

Beat: Business

## Stability of Egypt is a key interest for Hungary PM Viktor Orban Said

After meeting President of Egypt Al Sisi

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**USPA NEWS** - The Prime Minister said he expects Hungarian-Egyptian economic and trade activity to increase significantly within a short period. In the Parliament Building on Monday Prime Minister Viktor Orbán had talks with President of Egypt Abdel Fattah el-Sisi, who is in Budapest on an official visit. After their meeting Mr. Orbán described the security, military and economic stability of Egypt as a key interest for Hungary.

In a press statement he made in the company of the Egyptian head of state, the Prime Minister said that Egypt is not only a nearby country, but "our neighbour in a political sense", as it is a crucial state in the region, which "has a direct impact on our lives". The opposite side of the Mediterranean is "part of European history", Mr. Orbán remarked, and sooner or later what is happening over there will make its effect felt over here. He stated that one can now say that technological advance means that "what happens there at the beginning of the week will by the end of the week have an impact on Europe's public security, its quality of life and its stability".

He stressed that the success of Egypt's fight against terrorism is a precondition for calm and peace in Europe.

"We see Egypt as a country which, through its commitment to stability, also protects Hungary and Europe, and therefore in addition to a spirit of friendship, we also have an interest in your success", the Prime Minister told Mr. Sisi.

When Hungarians look at other countries, Mr. Orbán said, they first of all note how much "they are in love with their own independence" "as Hungarian history is itself a series of struggles fought for sovereignty. Consequently, he continued, when a leader such as Mr. Sisi comes to Budapest from a country which is also seeking to rebuild a nation on this way of thinking, "this always engenders respect in us, and for us such a visitor is a particularly valued guest".

He also congratulated Egypt on having managed to consolidate its economy, and pursuing a policy aimed at national unity.

With regard to Hungarian-Egyptian relations, he said that the process of closer political cooperation is at an advanced stage, and the two countries have also managed to "open windows" on a number of economic issues. The Prime Minister said he expects Hungarian-Egyptian economic and trade activity to increase significantly within a short period.

The Prime Minister also thanked President Sisi for his committed and exemplary policy of protecting Christians in the Middle East. Mr. Orbán said that on Tuesday the prime ministers of the other three "V4" Visegrád states "Poland, the Czech Republic and Slovakia" will join their talks, and economic cooperation will also be on the agenda, alongside security issues. The goal is to launch a Central European-Egyptian economic cooperation scheme, he stated.

The Prime Minister said that Hungary is convinced that Europe must play a part in the stability of the Egyptian economy, and Hungary and the V4 nations are ready to contribute what they can. They are convinced, he said, that the Brussels decision-making system should allow for high-level Egyptian-European negotiations as frequently as possible, that a more pragmatic approach should be adopted, and that the most practical economic policy possible should be developed between Egypt and the European Union. In his statement President Sisi confirmed that the Egyptian people are convinced of the need for stability, and are ready to pay the price of that stability. The Egyptian people are also ready to take on the fight against terrorism, he said, and to implement major economic measures in the interest of stability.

He said that the fight against terrorism is not being conducted only by Egypt's leadership, but by its people, who reject extremist organisations' ideologies, which run counter to everything the people believe in. Egyptians want change, and have therefore also agreed to implementation of stringent economic measures which many other countries would be unable to endure, he said; the Egyptian people have accepted them because they know the importance of stability, he explained.

Mr. Sisi stressed that there is no need for gratitude for the specific protection of Egypt's Christians, as no distinction is being made between people on religious grounds, and everyone enjoys the right to security and protection. He added that the Christian minority forms part of the people, for which the Government takes responsibility. The Egyptian President noted that next year sees the ninetieth anniversary of the establishment of diplomatic relations between Hungary and Egypt.

The Egyptian head of state observed that bilateral political relations have always been strong, and this is a good basis for economic cooperation. In recent years, he said, significant progress in building relations has been made, and the ongoing cooperation with the Prime Minister elevates these relations to a higher level. He pointed out that it is important to strengthen economic cooperation, and that afternoon's business forum could promote this.

Mr. Sisi thanked Hungary for playing a major role in the European Union in representing Egypt's interests. He added that in his

meeting with Prime Minister Orbán they had also spoken about tackling migration, the possibilities for a peaceful resolution of the situation in Syria and Libya, and the possibility of long-term peace in the Middle East. With apo, on behalf of Ministry of Foreign Affairs and Trade, Hungary.

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