***JOINT STATEMENT***

*adopted at the Trilateral Leaders´ Summit of Slovakia, Hungary and Serbia on*

*22 October 2024*

The Prime Ministers of the Slovak Republic and Hungary and the President of the Republic of Serbia

1. **Recognise** that illegal migration to Europe is a serious problem, fuelled by geopolitical instability, growing conflicts and social inequalities in Europe's immediate neighbourhood, and exacerbated by the pull factors within the EU;
2. **Acknowledge** that illegal migration continues to pose a significant challenge to many countries, especially those which, due to their geographical location on the Western Balkan migration route, bear a disproportionate share of the burden in dealing with illegal migration and suppressing human trafficking and other related organised crime activities;
3. **Reaffirm** that, in accordance with the expectation of our citizens, the sovereign decision about who crosses our borders must be for our governments to take in line with established international rules, and not organized criminal groups;
4. **Underline** that a comprehensive approach to migration and asylum involves, in particular, addressing the external dimension of migration policy by active coordination at intergovernmental level and exploring the use of innovative solutions;
5. **Emphasise** that the protection of the Schengen area, which guarantees the free movement of citizens without border controls, should be accompanied by regional compensatory measures to alleviate the pressure on the external borders, in particular through mechanisms to support and complement border management and facilitate return with key countries of origin and transit; underlining that these measures should not exacerbate unhindered movement of people and goods in Europe and Western Balkans in particular;
6. **Argue** that the solutions recently adopted at European level do not appear to be effective or sustainable, and should therefore be complemented by further strengthening of the regional dimension of cooperation in combating illegal migration;
7. **Stress** that the situation on the Western Balkan migration route has improved considerably in recent months, thanks in particular to the measures taken by our governments;
8. **Confirm** hereby that EU enlargement is a geostrategic investment requiring a more active EU engagement in the Western Balkans region, including in tackling illegal migration, and **support** the efforts of the Republic of Serbia as a candidate country on the path towards full membership of the European Union, while noting the existing friendly relations and fruitful cooperation between our countries;
9. **Agree** to further reinforce mutual cooperation and deepen the trilateral partnership between Slovakia, Hungary and Serbia in the fight against illegal migration;
10. **Commit** themselves to continue to stem illegal migration in the region, using policies of mutual cooperation, while engaging technical, personnel and material assistance measures, and to use their bilateral cooperation with certain key third countries for the benefit of the region;