

# Full text of Viktor Orbán's speech at Băile Tuşnad (Tusnádfürdő) of 26 July 2014

**Viktor Orbán's speech at the XXV. Bálványos Free Summer University and Youth Camp,**

**26th July, 2014., Băile Tuşnad (Tusnádfürdő)**

Good day to all of you! Respectful greetings to everybody!

When we saw each other here a year ago, I began my speech by saying that we are at the last Tusnádfürdő meeting before the upcoming Hungarian national elections. Now I can say we are at the first Tusnádfürdő meeting after the past Hungarian election, and I can announce the good news that we won the elections. Actually, we won twice. Because we did not only win the national elections, we also won the EP elections. Everybody here may know that the third elections will happen on October 12th this year; these are the municipal elections, which have weight and importance to Hungarian state life. Allow me to start my speech by citing an unworthily overlooked movement of the last national election. As a result of this election in Hungary the governing civic, Christian and national power, Fidesz and the Christian Democratic People's Party, gained a two-thirds majority – by only one mandate. I do remember – we chatted about it years ago – how beautiful it would be, how noble a form of revenge, if the political forces who voted against the re-engaging of the Hungarians living outside the borders of Hungary would be deservedly punished if a majority, or even a two-thirds majority, were gained by the votes of the Hungarians who live outside of the borders of Hungary. I announce that there is a strong suspicion that after all there is a moral balance in politics. We have good reason to doubt it. However, sometimes this belief is affirmed. For example, what happened now is that the votes of those Hungarians who live abroad were needed to gain the two-thirds majority of the national forces in the Hungarian parliament. Thank you everybody, providence, the voters, the Hungarian lawmakers, and finally those as well who turned against us and provided the chance for good to win. Because if there is no bad, how could good get mastery over the bad?

Ladies and Gentlemen!

My speech today is not connected to the elections. Our acting president introduced us as regime changers, and did it by recalling the regime change. This represents well that for our generation the regime change is the generational experience to which we compare everything, against which we measure everything, whence we start to define everything that happens around us. It seems natural, although it is rather a disadvantage for us, not an advantage. The regime change as an experience is very valuable because politics – in spite of what people

sometimes think – is not a speculative genre. It has to be built from experimental facts and experiences. And today the situation is that – acknowledging that experience is valuable – at the same time the same scale of change is happening in the world, as it was in the experience of the regime change. So the task before us, in an intellectual sense, is that regime change is to be referred to as an experience, but not a reference point, in the debates on designing the future paths. We should much rather consider as a starting point the financial, global economic, global power and global military power shift that emerged in 2008. This is the task we should accomplish. We are helped by the fact that there are people who were born later than us. And for them it has long been a hardship to consider the regime change as a reference point, because, let's say, those who were born in 1985 were five during the regime change in the '90s, and this was not the same experience as it was for us. They frequently stay out of political discussions because they do not even understand the references in the interpretations of the present and the future from the older ones. I believe that it would be advantageous in several ways to consider the regime change a completed historical process, the factbook of experience, and not the starting point when thinking about the future, because – if I get it right – our task every year is to try to somehow understand mutually what is happening around us, to grab its essential movements, and maybe see what is going to happen to us in the future. So if this is our task, I would suggest we briefly remind ourselves that in the 20th Century there have been three major world-regime changes. At the end of World War I, at the end of World War II, and in 1990. The common points in these – I might have mentioned this here once – were that when the changes took place it was clear for all of us that we are going to live in a different world overnight. Let's say it was very clear here after Trianon, just as it was in Budapest after World War II, as well. If the people looked around and saw the invading Soviet troops they knew that a new world was about to begin. In '90 when we succeeded in breaking and displacing the communists, it was clear after the first parliamentary elections that a new world had arrived for us: the wall in Berlin collapsed, elections were held and this is another future.

The statement intended to be the basic point of my talk here is that the changes in the world nowadays have the similar value and weight. We can identify its manifestation – that point when it became clear – as the financial crisis of 2008, or rather the Western financial crisis. And the importance of this change is less obvious because people sense it in a different way than the previous three. It was unclear in 2008 during the huge Western financial collapse that we are going to live in a different world from now on. The shift is not that sharp as in the case of the three previous world regime changes and it somehow slowly resolved in our minds, as the fog sets on the land. If we look around and analyze the things happening around us, for six years this has been a different world from the one we lived in. And if we project the processes for the future – which always has a risk – it is a reasonable intellectual exercise, and we see well that the changes will only have a bigger impact.

Well, Honorable Ladies and Gentlemen, for the sake of illustrating the deepness of this change, in no particular order, I assembled a few sentences, ideas from the Western World, as well as one or two from the Eastern World, too, that are stunning. If we assessed them through the lens of the pre-2008 liberal worldview, we would be shocked. Yet, if we do not view it that way, but understand from these sentences how far we have gone in terms of public speech, topics and their articulations in these last six years, then these sentences to be quoted will help us understand how profound the change is that is taking place in the world today.

Very briefly: In America, the President of the US has made numerous and repeated statements regarding how America has been engulfed by cynicism, and the task for American society and the American government is to declare war on cynicism originating from the financial sector. Before 2008, such a statement would have resulted in exclusion from gentleman-like international discourse, additionally, because of the characteristics of the financial system, it would probably have even been tainted with as being sinister, making any utterance of such sentences extremely perilous. Contrary to this, these ideas constantly appear in the American press as of late. The US president says that if a hardworking American constantly has to choose between career and family, that America will lose its place in the world economy. Or the President openly speaks about economic patriotism. He says such sentences that would still earn beating and stoning in today's provincial Hungarian public life. For example, he openly speaks about how companies employing foreigners should pay their fair share in taxes. Or he openly speaks about how companies employing Americans should be supported before anyone else. These are all voices, ideas and sentences that would have been unimaginable six or eight years earlier.

To proceed further, according to a well-recognized analyst, the strength of American "soft power" is deteriorating, because liberal values today incorporate corruption, sex and violence, and with this liberal values discredit America and American modernization. Also, the Open Society Foundation published a study not long ago analyzing Western Europe. In this, we could read a sentence which says that Western Europe was so preoccupied with solving the situation of immigrants that it forgot about the white working class. Or the British prime minister said that, as a consequence of the changes happening in Europe, many became freeloaders on the back of the welfare systems. One of the richest Americans, who was one of the first investors in the company Amazon, stated that we are living in a society that is less and less capitalist and more and more feudal, and if the economic system does not reform itself then the middle class will disappear, and, as he puts it, "the rich will be attacked by pitchforks". Therefore, he thinks a middle-up economic model is needed instead of a top-down model. It is not my intention to interpret these sentences, simply to cite them here in order to show the novelty of these ideas that were impossible to talk about only six years ago. Or, similarly from America, the number of unemployed youth has drastically risen, and in the case of the most promising career options, children from families with affluent families receive a far greater advantage –

this is said in the homeland of social mobility. Or to cite something else: another respected analyst said that the internet, understood by the liberal world as the greatest symbol of freedom for many long years, is being colonized by big corporations. His statement suggests that the big question is whether great capitalist companies, meaning international corporations, would be successful in doing away with the neutrality of the internet. Going forward, to quote a development that is both dear and unexpected for us, the English prime minister, who awkwardly avoids his party being identified as Christian Democratic, stands up in before the public stating that Christianity is a core principle of British values, and despite multiculturalism, Great Britain is a Christian country at heart, and this is a fact to be proud of. Honorable Ladies and Gentleman ... and I could enumerate these for a long time, if you allow, me I will not waste more time with this.

The question is whether numerous changes surrounding us could be attributed for the sake of understanding to one explanation? Can one, two, three essential aspects be grasped of what is happening around us? Well, they can be grasped. Many are thinking and even more are writing about this nowadays. Numerous books have been published on this topic. I would only like to recommend to you a single one of these world-interpreting ideas. In my opinion, the most provocative and exciting question surfacing in the Western world during the last year can be summarized as follows, applying necessary simplification: competition existing among nations in the world, competition existing among alliances and forces of the world has been supplemented by a new element. Everyone was only talking about competition in the world economy. Globalization on the international scale made it necessary to do a lot of talking, writing and analysis of it, and this phenomenon is known in detail. We can more or less know why a major economic interest group, for example the European Union, is competitive, or why it is losing its competitiveness. However, according to many, and I am one of them, today this is not the principal question. It remains an important question. As long as people live off money and the economy, this will remain an important question. Yet there is an even more important race. I would articulate this as a race to invent a state that is most capable of making a nation successful. As the state is nothing else but a method of organizing a community, a community which in our case sometimes coincides with our country's borders, sometimes not, but I will get back to that, the defining aspect of today's world can be articulated as a race to figure out a way of organizing communities, a state that is most capable of making a nation competitive. This is why, Honorable Ladies and Gentlemen, a trending topic in thinking is understanding systems that are not Western, not liberal, not liberal democracies, maybe not even democracies, and yet making nations successful. Today, the stars of international analyses are Singapore, China, India, Turkey, Russia. And I believe that our political community rightly anticipated this challenge. And if we think back on what we did in the last four years, and what we are going to do in the following four years, then it really can be interpreted from this angle. We are searching for (and we are doing our best to find,

ways of parting with Western European dogmas, making ourselves independent from them) the form of organizing a community, that is capable of making us competitive in this great world-race.

Honorable Ladies and Gentlemen

In order to be able to do this in 2010, and especially these days, we needed to courageously state a sentence, a sentence that, similar to the ones enumerated here, was considered to be a sacrilege in the liberal world order. We needed to state that a democracy is not necessarily liberal. Just because something is not liberal, it still can be a democracy. Moreover, it could be and needed to be expressed, that probably societies founded upon the principle of the liberal way to organize a state will not be able to sustain their world-competitiveness in the following years, and more likely they will suffer a setback, unless they will be able to substantially reform themselves.

Honorable Ladies and Gentlemen

As the matter stands, if we look at the surrounding events from here, we can consider three ways to organize a state that we so far knew, as a starting point: the nation state, the liberal state and then the welfare state, and the question is, what is coming up next? The Hungarian answer is that the era of a workfare state could be next, we want to organize a workfare state, that – as I previously mentioned – will undertake the odium of expressing that in character it is not of a liberal nature. What all this exactly means, Honorable Ladies and Gentlemen, is that we have to abandon liberal methods and principles of organizing a society, as well as the liberal way to look at the world. I will only mention two dimensions of this – I do not want to get into a longer lecture here – and I only want to touch on them, so that the importance of the matter could be sensed. When it comes to a relationship between two human beings, the fundamental view of the liberal way of organizing a society holds that we are free to do anything that does not violate another person's freedom. The twenty years of Hungarian environment preceding 2010 was founded on this theoretical, conceptual starting point. It accepted a principle that is otherwise a general principle in Western Europe. In Hungary however, it took us twenty years to be able to articulate the problem, that this idea, besides being very attractive on an intellectual level, yet it is not clear, who is going to say at what point my freedom is violated. And as this does not come without understanding, then it has to be fixed and determined by someone. And as nobody was appointed to decide this, therefore everyday life experience suggested to us that it was the stronger party who decided this. We constantly felt that the weaker were stepped upon. It was not some kind of an abstract principle of fairness that decided upon conflicts originating from a recognition of mutual freedoms, but what happened is that the stronger party was always right: the stronger neighbor told you where your car entrance is. It was always the stronger party, the bank, that dictated how much interest you pay on your mortgage, changing it as they liked over time. I

could enumerate the examples that was the continuous life experience of vulnerable, weak families that had smaller economic protection than others during the last twenty years. Our suggestion for that, and we will try to build the Hungarian state on this, is that it should not be the organizing principle of Hungarian society. We can't pass a law for this. These are principles that you are free to do anything that does not violate another's freedom. Instead the principle should be do not do to others what you would not do to yourself. And we will attempt to found the world we can call the Hungarian society on this theoretical principle, in political thinking, education, in the way we ourselves behave, in our own examples.

If we put this idea in the dimension of the relationship of the individual and the community, so far we were talking about the relationship between two individuals, then we will see that in the past twenty years the established Hungarian liberal democracy could not achieve a number of objectives. I made a short list of what it was not capable of. Liberal democracy was not capable of openly declaring, or even obliging, governments with constitutional power to declare that they should serve national interests. Moreover, it even questioned the existence of national interests. I did not oblige subsequent governments to recognize that Hungarian diaspora around the world belongs to our nation and to try and make this sense of belonging stronger with their work. Liberal democracy, the liberal Hungarian state did not protect public wealth. Although now we are hearing about the opposite, as if some acquisitions – I will get back to that, as the Hungarian state recently even bought a bank – and the interpretation of such acquisitions is that the Hungarian state could acquire such pieces of wealth, that surpasses behavior accepted in Europe, whereas if we look at – for example the recent Financial Times list of how big the proportion of public property in individual countries is, then we can see that Hungary could be found at the very-very-very end of the list. Every other country – no counting maybe two – has higher proportion of public property than Hungary has. So we can safely state that in Hungary liberal democracy was incapable of protecting public property that is essential in sustaining a nation, even compared to other countries. Then, the liberal Hungarian state did not protect the country from indebtedness. And – and here I mostly mean the system of foreign exchange loans – it failed to protect families from bonded labor. Consequently, the interpretation of 2010 election results, especially in the light of 2014 election success, can acceptably be that in the great world race that is a race to come up with the most competitive way of organizing state and society, Hungarian voters expect from their leaders to figure out, forge and work out a new form of state-organization that will make the community of Hungarians competitive once again after the era of liberal state and liberal democracy, one that will of course still respect values of Christianity, freedom and human rights. Those duties and values that I enumerated should be fulfilled and be respected.

Honorable Ladies and Gentlemen,

Consequently, what is happening today in Hungary can be interpreted as an attempt of the

respective political leadership to harmonize relationship between the interests and achievement of individuals – that needs to be acknowledged – with interests and achievements of the community, and the nation. Meaning, that Hungarian nation is not a simple sum of individuals, but a community that needs to be organized, strengthened and developed, and in this sense, the new state that we are building is an illiberal state, a non-liberal state. It does not deny foundational values of liberalism, as freedom, etc.. But it does not make this ideology a central element of state organization, but applies a specific, national, particular approach in its stead.

Honorable Ladies and Gentlemen,

After all this, I have to talk about what obstacles we should get over to achieve these objectives. It can well be that what I am saying is self-evident for many here today. We have to elevate this on the level of political work and program. I will address only some of these obstacles, more precisely two of them. These are not necessarily the most important but the most interesting: the relationship between professional politicians and civil organization members. The state needs to be organized by elected and professional statesmen and lawmakers. Yet NGOs and civil organizations will always appear on the fringe of political life. Now, the Hungarian NGO landscape shows a very particular image. Ideally a civil politician, as opposed to professional, is an individual who is organizing from the bottom up, financially independent, and the nature of his work is voluntary. If we look at civil organizations in Hungary, the ones in the public eye, debates concerning the Norwegian Fund have brought this to the surface, then what I will see is that we have to deal with paid political activists here. And these political activists are, moreover, political activists paid by foreigners. Activists paid by definite political circles of interest. It is hard to imagine that these circles have a social agenda. It is more likely that they would like to exercise influence through this system of instruments on Hungarian public life. It is vital, therefore, that if we would like to reorganize our nation state instead of the liberal state, that we should make it clear, that these are not civilians coming against us, opposing us, but political activists attempting to promote foreign interests. Therefore, it is very apt that a committee was being formed in the Hungarian parliament that deals with constant monitoring, recording and publishing foreign attempts to gain influence, so that all of us here, you as well, will know who the characters behind the masks are.

I will mention another example that is another obstacle of reorganizing the state. When I mention the European Union, I am not doing this because I think it is impossible to build an illiberal nation state within the EU. I think this is possible. Our EU membership does not rule out this option. It is true that many questions formulate, and many conflicts develop, you could follow this in the past years, a lot of battles have to be fought. Now I do not mean this, but rather another phenomenon unfamiliar to you in this form. When the contract, fixing

financial contacts between Hungary and the EU for four years expired this year, we are about to fix the contract for the next seven years just now, then a debate erupted. At that time I needed to look up a couple of facts to understand the nature of this debate. What did I see? I saw that that we are talking about hundreds of people here that deal with distributing resources of economic or social development from the EU that Hungary is entitled to (these resources do not come as a gift – as I said we are entitled to them) receive their salaries directly from the EU. Consequently, an extraterritoriality situation came about in Hungary. Then, it turned out from the numbers that these salaries are 4 to 5, but often 8 times more than for employees in the Hungarian administration. This means that Hungary was living for 7 years that such people decided on the majority of resources at the country disposal, who were paid by other people, and received a multiple of what Hungarian administration employees would receive for that job. Similarly, out of 100 forints going from there to the Hungarian economic life, 35 percent could be invoiced as so-called “soft expense”. So for expenses that were not closely related to the objective of the grant, but only connected to it: preparation, analysis, planning, and all kinds of things, advising, for example. There is a debate going on between the EU and Hungary, because we changed this system, and the government decided, that whoever decides on these EU funds in the new illiberal state conception has to be employed by the Hungarian state, and could not receive more than the Hungarian administrative employee of the same classification. And it is not possible any more to spend 35 forints out of every 100 forints on “soft expenses”, because in the next seven years this shall not exceed 15 forints out of 100 forints. These are all decisions that appear to be political decisions in themselves, but in reality it is not the question of one or two political decisions. This is about the ongoing reorganization of the Hungarian state. Contrary to the liberal state organizational logic of the past twenty years, this is a state organization originating in national interests. Conflicts that erupt are, therefore, not coincidental, do not originate in ignorance (well maybe only sometimes), but these are debates that necessarily accompany the rebuilding and self-definition process of a new state.

Now, Honorable Ladies and Gentlemen, in conclusion, I would like to tell you that if we are curious about the future then I would like to tell you something that might seem insufficient from somebody in a high official position. The essence of the future is that anything could happen. “Anything” is hard enough to define. It can happen that a commercial plane is shot down in the airspace of a country neighboring Hungary. It can happen that several hundred die for no apparent reason as a consequence of — let’s name it for what it was — an act of terrorism. It can easily happen that, I have seen it in the news yesterday, that in the United States, maybe it was the Senate or the Senate and the Congress together decided to sue the President for continuous encroachment of his power. And if I look at the background of this news, it turns out that the President is not only sued, he has actually been sentenced a couple of times for exceeding his power. Imagine this in Hungary, if Parliament were to sue the prime

minister for encroaching on his power, and the court even sentenced him! For how much time can I stay in power in a situation like this? I only bring up these examples for you so that you see that we are living in a world where anything could happen. It can even happen that after the judiciary processes end hundreds of thousands of Hungarians will receive money back from banks; money that should not have been taken from them, and even this can happen, honorable ladies and gentlemen.

With all this, I would like to point out that a precise or nearly precise forecast of events to come is impossible. Just to cite another refreshing example as a conclusion: the government winning the Hungarian elections declares that at least 50 percent of the Hungarian banking system should be possessed by Hungarians, not by the state but by Hungarians. Three months pass after the elections and this is already a reality. It became a reality that the Hungarian state bought a bank back. Considering such a bank should have never been sold to foreigners, the Hungarian state buys it back, and with this Hungarian national ownership within the banking system exceeds 50 percent. Now the only question that remains, honorable ladies and gentlemen, and it is a question that I am not entitled to answer, that in times like this, when anything could happen, should we be afraid, or should we instead be hopeful? Because the present order of the world is not exactly to our taste, that this future, although it is uncertain, it could even cause huge trouble, it also holds opportunities and developments for our Hungarian nation. So instead of seclusion, fear and withdrawal I recommend courage, prospective thinking, rational but brave action to the Hungarian communities in the Carpathian Basin but also throughout the world. As anything can happen, it can easily happen that our time will come. Thank you for honoring me with your attention.