

Press Releases: Secretary Pompeo's Travel to Hungary and Slovakia: Honoring Shared History and Building for a Shared Future

Fact Sheet
Office of the Spokesperson

Washington, DC
February 10, 2019

- The United States is committed to a strong, united, and capable transatlantic alliance rooted in the principles of common defense, democracy and fundamental freedoms.
- The Secretary's visit marks thirty years since Central Europeans tore down the Iron Curtain to reclaim their freedom and sovereignty, choosing the path of Western democracy denied to them for decades, and solidifying that commitment by joining NATO and the European Union.
- The United States is committed to increasing our diplomatic, military, commercial and cultural engagement with Central Europe in order to strengthen this region's ties with the West as it faces increased pressure from Russia and China. We will build on our shared experiences to compete for positive influence and ensure a democratic, prosperous, and secure future for generations to come.

RENEWING OUR COMMITMENTS AND REINVESTING IN SHARED SECURITY

- The United States' commitment to NATO's Article Five is ironclad. We expect all allies to invest adequately in their own defense responsibilities by meeting their share of the NATO alliance's capability needs. We encourage Hungary and Slovakia to continue to work toward meeting these defense investment targets.
 - Both Hungary and Slovakia have credible plans to spend 2% of GDP on defense investment, with 20% of that outlay aimed at major equipment purchases, by 2024.
 - Slovakia selected the F-16 as its next generation fighter, which will improve its air-defense capabilities and allow for expanded and deeper cooperation with NATO-allied militaries, while also

- reducing Slovakia's dependence on Soviet-made legacy equipment and the Russian crews that maintain them.
- Hungary supports NATO's Strategic Airlift Capability by hosting Heavy Airlift Wing, a 12-nation consortium (including the United States) at Papa Air Base, to support NATO and member nations' operations.
- The United States, Hungary, Slovakia, and all NATO allies have a shared interest in a prosperous, stable and democratic Ukraine that is unfettered in its engagement with – and path to – eventual membership in NATO.
- As NATO allies, Hungary and Slovakia participate in regional and global missions, including in Kosovo, Iraq, and Afghanistan. We applaud these commitments.
- The United States is negotiating bilateral Defense Cooperation Agreements with Hungary and Slovakia to provide further opportunities to enhance our mutual security.

EXPANDING MUTUAL PROSPERITY AND DEMOCRATIC FREEDOMS

- We treat allies as allies and expect them to keep their commitments. As members of NATO, the OSCE, and other transatlantic institutions, our governments have pledged to work tirelessly to ensure our citizens' freedoms. Democracies are our strongest allies; a vibrant civil society and free media are the hallmarks of a pluralistic democracy.
- On this trip, the State Department is announcing new initiatives to coincide with the 30th anniversary of the fall of Communism that are aimed at strengthening U.S. engagement in the Central Europe region.
 - We are strengthening connections between Hungarians and Americans through U.S. government-funded academic and professional exchange programs. For example, beginning in the 2019-2020 school year, Hungary will join the Future Leaders Exchange (FLEX) Program, which will provide scholarships for Hungarian high-school students to spend an academic year in the United States.
 - We will strengthen support for local independent media in all four Visegrad countries, with an emphasis on creating exchanges with the United States to strengthen workforce skills and improve business practices.
 - Across Central Europe, we are increasing U.S. support to fight corruption, including law enforcement cooperation and support for investigative journalism to study the intersection between regional corruption and Russian and Chinese influence.
- Hungary and Slovakia are home to hundreds of U.S. companies, and we will work to promote and expand these strong economic ties. The United States advocates for stable operating conditions and a predictable legal environment, with a level playing field that creates opportunities for Central Europeans and Americans alike.
 - In 2018, bilateral trade in goods and services between the United States and Hungary reached approximately \$8.9 billion; with

Slovakia, approximately \$4.7 billion.

- The United States is working to strengthen our trade relationships with the European Union, which would benefit Hungary and Slovakia as members. The economic relationship between the United States and the European Union is the largest in the world, accounting for \$1 trillion in annual bilateral goods and services trade.
- We will continue to work with Hungary and Slovakia to support energy security that includes diversity of suppliers, delivery routes, and energy types.
- Looking forward, liquefied natural gas processed at the Krk Island floating storage regasification unit (FSRU) would contribute directly to the energy security of Central Europe.
- Hungary and Slovakia have taken steps to upgrade interconnector infrastructure. We urge Hungary and Slovakia to step up their work toward greater regional energy security and to oppose the Nordstream II and multi-stream Turkstream pipelines.

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