



MINISTRY
OF INTERIOR
PRESS DEPARTMENT

**Background information for the Press
about the joint press conference of the Office of Immigration and
Nationality and the National Police Headquarters on illegal migration**

In the past one and a half year Hungary has been facing serious challenges due to the continuous increase of illegal migration from Serbia. The border-guard services patrol Hungary's 1103.7 kilometres long external Schengen border fully in compliance with the Schengen requirements. Being an external Schengen Member State our duty is the effective action against illegal migration and to prevent the abuses of the asylum system. At the same time Hungary provides international protection in compliance with the EU standards to those who are really in need of it. Hungary is still not a target country but a transit country for the foreigners, who mostly intend to reach a Western-European Member State. This is justified by the fact that the vast majority of the illegal migrants arriving to Hungary does not apply for international protection during the immigration proceedings.

The composition of foreigners arriving to Hungary is extremely varied, mostly Afghans, Kosovars and Pakistanis. Their reason for migration of the different individuals can be diverse. However a significant majority arrives because of economic reasons, while a smaller group of foreigners flee some persecution or the risk of some persecution.

Immigration proceedings are conducted against illegal migrants apprehended at the external borders of Hungary. During these immigration proceedings the illegal migrants are accommodated in detention facilities. The Office of Immigration and Nationality or the Police has the competence to decide on such restriction on liberty. Some foreigners submit an application for international protection while in detention, which does not automatically results in the release of that foreigner from detention. The reason for this is that in the past years in many cases those foreigners, whose detention was terminated after the submission of an application for international protection, did not wait for the decision of the asylum authority but illegally left Hungary for some Western Member State, from where they were sent back afterwards to Hungary. In cases of foreigners submitting application for international protection the immigration authority conducts immigration proceedings only after the decision of the asylum authority is brought on the application for international protection. Rejected asylum-seekers and those illegal migrants who do not apply for international protection in Hungary can be transferred to the neighbouring countries in the framework of readmission agreements. During the execution of an expulsion decision the protection of human rights is a primary concern to the Police. The Police does not execute an expulsion decision if the non-refoulement principle applies.

The execution of detention takes place in five specialized detention facilities run by the Police. The capacities of the detention facilities are the following: in Győr 40 persons, in Budapest (airport) 27 persons, in Kiskunhalas 178 persons, in Békéscsaba 135 persons, and in Nyírbátor 273 persons, altogether 653 persons can be accommodated. Detention means a

periodic restriction on liberty; therefore it can be applied only together with special legal guarantees and the continuous control of different supervisory bodies. The immigration authority has the power to order the detention of a person only for 72 hours. After this period it is in the courts competency to prolong the detention and to supervise its justification in every thirty days. Furthermore as another legal guarantee the prosecutor supervises the lawfulness of the execution of the detention in every two weeks. Besides this the Police attaches great emphasis on that the control of national and international civil organisations over the practice of the Police is ensured. The representatives of international and national NGOs can notify the problems emerged in connection with the detention of foreigners or they can pass over any information gathered from the detainees directly to the head of the detention facility or the management of the Police, furthermore they can help the detainees in exercising their rights.

The detainees are provided with food appropriate to their religion, the amount of calorie of the food that must be provided daily per person is determined by law. They are provided with family doctor services on the same level as nationals and paramedic assistance is continuously available for them. In cooperation with non-governmental organizations the Police provides from EU funding the possibility for detainees to participate in leisure-time activities organized by professionals in dignified conditions. In the framework of this initiative social workers, psychologists provide services at detention facilities, furthermore sport and cultural activities, and Hungarian language classes are available for detainees.

In order to ensure that the detainees have wide access to communication possibilities and information channels from 2011 the use of the Internet is also possible at detention facilities – it was provided for almost 24 000 hours last year.

The Police is open to all signals that reveal any violation of the law, however the fact that in the hope of gaining advantages unlawfully detainees often provide false, unfounded information to international organisations and NGOs shall be taken into account therefore the Police checks the validity of the information provided by the detainees in a detailed exploratory examination.

The person or organisation filing the complaint is always notified of the results of the examinations. If the Police finds the signalled problem or complaint founded, reveals an unlawful activity or omission it immediately takes measures to terminate the causes and in case of personal responsibility to initiate the necessary disciplinary or criminal procedures.

The Office of Immigration and Nationality operates reception centres in Debrecen, Bicske and Balassagyarmat in order to accommodate refugees, asylum seekers and persons who cannot be returned to their countries of origin. Asylum seekers are accommodated at the reception centre in Debrecen while recognised refugees and beneficiaries of subsidiary protection are accommodated at the reception centre in Bicske. The reception conditions are in no aspects below the standards of similar facilities operating in other Member States. The two reception centres together are suitable for the accommodation of 1600 persons. The community shelter in Blassagyarmat houses foreigners participating in an aliens policing procedure. The capacity of Balassagyarmat is 130 persons. Residents of all three facilities can leave the facilities during daytime and they only have an obligation to announce their intention if they wish to leave them for a longer period of time.

The reception facilities operated by the Office of Immigration and Nationality ensure accommodation for foreigners among dignified conditions in accordance with the requirements of this era. For the residents the Office ensures three meals a day taking into account religious customs, basic and emergency health care services, and conditions necessary to enable meaningful activities in their free time (such as Internet use, club room, playground). The Office spends approximately 1000 Million HUF yearly on the operation of the reception facilities, the accommodation of the residents and the maintenance of the facilities.

The school education of school-age children living in the reception centres is ensured by the local elementary schools. Recognised refugees and beneficiaries of subsidiary protection participate in 520 hours of free Hungarian language training.

In order to ensure housing and livelihood for recognised refugees in Hungary the Office of Immigration and Nationality provides pecuniary benefits and other allowances and provisions determined by law. As this group of beneficiaries of international protection are eligible for the same rights as Hungarian citizens, they have access to the Hungarian labour-market as well as in justified cases to social benefits.

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