

## **STATEMENT BY HUNGARIAN FOREIGN MINISTER JÁNOS MARTONYI ON THE VISEGRÁD COOPERATION (BUDAPEST, FEBRUARY 26, 2002)**

In my capacity as the Foreign Minister of Hungary currently holding the Presidency of the Visegrád Cooperation, I would like to reconfirm that Hungarian foreign policy continues to regard the Visegrád Cooperation as one of the key, and for us a most significant, frameworks of Central European co-operation and cohesion, and we are interested in its further enhancement.

Although our Czech and Slovak partners decided not to attend the scheduled meetings, we are firmly convinced that the common interests in our cooperation are unchanged. This is clearly substantiated by the favourable experiences gained so far. We believe in the strength of Visegrád, and we also regard as important the recent statements by our Visegrád partners expressing the same intention.

It is the strong conviction of the Government of Hungary that the continuation of the Visegrád Cooperation on the basis of the results achieved so far will contribute to the strengthening of the cohesion in Central Europe in the future, as well as to promoting the European integration of Hungary, the Czech Republic, Poland and Slovakia. Therefore it is our firm objective to further strengthen the ties among our countries, and to continue the Visegrád Cooperation.

In addition to enhancing political cooperation, we have also achieved significant results in the economic, cultural and many other fields. The Visegrád Cooperation has become a real force of cohesion, which is demonstrated by the activities of the Visegrád Fund promoting contacts among civic organizations. Recently, we have substantively coordinated our positions concerning accession to the European Union. This also has to be continued in order to successfully complete the accession negotiations of the Visegrád countries as well as those of the other candidates at the earliest possible date.

In my opinion, the Visegrád Cooperation has proved its reason for existence in concrete fields. Based on these, we have to overcome those issues that do not directly affect either our bilateral relations or the Visegrád Cooperation. The Visegrád Cooperation will continue to exist and will be maintained. Pursuant to our position, we are ready to organize at a new coordinated date those political meetings that are to facilitate further progress in the concrete areas of our cooperation.

In addition to the Visegrád Cooperation, Hungary attributes great importance to such frameworks of regional cooperation of variable geometry like the CEFTA, the Quadrilaterale, the Central European Initiative, the regional partnership initiated by Austria, the Stability Pact and the Szeged Process, as well as to the consistent deepening of our bilateral relations in all fields with the countries in the region.

Budapest, February 26, 2002

[Quelle: <http://www.kum.hu/kulugy>]