



**JOINT DECLARATION
of the Ministers of Finance of the Visegrad Group countries
30 September 2021 – Budapest**

WE, THE MINISTERS OF FINANCE OF THE VISEGRAD GROUP (V4) COUNTRIES
CONVENING IN BUDAPEST ON 30 SEPTEMBER 2021, HEREBY ADOPT THE
FOLLOWING JOINT DECLARATION.

WE EMPHASIZE that after the first year of the pandemic, in 2021 the Visegrad Group has achieved remarkable economic growth as it performed well compared with the rest of the European Union, due to its successful economic and financial policies. These include the rollout of timely and effective large-scale government measures in order to recharge Europe, relaunch growth and increase the competitiveness and resilience of V4 economies in the face of crises. Achievements have especially been outstanding in the protection of jobs: the Visegrad Group has managed to maintain a low unemployment rate.

WE CONTINUE TO reinforce our economies with further targeted measures to maintain growth above the EU average by creating jobs, attracting further investments and replenishing the shortfall of capacities during the crisis in a competitive and sustainable manner. We stand ready to provide the necessary fiscal support and supportive tax policies to further incentivize economic recovery and productivity increase until the recovery takes hold.

WE NOTE that the forthcoming review of the fiscal framework of the European Union is timely as in the past decade both the complexity and inadequate ownership of the rules have weakened their disciplined implementation. We underline the importance of reforming the framework while re-establishing and strengthening the required fiscal discipline of the EU Member States.

WE ARE OF THE VIEW that it is particularly important to closely monitor our economic performance, especially in these turbulent times. We are committed to upgrading our economic forecast toolkits and sharing experience on them.

WE BELIEVE that balanced territorial development and reduction of territorial inequalities represents one of the key elements for the recovery and therefore, targeted interventions, appropriate financial support and flexibility should be provided both within the EU cohesion policy and the national territorial development frameworks.

WE CONTINUE TO COOPERATE on the protection of our borders to fight the illegal movement of people. In this regard, we highlight the necessity for sufficient EU funding to reinforce the EU external borders in times of emerging new wave of illegal migrants, since the protection of external borders of the EU is a key policy priority.

WE UNDERLINE that the Tax and Customs Administrations of the Visegrad Group countries are entirely committed to continuing the active cooperation in customs control, the fight against tax evasion and fraud and especially VAT fraud both at administrative and operational levels, fraud related to excise goods, product safety, as well as to monitoring international truck and container transport. The enhancement of the administrative cooperation in the tax area, in the spirit of tax solidarity, especially with respect to exchange of information, knowledge, new technologies and best practices is crucial in this respect.

WE ARE AWARE that the regulation of digital financial instruments poses serious challenges to the tax administrations and therefore, the cooperation initiated in the fields of e-services, automated exchange of information, data asset utilization with data mining tools and transfer pricing audits are key priorities.

WE UNDERLINE that the pandemic has further increased the importance of promoting financial literacy as an essential tool for individuals and households to build greater financial resilience at the household level. Financial literacy improvement is a key to financial consumer protection, more considerate decisions at the household level and increased competition among financial service providers. The V4 countries are committed to cooperating more closely in enhancing financial skills of their population with a special focus on digital finances and contactless payment methods, and in discussing relevant EU initiatives like the one based on the OECD/INFE framework and the European Payments Initiative.

WE BELIEVE that the effects of demographic processes are posing a challenge for all our economies. The V4 countries are committed to support families, youth and children and to creating jobs that keep and attract back our talents.

WE ARE AWARE that climate change is one of the biggest global challenges and it is a major risk factor to macroeconomic stability. We, as Finance Ministers will support the transition to a low-carbon and climate-resilient economy through sustainable economic and financial policies as well as aligning our capital markets with climate objectives, and we are committed to sharing experience and expertise in this regard. We STRONGLY REMIND that the EU energy, climate and sustainable finance policies should accommodate all paths to net zero emissions according to the technology neutrality principle. In this context, we URGE the inclusion of nuclear energy and natural gas-related activities into the Taxonomy Delegated Act.

We SHARE the key objectives of the EU Fit for 55 package. However, we UNDERLINE that the EU energy transition can only be successful if actions and measures to be taken are just, cost-effective and proportionate among Member States and preserve the competitiveness of Member States and the EU economies as a whole. The V4 countries will thoroughly CONSIDER the Commission’s proposals on initiatives concerning the energy transition. Transformation burdens linked to the climate action, including energy taxation, should not be borne by the most vulnerable households.

WE DECLARE OUR INTENTION to continue our cooperation in the European and international initiatives and emphasize the need to continue our dialogue within this framework and the possibility to meet again in the first half of 2022.

SIGNED BY

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