

Hungary Unlikely to Abandon Tough Stance on Migration Despite EU Pressure - MP



MOSCOW (Sputnik) - The Hungarian government is unlikely to reverse its tough stance on migration and asylum policies, despite pressure from the European Union, though it may resort to minor concessions, Tibor Bana, the deputy chairman of Hungary's parliamentary committee on European affairs, told Sputnik.

"The Hungarian government tries to maintain its 'defender [of national interests]' image (while it continuously lets in asylum seekers and it lets in thousands of foreigners through settlement bonds). We don't believe that the government will change its opinion about migration, minor adjustments are possible though," Bana, who is also the vice president of the right-wing Jobbik party, the second largest force in the Hungarian parliament, said.

According to Bana, the Jobbik party similarly believes that "every country should have the right to defend its borders and to decide how many migrants or asylum seekers they want to let in."

"The main topic of the Hungarian government is migration and the defense of the country for years, so we are sure, they will do anything to defend their opinion," he clarified.

Bana also expressed hope that the 2019 European Parliament election would see the rise of like-minded political forces on the continent that would result in a shift in EU migration policies.

"The most important question is the outcome of the European Parliamentary elections, next year. It seems like that those political forces who are strongly against migration can push forward and this could lead to a change in the European Union's opinion about migration," he noted.

The politician added that such a change was highly anticipated by Budapest

because it would give Hungary much more freedom of action on the issue.

On July 19, the European Commission referred Budapest to the Court of Justice of the European Union over legislation criminalizing help to undocumented migrants, adopted by Hungary in June, which the commission argued did not comply with EU law.

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Hungary has long been critical of the European Union's open-door policy, initially introduced at the onset of the European migration crisis, and opposed the mandatory migrant relocation quotas. Budapest's stance prompted the European Commission to launch its first infringement procedure against Hungary over its asylum legislation in December 2015.

Over recent months, Hungary has come under intense criticism due to its new so-called Stop Soros law, which banned non-governmental organizations from providing aid to undocumented migrants. The legislation is part of the policy against EU migration regulations and Hungarian-born US billionaire George Soros, who proposed a plan to address Europe's refugee crisis and urged the member states to keep their borders open for documented migrants.

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