuggling of migrants and trafficking in human beings, aware that this requires a coordinated whole-of-route approach;

Determined to find effective, comprehensive and coordinated approaches through the implementation of planned and well-governed migration policies to make migration orderly, safe, regular and responsible while continuing work to prevent irregular migration and fight against migrant smuggling and trafficking in human beings, in full respect of national competences and priorities;

Taking into account regional and bilateral labour mobility partnerships and labour shortages in specific sectors and the possibility to match these needs to a talent pool of available candidates in partner States, specifically in the Silk Routes Region, whilst acknowledging the need to prevent brain drain and respecting national competences and priorities;

Taking into account the importance of cooperation on safe, effective and timely return, readmission and sustainable reintegration, where feasible, in a bilateral and multilateral frame, as well as the obligation of States to readmit their own citizens;

Acknowledging that orderly, safe, regular and responsible migration, including through the implementation of planned and well-governed migration policies, can enhance the development outcomes of migration;

Mindful of national security and convinced that only a comprehensive, over-arching and inclusive approach, respecting the human rights of migrants, refugees and other persons in need of international protection can ensure the success of our collective actions in the face of the complexity of the phenomenon of international migration and forced displacement;

Recognising the need to promote integration of regular migrants, refugees and other persons in need of international protection, including through initiatives aimed at fighting against racism, extremism, discrimination and xenophobia;

Reiterating our individual and collective commitment to the Budapest Process, its principles and objectives;

Recalling the commitments made at all earlier Ministerial Conferences and the relevance of the 2013 Istanbul Declaration and the 2019 Istanbul Commitments;

Recognising the progress made on the implementation of the Call for Action and the need to strengthen the Call for Action to better achieve our objectives;

Adopt the attached Action Plan “The Call for Action 2025-2030” and its six following priorities, all of equal importance while taking full account of national competences:

- **Priority 1:** Prevent irregular migration and fight against migrant smuggling and trafficking in human beings and reinforce cooperation in the field of border management, criminal investigations and prosecutions;
- **Priority 2:** Strengthen existing policies and pathways for legal migration and mobility;
- **Priority 3:** Strengthen international, regional and bilateral cooperation for safe, effective and timely return, readmission and for sustainable reintegration;
- **Priority 4:** Strengthen the positive impact of migration on development, as well as address the root causes of irregular migration and forced displacement;
- **Priority 5:** Ensure international protection and the respect of the rights of refugees and other persons in need of international protection, in line with international law, as well as promote durable solutions;
- **Priority 6:** Support the integration of regular migrants, refugees and other persons in need of international protection and counteract racism, extremism, discrimination, and xenophobia.

Agree equally to adopt the following approaches and cross-cutting priorities to be mainstreamed throughout the implementation of the Call for Action:

- **A regional and whole-of-route approach:** the identification, formulation and implementation of actions will take into account local and regional specificities. In addition, the Budapest Process States will take into account migration and displacement patterns and trends along the whole routes, from countries of origin, transit and destination;
- **An inclusive and multi-stakeholder approach:** the partners will apply a whole-of-government and whole-of-society approach and seek to involve all relevant actors as well as relevant international organisations, to ensure coordinated and orderly management of all dimensions of migration and displacement;

- **A human rights-based approach:** the implemented actions will contribute to fully respecting, protecting and fulfilling the human rights and dignity of all people, including migrants, refugees and other persons in need of international protection as well as victims of trafficking in human beings, irrespective of their migration status;
- **Racism, discrimination and xenophobia:** Particular attention will be paid to the fight against racism, extremism, discrimination and xenophobia, and to ensuring adequate access to basic rights (including but not limited to education, work, training, social protection, healthcare, justice) [according to national law] and a fact-based narrative on migration;
- **Protection of people in situations of vulnerability:** Particular attention will be paid to people in situations of vulnerability and groups at heightened risk;
- **Information exchange and data reliability:** Particular attention will be paid to exchange of information, reliable data and analysis on migration and displacement between countries of origin, transit and destination, in line with data protection standards to contribute to evidence-based migration policy-making processes;

Decide to strengthen the institutional governance of the Budapest Process by endorsing the role of the Reference Group, as set out in its Terms of Reference, to support the implementation of the Call for Action;

Decide to endorse the set-up of the three Thematic Working Groups, respectively on law enforcement cooperation to counter irregular migration, return and reintegration and legal pathways for migration, supported by the Budapest Process Secretariat, hosted by the International Centre for Migration Policy Development (ICMPD);

Agree to support the implementation of the Call for Action through the use of appropriate instruments and initiatives and national resources of Budapest Process States;

Commit ourselves, with the support of the Budapest Process Secretariat to periodically monitor and evaluate the implementation of the Call for Action in order to promote progress towards its objectives;

Congratulate the authorities of Hungary for the facilities made available to our 7th Ministerial Conference to ensure its full success.

THE BUDAPEST PROCESS CALL FOR ACTION 2025-2030

Priority Goal 1

Prevent irregular migration and fight against migrant smuggling and trafficking in human beings and reinforce cooperation in the field of border management, criminal investigations and prosecutions

1. Strengthen international, regional and bilateral cooperation and improve coordination in order to prevent irregular migration and fight against migrant smuggling, in support of the Global Alliance to Counter Migrant Smuggling – as well as trafficking in human beings;
2. Reinforce the capacities of national authorities to prevent and combat criminal networks involved in the smuggling of migrants and trafficking in human beings to allow for effective operational cooperation, including international information exchange, joint investigations and judicial cooperation, contributing to identification, dismantling, prosecution and punishment of smuggling and trafficking networks; facilitate peer-to-peer learning, knowledge and data sharing resulting in better trained front-line officers;
3. Support Budapest Process countries to build more effective, sustainable [and rights-based] border management systems, notably through international cooperation and the increased use of innovative technologies, in a way that is compatible with international human rights obligations;

4. Strengthen the implementation of awareness raising and information campaigns on the risks of irregular migration, smuggling of migrants and trafficking in human beings in key countries of origin and transit as well as on the availability of legal migration opportunities;
5. Continue to develop and periodically review national and regional strategies and policies for the identification, protection, assistance, referral and reintegration of victims of trafficking; ensure that actions engaged in this area also include people in situations of vulnerability and groups at heightened risk. Strategies and policies should also consider actions to address the business model and reduce demand that fosters trafficking in human beings and other forms of exploitation.

Priority Goal 2

Strengthen existing policies and pathways for legal migration and mobility

1. Promote skills development as well as skills matching, skills mapping, the recognition of diplomas, qualifications and work experience as well as portability of social security rights and benefits of regular migrants and their families, inter alia through partnerships and agreements between the education sector, training and vocational schools as well as the employers from the public and private sectors of both countries of origin and destination;
2. Strengthen existing policies and the use of existing pathways for regular migration, including through efficient visa procedures, whilst ensuring that the relevant visa system is not abused, in accordance with applicable national law, and improve transparency of rules and regulations on admission, residence and prolongation, taking into account national competences;
3. Reinforce labour mobility schemes, within the framework of applicable national law, including through regional and bilateral labour mobility agreements, periodic exchange of information and sharing of best practices as well as their effective implementation, such as with programmes for circular and temporary migration;

4. Promote decent working conditions and the implementation of human rights due diligence procedures by economic actors and improve labour inspections to avoid labour exploitation, abusive practices and violations of human and labour rights of migrant workers during the entire migration cycle, including during the recruitment process as well as in their work;
5. Increase initiatives and promote better use of existing means for enhanced student, researchers and academic mobility between the Budapest Process partners, specifically within the Silk Routes Region, including the setting up of scholarship and trainee and exchange programmes, while avoiding duplications;
6. Promote communication, awareness raising and easy access to relevant, accurate and timely information on regular channels of migration for persons intending to migrate and provision of vocational and language training, notably through the work of the Migrant Resource Centres, Pre-Departure Orientation Centres and Post-Arrival Orientation Centres.

Priority Goal 3

Strengthen international, regional and bilateral cooperation for safe, effective and timely return, readmission and for sustainable reintegration

1. Enhance international, regional and bilateral cooperation on return and readmission, based on States obligation to readmit their own nationals, as well as foster partnerships and synergies to improve a multi-stakeholder approach as regards sustainable reintegration where feasible;
2. Strengthen capacities of the competent authorities notably by improving the process of identification and issuance of travel documents and the development of national legislation related to readmission to complement the existing States obligation to readmit their own nationals;
3. Support countries of origin, transit and destination to ensure effective management, monitoring and evaluation of return, readmission and reintegration processes, as well as enhance a coordinated outreach to countries of origin;

4. Promote the use of innovative technologies, electronic systems and digitalisation in order to improve cooperation on information exchange related to return and readmission, in compliance with data protection standards and respect for national competencies and international human rights obligations;
5. Support the strengthening of first line support and referral mechanisms provided to returnees, through inter alia information campaigns, database formation and the inclusion of returnees in local development programmes;
6. Reinforce the ownership and capacities of countries of return to support the economic, social and psychosocial reintegration of their returning nationals, notably by supporting the establishment of their national reintegration structures and initiatives, including but not limited through the support of the Migrant Resource Centres and cooperation with the private sector.

Priority Goal 4

Strengthen the positive impact of migration on development, as well as address the root causes of irregular migration and forced displacement

1. Promote the inclusion of migration into development strategies and cooperation programmes, while taking into account existing regional and national normative frameworks;
2. Support the creation of livelihood opportunities in countries of origin, transit and destination in order to promote self-reliance and reduce dependency;

3. Analyse and address root causes of irregular migration and forced displacement in targeted local contexts, through the use of good practices such as migration data collection and analysis;
4. Address challenges associated with climate induced displacement through knowledge sharing, promoting regional cooperation such as building initiatives for enhancing resilience;
5. Improve cooperation with the private sector and promote sustainable development efforts in countries of origin, transit and destination, by supporting policies aiming at creating job opportunities and stepping up support to micro, small and medium size enterprises (SMEs);
6. Facilitate and promote the faster, cheaper and safer transfer of remittances by regular migrants including by reducing costs of sending remittances to their countries of origin, as well as by providing trainings on financial literacy and by supporting initiatives using the potential of new technologies;

Priority Goal 5

Ensure international protection and the respect of the rights of refugees and other persons in need of international protection, in line with international law, as well as promote durable solutions

1. Support and build the long-term capacities of relevant national institutions in charge of international protection ensuring the allocation of adequate resources for compliance with applicable international law while counteracting the abuse of the asylum system;
2. Promote measures to enhance identification, registration and protection of refugees and other persons in need of international protection, providing them with adequate reception conditions, documentation and access to services, including through referral mechanisms. Particular attention will be paid to people in situations of vulnerability and groups at heightened risk;
3. Promote the adoption of local, national and regional policies and measures, and share experiences, good practices and lessons learned allowing for timely contingency planning in addressing situations of large movements of people in need of international protection and mixed migration flows;

4. Promote durable solutions, namely voluntary repatriation, resettlement, humanitarian admission and local integration while utilising complementary pathways to protection;
5. Enhance international solidarity and burden and responsibility sharing with countries hosting large numbers of refugees by increasing cooperation, and providing technical and financial assistance to host countries, as relevant;
6. Enhance efforts to prevent disappearance of migrants, refugees and other persons in need of international protection, clarify whereabouts of the missing persons and regularly provide information to their families. To this end, improve trans-regional coordination channels between forensic services to identify deceased persons along migration routes, in line with data protection standards.

Priority Goal 6

Support the integration of regular migrants, refugees and other persons in need of international protection and counteract racism, extremism, discrimination and xenophobia

1. Share good practices for supporting receiving communities in integrating refugees and regular migrants and develop adequate integration tools and measures to create the opportunities for the migrants' economic, social and cultural participation as well as informing migrants on their rights and responsibilities in relation to the receiving communities;
2. In order to reach out to regular migrants and refugees, establish official and reliable information mechanisms on their rights and obligations, as well as on their access to services including through the use of innovative methods and technologies;
3. Ensure the access of regular migrants and refugees to relevant services including where appropriate: for education, employment, training, social protection, healthcare (including psychosocial support) and justice, specifically for vulnerable groups;

4. Continue information campaigns on integration and on counteracting racism, extremism, hate speech, discrimination, xenophobia and related intolerance;
5. Develop and maintain legislative and administrative measures to counter racism, extremism, discrimination and xenophobia and related intolerance, and initiate capacity building to this end;
6. Engage with civil society and migrant communities abroad in cooperation with competent authorities of host countries to achieve better integration, including in monitoring and countering incidents of racism, extremism, discrimination, xenophobia and related intolerance;
7. Support schools and other educational structures to promote a comprehensive understanding of all aspects of migration, encourage cultural exchange initiatives, support language trainings and work against racism, extremism, discrimination, and xenophobia and related intolerance;
8. Engage with media to promote accurate and evidence-based narratives on migration and prevent misinformation and disinformation about migrants.
