

The Wall Street Journal  
September 29, 2015

## Migrant Crisis Threatens Europe's Stability, Hungary Leader Warns

*Prime Minister Viktor Orban, in interview, calls for international solution to Syria conflict*



Prime Minister Viktor Orban during an interview Tuesday in Manhattan. Photo: Agaton Strom for The Wall Street Journal

by Margit Feher

NEW YORK—Hungary's prime minister warned that the massive [influx of migrants](#) from the Middle East and Afghanistan risks destabilizing the European Union unless the continent adopts a tough stance on the crisis.

“Without having an international solution in Syria, there’s no chance to stop the flood. The world, the developed world should not consider this a challenge only for the Europeans,” Prime Minister Viktor Orban said Tuesday in an interview with The Wall Street Journal.

Speaking on the sidelines of the United Nations General Assembly, Mr. Orban defended measures that have made crossing its borders without proper travel permits a crime punishable by up to three years in jail, as well as the construction of a [110-mile fence on its border with Serbia](#), a non-EU country.

Hungary alone has seen more than 280,000 migrants since the start of this year, a large part of them from war-torn Syria, who have crossed its territory on their way to more affluent parts of Northern Europe, according to Hungarian police figures. That was many times more than some 42,000 migrants recorded in all of last year.

“The U.S., and other countries, and even the rich Arab countries should take some [refugees] because Europe cannot handle [them]. The crisis could destabilize Europe easily. It’s not difficult to imagine that one or two years from now the old political elite will be replaced by the radicals,” said Mr. Orban.

Mr. Orban maintained Tuesday that Hungary doesn’t need the migrants, most of whom are Muslim, despite the country’s aging population, the emigration of Hungarians to Germany and the U.K. in large numbers in recent years, and the country’s likely economic needs.

“The job of the world today is not to give a new life to these people but to provide a chance to continue their own life at home. Morally, this is the right thing to do,” Mr. Orban said.

Mr. Orban, who shot into the political scene in 1989 with a speech that demanded Russian soldiers leave Hungary, once a satellite country of the Soviet Union, said Hungary should continue to guard its sovereignty. It should have a choice, he said, over whether to provide a home to another culture, even as some other EU countries, such as France and Germany, have already welcomed a large number of Muslims from abroad.

“Muslim culture is very strong, we don’t oppose it but we haven’t had those parallel societies that are not integrated into European values,” Mr. Orban added.

Mr. Orban’s measures have been criticized at home and abroad as drastic, but most Hungarians support his efforts. Public support of the border fence jumped to 73% from 55% in just one week in September, local pollster Nezapont said. The governing Fidesz party’s support increased to 34% in September, when the fence was completed, from 29% in August, Nezapont said.