

**PARLIAMENTARY ACTION FOR SOCIAL DEVELOPMENT AND
JUSTICE**

*Speech by Mónica BARTOS, acting Head of Delegation at the general debate of the 150th
IPU General Assembly to be held in Tashkent
(Tashkent, April 6-9, 2025)*

Dear Mr/Madam President/Speaker?

Dear peer Members of Parliament,

Modernism and the globalisation that amplifies it affect everyone. At the same time, globalisation has not delivered the desired happiness to all. Individual communities and countries can respond to the processes involved in different ways. Many have suffered and continue to suffer disadvantages. They are falling behind. The resulting feelings of frustration, marginalisation, humiliation and being threatened can affect individuals as well as communities. As parliamentarians, we have an important role in reducing and, where possible, closing the gaps and divides that emerge.

When we act to help or to find a solution, we must always look beneath the surface and avoid generalisations. Numbers, figures and general statements can obscure a lot of useful information. In finding solutions, it is essential to analyse processes and think in the long term. The past, tradition, culture, current state, adaptability and level of social support of individuals and communities should be taken into account.

It is essential to think strategically, and continually build upon what's already there. Co-operation between individuals and communities is also important.

When designing our opportunity programmes in Hungary, we pay special attention to informing the public. Among others, we support the resilience of underprivileged communities through awareness-raising programmes.

Dear Peer MPs,

As I am sure it happens in your countries as well, there are numerous programmes in Hungary to strengthen equal opportunities and eliminate the social exclusion of certain layers of society. Please, allow me to highlight two specific groups and, through them, present methods that can serve as good examples and be applied in your country as well.

We have a dedicated programme focusing on the 300 most disadvantaged settlements in Hungary. This long-term, complex social integration programme offers comprehensive intervention to support the most vulnerable layers of society, including through the improvement of housing conditions, early childhood development, drug prevention, family mentoring, etc. These settlements often have a large Roma population. We have developed a wide-ranging support system for them, spanning from birth till the end of life. The very name of the competent institution already says a lot, as it is the Directorate General for Social Empowerment at the Ministry of the Interior that we can turn to. This is a very important aspect. It is not enough to just have a budget for development and convergence.

We also need an institutional background stakeholders can always turn to with confidence with their questions and requests. We place a very strong emphasis on the early years of life. However, the well-being of children can only be ensured if we also look after mothers and families. To this end, we have developed a complex system in Hungary with modular components, taking into account the age of the child or young person, as well as their family circumstances and the direction of their studies. We do not let go of the hands of young people, even in secondary school or at university. They can choose from a range of scholarship programmes. What's also very important is that we also create and offer them jobs, so they can start their young adult life with a solid foundation.

Preserving identity, however, is equally important. Through local governments and NGOs, we help preserve culture, and pass it on to the next generation. We see this as a success story, as the feedback from stakeholders tells us that these programmes have reached those for whom we have developed them, and they have found them useful. In general, it is a measure of the usefulness and effectiveness of development programmes among target groups.

Dear Peer MPs,

I have frequently mentioned not only children, but also mothers and families. Many know that Hungary is a family-friendly country. We aim to give mothers - or fathers - the opportunity to stay at home with their children if they wish so.

The duration of this leave is an extraordinary 3 years in Hungary. At the same time, we also want mothers and families to be free to decide how to balance family life with work and a career.

The issue of women's policy is essentially approached from a family perspective, especially since the gender gap is the result not primarily of the biological differences or social stereotypes between women and men, but of the fact that, due to child-rearing, women may be disadvantaged in many areas of life, including on the labour market. Supporting work-life balance is a top priority. Therefore, we support housing and financial security. The complex development of the nursery care system directly contributes to the realisation of work-life balance. Just recently, the Hungarian Government has announced the largest tax cut programme in Europe. Hungary has seen one of the highest increases in female employment in the European Union. Hungarian women not only participate in the labour market in greater numbers, but also work significantly more than their European counterparts.

Dear Colleagues!

There is so much more I could say, but, unfortunately, my time is up. If you would like to receive more information on the details of our family policy, I am more than happy to be at your disposal.

Thank you for your kind attention.