



***Dear Polish Friends!***  
***Dear Fellow Hungarians!***

### **The centuries-old Polish-Hungarian friendship cannot be over!**

In his recent (customary) speech at the Tusnádfürdő (Băile Tușnad, Transylvania, Romania) summer camp at the end of July, Hungarian Prime Minister Viktor Orbán said that Poland wants to be the United States' number 1 European base in a British-Baltic-Scandinavian-Ukrainian alliance. He criticised this alleged plan with sharp and insulting words, saying that the Poles were "pursuing the most hypocritical and disingenuous policies in the whole of Europe." His foreign minister went even further, saying "Polish diplomacy is sinking into a quagmire of lies."

There are many of us in Hungary who see it very differently. It is our deep conviction that the centuries-old friendship between the Polish and Hungarian peoples cannot be dependent on the current government of either country. In addition to the many dynastic and personal links (Anjou, Piast, I. Báthory, F. Rákóczi, J. Bem etc.) this friendship worked even when the Polish state was divided in the 18th century and Hungary did not have an independent foreign policy. During WWII Hungary not only welcomed the hundred thousand Poles fleeing the Nazi conquest, but also actively supported the Polish resistance until it, too, was occupied by Germany in March 1944. The Polish government in exile did everything in its power to help Hungary to detach itself from the German alliance and war.

In 1956 Poland showed the way, which Hungary followed in October. These two countries played a decisive role in the overthrow of the communist regimes in 1989, and together with Czechoslovakia they formed the Visegrad Cooperation. Together we campaigned for eastward NATO enlargement, and together we joined the European Union. After Fidesz's election victory in 2010, Prime Minister Viktor Orbán's first trip was to the centre-right government in Warsaw, headed by the same Donald Tusk who is the prime minister today.

This historic friendship should not be jeopardised, even if the two governments' policies are currently substantially different. And what is wrong with the north-eastern and northern states of Europe standing together against the Russian threat? Together with Romania and Ukraine, this association would strengthen the unity of the old and new democracies of the European Union. Isn't that the right place for the other Visegrad countries, too?

The V21 Group, which brings together members of former Hungarian governments between 1990 and 2012, is convinced that the overwhelming majority of the Hungarian people will stand by their traditional friendship with the Poles and reject the current Hungarian government's strident attacks on Poland.

This letter will be published in Hungary and sent to the government and citizens of Poland.

Budapest, 12 August 2024.

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