



V4

The image features a stylized logo consisting of the characters 'V' and '4' in a bold, sans-serif font. The characters are filled with a vibrant teal color. The 'V' has a rounded, bulbous top, and the '4' has a thick, blocky structure. The logo is centered on a background of fine, parallel diagonal lines in a light blue-grey color, which create a textured, woven effect. The overall composition is clean and modern.



V4 – 25 YEARS

–

THE CONTINUING STORY
OF THE VISEGRÁD GROUP

–

1991 – 2016

We are honoured to present you with a special publication on the 25th anniversary of the Visegrád Group. This book brings together the finest, contemporary political minds to discuss eleven of the most important issues affecting Visegrád today. Ranging from the values and history of the V4 to the future growth and infrastructural development in the region, it covers the most fundamental and pressing reasons for the continued cooperation. We hope that, through the views shared by these distinguished voices and opinion-leaders, readers will gain insight into the Central European perspective on a variety of issues which are currently dominating discussions in the European as well as global arenas.

The Visegrád Group has always had the goal of being an active participant in the international, European and transatlantic communities. Today, it has accomplished and continues to reinforce its strong stance within these forums. Therefore, this book should be read not only as an account of the accomplishments of the last twenty-five years, but also as a possible guide for the future hopes and potential dilemmas of the region.

ARE **THE IDEAS**
ON WHICH THE
VISEGRÁD
GROUP WAS
FOUNDED STILL
RELEVANT IN
TODAY'S EUROPEAN
POLITICS?



The Visegrád Group
signing ceremony
in February 1991.



A powerful symbol of the changes in 1989 – the cutting of a wire fence – has returned; an image which was supposed to belong to the past

RUDOLF CHMEL

(b. 1939) is a Slovak politician and literature professor, former Minister of Culture of Slovakia (2002-2005, 2006) and the last ambassador of Czechoslovakia in Hungary. Deputy Prime Minister for Human Rights and National Minorities in the government of Iveta Radičová (2010-2012).

My relationship to Visegrád is a bit sentimental. It is not only due to the fact that I inherited a Central European identity from my ancestors, but also because we, the future ambassadors of the Visegrád countries, assisted actively in the birth of Visegrád. Our intention was to convince politicians, who were representing the “national egos” of their countries, that Visegrád should also have a spirit of cooperation, based on similar historical experiences and the anti-communist ideas which were forged through years of struggle and dissent.

This concept of comradeship could be exemplified by one of the most notable and potent slogans of the Czecho-Slovak Velvet Revolution of 1989, “The return to Europe”. It had quite a mobilizing effect and focused attention on the shared goal which was omnipresent in the Central European atmosphere at that time. Of course, the Europe we had in mind was more ideal and virtual than concrete and realistic.

We wanted a think tank that would support the cooperative spirit of Central Europe leading to the integration of the region with the West, and, at the same time, we wanted to support and foster the internal cohesion of the region since we were well-aware of its history, full of conflicts and contradictions.

Twenty-five years after its establishment there are not that many achievements the V4 can be proud of. The creation of the International Visegrad Fund

(IVF) can be definitely perceived as a positive step; however, culture—on which the IVF focuses most—represents only one segment of a much larger system.

At the time when Visegrád was created, Central Europe did not realize that this predecessor to the European Union was established with the aim to avoid conflicts originating from nationalism, racism, xenophobia and intolerance. We wanted to use Visegrád to accelerate our return to Europe, but we lacked a deeper political or intellectual discourse about our European future. For a significant part of the population, the benefits connected with the integration to the EU are reduced to euro-funds, subsidies and strengthened national egos and less to a celebration and development of meaningful cooperation and values.

After twenty-five years, just on the occasion of the anniversary, the V4 countries have finally found an agenda that unites them unanimously: immigrants. I do not intend to describe the reasons for this unity. Nevertheless, these reasons show that the differences between Western and Central Europe are still greater than we expected them to be. Also, we are witnessing a reality when a powerful symbol of the changes in 1989 – the cutting of a wire fence – has returned; an image which was supposed to belong to the past. That is why the “return to Europe” is more sceptical and bitter, partly in thanks to our contribution.



Borders may change, but the underlying values which gave birth to the Visegrád Group will last. They can be rediscovered or neglected depending on which way the political winds are blowing

MIROSŁAW FILIPOWICZ

(b. 1963) is a Polish historian, professor at Catholic University of Lublin. Director of the Institute of East-Central Europe.

In 1991, when the presidents of Poland, Czechoslovakia and Hungary created the Visegrád Group, the political situation in the three countries did not indicate any great surprises. Parliamentary democracy as well as constitutional and legal orders were being developed, and clear goals—to strive towards EU and NATO memberships—were set. Nevertheless, reality always has the power to surprise, and two years later, the Group grew number without expanding territorially. Two new countries emerged—Slovakia and the Czech Republic. I remember recalling Milan Kundera's words from his splendid essay "The Tragedy of Central Europe":

"It would be senseless to try to draw its [Central Europe – MF] borders exactly. Central Europe is not a state: it is a culture or a fate. Its borders are imaginary and must be drawn and redrawn with each new historical situation".

Precisely stated—the political situation, or even states' borders may change, but the underlying values which gave birth to the decision of establishing the Visegrád Group will last. That being said, these same ideals can be rediscovered or neglected depending on which way the political wind is blowing in a particular country at any given time. It would be trivial to recall again that the whole of our region is definitely European, and this fact has, and should have, its consequences regarding the preferred values.

However, we must not forget the fate Kundera mentioned. It needs stressing that the publication of the essay in *The New York Review of Books* was, along with the earlier election of Karol Wojtyła as Pope and the "Solidarity" revolution, one of the more memorable moments when the West shifted its attention to this forgotten nook

of the world—remembered mostly for being underneath the shadow of the former USSR—a nook which was just about to reclaim its European membership. A natural threat for the region was the so-called "lacrimogenetic" attitude (i.e. each of the nations of the Group had its own oversensitive areas, sense of hurt or feelings of betrayal).

The track towards the EU and NATO was meant to break those mental chains and increase the sense of security and social contentment. And again it seems that nothing can be given or granted forever. Everywhere in Europe now, including in our region, one can observe the rise of national egos, so unwilling to support common values, especially if their own particular interests were to suffer. A few years ago, when I was giving a lecture and I mentioned the idea of a rebirth (or an "evil" mutation) of Central and Eastern Europe as an alternative to the EU, a nationalistic alliance of Poland, Czech Republic, Hungary, and Slovakia. At that time, I thought it was just a political fiction or a gloomy joke, but some jokes should never be told.

It should be noted that such surprising social mood swings are not only present in our local climate. Similar tendencies are arising in the countries of the West, the South and the North. It would be naive to say that our part of Europe follows the same values in its social and political strategies as when the Visegrád Group was first started. However, the values have not died, nor disappeared, and they will return. They have to if Europe is to mean anything in the future. It is important to remember that our region has experienced much tougher ordeals and finally prevailed, although many times not without accruing great losses in the process.



*Many of the present
apparently deep political
divisions in Europe can
be bridged with both
determination and goodwill.
The V4 could initiate such
a discussion*

GÉZA JESZENSZKY

(b. 1941) is a founding member of the Hungarian Democratic Forum (1988) and a former Minister of Foreign Affairs (1990-1994). Former ambassador of Hungary to the United States (1998-2002), and to Norway and Iceland (2011 -2014).

The immediate, though unannounced, aim of the Visegrád summit meeting in 1991 was to complete the dismantling of the institutions which embodied political and economic dependence on the Soviet Union. But the more basic purpose was to set aside old rivalries and the memory of conflicts between the four nations as well as to (re)establish economic and cultural cooperation. All this was meant to facilitate becoming part of the West and the Euro-Atlantic structures. Those ideas and hopes have been achieved, and they should be upheld.

The economic strength of this association is also considerable, with the potential for substantial growth. The strategic significance of the territory of the V4 has been proven time and time again. This gateway was used by numerous military leaders: Roman Emperors, Ottoman sultans, Russian and Prussian monarchs. Both Hitler and Stalin tried to dominate it. What matters today is the proximity of Russia, Ukraine and the Balkans. The Visegrád countries understand their eastern and southern neighbours rather well; they have much to offer on the problems related to the periphery of Europe.

Based on the tragedies of the 20th century, the once victims of successive totalitarian dictatorships were strongly committed to Atlanticism, to a continued close collaboration with the United States and Europe. They should remain so. But what is essentially tied to this is a commitment to the traditional values of Europe. Freedom and political liberties were the battle cry of the opponents of communism. Regrettably today, we are witnessing a digression from those values in many countries, but the majority of the population is not

likely to turn away from them. The present controversy over how immigration and the threat of Islamic fundamentalism should be handled is about practical politics and not about values. It is wrong to assume that the disagreement represents an East/West divide. At present there is indeed a split between several European governments and their public over the migrants issue, but that should be mended, as its consequences are fraught with danger. The differing views should be discussed openly and sincerely, going beyond the constraints of "political correctness." Who can deny that all the values of Europe go back to the three hills: the Acropolis, the Capitolium and the Golgotha? Hungary's late Prime Minister, József Antall used to say that in Europe even the atheists are Christians. By that he meant that the messages of both the Old and the New Testament are universal. Many of the present apparently deep political divisions in Europe can be bridged with both determination and goodwill.

A hundred years ago most of the territory of the V4 was a common economic space, with no internal borders, with a common currency, a common foreign policy, even with a common army. The Austro-Hungarian Monarchy had many shortcomings, but it also had many positive aspects. Europe should never become a new edition of the Carolingian Empire, covering only Western Europe (the old Common Market), leaving out the lands which once comprised the Habsburg Empire. Narrow political and economic interests and short term thinking can ruin all the achievements of the last twenty-five years, and the V4 countries could easily end up in a new version of the Soviet Empire. *Caveant consules...*



Rather than our common features or similarities, it is perhaps the challenges we are now facing that will make us appreciate our mutual differences

PETR PITHART

(b. 1941) – the first Prime Minister of the Czech Republic (1990-1992) and the First Deputy Chairman of the Senate of the Parliament of the Czech Republic (2004-2012).

For someone who was involved from its very inception with Visegrád (indeed, one of those who helped conceive it intellectually, well before the “institution” came into being) and was personally acquainted with all its protagonists, it is very difficult to presently provide a spontaneously encouraging answer to the question at hand.

Back then, we believed that our common contemporary history placed an obligation upon us to share our unique experience with others, should they show an interest. And that we should proceed jointly whenever appropriate and beneficial.

However, it turned out that our still-living countries’ past is somewhat “older”, dating back as it does to the era between two World Wars, a time when our countries did not have all that much in common. Furthermore, it is an era that could not be openly discussed for a long time. In short, it is mainly the memory of what had been swept under the carpet by previous regimes that has come back to haunt us with a vengeance.

Another thing that has become evident over the past few months is that our shared feature is a collective and individual selfishness; one that evolved, quite naturally, as a response to the collectivism that the state had imposed on us.

Nevertheless, the weak yet growing civil societies in our four countries, which were able to take advantage of the modest resources provided by the Visegrad Foundation, have proved their mettle. They have remained loyal to the founding idea.

Regardless of all the disappointments of recent months, I would still insist that all channels of Visegrád communication be kept open, even if, at this moment, they seem to be dragging us out of Central Europe. Rather than our common features or similarities, it is perhaps the challenges we are now facing that will make us appreciate our mutual differences. However, this will happen only if our politicians and media elites do not try to spare us too much and speak their minds openly. After all, the one thing we still have in common is the awareness of our own past descent into perdition stemming from the loss of freedom, which we continue to carry within us. This gives us hope that, even if we may not be able to see clearly at this moment in time, we will open our eyes eventually, even if it is at the last minute.

For we are surely still the same people who, along with the Charter 77 philosopher Jan Patočka, understood that the things one suffers for are precisely those worth living for. “The rest of Europe”, on the other hand, knows this only from reading about it.



The project has probably been the most coherent and successful incarnation of the European ideal in recent history. We need a return to the initial inspiration of the Visegrád project

JACQUES RUPNIK

(b. 1950) is a French political scientist, specialized in Central and Eastern Europe affairs. An advisor to the former Czech president Václav Havel (1990-1992). Director of Research at CERI (Centre for International Studies and Research) and Professor at Sciences-Po, Paris.

What is alive and what is dead in the Visegrád project? Perhaps it would be helpful to remember that the collaboration came about immediately after the fall of the Communism, and that it was forged with the democratic ideals, aspirations and leadership of the former dissidents in the late 1980's.

It also represented a strong opposition to nationalism which had stemmed from that great lesson of Central European history: nationalism had been the poison that had prepared the ground for the demise of democracy in the region.

And thirdly, there was a European dimension—the common goal was to join Europe, to create a new Central Europe while simultaneously integrating it with the broader European project.

That was the initial goal and I need not over-stress the fact that it did not flourish once the early “leadership” in

Eastern Europe associated with the democratic changes of 1989 was removed.

Regardless of these troubles, the project, on the whole, has survived and has probably been the most coherent and successful incarnation of the European ideal in recent history. If we consider the EU accession of the V4 (2004) as the main goal of the cooperation, in the subsequent years many people thought that the Visegrád Group suffered from a lack of purpose.

What used to be seen as the positive discovery of Central Europe, as part of a greater European liberal project, is now positioning itself as a region abandoning the values it had previously ported, and even opposing further European integration.

It should be a matter of thought and perhaps for action for intellectuals and in civil society actors, who want to return to the initial inspiration of the Visegrád project.



Visegrád was as much about transformation towards Western democracies and economies as it was about enhancing the security and long-term stabilisation of the region

DANIELA SCHWARZER

(b. 1974) is European Affairs expert, Director of Europe Program at the German Marshall Fund of the United States in Berlin. Senior Research Professor at the Department for European and Eurasian Studies at Johns Hopkins University.

The Visegrád Group was formed in the 1990s to eliminate the remnants of the communist bloc in Central Europe, to overcome the historic animosities between Central European countries, to accomplish a social metamorphosis and to join both the EU and NATO. So, Visegrád was as much about transformation towards Western liberal democracies and functioning market economies as it was about enhancing the security and long-term stabilization of the region by integrating it with the existing Western structures.

Today, integration with the EU and NATO has been formally achieved and with the growing number of internal and external challenges, the significance of this membership should not be underestimated. Also, the founding idea of Visegrád - to stabilise liberal societies and democracies - remains crucial, in particular as the current governments in Hungary and Poland are challenging this assumption.

In terms of geostrategic orientation towards the West, the EU and NATO

oppose Moscow's efforts to undermine the Western rule-based security order and the violation of Ukrainian sovereignty. Of the four Visegrád members, only one country, Hungary, entertains a close relationship with Moscow though it still upholds sanctions.

With regards to the migration crisis, the Visegrád countries' decision to close national borders and refusal to join the quota system for the relocation of refugees has brought about the question of whether the V4 understands itself as a regional subgroup that functions to strengthen the EU and its values, or whether it undermines the core principles and joint solutions of the union.

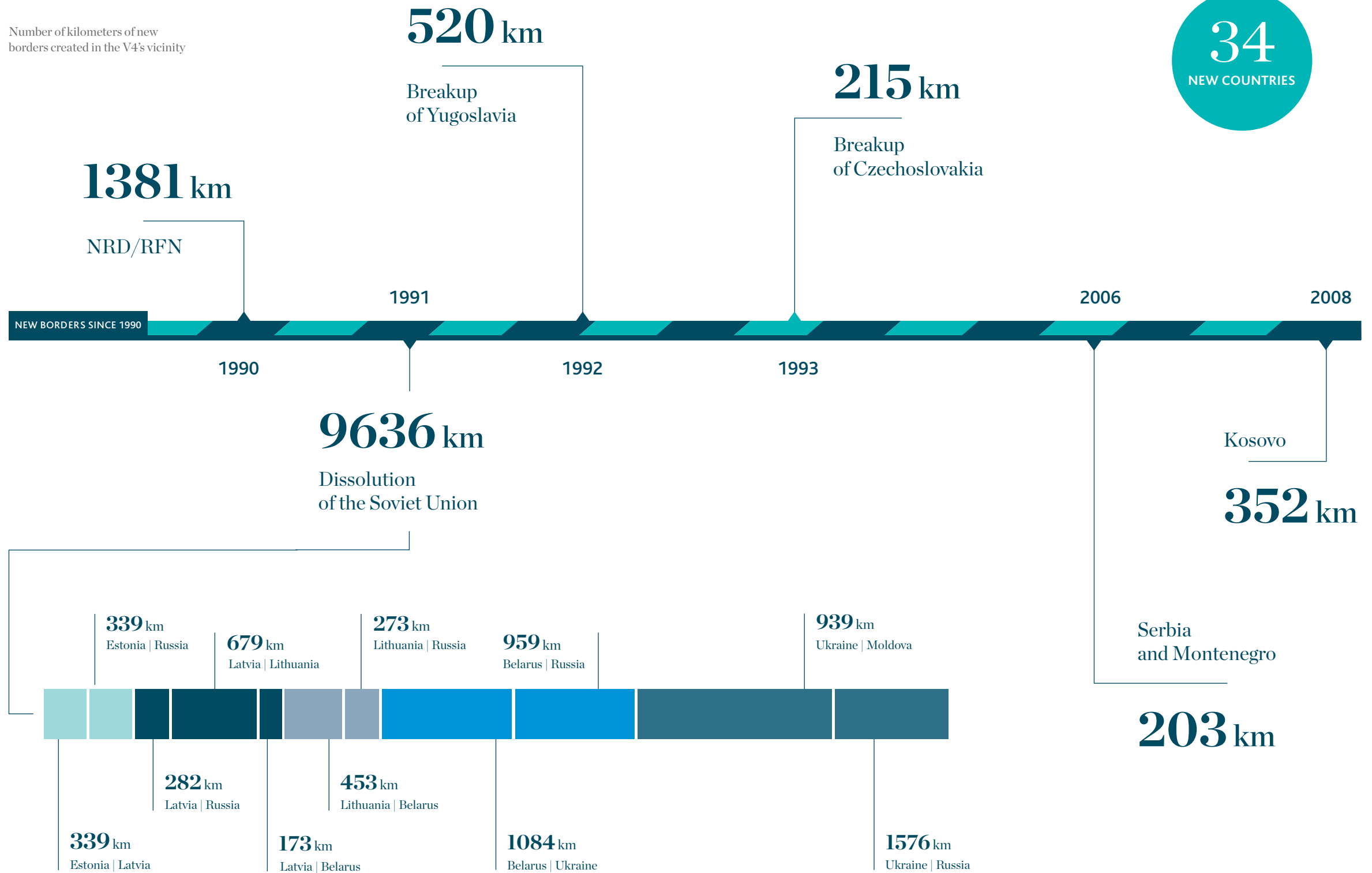
Thus, the migration crisis has highlighted the need and importance for all EU member states to revisit and rebuild a shared understanding of their joint principles, to exemplify European solidarity, to define which expectations are acceptable and which too burdensome for our European societies and to underline when it is necessary to take external action.

WHAT DOES THE
RISING IMPORTANCE
OF **GEOPOLITICS** IN
EUROPE MEAN FOR
THE V4?

GEOPOLITICS IN EUROPE 1990–2015

Number of kilometers of new borders created in the V4's vicinity

34
NEW COUNTRIES





By focusing on short-term national interests, Visegrád governments play into Moscow's hands and encourage Putin's ambitions in restoring Russia's regional hegemony



JANUSZ BUGAJSKI

(b. 1954) is a Senior Fellow at the Centre for European Policy Analysis (CEPA) in Washington DC and author of 20 books on Europe, Russia, and trans-Atlantic relations. His newest book, co-authored with Margarita Assenova, is entitled *Eurasian Disunion: Russia's Vulnerable Flanks* (Washington DC: Jamestown Foundation, 2016)

The original purpose of the Visegrád initiative was for the four re-emerging Central European democracies to coordinate their pursuit of NATO and EU membership. However, since achieving its primary targets, the V4 has proved unable to coordinate the disparate foreign policies of its members and lacks a clear geopolitical identity.

While competitive geopolitics has returned to Central Europe with a vengeance through Russia's pursuit of a new Moscow-centred "pole of power," the V4's response has been tepid and rudderless. Worse still, the region has exposed itself to Kremlin inroads through economic, political and intelligence penetration. In sum, Visegrád has become a microcosm of EU disunity.

Warsaw remains more assertive in focusing EU and NATO policy on Russia's aggression and has viewed transatlantic relations as paramount. In contrast, Hungary, Slovakia and the Czech Republic remain circumspect. After Russia's attack on Ukraine, all three governments were hesitant in supporting sanctions against Moscow partly for economic reasons, especially where there is high dependence on Russian energy. In some cases, political

leaders display sympathy toward a more authoritarian political model or view Moscow as a potential counterbalance to Brussels.

By focusing on short-term national interests rather than more significant strategic imperatives, Visegrád governments play into Moscow's hands and encourage Putin's ambitions in restoring Russia's regional hegemony. The partition of Ukraine did not convince Budapest to terminate the contract with *Rosatom* for the modernization of the nuclear power plant in Paks, as Prime Minister Viktor Orbán avoided confrontation with Moscow. Similarly, the Czech Prime Minister Bohuslav Sobotka opposed strengthening NATO forces in Europe while Slovak Prime Minister Robert Fico protested against increasing America's military presence in Central Europe.

Unless it can adopt a more assertive Atlanticist and Europeanist position to help defend the continent against Moscow's subversion, the V4 will remain divided and defunct. Without a new impetus, it will be unable to play a constructive role in the geopolitical struggle for the future security and independence of Central and Eastern Europe.



While it is appropriate to talk about the concerns of ordinary people over migration issues, anti-migrant sentiments spread by officials can appear counterproductive

MARTIN BÚTORÁ

(b. 1944) is Slovak sociologist, writer and analyst. Since 2014 he has been the foreign policy advisor to the Slovak president Andrej Kiska. He was also the human rights advisor to the former president of Czechoslovakia Václav Havel (1990-1992). Co-funder of Slovak Institute for Public Affairs and Ambassador of Slovakia to the United States.

The recent resurgence of geopolitics, in particular in this part of the world, is connected with Russia's aspirations to return to the stage as a global power, and accompanied by the historically highest levels of negative public opinion towards the West, which itself is being supported by the assertive anti-Western propaganda. It is a different picture from that of twenty-five years ago when the Visegrád Group was born.

At that time, there were two key geopolitical challenges lying ahead for the Central European leaders. The first one was to complete the departure from the zone of Soviet supremacy, especially having in mind the fragile political situation in Moscow and the unpredictability of any future developments. The second challenge, expressed both officially and informally, was to fill the vacuum, to seek a firm political anchoring and security for its members in the Euro-Atlantic community.

After its creation, the Visegrád Group has been repeatedly involved, directly and indirectly, in attempts to influence the geopolitical architecture of its neighbourhood. The first action has proved to be a success: the three frontrunners in accession to NATO and the European Union—Poland, the Czech Republic and Hungary—helped Slovakia, after the favourable political change in the 1998 general election, to accelerate its course towards integration. Secondly, in accordance with its wish to find its own place in shaping EU policies, the V4 has contributed to the pro-European moves in the Balkan countries. Thirdly, a more ambitious

engagement of the V4 in promoting the Eastern partnership has yet to be realized, though progress has been made. And lastly, although the Visegrád countries differ in their views about the nature of the Russia-Ukraine conflict and on methods and tools of help and support, all of them have been trying to contribute to positive developments in Ukraine.

As for the behaviour of Visegrád countries concerning the recent crisis caused by migration, even if at first sight there does not appear to be any immediate relevant geopolitical consequences, it can weaken their position in coping with future challenges, uncertainties and threats.

There are three possible problematic areas which could stem from the V4's attitude towards the migration crisis. First, it does not strengthen their positions in shaping future EU policies: with attitudes and behaviour expressing a limited perspective, it is difficult to imagine how these countries could promote their national interests and priorities within the EU.

Secondly, while it is appropriate to talk about the legitimate concerns of ordinary people over migration issues, anti-migrant sentiments and fear disseminated by officials can appear counterproductive.

Thirdly, there is one country encouraging—both openly and secretly supporting—fragmentation, nationalism and Euroscepticism within the EU in efforts to undermine the Union's capacities to act. It is the Russian Federation, and any steps undertaken by the EU members that are in accordance with this Russian goal should be closely watched and discouraged.



From Brussels's point of view, strengthening the internal ties in Central Europe is going to be seen more and more as acting against general EU cohesion

PAWEŁ KOWAL

(b. 1975) is Polish politician and historian, Member of European Parliament since 2009. From 2006 to 2007 he was a secretary of state in the Ministry of Foreign Affairs.

Central Europe has not made the most of its stellar time post-1989 to strengthen its political or economic situations. Historians will analyse why, but today it seems that there were several major mistakes made during our contemporary history when considering the preservation and future of the V4. Firstly, they were often focused excessively on nationalism, thinking at times exclusively in terms of one's own small country. Secondly, and in the other extreme – thinking in terms of “the EU as a whole”, without bearing in mind the regional context. Thirdly, there was a lack of regional leaders who were able to convince the people of the Visegrád countries that it could really be economically strong and competitive in its own right, and that it held the key to successful integration for the entire continent.

References to their shared history turned out to be of little inspiration even though the region had not always been weak. Few believed that the region's glorious past could become the foundation for a new, modern greatness. Similarly, the strong ties forged during the communist era (i.e. mainly stemming from relationships between the Polish-Czechoslovak and Polish-Hungarian dissident movements) were not enough to promote a regional awareness or emphasis. An excessive integration of the region would probably not have suited the West either as from the point of view of the Western European capitals, it seemed more effective to build direct ties between the individual V4 capitals and Brussels,

Berlin and Paris, without the intermediate stage of stronger regional integration. This was reflected in the poorly-developed, regional economic relations, which do not consider Visegrád cooperation to be of the utmost importance to the individual members of the V4. The key accomplishments of the V4 cooperation are the fact that, despite their conflicting interests, Central European countries did not quarrel too much on their way to the EU and NATO, and the fact that they have created a number of institutional cooperation mechanisms – not just the International Visegrad Fund, but also bilateral funds that allow for youth exchanges, working with the elites, etc.

The problem is that under the reign of bare geopolitics this is not enough. The atmosphere of Russia's frenzied rivalry with the Western members of the EU and the USA does not encourage the integration of Central Europe. Rather, it increases the risk of it being torn apart – some countries will consider the Kremlin's offer, while others, like Poland and the Czech Republic, will not be able to do so. Under such circumstances, strengthening the internal ties in Central Europe – even if it survives the conflicting interests between the individual countries (for example, in the power industry) – from Brussels's point of view, is going to be seen more and more as acting against general EU cohesion. There are even experts who want to see a strengthening of NATO's so-called “eastern flank”, but the Visegrád Group is not ready to thrive in the midst of aggressive geopolitical competition.



The rising importance of geopolitics in Europe means rising geopolitical importance for the V4 countries and their cooperation

JÁNOS MARTONYI

(b. 1944) is Hungarian politician and lawyer. He served twice as Minister of Foreign Affairs - from 1998 to 2002 and from 2010 to 2014.

The rising importance of geopolitics in Europe means the rising geopolitical importance of the V4.

The Visegrád cooperation was founded in a historic situation presented by a fundamental geopolitical transformation. However, the foundations of the cooperation were much deeper, rooted in such factors as the level of economic development, geography, political history, the geopolitical situation and interests, but first and foremost, a common cultural heritage and the Central European identity. We may not be able to define all characteristics of this identity, but we share something that is more spiritual than material. Central Europe is a more intensive Europe with a higher speed for revolution and a great diversity of traditions, languages and religions; with a legacy of the past but also a sense of aspiration and responsibility for the future.

What does this have to do with geopolitics? Economic, political and security interests are of fundamental importance, but there is something we should never forget. It is culture that matters—as has been made clearer by recent developments in the world and in Europe.

When identifying our geopolitical interests and deciding what strategy to implement, we have to answer the questions who we are (including who we are not) and

where we belong; in other words, what is our identity.

Central Europe belongs to Europe, "Whole and Free"; it is an indispensable actor of the European construction, and of the Transatlantic Alliance as embodied by institutions like the EU and NATO. This must be the alpha and omega of any analysis of our geopolitical role, importance, aspiration and interests.

The V4 is anchored in the West. This is particularly important in the security situation created by the "return of history" with a serious conflict between two major powers in our neighbourhood, including the violation of international law and its geopolitical and economic consequences. In this new geopolitical reality we have to underline that the V4 is not a bridge between two worlds, but a bridgehead firmly fixed on the Western side. Neither is the V4 a mediator, or a "shock absorber" in cases of conflict. We have a fundamental interest in a peaceful environment, and a special responsibility to enhance security and promote understanding and cooperation around us.

This is the reason why the geopolitical importance of the V4 has been on the rise. In light of this harsh reality, it is indispensable to have a clear vision of our values, our place in the world as well as of our increased importance and responsibility.



Twenty-five years have passed, and the Visegrád Four are still here, and I am convinced that their cooperation is more important than ever before

ALEXANDR VONDRA

(b. 1961) – foreign policy advisor to President Václav Havel (1990-1992) and the Czech Ambassador to the United States (1997-2001). He served several political posts in Czech Republic, including Defence Minister (2010-2012), Deputy Prime Minister for European Affairs (2007-2009) and Foreign Affairs Minister (2006-2007).

Twenty-five years ago, the Presidents, Prime Ministers, foreign ministers and other leaders of Czechoslovakia, Hungary and Poland met at Visegrád Castle on the Danube river to sign a declaration of cooperation. The notion was to establish a new group, the idea of which had already emerged during a conference held in Bratislava in April 1990 by the invitation of Václav Havel. However, the ceremonial signing had to wait until Lech Walesa had become the Polish President.

Thoughts of the Visegrád's architects were framed by lessons of the past as well as by challenges of the future. On one hand, we have remembered how Jagellonians and other ancestors together defended Europe against Ottoman invasions, or how Czech, Slovak, Hungarian and Polish dissidents defended their freedom of

expression and other fundamental rights against the Soviet oppression. On the other hand, we were convinced that only through our mutual cooperation would we be able to avoid the repetition of the "divide and empire" policy which plagued our region for centuries.

Twenty-five years have passed, and the Visegrád Four are still here, and I am convinced that their cooperation is more important than ever before. The U.S. is less interested in world affairs, the European Union has serious troubles and Russia's mounting assertiveness makes the idea of a Central Europe – standing united and undivided – an imperative for our future success. We are sandwiched between Germany and Russia, and, to paraphrase Robert Kaplan, we cannot deceive our geography.

WHAT SHOULD THE
VISEGRÁD GROUP
CONTRIBUTE TO
THE **COMMON
EUROPEAN
PROJECT** BEYOND
BLOCKING POWER?



The Warsaw Pact dissolution
Czechoslovakian Foreign Minister Jiří Dienstbier (R) signs a document declaring the dissolution of the Warsaw Pact, as Czechoslovakian Defence Minister Luboš Dobrovský (C) looks on. Budapest 25 February 1991.



Visegrád can serve as an excellent political device if its relative weight is used in the proper international context. This is the main strategic question for its future

PÉTER BALÁZS

(b. 1941) is Hungarian economist and politician, former Minister of Foreign Affairs (2009-2010) and European Commissioner for Regional Policy (2004). He is a professor at the International Relations Department of the Central European University in Budapest.

The Visegrád Group was leading the great systemic change in the eastern half of Europe. Western assistance targeted first Poland and Hungary, their initials were commemorated by the PHARE program's acronym in 1989. It is a question of political philosophy, to what extent the four nations contributed to the collapse of the Soviet empire by their consequent uprisings (1956, 1968, 1980), or if they just gave adequate reactions to the weakening of the eastern power expansion generated by Russia. Another dilemma is whether the construction of the Visegrád Group was initiated by its well-known "founding fathers" – József Antall, Václav Havel, Lech Wałęsa – or did they just react to the encouraging signals from their Western partners inciting them to frame the dynamics of transformation through an intra-regional structure. Personally, I experienced the first effects of this Western "push" for closer cooperation at the major economic meeting of the Conference on Security and Cooperation in Europe by early 1990 in Bonn, almost one year before the signing of the Visegrád Declaration in Hungary on February 15th, 1991.

Fortunately, the internal cohesion of the V4 did not decline under the challenging circumstances of NATO and EU accession. On the contrary, Visegrád has survived in spite of its loose, understaffed and under-financed structure. After twenty-five years

of existence, Visegrád is a well-known political brand-name. However, it does not constitute a "critical mass" within the EU. Under the "double majority" voting system, the V4 represents only $\frac{1}{4}$ of the required 55% of the member states and $\frac{1}{5}$ of the 65% of the population. It can be the initiator of larger actions if there are other supporters too, but without that, the V4 would only function as an opposition to the majority or as a "veto player". The emerging anti-Western and anti-modernisation tendencies, which won the hearts of many voters in the Visegrád region (and beyond) with its ingrained nationalist rhetoric, do not enjoy a majority backing in Europe. The economic and geopolitical focus of the continent is obviously on Germany, being the greatest guardian of the Visegrád idea. Taking an adversary position to Berlin on behalf of the V4 countries seems a self-destructive strategy leading to political isolation.

The Visegrád Group represents an integral part of European economy and culture and of the trans-Atlantic military alliance. The founders of the V4 created twenty-five years ago an adequate "four-wheel drive" structure, but the power of the engine should come from well-chosen external sources. Visegrád can serve as an excellent political device if its relative weight is used in the proper international context. This is the main strategic question for the future of the V4.



It appears that the support shown before the downfall of the Iron Curtain – the revolution in Budapest in 1956, the Prague Spring and the time of martial law in Poland in the 1980's – has been forgotten



ERHARD BUSEK

(b. 1941) is a chairman of the Institute for Danube Region and Central Europe (IDM) and former Vice-Chancellor of Austria (1991-1995). He was a Special Coordinator of the Stability Pact for South Eastern Europe (2002-2008).

First at all, it needs to be stated outright that the problem of creating a real European neighbourhood has yet to be solved. Belonging to the European Union, however, has been an essential and necessary first step. Not only for the immediate and tangible benefits stemming from EU funds and investment, but more importantly, the very real advantages derived from a burgeoning cooperation with other European nations, so that, like neighbours, we can collectively assist one other to overcome individual and shared problems. This sentiment has its root in the protracted refugee question where the V4's understanding of the situation has not been well-received by some neighbouring states. So too, it seems the notion that solidarity might not be the only solution has yet to be grasped. Also it appears the support shown in times before the downfall of the Iron Curtain—the revolution in Budapest in 1956, the Prague Spring as well as the time of martial law in Poland in the 1980's—has been forgotten

Apart from these issues, the Visegrád Group has contributed greatly to the EU with many impressive economic developments (most notably Poland and Slovakia). They could use this experience to create a dialogue not only concerning infrastructure but also joint cooperation. But to be successful, we need to develop a common

understanding and message for European democracy and to avoiding making hurtful announcements by an “illiberal democracy” or any aggressive changes to laws concerning media (e.g. Poland).

Admittedly, the contribution of Poland has been, until now, very positive concerning the tumultuous situation in Ukraine regarding Russia, but we need an open European dialogue on this subject, which can be positively influenced by the leadership of the Visegrád Group.

The Visegrád Group has to do more to promote diplomacy, where the countries and the representatives of the region and further afield can learn to work constructively together. Here, I would say, the civil society has been playing a very important role, so it is necessary to include not only churches and universities but also focused organizations devoted to the study and growth of these fields. It is not only necessary to learn the intricacies of the problems facing different countries, but also to have a mutual understanding if not a kind of empathy towards them as well. My proposal would be to create unified strategies on subjects of shared interest which can be pooled throughout the EU regarding any multitude of subjects from business, education, scientific development and so on.

Neighbourhoods have to be developed through action and not only theory.



Besides looking outside the EU, we should also strengthen ties with the new members who share a similar history and culture like Slovenia and Croatia

KAREL SCHWARZENBERG

(b. 1937) is a Chairman of the Foreign Affairs Committee of the Chamber of Deputies of the Parliament of the Czech Republic and former Minister of Foreign Affairs of Czech Republic.

It appears today that the only means we have available to us is the lobbying for our mutual interests in Europe and our surrounding neighbourhood. Due to the geographic proximity and a shared history, we have numerous common problems and goals, which we can pull from to find a base for action whether they are focused on our own countries or more further afield. Promotion of these interests and solutions to these problems are the best means the Visegrád countries have to be successful. Indeed, I think the Visegrád Group should be more active in European projects and in the formation of European policies. The experience of the 20th century has taught the V4, as well as many other nations, the ramifications of division. Fortunately, we have overcome and defeated those forces that were trying to keep us out of the larger European theatre by becoming members of the European Union. We should not, however, forget those voices still struggling to achieve this goal, specifically those neighbours to the south and southeast who are not yet members of the distinguished group. It is our similar experience which makes us ideal advocates for these countries, and we can complete our task by influencing many tiers (e.g. European Parliament and the European Council) simultaneously.

Another issue which presents the opportunity for us to demonstrate our importance and the usefulness of our countries in

the European Union is our policy towards our eastern neighbours. There is a definitive need for essential, effective and positive work to be completed in the region. While the need for action is undisputed, the main deficiency of the Visegrád Group, however, is the splintering of our opinions on policies concerning both internal European issues and of our policy towards the Russian Federation. We should formulate a cohesive understanding of the goals the Visegrád Group want to accomplish and then actively work towards accomplishing them. Furthermore, we should recognize and analyse our common deficiencies and strive to better ourselves in the process. And we should try to help those members who are not fully understood in Western Europe and try to bridge the misunderstanding as for instance the current situation concerning Poland.

Besides looking outside the EU, we should also strengthen ties with the new members who, again, share a similar history and culture like Slovenia and Croatia. In relation to the Baltic states, it is important to support them in their difficult position towards Russia. This should be an absolute priority because they are smaller states with tremendous problems, and they should be supported by the larger association of which they belong. It is our similarities which we should celebrate and use as the platform to find common ground to build unified policies of action.



*The central part of Europe
is naturally obligated to
make the rest of the continent
familiar with the situation
beyond the eastern border of
today's EU*

KRZYSZTOF SZCZERSKI

(1973) Secretary of State in the office of the President of Poland. In the years 2007-2008 Undersecretary of State in the Ministry of Foreign Affairs and in the Office of the Committee for European Integration. He was a member of the Civil Service Council to the Prime Minister (2009-2010) and a deputy to the Sejm (2011-2015). In January 2015, he became the representative of the Polish Parliament in the Parliamentary Assembly of the Council of Europe. From 2013, he has been an associate professor at the Jagiellonian University in Krakow.

Provided that the model of the EU is consensus based, it is in many ways obvious that the perspective of the Visegrád Group should play an important role in moulding the European point-of-view.

The first reason is that today Europe needs the opinions of countries and societies like Poland, which on one hand is pro-European since the Poles want to actively be part of the EU and support the notion of European unity, and on the other hand, are sensitive about preserving their right to make decisions which reflect a more traditional vision and concept of their national identity. In this Central European country, there is a layering of ideology—Poles believe their pro-European stance can be combined with the maintaining of one's own identity, that the two are not mutually exclusive. This is the phenomenon currently at work in Polish society—a lesson which, if learned, can have numerous benefits especially with regards to the vying ideologies at work nowadays in Europe.

Secondly, the Visegrád countries need motivation to encourage social cohesiveness and the still much needed development. At the same time, they present a political challenge for Europe as it exceeds and shakes up the traditional north-south division where the latter are more socially integrated and the former more

monetarily driven, each having their own areas to develop in.

Thirdly, the central part of Europe is naturally obligated to make the rest of the continent familiar with the situation beyond the eastern border of today's EU. Without the V4 countries, Europe would still be discussing the migration situation on the southern border but perhaps not the equally ignitable situation to the East. Our role is crucial as we need to show Europe how to observe and understand our larger environment. Therefore, the more competent the V4 is on eastern matters, the more opportunities we should have to mould European views, and such competence simply comes from territorial proximity and our feel for local ecosystems.

And finally, our part of Europe should mutually cooperate instead of block provisions or policies based on our individual interests. We will only be able to support European unity once we create one regionally.

When looking at European policies within the European Union, it is rare for a group of countries to share similar views in many areas. It cannot be said about France, nor Germany, nor Italy. But when the issue was clear (e.g. regarding energy security), the countries of the V4 agreed that the needs were the same for everybody.



What is remaining is our hope and strong belief that this hysterical anti-European mood will quickly blow over, and new intellectual leaders from the next generation will rise from within CE

MAGDALÉNA VÁŠÁRYOVÁ

(b. 1948) is a Slovak diplomat, politician and actor. State Secretary of the Ministry of Foreign Affairs of Slovakia 2005-2006. She served as an Ambassador of Czechoslovakia to Austria and Slovak Ambassador to Poland.

Such beautiful ideas we had in 2004, we – the people of Central Europe. We should be one of the engines of the European Union, we should share with others the awful and deterrent experience of two totalitarian regimes, we should be the strongest defenders of democracy and particularly, we should be aware and thankful to all the states of the “old European union” of what they were and are still willing to do for us. After more than ten years, we have to admit sincerely that instead of being an engine, we have become a problem. It is possible that civic forces, forces that had been at the forefront of pro-European efforts in our Central European countries, did not raise their followers—the next generation—to assume their ideals, ambitions and energy. Yes, it seems so far, we have not passed on these values. Our countries have become an unambitious part of the European Union, and there is no doubt that the more able and ambitious members of the younger generation are leaving for the more mature economies of the West. On a related note, this development brings into question whether we are too pampered by the European structural funds. This is money which was not created by us, nor was it earned by our work, and yet for many of us, this opportunity for development is being taken for granted. Worse still, some do not feel we should even be grateful for the coffers made available through our neighbour’s toil.

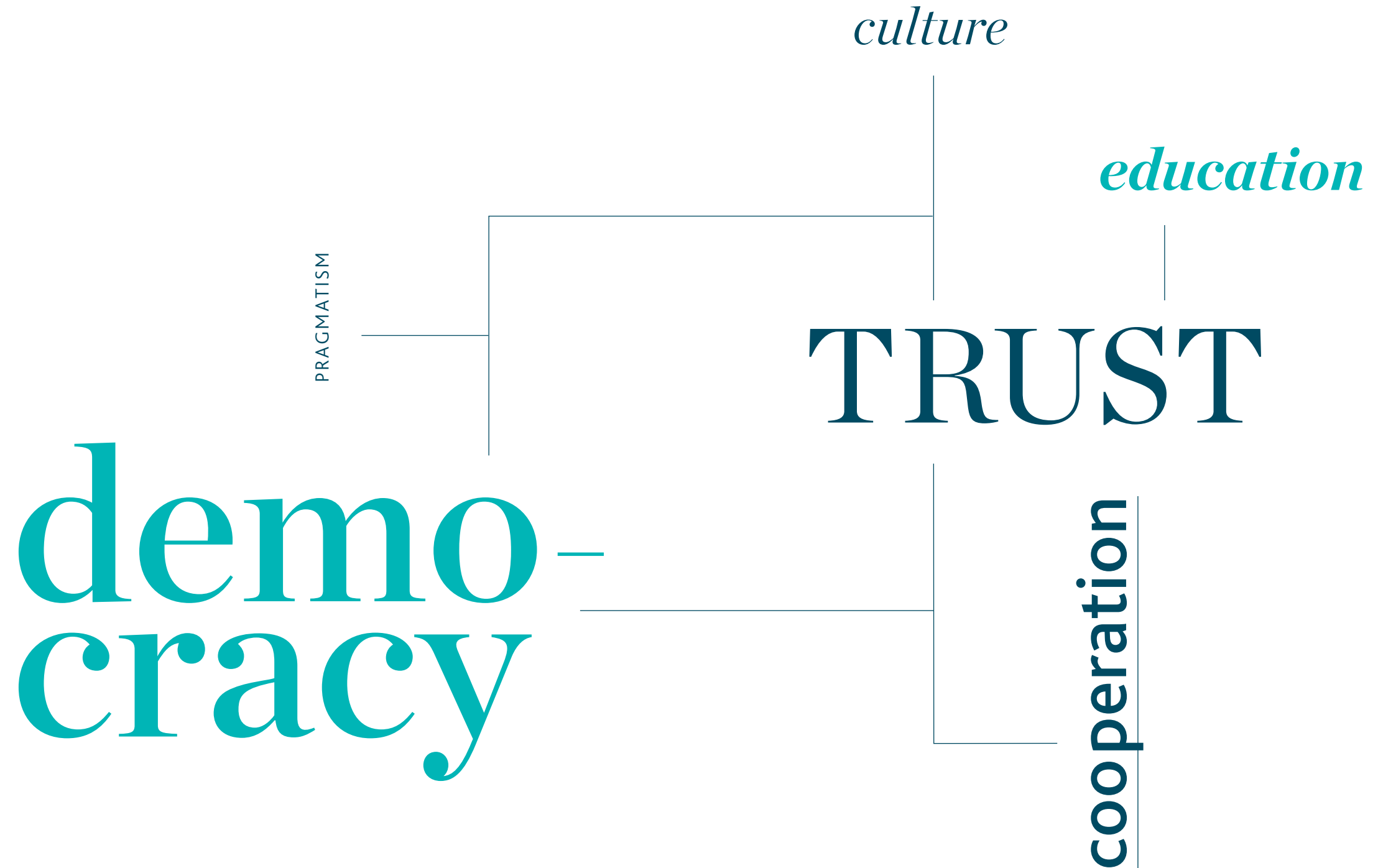
What is remaining is only our hope and strong belief that this hysterical

anti-European mood—which is nowadays spreading through Hungary, the Czech Republic, Poland and is beginning to take shape in the historically pro-European Slovakia—will quickly blow over, and new intellectual leaders from the next generation will rise from within Central Europe as the bearers of fresh ideas. We need them desperately because to have just ideas is not enough, their youthful zeal is also required. More importantly, we have to find them as quickly as possible because they should be able to adopt these ideas and push them forward in effort to inspire a greater portion of the Central European population. This would pose a shift away from the threatening return of isolationism, the proliferation of nationalistic ideas, the senseless attacks on the values of liberalism through a criticism of so called neo-liberalism (which is now a common practice) and from obvious intensification of anti-Semitism lingering in the atmosphere of the Central European states. These were trends that in the 20th century plunged Central Europe into chaos and confined it to the Iron Curtain. Lastly, we have to change one more thing in our countries. We have to finally get rid of that advantageous and comfortable feeling that in Europe we are responsible for nothing “because, after all, we are still just victims of those other and stronger powers.”

We still have the hope and the desire to search out and shape such a new generation.

WHAT ARE THE
VALUES THAT BIND
US TOGETHER?

WHAT ARE THE VALUES
THAT BIND US TOGETHER
- KEY WORDS





*Citizen commitment to
freedom and democracy varies
across time and countries.
What unifies us more is
the dream of an ideal
democracy; one with the ability
to put the country back on the
track*

OLGA GYÁRFÁŠOVÁ

is a Slovak sociologist, currently a director of the Institute of European Studies and International Relations at the Faculty of Social and Economic Sciences, Comenius University in Bratislava. She is founding member of a Slovak Institute for Public Affairs.

Visegrád cooperation became a brand for solid regional co-operation that guarantees stability and good neighbourly relations. Despite the fact that the commitment to V4 oscillated, went through many “ups” and “downs”; despite the fact that it is far from being a compact political entity which would be able to adopt joint strategies, find common political instruments and to enforce common interests; despite these many failures, lost ambitions and cynical doubts, the V4 has survived to celebrate twenty-five years of existence. Happy birthday! So, there must be something that binds us together, and it must be deep enough not to be destroyed during the critical low periods. Embedded values! But what values?

Democracy? For sure, the euphoria when the communist regimes collapsed was authentic and shared. But we all know that implementation of democracy is one thing and maintenance of a stable democratic regime which respects the rule of law, rights of minorities, fairness to all citizens etc., etc., is another. The current look of the V4 shows that the path to a consolidated democracy is neither linear nor irreversible; moreover, citizen commitment to freedom and democracy varies across time and countries. What unifies us more is the idea of democracy. The dream about an ideal democracy which has the ability to put the country back on the right track again.

But let's continue exploring – trust? The nations of the Central European region carry a huge historical burden from their common past. Interpretation of

history often reveals that everyone feels they are owed something, and everybody did harm to someone else at some point. On the other hand, the nations are unified by the closeness of their common destiny which sets the grounds for mutual trust. Based on surveys, we see that the Czechs and Slovaks share the strongest ties of confidence. This level of trust and above-standard relationship seemed to be the utopian dream until around the split of the Czechoslovak federation in 1992-1994. But recently the commonalities and the joint history represent a strong background for good relations – these two nations became the most amicable of divorced couples. Poles have very balanced relations with the other three nations, and – of course – the most sensitive is the question of trust between Slovaks and Hungarians. However, many bridges have been built in recent years to overcome the historically conditioned distrust. Okay, but what about the world beyond Visegrád and its allies? The challenge came in 2015 with the biggest refugee crises this part of Europe has ever faced. And another common ground has been found – the lack of solidarity with the other EU team-mates more affected by the migration flows, limited displays of humanity towards the culturally distant “others” and hypocrisy when it comes to excuses why we cannot help. In spite of all the consequences these V4 positions may have, let us be optimistic (and romantic) – the shared idea of good democracy and mutual trust embedded in a common destiny will preserve the bonds.



The East or West division is a fundamental issue of identity, determining the political reality not only of Central Europe but of the entire continent

JACEK PURCHLA

(b. 1954) is art historian and economist. He founded International Cultural Center in Kraków in 1991 and remains its director until today.

Central Europe has never found itself outside European civilisation, but it has retained its distinctiveness – which today is a value. This specific nature of Central Europe follows from its unique historical experience and location in the continent.

This character became obvious in the 20th century. The lingering impact of feudalism, delayed nation-building processes and formation of new nation-states only after the First World War, the Bolshevik Revolution in Russia, the Holocaust, the scale of destruction and looting of cultural property during World War II, post-war border changes coupled with the large scale ethnic cleansing it entailed and finally the almost half-a-century long “lesson of communism” cannot be ignored when analysing the complex and unique situation of the V4 countries.

The question of geographical location is essential and it has been toiled over with great enthusiasm and obsession. The answer to the question: East or West—seemingly of no great importance—for the Czechs, Hungarians, Poles and Slovaks is a fundamental issue of identity, determining the political reality not only of Central Europe but of the entire continent. This is where the notion of Central Europe takes its origins, conceived not only in geographical, but mainly in historical and cultural terms.

The question of belonging to the East or the West is not—at its core—a question of geography and borders, but primarily of an aesthetic sensitivity: belonging to a particular cultural circle, economic zone and political system is a matter of philosophical outlook! Especially since, in the last century, the political borders in Central Europe changed much more rapidly than the cultural ones.

In the 1970s and 1980s, intellectuals from the Eastern side of the Iron Curtain – György Konrád, Milan Kundera, Vaclav Havel, Czesław Miłosz - used the cultural distinctiveness of Czechoslovakia, Hungary and Poland to manifest the fundamental differences between the Soviet reality and the traditional European values.

It is obvious that the struggle of Central European nations against the Soviet domination, which ended victoriously in 1989, was not only a fight with communism as a system, but also an effort to return to the Atlantic civilisation. This strong attachment to the culture which these nations contributed to for an entire millennium, and the half-century long experience—unknown in Western Europe—of resisting a totalitarian system, is not only a burden, but also an asset which the nations of the Czech Republic, Hungary, Poland and Slovakia can build upon.



We wanted the values that were central to Western liberal democracies, those relating to human rights, civil rights, pluralistic democracy and the rule of law, to be the focus of our societies

LIBOR ROUČEK

(b. 1954) is a Czech politician, former Member of European Parliament (2004-2014).

When we look at the situation twenty-five years ago, yes – we talked about values. The values that were of Western liberal democracies which meant human rights, civil rights, pluralistic democracy and the rule of law. We wanted these values to become the focus of our societies, and of course we wanted to join the institutions that were built on those values. That meant the European Union and NATO. So these other values of the western liberal societies are and should be the values of Visegrád Four because that is what we aim for, and we also know the alternative from the experience we endured under communism. We know that if we do not hold these values dear, if we do not have respect for human rights, we could end up again under communist rule and the Soviet influence.

I think in the early years we were sensitive to the breaches of human rights committed in the former communist countries of the “Eastern Block”, and also in countries like Cuba, China and Vietnam. But my feeling is that as more time has passed,

we are not very sensitive to those questions anymore, or we are less and less concerned. So I think that we should go back to our rules and values, and make it absolutely clear for ourselves, for our citizens and for the rest of the world that yes - these are the rules we want to stick to.

These are aspects of our lessons from the past, but now it is twenty-five years later and we have a new generation coming, one who has not had the experiences which taught us so much. In my opinion, we have not done enough to educate this younger population. In comparison, I could give the example of Germany starting after World War II and still continuing today, there has been a continual process of political education: the *bildung* and the Bundeszentrale für politische Bildung, for instance. It has been instructing the people and it has become part of the framework of their society, and when we talk about refugees, it also educates the newcomers in those same values. To become responsible democratic citizens, I think we do not do enough in our V4 countries regarding this matter.



The Visegrád region, as much as Central Europe, is a heuristic notion that can aid us in comprehending ourselves better if it is applied adequately

BALÁZS TRENCSENYI

(b. 1973) is an Associate Professor at the Central European University in Budapest.

The construction of “Central European-ness” as a community of values goes back a long way, but its substance has been repeatedly redefined over the past 150 years. In the late 19th century, the region was identified in opposition to the West, whereas in the interwar period it was seen as a specific zone which is neither fitting the Western normative framework nor is it completely Eastern. The Central European ideogeme had a certain impact also during the immediate post-1945 years when the region was portrayed as a bridge between the East and the West. Conversely, the classic Central European discourse of the 1970s and 1980s tried to define a community of values based on the region’s reintegration with the West, and hence it seemed that the 1990s could move beyond the metaphor of a “stolen Europe”, and the Central European discourse even seemed unnecessary for some observers and historical actors. Nevertheless, as territorial and cultural connections did not allow solving certain matters regarding the frames of the nation-states, it seemed to be worth maintaining a regional framework. The cooperation thus survived even when the Central European discourse became seemingly irrelevant, and some even saw the collaboration as restraining and a possible hindrance to swift EU accession, which was the shared desire of the four countries at the time. Finally, over the past years, we have seen the revival of the 19th-century *Mitteleuropa* concept, albeit without Germany at its core. Interestingly, while before World War I it was the “German” *Mitteleuropa* that defined itself in contrast with the West, now the political elites of the Visegrád countries construct their regional agenda in opposition to a liberal democratic West most consciously represented by Angela Merkel’s Germany.

This implies that the Central European community of values has been defined in

radically different terms over time. Consequently, there is no essential and metaphysical content that would timelessly bind these societies together, independent of any historical context. They are connected since certain political and cultural elites in various historical periods have adopted common discourses and framed certain experiences as shared, but the framework in which they sought to work together was redefined time and again. Their cooperation is hence not so much value-based but intertwined with interests which can be understood or isolated within a given geopolitical or symbolically geographic context. From this perspective, the tie that binds the Visegrád cooperation, which managed to sustain itself beyond the change of ideologies, appears to be nothing more than pragmatism. Though this pragmatism does have a certain historicity which (re-)arranges the cooperation, giving it its concrete framework.

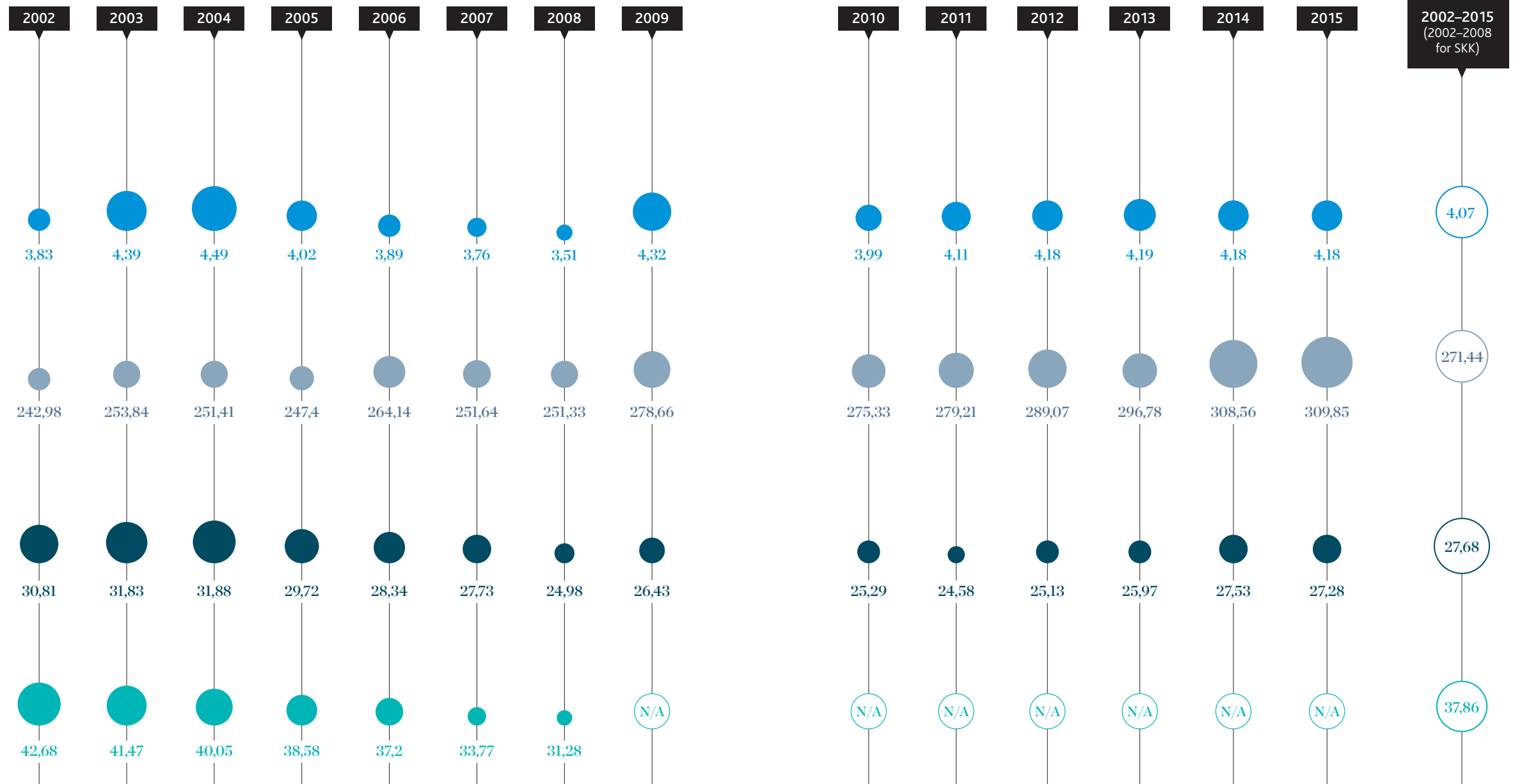
At the same time, while there is no obvious and particular set of values that bind specifically these four countries together (and there are also a number of other countries which have overlapping pasts and socio-cultural affinities with the Visegrád Four), there are historical and cultural experiences which can be turned into a basis of empathy towards each other. This “tacit knowledge”, originating from shared experiences, allows people to understand problems and interpret developments from a regional perspective that goes beyond their narrow scope of the nation-state, but is still not as wide as a pan-European framework relativizing most, if not all, the contextual nuances. The Visegrád region, as much as Central Europe, is thus a heuristic notion that can aid us in comprehending ourselves better if it is applied adequately, and its underlying values are not to be interpreted as a common essence, but rather as a call for empathy and mutual understanding.

DOES THE V4 NEED
THE EUROZONE?

EURO TO V4 CURRENCIES EXCHANGE RATE 2002–2015 (for 1€)

■ PLN ■ CZK
■ HUF ■ SKK

AVERAGE:



SOURCES:

PLN www.ukforex.co.uk/forex-tools/historical-rate-tools/yearly-average-rates
HUF www.ukforex.co.uk/forex-tools/historical-rate-tools/yearly-average-rates
CZK www.ukforex.co.uk/forex-tools/historical-rate-tools/yearly-average-rates
SKK www.oanda.com/currency/average



In spite of turbulences and political problems, the euro is an economic reality; governments cannot postpone the decision for much longer

PÉTER ÁKOS BOD

is a professor of economics at the Corvinus University in Budapest and former Governor of the Hungarian National Bank.

The rationale behind establishing the Visegrád Group was essentially political, without reference to any monetary policy issues such as the choice of exchange rate regime. Yet, given the similarities in legacies and the comparable level of development of the V4, it is justifiable to deal with the above question at this elevated, more general level. More precisely, this could have been a policy issue at the time of our accession to the EU. At present, it should be rephrased: “does the V3 need eurozone accession”, since Slovakia is already in, together with the Baltic nations and Slovenia. I am sure that as soon as Croatia and Romania meet the entry criteria, they will join the eurozone as well.

This is not surprising. Small and open EU member states are particularly exposed to foreign exchange risks. Such risks may be reduced greatly by adopting the currency used by the majority of their economic partners. If this is so obvious, why do the remaining three stay out? The Hungarian and Czech economies are extremely trade dependent, and the Polish is open to global standards, thus businessmen and economists of the “out” countries can make a strong case for accession to the eurozone. Political support is, however, a different cup of tea. Giving up monetary sovereignty for the ease of doing

business is a risky political trade-off. Take the case of Hungary. The first time when this issue was seriously raised, in 2001, the then prime minister, Viktor Orbán, stood for the earliest possible entry. Less than a decade later, he and his party are again in power, only now they place economic sovereignty (or the illusion thereof) above any benefits derived from a more dynamic economic growth rate. True, problems within the eurozone – or problems with some eurozone member states – would make even euro-enthusiasts cautious about the timing of the decision to change to the European currency.

Wait and see, thus, looks like the common no-nonsense strategy. But the “out” position suffers from systemic weaknesses: having a less-than-significant national currency exposes domestic agents to currency risks not borne by their foreign competitors, plus you face additional transaction costs. These handicaps might be manageable by richer nations, but we are not Danes or Swedes. Make no mistake: market players do use the euro extensively as a parallel currency already in non-euro countries.

In spite of these turbulences and political problems, the euro is an economic reality. Thus the above question will not fade away, and governments cannot postpone the decision for much longer.



The Central European countries need the eurozone as a compass to show them the direction and motivation for implementing their reforms successfully

MAREK CICHOCKI

(b. 1966) is philosopher and historian, former advisor to Lech Kaczyński, late President of Poland. Professor at Collegium Civitas Warsaw.

This was about six years ago, as the wide spread opinion prevailed in the new member states that after having become the member of the EU in 2004, the next logical step would be to complete the integration by adopting the single currency. However, the financial crisis and the resulting new situation it generated in the eurozone has changed this strategy of full integration originally envisaged in the association agreements of the new member states. The approach of the V4 to the euro has become even more complicated: over the past decade, Slovakia (and the Baltic States) decided to join the eurozone, and during that same time, the distance of Hungary, Czech Republic and Poland to the euro has been growing. There are several serious reasons why this has happened, but one reason seems to be decisive.

While the process of economic and political transformation of the Central European (CE) countries and the European integration indicated a high level of complementarity, this did not necessarily happen in the case of the current consolidation of the eurozone, which should actually be the tool to establish the real

economic governance, common fiscal policy and common political representation. If the transformed economies and societies of the CE countries are insufficiently prepared to compete effectively in the integrated eurozone, as the popular argument goes in the Polish and Hungarian debates, they have to regain their competitiveness before appropriating the single currency.

There is a need for massive structural reforms which should be embarked on by democratic governments and supported by democratic societies in those countries in order to be prepared for the common currency. The fear is that adopting the euro without such efforts would lead to a deeper peripheralisation of the CE countries and the loss of democratic legitimacy for the much needed economic and social reforms. Thus, the CE countries do not necessarily need to adopt the euro to ensure development, competitiveness, innovativeness and productivity for the post-transformation period. For this, they surely need bold structural reforms and internal democratic support. However, they do need the eurozone as a compass to show them the direction and motivation for implementing their reforms successfully.



It is reassuring in these uncertain times to share not only economic and defence policies, but also a currency with countries holding - or at least aspiring to acquire - similar values and interests

MARTIN FILKO

(1980-2016) was the chief economist at the Slovak Ministry of Finance and director of the Institute for Financial Policy, Ministry of Finance's research and policy department. He was an advisor to the prime minister Iveta Radičová, as well as to ministers of finance, health and education under different governments.

can see at least two possible answers to this question - economic and political.

Luckily, my answer is affirmative in both cases. Being a part of the eurozone helps small, open, transition economies like Slovakia achieve robust economic growth. And having a seat at the inner table not only binds us closer to the continent's core, but also give us a stronger voice and helps us improve our own institutions.

In a forthcoming paper by the Institute for Financial Policy and the OECD, it will be reported that we have rigorously tested the former component of the question. Comparing a hypothetical Slovakia (based on the performance of similar countries) with the actual performance of the Slovak economy after 2006, we find that the 2009 euro-adoption increased the real GDP per capita in Slovakia by approximately 10%. Two thirds of the positive gain took place before 2008, emphasizing a strong anticipatory effect. Nevertheless, the GDP per capita grew between 2008 and 2011 by three additional percentage points.

The effect is structural rather than cyclical: in line with the standard literature, we find that had Slovakia kept the floating currency regime during the recession in 2009, the economy would have been temporarily better off by roughly 2%.

I have limited experience in European politics to comment on the latter aspect

of the question. Yet, it is impossible not to notice that the voice of the Slovak finance minister - whoever it may be - carries more weight than those of her regional colleagues just from the very fact that she participates in the Eurogroup meetings.

It is reassuring in these uncertain times to share not only economic and defence policies, but also a currency with countries holding - or at least aspiring to acquire - similar values and interests. For example, Slovakia will be pushing for more economic, especially more fiscal integration in the eurozone including common, fiscal instruments and a shared budget to help it weather asymmetrical economic shocks. It may be a long shot for a small eurozone member, but it would be impossible without a membership.

So too, after being shown examples and pressured by our more mature peers, Slovakia had to build up institutions for the stewardship of its economy better and more swiftly than our regional neighbours. Not surprisingly, the subsequent tighter and more transparent government budgets led to a more rapid catching up with the core of the eurozone.

In Central Europe, no country is an island. It is in the economic and political interest of the Visegrád countries to join the common continental currency, rather than to continue to float.



The V4 countries have the desire to be influential players in Europe, and to accomplish this, they should join eurozone as soon as possible

DANUTA HÜBNER

(b. 1948) is a Polish economist, academic and a former European Commissioner for Regional Policy (2004-2009). Currently she is the Chair of the Committee on Constitutional Affairs (AFCO) of the European Parliament.

We are living a crucial time in the history of the European Union, when certain evident truths are being questioned and some temptations are resurfacing. In the context of the V4, we can observe a tendency to distance ourselves from the core concerns of the EU.

Undoubtedly, this kind of isolationist attitude, including the lack of confidence in the eurozone, has resulted, to a large extent, from the euro area crisis and the austerity policies implemented after the 2008 crisis. The V4 countries' reaction can, thus, be psychologically understandable. But politically, it can have, in the long run, detrimental effects on their growth as well as on their overall position in the EU.

It is in the interest of the V4 countries to have a politically strong and economically stable eurozone and, in time, become its full-fledged members. Only by being a part of a coherent, inclusive and globally competitive group - sharing with it a common currency as well as cooperating economically - can our countries avoid the dangers of lagging development and the middle-income trap.

It is worth noting that the post-crisis eurozone's architecture is very different from how it looked before. Reforms have been conducted to enhance fiscal policy coordination and discipline on a national-level. A Banking Union has been created, with two pillars having now started to operate: a single mechanism for bank supervision and another one for bank

resolution. These reforms increase the resilience of the eurozone's economy and the crisis management capabilities of the group. In order to be fully effective, however, those reforms cannot be limited to one part of the European Union only.

In order to gain as much advantage as possible from this effort to reshape the eurozone, it is in the vital interest of its member countries to include those that remain still outside of it and vice versa. For instance, it should be particularly advantageous for these countries to join the Banking Union since their banking systems are characterised by a large presence of foreign banks and have the associated potential of cross-border issues. Another point, of no less importance to the V4 countries outside the eurozone, is their desire to be influential players in Europe, and to accomplish this they should join as soon as possible.

Even before their formal accession to the eurozone, these V4 countries that do not yet share the common currency should have as their goal to become an indispensable partner and serious interlocutor in eurozone-related issues.

The V4 group is facing a key challenge for its future: whether to be an agenda-setter for the European Union as a fully-fledged member of the eurozone or to remain a regional grouping of countries with ambiguous standing in the EU and divergent strategies toward the outside world.

I think that the choice should be pretty obvious.



*Central European countries
should be able to breathe both
within the eurozone as well as
outside of it*

ZDENĚK TŮMA

(b. 1960) is a Czech economist and former Governor of the Czech National Bank (2000-2010).

There are two principal aspects we must address when we want to assess the pros and cons of euro adoption in Central European countries. One is the economic impact, the other is a political issue. As a former central banker, I shall focus on the first one.

We can distinguish several monetary policy regimes such as monetary, exchange rate, inflation targeting and some others. But when we speak about the exchange rate in monetary policy, we have got just two basic concepts, fixed and floating exchange rates. We should realize that from the central banking perspective, the euro is a *de facto* fixed exchange rate regime. Therefore, we can consider the (dis)advantages of the euro in the context of the debate over exchange rate policies.

Regardless of the choice of the monetary policy regime, the ultimate objective of central banks is to smooth over the volatility of the business cycle. Monetary policy itself is a powerful weapon; nevertheless it cannot change economic trends: they are based on fundamentals such as productivity, labour market flexibility, legal framework, functioning state administration and alike. In other words, monetary policy can influence the volatility of various economic variables, such as inflation, exchange rates or output. The same holds true for the choice of foreign exchange environment – if we fix the exchange rate, inflation will be more volatile, and vice versa.

I believe it is straightforward in the aforementioned context that the euro itself cannot change the economic performance or the growth of potential output. There is one caveat, however. Central

European countries entered the European Union with significantly lower economic output per capita. Thus, it could have been expected that these countries would be catching up with their wealthier peers, or converging in real terms as we say in the economic jargon. And this process of real convergence has an impact on the real exchange rate – which is a combination of nominal exchange rate and differences in domestic and foreign inflation.

These countries were really growing faster in the previous period as compared to the average economic growth of the “old EU members”. Therefore, their local currencies mostly appreciated in real terms to the euro; in some countries the appreciation went primarily through nominal exchange rate, (i.e. in the Czech Republic); in others it was channelled both via higher domestic inflation and the nominal exchange rate. Now, were the exchange rate fixed, or euro adopted, during the period of significantly faster growth, it would have led to higher inflation – as it would have been the only channel for real appreciation.

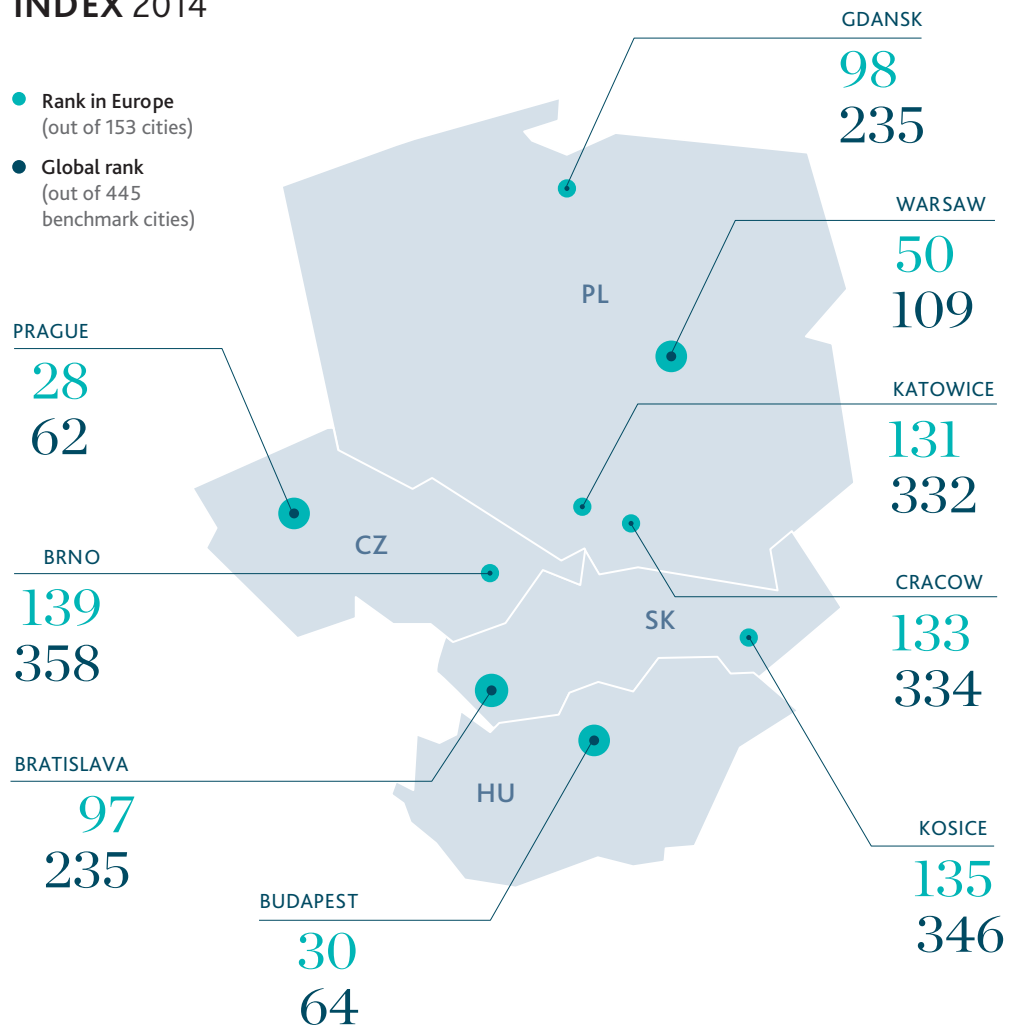
Looking towards the future, I tend to believe that this process of fast real convergence is over, and there is pressure on local currencies as well. It means that adopting the euro (i.e. fixing the exchange rate), should not boost inflation to significantly higher levels.

My conclusion is that the Central European countries should be able to breathe both within the eurozone as well as outside of it. The economic impact of such a decision would be very limited. Therefore, this type of decision is really a political one – but that is a different story.

COULD
INNOVATION
BE THE FUTURE OF
ECONOMIC
GROWTH IN THE V4
REGION?

INNOVATION CITIES INDEX 2014

- Rank in Europe (out of 153 cities)
- Global rank (out of 445 benchmark cities)

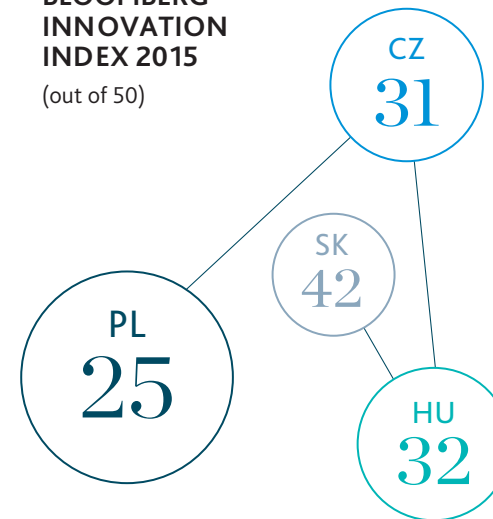


NESTA EUROPEAN DIGITAL CITIES INDEX



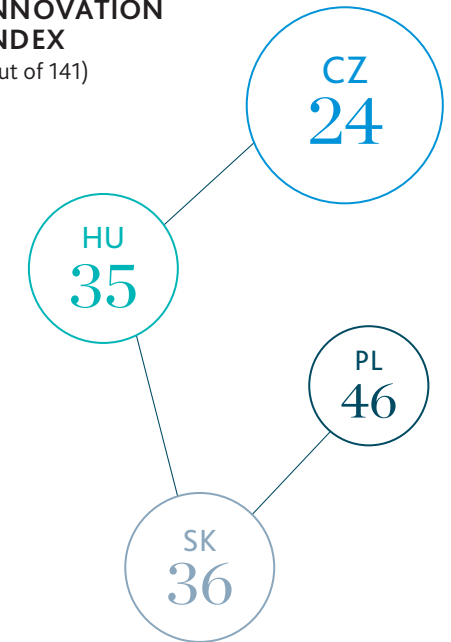
All of the above are ordinal rankings. The lower the number the better the position of the city/country.

BLOOMBERG INNOVATION INDEX 2015 (out of 50)

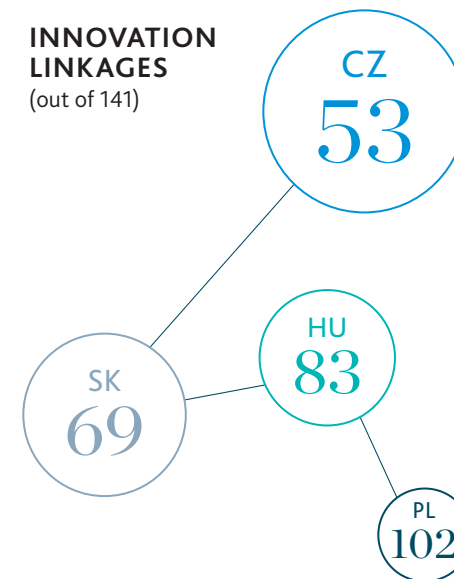


Country's overall rank is the average of the six measures: R&D, Manufacturing, High Tech Companies, Education, Research Personnel, and Patents

GLOBAL INNOVATION INDEX (out of 141)



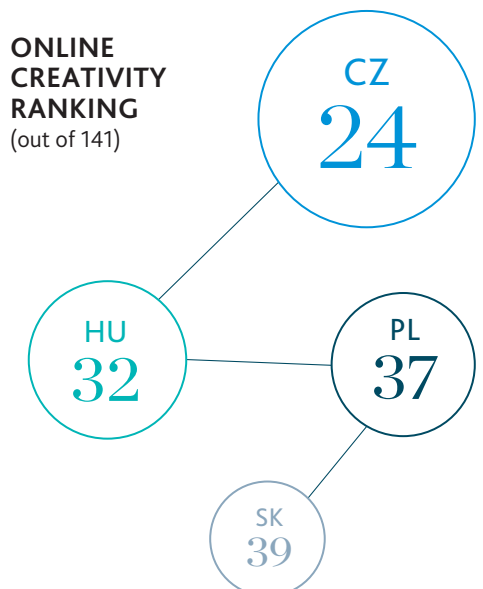
INNOVATION LINKAGES (out of 141)



Based on the number of generic top-level domains' links

Global Innovation Index 2015

ONLINE CREATIVITY RANKING (out of 141)



University/industry research collaboration, State of cluster development, GERD financed by abroad, JV-strategic alliance deals, Patent families 3+ offices

Global Innovation Index 2015



Innovation is not just a possibility for the V4, it is the most powerful growth engine we will ever find

PÉTER ÁRVAI

(b. 1979) is a Swedish entrepreneur of Hungarian descent, CEO and co-founder of Prezi, presentation software company with the world's largest database of publically available presentations, started from Budapest.

Three out of today's five most valuable companies are companies built on innovative products. The combined market value of Apple, Google and Microsoft is USD 1400 bn - ten times more than the expected Hungarian GDP for 2015.

This is, however, not just a story of value creation but also a story about the rate of change. In 2013, two other companies in the very same business sector had two completely different outcomes. One of them, more than 130 years old and very well-established filed for bankruptcy, while the other one, only a few years old and run by 13 employees was acquired for USD 1bn. The former was Kodak, the latter was Instagram. Both helped people to share pictures, but the difference was that Instagram had an innovative solution--proving that creativity trumps experience. As a result of innovation, the life expectancy of the most successful companies in the world has gone from over sixty years in the 1960s to a mere eighteen today. The only way to survive in today's economy is by constantly reinventing who you are and what you do.

So can we in the V4 countries be globally competitive with regards to creativity? The reality is that creativity is more of a mind-set than something you are born with. I have found that people who are intrinsically motivated, allow themselves to be vulnerable and learn from their

mistakes and are able to challenge their assumptions are also more likely to produce creative thinking. This is the creative mentality that often builds the companies of the future, and this mind-set we can practice and should teach in our educational institutions.

The creative movement is often led by entrepreneurs who not only build great companies but can also influence whole countries and create opportunities for others. On the eve of 1990, Estonia was in a very similar situation, with its shared history of communist rule and the Soviet occupation, as the V4 countries are in today. Over the past twenty-five years, this tiny country with a population of 1.3m became the leader of digital innovations. After its earliest success story, Skype, was sold in 2005 for USD 2.6bn, Estonia reformed itself. It created a new class of investors in the country, who have used this money to finance innovative companies with fresh ideas. As a result, Estonia holds the world record in start-ups per person.

What aided this development was that the government adopted this approach to itself. Estonia was the first country to introduce online voting in 2007, and now the whole government is online, which means they could even run the country from under the sea if it were necessary.

Innovation is not just a possibility for the V4, it is the most powerful growth engine we will ever find.



There is a high potential for growth in this field, especially in the cases of lower-level innovations or in the arenas of managerial, marketing or process innovations

RUT BÍZKOVÁ

(b. 1957) is a chairwomen of the Technology Agency of the Czech Republic and Czech nuclear energy specialist.

This question could hardly be answered in any other way than “of course it could”. However, it is important to know where the potential for innovation can be found, and where its use could be most efficiently implemented.

Having observed the situation in the V4 countries, there is a high potential for growth in this field, especially in the cases of lower-level innovations or in the arenas of managerial, marketing or process innovations. Regardless of any use of similar techniques and technologies, our labour productivity still remains below the EU average or that of other successful national economies. Such innovations could bring about some “low hanging fruit” and may become the source of economic growth based on growing national consumption as well as an increasing of export opportunities.

Additionally, higher-level innovations often based on research and development represent another issue. At present, there is great incentive for their expansion and implementation in the Visegrád countries – high research and development capacities have been built in all four countries with the support from the EU structural funds. In the Czech Republic, many research centres have been built equipped with high-tech devices, which are difficult to find elsewhere in Europe. This gives us an opportunity to base our future economic growth on new solutions provided these

centres are successful in attracting development activities of multinational companies or in supporting the formation and growth of national (endogenic) companies. This idea can be illustrated by the successful results of the large-scale project INKA – the mapping of innovation capacities in the Czech Republic – within which macroeconomic and microeconomic data were added by detailed interviews with managers of leading innovating companies and leading exporters.

Both increased challenges and opportunities lie ahead in the ongoing Next Production Revolution, which comprises the change of production patterns towards digitalization, decentralization (especially in the energy sector) or the introduction of 3D printing, which could become an important production tool. The internet of things, facilities and labour are bringing about a new life-style including new types of services and approaches to these services.

I am deeply convinced that the citizens of the V4 countries that have undergone many radical changes during the 20th century will be able to adapt themselves to this emerging change easier than others.

A quick response to this challenge will bring us a comparative advantage – not only due to the fact that we live in Central Europe where all roads from the North to the South and from the East to the West are crossing...



The past investments, we were once attractive for, were not very advanced or complex; they did not require a high level of specialised skills. Those opportunities no longer exist



JADWIGA EMILEWICZ

(b. 1974) is a Polish political scientist and manager, undersecretary of state in the Development Ministry.

Innovations are one of the pillars of the Responsible Development Plan announced by the current government, which was prepared by Mateusz Morawiecki, the Vice-Minister and Minister of Economic Development. What is more, he often uses a quote that Poland will either be great, or it won't exist at all. Personally, I paraphrase these words into thinking that Poland will either be innovative, or it won't exist at all.

We know that to be able to compete with the largest enterprises in Europe and the rest of the world, we need to increase our capital. We can either do it locally by uniting forces, or a more advantageous option would be to cooperate within the Visegrád Group. We have some plans for the upcoming period of the Polish presidency in the group which are focused on this issue. Currently, the Silicon Valley is the ultimate dream for the young Polish talent in the IT field, and when they are successful in their pursuits, we, of course, are proud of their accomplishments. However, we would like to create the conditions where some of them would wish to stay and develop the Polish sector. Moreover, we would like to build a scenario where the Polish market is attractive enough to entice promising foreign talent to relocate here. By saying here, I do not mean just Poland, but the whole of Central Europe.

Accomplishing this task will take years of devotion, and while it is too soon to talk about the "Visegrad Valley" as a competitor to the Silicon one, we are planning to organise a technological fair strictly dedicated to V4 start-ups during our presidency. Though, of course, our scope will not be

too limited; guests from Ukraine and Belarus will also be welcome. Hopefully, it will be successful in showing our common economic mission.

Within the Responsible Development Plan, we have identified several traps which Poland has fallen afoul. One of persistent worry is the middle-income-trap. Until recently the cheap labour force has been our basic competitive advantage, but this lead is coming to an end since there is an even cheaper labour force further to the East, and the reality of the situation is that it is not difficult to move a business 500 km away. The past investments we were once attractive for were not very advanced or complex; they did not require a high level of specialized skills. Those opportunities no longer exist, and we can readily observe, in large cities, this shift towards more innovative competencies, but we still need to increase the amount of modern and technologically advanced investments.

Our V4 partners are facing similar problems, and we share the same concerns regarding the higher competency market. Again, if we stand together and show our skills and capabilities, our power to attract will increase. This is especially so if we focus our attention on the area between the Baltic to the Black seas where the potential for development is huge. Our diplomatic efforts should be united because together we will all achieve more. Surely, the possibility to lose everything is present if we continue competing with each other. The most immediate solution would be establishing cross-national production lines which would certainly benefit everyone in the Visegrád Group.



The very success of the V4 economic model is increasing its indefensibility. Success means higher growth, which then entails higher salaries, and would lead to a reduction in its competitiveness in this sector

IVAN MIKLOŠ

(b. 1960) is a Slovak politician, former Deputy Prime Minister for Economy (1998-2002) and Minister of Finance (2002-2006, 2010-2012). Co-founder and director of the MESA 10 think-tank (1992-98). Between 2015-16 he was working as a chief advisor to the Ukrainian Minister of Finance; currently he is a senior economic advisor to Prime Minister Volodymyr Hrojsman.

The simple and correct answer to the posed question is that innovation not only could but will have to be the future of economic growth in the V4 region if this region wants to be successful. A sentiment which would carry with it a better standard of living and quality of life for its people.

When considering the new EU member states, the V4 countries are among the most developed and advanced of the post-communist countries. The economic models of these countries are based on the highly competitive mass industrial production (e.g. cars or electronics). The V4 countries have attracted a lot of foreign direct investment in this area because they can offer a very qualified and still comparatively cheap labour force as well as a relatively mature business environment. The main problem is that the very success of this economic model is increasing its indefensibility—as success means higher growth, which then entails higher salaries, and would lead to a reduction in its overall competitiveness in this sector.

Global competition is steadily increasing everywhere, and the mass industrial

production sector is not immune to this trend. Yet, the V4 have found the path for achieving these goals is to create preconditions for a fruitful restructuring of this production zone based either on a knowledge-based or an innovation-driven economy. As a clue to the realisation of their models, the World Economic Forum in its Global Competitiveness Index (GCI) divides countries into three basic groups – factor-driven, efficiency-driven and innovation-driven. In the latest GCI 2015 – 2016 listings, the Czech Republic and Slovakia are among the innovation driven countries while Poland and Hungary are placed in transition stage between the second and third groups.

The only way for the V4 countries to avoid the middle income trap and build an innovation-driven economy is to provide the necessary reforms focused mostly on the following areas – sound and sustainable public finance, competitive business environment, effective public sector and knowledge economy.

Countries that will thrive in completing this transition will be innovation-driven and successful.



The V4 might continue to order what others already have had and put a lot ketchup on it to moderate the aftertaste, or they might invent leaner ways of managing their national economies and clusters of excellence

STEFFEN ROTH

(b. 1976) is a German academic, Professor-Chercheur of Management and Organization at ESC Rennes School of Business in France.

The answer clearly is: “Yes, but....” In the movie *When Harry Met Sally*, actress Meg Ryan as Sally vividly fakes an orgasm during a romantic dinner in a crowded New York delicatessen to convince her date that men cannot tell the difference. The scene ends with her casually resuming her meal as a lady at a neighbouring table places her order with the iconic line, “I’ll have what she’s having”.

The V4 countries also seem to be busy with getting what *others* are having. *Others* here refers to the most potent national economies or regional innovation clusters. This is not to say that, for example, the recent New York high-tech climax – vividly performed by the former Governor of New York, George Pataki, during his keynote at *think.BDPST 2016* – is fake. Yet benchmarking no matter whether fake or real success stories often requires spending a lot of time and money on “recipes” that have the same impact on our well-being as the above meal had on the lady who ordered it. Even if some recipes work sometimes, copied recipes are often worse than original ones: the New York strategy of investing public money in high-tech clusters of smart people and smart technologies so as to outsmart the rest of the world only works if you are among the first to apply it. The more popular this manoeuvre, the less

it can be used to best the rest of the world, and the less competitive advantage it provides. There is hence no reason why the V4 should remain preoccupied with importing the best innovation practices, which necessarily keeps the V4 locked in a game where they constantly have to catch-up with what others have already been achieving. This catch-up logic corrupts the dynamics of a genuine innovation process as much as ketchup spoils the flavour of a genuine meal.

The V4 might nonetheless continue to order what others already have had and put a lot ketchup on it to moderate the aftertaste, or they might invent leaner ways of managing their national economies and clusters of excellence. Since competition necessarily is not lean, this strategic shift would involve a farewell to 20th century competitive strategies. Lean innovation strategies of the 21st century will be focused on value innovation. Difference, not competition, is the key to this future. Thus, innovation will be the future of economic growth in the V4 as soon as the V4 know more about the value that innovations “*Made in V4*” generate not only for the V4 citizens, but also for a world full of customers who are desperately in need of alternatives to the “*more of the same*” with “catch-up” flavour.

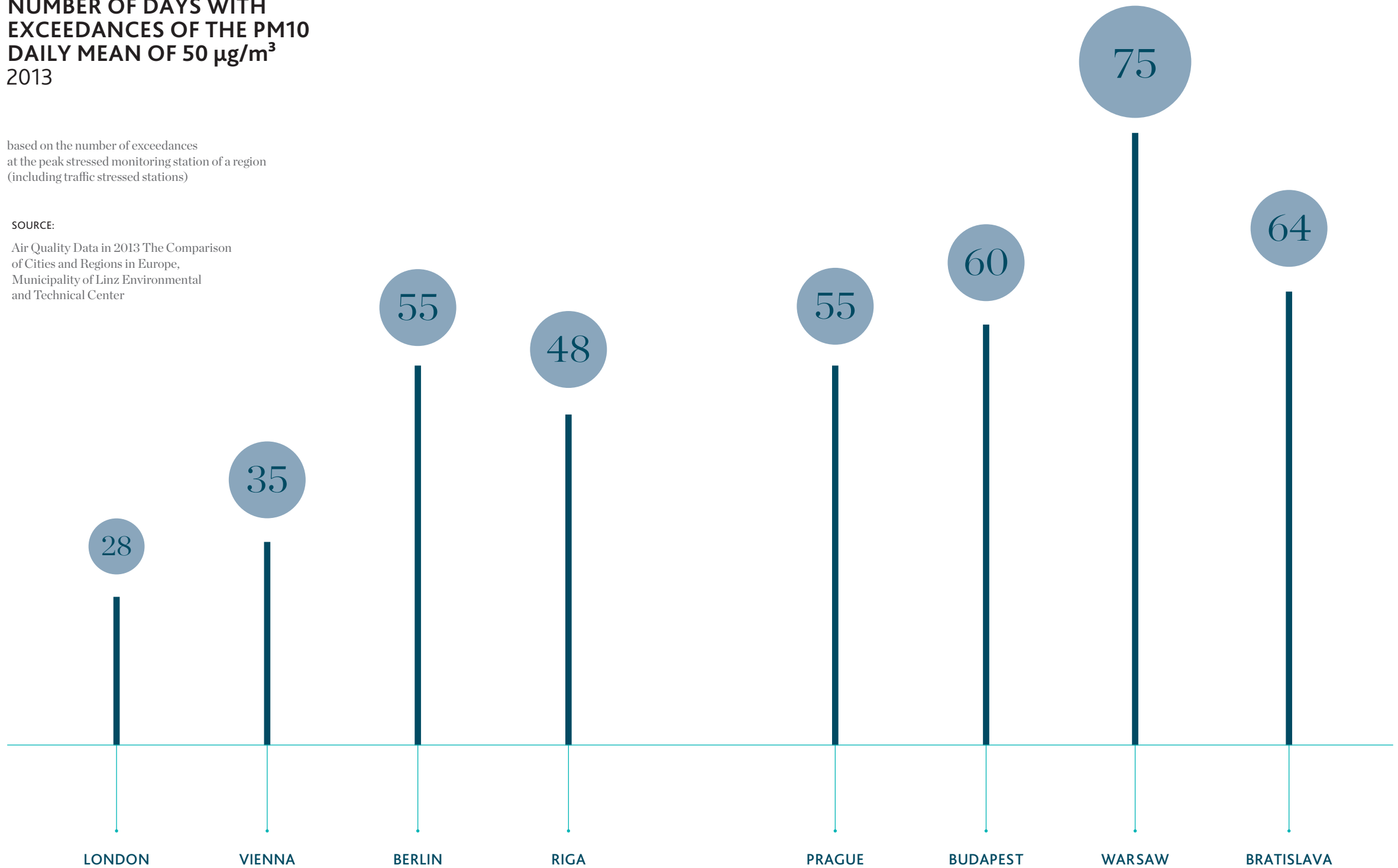
WHAT SHOULD THE
CLIMATE POLICIES
IN THE V4 REGION
LOOK LIKE?

NUMBER OF DAYS WITH EXCEEDANCES OF THE PM10 DAILY MEAN OF 50 µg/m³ 2013

based on the number of exceedances at the peak stressed monitoring station of a region (including traffic stressed stations)

SOURCE:

Air Quality Data in 2013 The Comparison of Cities and Regions in Europe, Municipality of Linz Environmental and Technical Center





The renewable energy effort of the V4 has slowed considerably. In 2015, for instance, the Czech Republic and Hungary did not add a single new megawatt (MW) of wind power



DAVID BUCHAN

(b. 1947) is a Senior Research Fellow at the Oxford Institute for Energy Studies, former journalist at The Economist (1970-1974) and Financial Times (1975-2006).

The climate policies of the Visegrád Four look reasonable at the moment and will meet their EU targets for 2020, but they are badly positioned to carry these countries towards the bigger emission reductions expected of them by 2030.

Twenty-five years ago, the collapse of heavy industry in the V4 contributed to a reduction in emissions. This general breakdown also created a statistical jump upwards for renewable energy because hydro-electric power and wood-burning for heat did not suffer the same drop that conventional coal and gas power did, and therefore represented a larger share of the total energy consumed when compared with the communist period. In the EU's energy and climate agreements of 2009, the V4, like other, newer EU member states, were given relatively easy renewable energy targets for 2020; this was partly in recognition of the fact that they adopted renewable subsidy schemes later than Western European states.

However, the renewable energy effort of the V4 has slowed considerably. In 2015, for instance, the Czech Republic and Hungary did not add a single new megawatt (MW) of wind power. Poland added 1.2 gigawatts (GW) of onshore wind last year, but this is dwarfed by the more than 4 GW of hard coal and lignite capacity that Polish companies are currently building. Furthermore, Czech coal capacity is also being increased. [This is

in sharp contrast to the reduction in coal capacity everywhere in Western Europe except for Germany.]

Renewables have never been very popular in the V4 countries—and were made even less so in the Czech Republic by the wildly over-generous solar subsidies of the past. Nor has much progress been made in the alternative low carbon field of nuclear power, even though they all support it in principle. Hungary is advancing quickly with its plans for the Russian-built additions to Paks; Poland's first nuclear plant will not be realised until the 2020s, and Slovakia is only adding a modest amount to its nuclear capacity.

Until 2020, the V4 are allowed to increase emissions in areas outside the power and industrial sector covered by the Emission Trading Scheme, such as transport, services and agriculture. But after 2020, they will have to restrain or reduce emissions in these non-ETS areas.

The V4 have clearly found the Visegrád forum a useful tool to lobby the EU on energy and climate policies, and now that regional cooperation is supposed to be the building block of the new Energy Union plan. Yet Visegrád would be more useful if the four countries were to work closer together as in their recent agreement to cooperate on hydrogen technology as a way of storing electricity. Whether or not these plans will come to fruition will depend on how closely the V4 cooperate and extend their influence.



Poland is the last country of the V4 group to still engage with coal mining. That's one of major differences that directly relate to our disparate opinions on the climate treaty



MACIEJ BUKOWSKI

is a Polish economist, Research Fellow at the Warsaw School of Economics, president of WiseEurope think tank.

The Visegrád Group is an assorted collection of countries, and since the fall of communism, they have followed diverse paths when it comes to the question at hand. Poland is, for example, the only state which does not have nuclear power. We are also the last country of the group to still engage with coal mining. Consequently, these differences directly relate to our disparate opinions on the climate treaty. For the Czech Republic, the climate policy is quite beneficial since they have a nuclear power plant and have become, therefore, its proponents. Furthermore, the Czechs and Slovaks have higher credit rankings (AA- and A+ respectively) than Poland (BBB+), which makes their costs of financing lower. Investment within the energy sector always consumes a lot of capital, so obviously the lower the cost of the capital, the easier it is to accomplish. The truth is that the other countries of the region are less vulnerable to the consequences of the climate policy because their investment markets are smaller. Regardless of these factors, being part of the EU requires member states to adhere and fulfil policy initiatives. In our case, success depends on overcoming hurdles in three areas – infrastructure, regulations and politics.

The first issue of infrastructure relates to both to the economy and technology. Economically thinking, what pays off is nuclear power and windmills. There have been tremendous inroads made regarding increasing the efficiency of production as well as the storing of energy; however, we know little about the proportions, good market settings and the organization of these sources of energy. Moreover, following this wave of technological change is not enough as it may be gridlocked by local regulations.

In Poland, many regional governments are actively trying to block the development

of alternative energy production, and the situation could be dire as there have been rumours about some acts which would actually limit the development of wind power plants in Poland. A large, modern wind power plant could be profitable and require no subsidies. Those benefits notwithstanding, there is some deeply-rooted scepticism in Poland towards renewable sources of energy. Part of the solution is to bring about gradual, effective regulation. Unstable regulation would create a risky environment, but if we are too slow in acting, we may hit a wall around 2020 where there physically won't be enough power produced in Poland.

However, if there is an external climate policy which forces some reduction targets, a state must cope with it. A large contributing factor to the Polish situation results from an inability to solve the problem of coal mining. The coal industry in Poland is doomed, and its participation must be decreased. The problem is that current Polish energy policies are held hostage by coal. To be honest and blunt, it is time to say goodbye to coal in the cities. What is more, politicians should start acknowledging the devastating environmental impacts of coal and initiate developing gas power plants. The old power plants must go, and there are too few new ones being built.

The problems of Poland are decisions and uncertainty. If you want my opinion, I would say the most rational choice for Poland is to seriously consider either a nuclear project or a large network of windmills, simply because something must replace coal, a substance we are running out of and treaty bound to diminish the usage of. My humble hope is for the Polish coal industry to go bankrupt. Once it substantially decreases in size, we would only have about 15,000 miners remaining, and then it will no longer be a political problem.



Instead of continued laments about our destiny, governments should learn from the Bundesrepublik, start viewing energy from a different perspective and get working

VOJTĚCH KOTECKÝ

(b. 1974) is a former campaign director at Friends of the Earth Czech Republic (Hnutí DUHA), an environmental group, works as an analyst in Prague-based Glopolis think tank.

When *Stocznia Gdańsk* faced a crisis in shipbuilding, it discovered an entirely new market: the manufacturing of wind power plants. This peculiar story from one of the more storied and iconic industrial plants in Visegrád pointed to possibly the most reasonable course for developing a sound V4 climate policy. Instead of engaging in bitter climate debates, perhaps we should start talking about something more productive.

Few people view *Zelená úsporám* as a climate policy. Nevertheless, the highly successful scheme which helps Czech families to insulate their homes and purchase clean heating, is, in fact, an ambitious effort to cut household reliance on fossil fuels. And a recently adopted Polish law provides for at least 200,000 households to buy their own solar roofs, launching a new citizen-based energy sector in the country.

Smart homes and micro-electricity production, nuclear reactors and farm-waste biogas, electric vehicles and municipal windfarms may cut carbon emissions substantially. But they also slash smog, energy bills and fuel imports while recharging the economy – none of which would count as controversial policy objectives in the Visegrád countries.

More than 100 people a year die prematurely due to local air pollution from Hungary's Matra coal power plant alone – and there are several dozen similar plants across the V4. Heating homes in Visegrád countries is, as it stands, largely a massive transfer of wealth from Central European families to Gazprom. The Slovak economy alone paid € 1.2 billion for the net import of natural gas in 2014. We need, and want, to deal with these problems.

Strangely enough, *Energiewende* might be an inspiration here. A Germany-style nuclear ZAGATA 2012 ToPB phase-out is not exactly something the Visegrád public strives for. But while we may disagree on objectives, key planks of the German energy reform – power decentralisation, robust investment in energy efficiency, deep innovation in energy system – are useful for V4 countries. Instead of continued laments about our destiny, governments should learn from the *Bundesrepublik*, start viewing energy from a different perspective and get working.

This will help us to find approaches on climate – as well as energy – policy that unite us with our neighbours, instead of focusing on divisive issues.



Without overcoming this profound cognitive gap in our societies, no serious climate policies can emerge. The climate policies we have today only exist because of pressure from Brussels

JURAJ MESÍK

(b. 1962) is a Slovak academic and environmental expert and activist, former Slovak Green Party Chairman (1990-1991) and World's Bank Senior Community Foundation Specialist (2003-2008).

Despite being a V4 enthusiast, I am rather sceptical when it comes to the global responsibility of the V4 countries. For centuries, our region remained on the periphery of the West, and, due in part to this marginalisation, it continues to behave in a rather provincial manner. Take our unfulfilled foreign aid commitments, the lacklustre response to the migration wave which started in 2015 or the issue at hand – climate change.

But let us dream! What would climate policies of the V4 look like in an ideal scenario? First of all, in such a scenario our climate policies would stem from both the internal understandings of the citizens and political elites of the Visegrád countries. Without overcoming this profound cognitive gap in our societies, no serious climate policies can emerge and be implemented. All the climate policies we have today only exist because of pressure from Brussels. Their implementation, if any, is consequently lukewarm.

In order to bridge this perceptive gap, we must come to the understanding that we are not poor victims of someone else's sins, but rather belong to the small group of culprits who perpetrated the crime; indeed, we have benefited greatly from the reckless burning of fossil fuels in the past. Our cumulative per capita energy-related CO₂ emissions put Czechs, Poles and Slovaks among the twenty most polluting nations in the world. Hungarians too made it to the top 30 list.¹

A must for any meaningful climate policy will involve the cancelling of the rather perverse subsidies for the extraction and use of coal as well as any other fossil fuel. The very existence of such subsidies proves

how vast the level of human and political ignorance is regarding climate change.

Contrary to subsidies, a carbon tax should be introduced to encourage people as well as businesses to save energy and to invest in clean energy sources. Taxation is a well-known and widely used instrument, which has proved to be a very effective method of discouraging pollution. Unlike complicated, utterly artificial and corruption-prone carbon-trading schemes, which have had essentially no positive effect on the climate, taxation is simple and works. This can be demonstrated through a simple comparison of CO₂ emissions per capita or per GDP dollar/ euro of EU countries with high fuel and energy taxes and the USA, which has effectively no carbon tax. Surprisingly, those countries show rates that are two to three times lower than those in the USA. An added point is the Jevons paradox which illustrates that energy must be expensive; otherwise it ends up wasted regardless of any energy efficiency standards.

An ideal climate policy for the V4 would indeed have many other features, but an integral component would also be adaptation. Whatever we do, 400 ppm of CO₂ is already in the atmosphere which means the global climate will continue to get worse. It will take time and an informed populous to improve the situation, but the situation is not hopeless. Without action, our Central European world will be much warmer, much dryer, water in some parts will become more precious, weather more extreme and food much more expensive. Hopefully the V4 people will realise the inevitable changes we need to sustain our way of life; we do have the time and resources to make this adjustment, but we need to act now.

¹ For details see https://upload.wikimedia.org/wikipedia/commons/7/7c/Cumulative_energy-related_per_capita_carbon_dioxide_emissions_between_1850-2008_for_185_countries.png



The V4 have the political blueprint from the UN Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) system, as completed by the Paris Agreement. Nothing more, but nothing less!

JÁNOS ZLINSZKY

is a Hungarian academic and director of the Sustainable Development Academy of the Regional Environmental Center (REC) in Szentendre, Hungary.

The frames of this opinion paper exclude the presentation of bibliography, or a system of facts, trends or options. Even barest, laconic conclusions cannot be comprehensive on one page, for large, complex systems can only be addressed simplistically at one's own peril. At a certain tipping point of compression, the message turns useless. With this caveat, here is my best summary advice, or rather, plea:

At the brink of 2016, "Humankind expects that every nation will do his duty!"² This duty is disarmingly simple: last year we concluded an agreement about a transformative global development path for the next fifteen years – now "*pacta sunt servanda*"! The V4 must "simply" honour their existing international obligations, adhering to the spirit and intent, willingly and proactively. These nations – as all others – must transform their material flows and social relations from within, as fast as possible, lest the heavy hand of nature imposes any changes.

Regarding climate change, the V4 have the political blueprint from the UN Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) system, as completed by the Paris Agreement. Nothing more, but nothing less! The parallel tracks of sweeping action that require attention are:

- Mainstream climate change mitigation urgently throughout politics and media
- Launch a decisive, ongoing effort to build the human capacities for the transformation.

- Plan, budget, (re)build and (re)equip for the transformation into a circular economy.
- Build - in this order of priority – social, ecological, infrastructural and financial resilience.
- Assist the poorest countries honestly, consequently, and generously to also do the above.

Supported by public goodwill and the optimism that the Paris success generated, climate change considerations and measures must be now declared a lasting political priority, and consequently integrated into national and local policies, strategies and planning as defined by the SDGs.

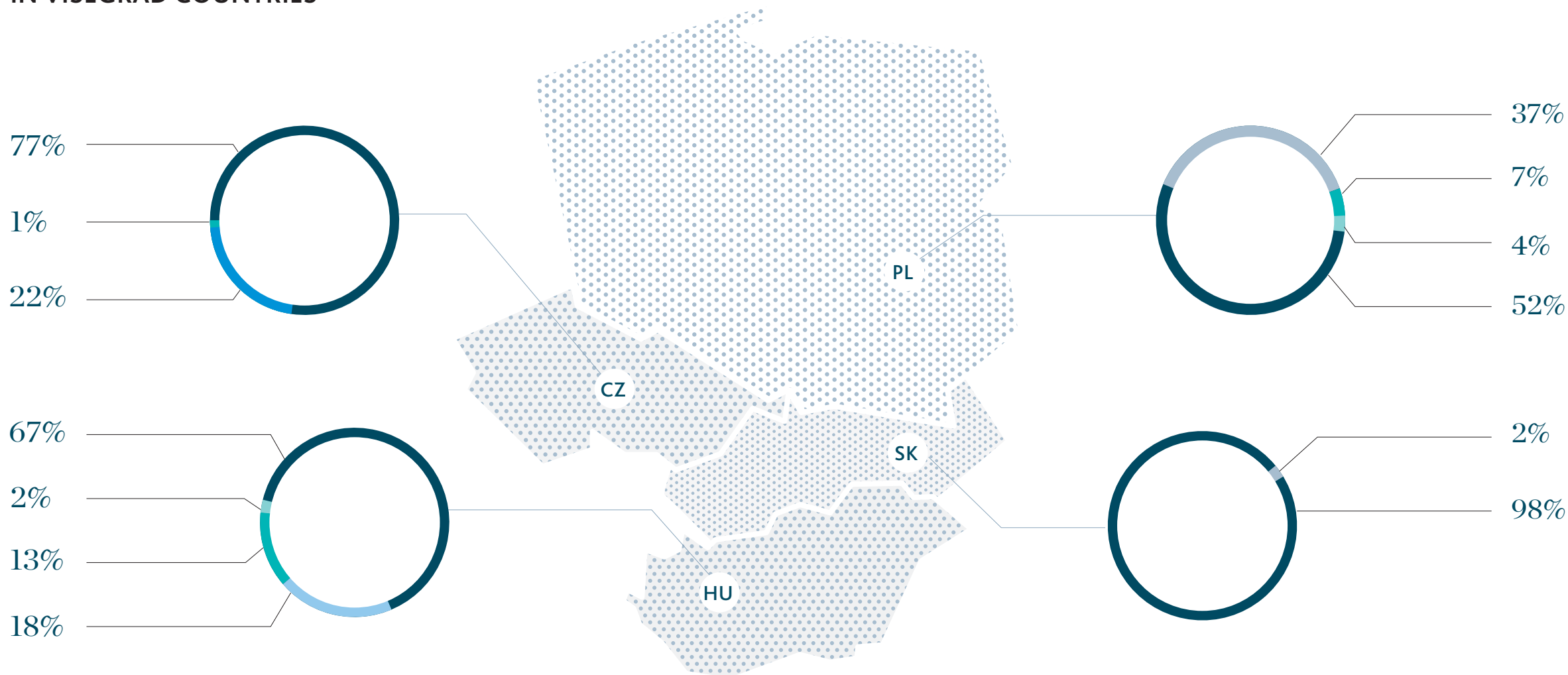
Changing the political agenda hinges on a decisive, ongoing effort to build the capacities for the transformation in all age groups. Finance flows will have to serve the new political goals unequivocally. National budgets and spending must support a pathway towards low GHG emissions and climate resilient development. And let us not cheat ourselves! It will never work without doing away with fossil fuel subsidies - and without doing away with the commercial advertisement of unsustainable goods, services and actions! Instead, openness, learning, co-operation, engagement and altruistic actions are needed from all, statesmen included. The good news is that this is exactly the behaviour that leads to human happiness...

² – to paraphrase Nelson.

ENERGY SECURITY

- WHAT HAS BEEN
ACCOMPLISHED
AND WHAT REMAINS
TO BE DONE?

SOURCES OF GAS IN VISEGRÁD COUNTRIES



SOURCE:
Visegrad Insight 1/2012

■ RUSSIA ■ TURKMENISTAN ■ DOMESTIC
■ GERMANY ■ NORWAY ■ OTHERS

SHARE OF GAS IN ENERGY MIX





Though they shared a similar historical experience, each country has taken different paths. Poland is striving to limit interaction with Russia while Hungary signed a deal with Russia to build two nuclear reactors

VÁCLAV BARTUŠKA

(b. 1968) is a Czech diplomat, politician and journalist, Ambassador-at-Large for Energy Security of the Czech Republic since 2006.

As soon as the Visegrád countries re-gained their independence in 1989, they were faced with the problem of dependency on a single supplier of oil and gas. The fact that this supplier happened to be their former occupier underlined the need for action.

We have achieved the most in oil supplies: at the moment, all four countries have access to the global market, despite three of them being land-locked. Whether it was an oil pipeline from Germany to the Czech Republic (built in 1996) or an upgrade of the existing Adria pipeline from Croatia to Hungary and Slovakia (completed in the last two years), this is a story of success.

For the rest, it is remarkable how different the approaches to energy security were. Though they shared a similar historical experience, each country took different paths. Poland is striving to limit interaction with Russia to an absolute minimum, even excluding Russian companies from certain areas of operation. In contrast, Hungary in 2014 signed an inter-governmental deal with Russia to build two nuclear reactors at Paks.

Regarding natural gas, the Czech Republic fully privatised its companies and assets in 2001 while Slovakia (which originally was following a similar course) partly re-nationalised its gas industry in 2013; Poland never let go of its national champions (this is not limited to the gas sector), and Hungary set itself a goal to create a state utility company which would be not-for-profit. In this set-up, it is not surprising that most of what the V4 does is talk: in June 2013, the four prime ministers signed a memorandum to create a common Visegrád market for natural gas, but nothing came out of it. Subsequently, the Czech Republic is now a de facto part of north-western European gas market (comprising Benelux, Germany and northern France), while Hungary retains 100 per cent dependency on Russia.

In electricity, the Czech Republic, Slovakia and Hungary have a unified market (including Romania), but Poland opted not to be included.

I am convinced that for countries of our size, regional cooperation is the best way forward. Whether this will be under Visegrád banner, remains to be seen.



Energy puts the V4 in the centre of Europe, not only geographically but also economically and politically

JERZY BUZEK

(b. 1940) is the Chairman of the Committee of Industry, Research and Energy of the European Parliament. Former president of the European Parliament and former Prime Minister of Poland.

Energy cooperation and a North-South Energy Corridor to lower our dependence on the monopolized east-west gas supply have been a core aim of the Visegrád Group mentioned explicitly in the founding declaration of 1991. It has been, however, only in the last few years that we can see real progress in this area. Until recently, like in the EU more broadly, the momentum for aligning our countries' energy policies was simply not present.

The supply disruptions of 2006 and 2009 forced us to revisit our approach. Almost half of the EU was affected by the latter of these supply crises, including all Visegrád Group members. This situation, coupled with the unfolding economic crisis, made us realize that ensuring a more stable, affordable and diversified supply of energy is crucial for Europe's overall security, welfare and competitiveness. We also understood that no country is able to handle this challenge alone. We had and still have to cooperate, both at the EU and regional level.

The V4 managed to complement the post-2009 liberalization of the EU energy market with new bottom-up initiatives, supported by EU funds including the European Energy Program for Recovery. Almost every year since then has seen the launch of new interconnectors and reverse flow capacities between the Visegrád countries and on the V4's external borders. The North-South Energy Corridor is becoming a reality and has been designated

one of EU's priority investments in infrastructure. It will allow not only for the swift distribution of gas throughout Central and Eastern Europe, but it will permit gas supplies from new suppliers to other European states - thanks to the new LNG terminals.

Energy puts the V4 in the centre of Europe, not only geographically but also economically and politically. It will suffice to note that the Energy Union, proposed by Poland and brought to life by the Slovak Vice-President of the European Commission, began with the 3rd Energy Package which was adopted during the Czech EU presidency, and receives indispensable technological input from the European Institute of Innovation and Technology headquartered in Budapest.

How to strengthen this central position of the V4? We should continue developing infrastructure to bridge our region with the rest of the EU countries, as well as non-EU neighbours (most notably Ukraine). Secondly, we should strive for leadership in developing the low-emission energy technologies that will allow for a more efficient use of all our indigenous energy sources. Thirdly, we should build on solidarity - promoting and strengthening it. Our regional voice should be part of a single European voice in the energy field, particularly in relations with external suppliers. This is a great challenge but also a great opportunity for Visegrád cooperation. We must make most of it.



Visegrád countries laid a firm foundation for the EU's current efforts to establish a single and unified European energy market

MATTHEW BRYZA

(b. 1964) is American diplomat and international relations specialist, Director of the International Centre for Defence Studies in Tallinn and former United States Ambassador in Azerbaijan (2010-2011).

The Visegrád countries recognized the importance of decreasing their dependence on Russia for oil and natural gas and diversifying their supplies several years before their larger European allies. While this thinking harmonized with Washington's strategic calculus, it was often at odds with the conventional wisdom coming from Berlin, Paris and Rome. In the end, the EU energy security policy evolved toward that of the Visegrád Four's; but this shift occurred only after nearly a decade of belligerence from Moscow that included three cut-offs of natural gas to Ukraine and the EU, and Russian military invasions of Georgia and Ukraine.

When Russia cut natural gas supplies to Ukraine and the EU on January 1, 2006, the Czech Republic's government and energy companies had already been working for ten years to reduce their dependence on Russian energy monopolies. The MERO-IKL oil pipeline, whose construction was inaugurated in March 1996 and completed in 2003, provided Central and Eastern European countries with access to global oil suppliers via the Transalpine Pipeline to the Italian port of Trieste on the Mediterranean Sea.

Similarly, representatives of Poland's government and energy companies strategically worked together to reduce vulnerability to Russian energy supplies, even as larger European powers found it more convenient to view Russia as a "reliable energy supplier". In 2006, shortly after Russia and Germany announced their Nordstream natural gas pipeline, which was to connect the two countries via the Baltic Sea, the then-Polish Defence Minister Radek Sikorski dubbed the project the "Molotov-Ribbontrop Pipeline". Beyond this tough rhetoric, Warsaw

explored concrete countermeasures and finally decided to build a liquid natural gas (LNG) terminal in the Baltic Sea port of Swinoujscie.

In Slovakia, the government resisted a similarly hostile takeover of the Transpetrol oil pipeline by allies of Russian President Putin who had gained control of the major Russian oil company, Yukos, following the arrest of Yukos founder and CEO Mikhail Khodorkovskiy; the Slovak Government paid \$240 million in March 2009 to buy back Yukos's shares in the pipeline, following a protracted legal battle. More recently, Slovakia has been playing a crucial role in providing "reverse flows" of natural gas from the West to the East, supplying Ukraine in an attempt to counter any threatened Russian cut-offs.

Finally, in late 2007, Hungary identified a strategic vulnerability that is only now becoming the focus of an EU energy security policy: insufficient north-south interconnections of natural gas networks in Central and Southern Europe. Hungary's state-affiliated energy company, MOL, proposed the New European Transmission System (NETS) as a solution by unifying the regions' natural gas transmission systems to enable more liquid trading of natural gas, and thereby provide competition to Gazprom's monopoly. More recently, Hungary has joined Slovakia in establishing reverse flows of natural gas into Ukraine.

These efforts by all four Visegrád countries laid a firm foundation for the EU's current efforts to establish a single and unified European energy market via the Third Energy Package, the Connecting Europe Facility, Projects of Common Interest and the Juncker Fund.



The New EU Energy Strategy is a significant step forward on the way to creating an “Energy Union”. What is missing is a cohesive European energy plan which would harmonize energy policies within the EU

JÁN KLEPÁČ

is Executive Director of the Slovak Gas and Oil Association since 2007. Former vice-president of the Slovak parliament (1990). Former general director of the Office of the President of the Slovak Republic.

Challenges in the field of energy are quite similar for all four Visegrád countries. Slovakia and the other V4 countries have learned substantially from the gas crisis of 2009, when Russia stopped delivering natural gas through Ukraine. Though there was a sufficient amount of gas on the market at the time, the main problem was the missing interconnectors. That situation led to the representatives of the V4 countries meeting to agree on the development of the North-South gas corridor that would strengthen significantly the energy security of the V4 countries.

Today the situation in the field of energy is totally different than that of twenty-five or even seven years ago. Due to long-term contracts, Slovakia, for instance, is guaranteed the delivery of both gas and oil for more than a decade. Together with the Czech Republic, Hungary and Romania, Slovakia is part of the electricity market coupling project, which further enhances its energy security. Other Visegrád countries are in similar positions, which means that the irregularity of gas and oil supplies is no longer a danger to their economies. Since the prices of gas, oil and electricity have dropped recently to their lowest level in decades, the situation seems to be quite profitable for the economies of the Visegrád countries.

Apart from these lower costs, another important aspect is the development of interconnectors. As for gas, the brand

new interconnector between Slovakia and Hungary was put into operation in the summer of 2015, while the preparatory works for the Slovak-Polish interconnector are also quite advanced. Furthermore, Slovakia—together with Poland and Hungary—are active participants in the strategic reverse flow of gas to Ukraine. Thanks to this scheme, Ukraine has been able to avoid significant economic and social damage, especially during the winter time.

The New EU Energy Strategy can be considered as a significant step forward on the way to creating an Energy Union. Still, what is missing is a cohesive European energy concept which would harmonize energy policies among all the EU member states. Due to the lack of such a concept, it is possible to pursue projects like Nord Stream 2 by some member states, while some others, including many Central European countries, feel uncomfortable with the idea. The construction of the Nord Stream 2 pipeline would delete Ukraine from the list of important gas transit countries while simultaneously creating adverse effects for other surrounding countries, such as Slovakia. This does not mean that alternative energy projects are not feasible, but they should be beneficial for all the countries in the region. The Eastring project developed by the Slovak transmission company, for example, would improve energy security for Ukraine and the countries in Southeast Europe.



*If we continue to act under
the umbrella of solidarity and
partnership, energy security
can be achieved in the
Visegrád region*

ANITA ORBÁN

(b.1974) is former Ambassador-at-Large for Energy Security of Hungary and author of "Power, Energy and the New Russian Imperialism" (2008).

Energy security has been on the agenda of Visegrád cooperation since 2006 when the first gas crisis took place, and it continues to be on the agenda till this day. Energy security is mostly understood as gas supply security even though other issues – like the stability of the electric grid – have been addressed, as well.

The most important task the Visegrád countries had to achieve in this period was to improve the physical interconnectivity between them. In September 2010, the Visegrád energy ministers wrote a letter urging the European Commission to establish the missing interconnections in the North-South and the South-North directions in the region. Among others, this letter led to the launching of the North-South energy corridor in February 2011. Several other elements of the corridor have been put in place since then; most notably, the Hungarian-Slovak interconnector and the soon to be commissioned LNG terminal in Swinoujście. We have a clear roadmap to commission the missing interconnectors (like Polish-Slovakian) and the necessary upgrades. As soon as they are in operation, the Visegrád countries will be well-connected physically.

The Visegrád countries have also worked together on raising Brussels' and

Washington's awareness about the energy security issues of the region. The Visegrád governments have been instrumental in bringing this issue to the attention of the US Congress, and contributed to the expedited licensing of US LNG companies on sales to non-FTA countries.

The Visegrád countries have not limited cooperation to the Visegrád framework; they have been actively engaged with the wider neighbourhood as well. They convened the first foreign ministerial meeting of the V4+Romania, Bulgaria and Greece in Budapest in February 2014. This meeting planted the seeds on the extension of the North-South corridor to Greece via the Eastern Balkans. Some projects that today form the core of the EU's Central Eastern and South-Eastern European Gas Connectivity (CESEC) initiative have already been identified at that meeting. Cooperation in the energy field with Ukraine as well as with Croatia and Slovenia has also appeared on the agenda.

Have we made significant progress in enhancing the region's energy security? The answer is a clear yes. Is the job done? The answer is no. However, if we continue to act under the umbrella of solidarity and partnership, energy security can be achieved in the Visegrád and the surrounding region.

HOW COULD THE
IMPROVEMENT OF
**INFRASTRUCTURAL
CONNECTIVITY**
CONTRIBUTE
TO THE REGIONAL
DEVELOPMENT
AND COHESION
IN THE VISEGRÁD
GROUP?



**LNG terminal
in Świnoujście**
(Baltic Sea) during
the last days of its
construction on 8
December 2015.



The new connections would ease traffic congestions and will lead to significant decreases in driving-times, not to mention the cost savings that come along with such easements

ĽUBOŠ ĎURIČ

works at the Department for Road and Inland Waterway Projects at the Ministry of Transport of Slovak Republic. Implementor of the Road Sector Projects within Operational Programme Transport (2007-2013). Active in the High Level Working Group on transport connections between the Visegrád Group countries and NETLIPSE.

The completion of the trans-regional transport corridors is one of the determinate factors for the improvement of the national economies in the Visegrád countries.

The new connections would ease traffic congestion and will lead to significant driving-time savings along with the cost savings that come along with such easements. This can boost the economy, make the region more attractive to investors and activate new jobs in all four countries of the Visegrád Group.

Additionally, possible negative impacts on the environment may be reduced by careful traffic planning and design. Also the plans for the recent development of a fast-charging network for electric cars seem to be another good example for the mitigation of negative environmental impacts. Nevertheless, we have to bear in mind the issue of road safety and focus on a reduction in the number of accidents and injuries.

Observing the changing trends in recent years, it can be concluded that people are travelling more, and in particular, they are using cars rather than other modes of

transport. Therefore, in my opinion, the Visegrád countries should prioritise the completion of the missing links in the motorway of the TEN-T corridors as they are the foundation stones of mutual connectivity between the regional centres. However, it still remains a fact that in many West-European countries the road sector is the most successful, and forcing the shift from road to rail has not been fully successful. On the other hand, following the continual growth of car passengers, the next parallel steps should also focus on improving the railway and regional mobility infrastructure in order to make it attractive for passengers. And lastly, the implementation of Intelligent Transport and Information Systems that could enable real-time traffic management will be a key challenge for the future.

I believe that continual enhancement of the mutual transport connections within the Visegrád countries as well as their neighbours will help improve the quality of life for their citizens and accelerate the economic development of the entire region. Moreover, the upgraded infrastructure will make our region more attractive for tourism.



The bottlenecks on the borders have not deterred the dynamic development of trade within the group, but there is still significant economic potential to explore

MATEUSZ GNIAZDOWSKI

(b. 1974) is a Polish international relations specialist and assistant director of Centre for Eastern Studies in Warsaw.

In 1991, the V4 states declared they would pay special attention to the infrastructural development within the region and cross regional co-operation was seen as crucial in Central Europe. The previous economic plans were to be erased including any transport schemes from the old communist bloc, which had often served Soviet transit and military needs.

Establishing connections with Western Europe became the priority. Naturally, it resulted from the significant transportation needs associated with the quickly developing economic co-operation; the V4 had become the greatest trade partner in the world for Germany, and it also turned Vienna into one of the biggest European transport hubs. However, the strengthening of the internal cohesion of the individual countries was poorly synchronised with the consistency of the whole V4 region. Each V4 state needed to develop its domestic links between its larger cities and importance was not placed on developing the intraregional infrastructure. There is just one new motorway between the V4 members (between Poland and the Czech Republic), and many of the rail connections seem to be poorer than in 1991.

Although the bottlenecks on the borders have not deterred the dynamic

development of trade within the V4, there is still significant economic potential to explore and tap into once the connections have improved. This also means that broader infrastructure will create opportunities for the peripheral areas to become attractive for investors, especially the mountainous regions so popular among tourists. That being said, the Carpathian mountain range is where the most barriers and bottlenecks are located in Central Europe; however, this issue has been addressed in the Common Spatial Development Strategy of the V4 + Romania and Bulgaria.

In recent years, territorial cohesion has become an important element of EU policy. Trans-European networks are aimed at supporting the development of internal markets and to increase the economic and social cohesion within the EU (e.g. to connect the regions without access to any sea and the more peripheral countries with the centre of Europe). More specifically, the V4 states are responsible for developing connections between the Adriatic, Baltic and Black seas. Most of the options for Romania and Bulgaria go through the V4, and Poland remains the main land link which the Baltic States have with the rest of the EU.



Homogeneous network planning, a sound modal balance and the interconnection of national networks will eliminate dead ends and isolated links in the current networks

MARTIN KVIZDA

(b. 1969) is a Czech economist, academic and associate Professor at the Institute for Transport Economics, Geography and Policy in Masaryk University of Brno.

The development of transport networks and the strengthening of functional cross-border connections are among the main priorities set by the European Union. The Visegrád Group countries tend to approach this issue incoherently, and the absence of any plan and coordinated development slows down the improvement of the region's internal cohesion. Due to numerous historical events which had affected the dispersion and structure of the population and due to the economic and political transformation and restructuring of each nation's economy and the economies of individual regions, which are coupled with geographically difficult conditions (marginalized or structurally affected areas in mountains), vast peripheral districts were created in cross-border areas and sometimes even between home regions. Harmonisation of the Visegrád Group countries' transport

policies would offer an improved structure of transport services, a strengthening of transport links in cross-border regions and the potential for their economic development to be revived.

Homogeneous network planning, a sound modal balance and the interconnection of national networks will eliminate dead ends and isolated links in the current networks. Improvement of the existing system combined with additional, missing connections and cross-border nodes between Visegrád Group countries will increase the general mobility of the population and the efficiency of freight transport – not only between individual countries, but also among the border regions. Better accessibility to transport services will in turn lower the transportation costs, which exerts positive influence upon the spatial distribution of populations and of economic and industrial activities.



Ukraine is transforming and it is crucial for them to recreate and rebuild their road and energy infrastructures. This would help the stabilisation of their political situation as well as the region as a whole



PIOTR NAIMSKI

(b. 1951) is a Polish politician and professor. Head of the Office for State Protection (1992) and Deputy Minister of Economy (2005-2007).

Proper communication between the governments of the Visegrád Group regarding their energy infrastructures does not only boost the economic cooperation between the countries, but it also contains a political component as it requires international cooperation and the engagement of governments to make common political and economic plans concerning the expansion of road, pipeline and energy networks to name a few. Moreover, it facilitates the consolidation of businesses and interests strengthening the cooperation in our region, which is one of our strategic goals.

We want all the Central and Eastern European countries—this of course includes the Visegrád Group but also the Baltics, Bulgaria, Romania and the Balkans as well—to be important political powers in the continent and in the European Union, which currently seems to be struggling with multifaceted crises and undergoing a visible and dramatic transformation. It is because of these circumstances that our region must be united with regards to our policies in both European and broader contexts.

There are specific plans concerning the development of the road infrastructure in the region, spearheaded by the Hungarians, who are particularly focused on the issue. We have had constant communication with Budapest about the motorway

investment—marked in Poland as SI9—and which will eventually connect the Baltic countries with Hungary, travelling through Slovakia and along the eastern border of Poland. The first stage of the investment is to be built between Rzeszów and Barwinek. Our mutual understanding is that each country will cover the cost of the motorway passing through their borders.

It is important that we look beyond the current boundaries of the EU, and in this respect we could view Ukraine as a strategic partner. Ukraine is transforming and it is crucial for them to recreate and rebuild their road and energy infrastructures, which would help in the stabilisation of their political situation as well as the region as a whole. For example, increasing the capacity of the gas interconnector in Hermanowicze would enable the transmission of gas from Swinoujście, in Poland, to Ukraine and eventually Hungary. There are very real and existing plans to accomplish this, but it does require political support and stability. Although every country interested and involved in the project agrees that infrastructural issues are of the upmost importance, these are mostly long-term investments and projects, which will outlive any one government's term of office. Therefore, the above mentioned political stability and continued commitment are necessary components if we are even to consider the successful completion of such plans.



The more economically and physically secure the links are, the tighter the economic contacts, cultural exchanges and touristic interest will be towards each other's countries

GYÖRGY WÁBERER

(b.1956) is a Hungarian businessman, chairman of the Hungarian Road Transport Association, Prime Ministerial Commissioner for the development of the Hungarian logistics sector. He was CEO of Waberer's International until 2016.

In February 2016, the Hungarian and Polish Prime Ministers, Viktor Orbán and Beata Szydło respectively, agreed on connecting the Eastern parts of the countries with a new four-lane highway. I am convinced that the implementation of this plan would not only strengthen the cooperation of the two countries but will also give an impetus to the overall economic cooperation of the V4 countries. The better the connection's quality as well as the more economically and physically secure the links are, the tighter the economic contacts, cultural exchanges and touristic interest will be towards each other's countries.

The current state of the transport infrastructure does not support the improvement of relations. From the towns of Eastern Hungary, which are otherwise easily and quickly accessible via highway, reaching the industrial areas of Slovakia and Poland requires a lengthy and tiring drive to the North. Highways are sparse; therefore, quicker and safer travel often faces obstacles. Moreover, the substandard condition of the roads increases travel time to the destination, which affects transportation costs adversely.

In Poland for example, due to the quality of the network, daytime traffic bans are regularly imposed during the heaviest summer heatwaves. Such measures force drivers of larger vehicles to drive overnight, thus increasing traffic safety risks. All this would theoretically call for the development of a network of truck rest areas. As long as there are no highways, setting up rest areas more frequently would help significantly.

In Slovakia, the technology of toll collection also slows the freight transport on the road since the toll collection device there can only be used after having been charged in advance. The introduction of a posterior payment system would significantly help transport companies.

Beside the improvement of technical conditions, the intensity of connectedness could be enhanced by the reduction of administration as well.

Hence, when the two Prime Ministers agreed on the seemingly technical question of road investment, they took a big step towards improving the conditions that can energize the Visegrád Cooperation.

WHERE SHOULD
THE **EXTERNAL**
PRIORITIES
OF VISEGRÁD
GROUP LIE?

EXTERNAL PRIORITIES
OF THE V4 – KEY POINTS





Visegrád must have a policy about how they see Eastern Europe's future. Once they agree on this they could begin to lobby for their policies inside the EU

JUDY DEMPSEY

is an Irish journalist, editor in chief of Strategic Europe webpage, former Financial Times, Irish Times and The Economist Eastern Europe correspondent and the author of several publications about Eastern Europe.

The Visegrád Group cannot have any external policies or hope to wield any influence in the EU unless they first iron out the fundamental differences among each other. The Ukraine crisis, Russia's invasion of Eastern Ukraine and even energy policies, confirmed Visegrád's inability to have a common position even though these two crises should have had the opposite effect. Just because Visegrád could agree on refusing to accept refugees does not mean its unity and sense of purpose has been strengthened. On the contrary, Visegrád is weak and verging on irrelevance. Identifying external priorities makes it even harder.

Realistically, the biggest external challenge facing Visegrád is Eastern Europe. Visegrád has no strategy toward the region. This is short-sighted, disappointing and dangerous. The lands between Russia and the EU are unstable and unpredictable. They cannot be ignored. As neighbours, Visegrád should be the first to understand that. As neighbours that have had to cope with all the challenges of political, economic and social transition, they are in the unique position to offer an "insider's perspective".

Precisely because of these experiences and geographical proximity, Visegrád has an opportunity to forge a strong

policy toward the region. It should be focused on supporting independent civil society movements and individuals. It should be about introducing packages of scholarships to students, undergraduates and graduates to study in the Visegrád universities. It should be about supporting much more enthusiastically the Endowment for Democracy. It should be about strengthening the infrastructures, such as roads and trains and energy, something that Visegrád could and should do much, much better inside their own region.

Above all, Visegrád must have a policy about how they see Eastern Europe's future. Once they agree on this, they could begin to lobby for their policies inside the EU. That means working very closely with Germany, Sweden and Finland. These are the three countries that understand the region – and Russia.

And herein lies Visegrád's biggest and unanswered question: what does it want to be? A small and regional group in Central Europe known mostly to the cognoscenti or one that is willing to expand and that wants to make a difference. For Visegrád to have an external policy means each one of them defining one's national interests and then finding a common aspiration. That has yet to happen.



Prospects for the V4 countries internal stability and economic prosperity depend primarily on a well-functioning EU market

ALEXANDER DULEBA

(b. 1966) is a Slovak political scientist and analyst. He is director of the Slovak Foreign Policy Association (SFPA) and lecturer at the Institute of Political Science of the Presov University.

The number one priority for the V4 countries external action should be their cooperation within the European Union. Prospects for the V4 countries internal stability and economic prosperity depend primarily on a well-functioning EU market. The main task should be the prevention of any emerging fundamental disruptions—that the current centrifugal tendencies in non-market EU policy areas (e.g. the migration crisis) might cause—to the fundament of the EU integration and to the EU single market. The recent financial crisis in the eurozone, including the so-called “Greek crisis”, posed the system a problem regarding the future shape of European integration, which has yet to be settled.

The formation of the eurozone group within the EU—a group of member states that work closer and make decisions in the area of fiscal policies without direct participation of the non-euro member states—first, created two categories of member states, and second, does have an impact on the functioning of the EU market and thus on all member states. The emerging inequality among member states in decision-making processes is one of the main reasons for the eventual secession of the United Kingdom. Should it happen, it will unbalance an already fragile geopolitical situation, a situation created within the EU over the last forty years.

A well-functioning EU is a guarantee-provider for equal-standing, sovereignty and national security of the all V4 countries in European affairs. In addition, V4 countries should aim at strengthening their infrastructural cohesion, especially in the field of energy and transport, which is the very basis of the EU investment programs. The main starting point for future V4 EU policies should be a clear understanding that there is no national interest, of any of the V4 country that might be better served or secured outside the European Union.

The second priority should be a more traditional focus of the V4 towards Eastern Europe and the Western Balkans. Even though the Kroměříž Declaration was adopted twenty-five years ago, the process of post-war and post-communist transformation of these two strategic regions, located in the Visegrád neighbourhood, has not been completed yet. Special attention should be paid to Eastern Europe, especially in the context of recent Russian aggression against Ukraine. V4 countries should aim at assisting Ukraine in building democratic institutions, fighting corruption, implementing reforms and implementing an association agreement with the EU. A successful, EU-oriented Ukraine will bring more stability, prosperity and security to the whole of Europe, including the V4 countries.



The V4 has to use its limited resources wisely and effectively to stand as a role-model in order to reinvent and re-energize EU support for the European fate of the countries in the East and in the Balkans

MICHAL KOŘAN

(b. 1977) is a Czech political scientist and Assistant Professor at the Department of International Relations and European Studies at Masaryk University in Brno. Researcher at the Institute of International Relations.

The international environment has changed rather fundamentally since the Visegrád Group commemorated its 20th anniversary in 2011. Because of the ever more assertive Russian aggressions and turbulent developments in the Middle East, Europe has seen the return of traditional geopolitics and the power-based understanding of international relations.

Throughout its history, the V4 endorsed a world-view that stressed internationalism and multilateralism, encouraged efforts to overcome national and mental boundaries, nurtured notions of cooperative security and with it a mutually shared stability, garnered prosperity and fostered peace.

Since late 2013, however, the Visegrád countries had to re-adjust to the new security and political environment within and around Europe, caused by a two-fold security related crisis: assertive Russian actions in Eastern Europe and an unprecedented flow of migrants fleeing from the conflict-stricken regions of the Middle East and Africa.

Thus, the first key question for the V4 is how to strike the right balance between properly and credibly contributing to European, regional and national security on the one hand and not compromising its commitment to cooperative security, to openness and to internationalism on the other.

Secondly, it has become clear that the job of ending the division of Europe is far from finished. On the contrary, multiple schisms are deepening, and they cut across geographic, national, socioeconomic and political lines. The V4 consists of countries that suffered heavily due to the conditions they endured while under Soviet rule, and if any of these divisions widen or become more rigid, then the countries will suffer again.

It is in the vital interest of the Visegrád countries to insist that the future of Europe cannot and will not be centred on power-based relations, sealed borders and deepening divisions within Europe and between Europe and the outside world. The V4 has to find enough courage, strength, creativity and determination to withstand the tendency to close-off, into ever more narrowly defined confines and fortresses, and to promote and infuse solidarity and openness back into the project of Europe.

The V4 has to use its limited resources wisely and effectively to stand as a role-model in order to reinvent and re-energize EU support for the European fate of the countries in the East and in the Balkans. At the same time, it has to demonstrate solidarity with the countries that feel most vulnerable to the challenges coming from the Middle East and turbulent African regions.



Preserving unity inside the V4 and avoiding situations where they could be played off of one another by those outside of the group should become the priority of all priorities

OLAF OSICA

(b. 1974) is a Polish sociologist and political scientist, chairman of the Centre for Eastern Studies (OSW) Board, director for risk assessment at Polityka Insight.

The real priorities of a foreign policy of any state should reflect the overall dynamics of the international context (i.e. threats for national security or opportunities for the expansion of the state's role vis-a-vis other players). This should also apply to alliances and inter-state groupings.

Today, the V4 faces the sort of challenges which lay at the very root of the group emergence. The European political and security system is again in a state of flux with the institutional framework is unfit for the present and future developments in and outside of Europe. The V4 is hence confronted with, or indeed put in between, three overlapping crises. The first is the crisis of the west (i.e. European integration), followed by the end of the east as we know it (the Ukrainian Conflict and the end of the post-Soviet model of socio-economic development) and lastly the collapse of the south (i.e. war, terrorism and the refugee crisis).

At the same time, any room to manoeuvre in these external actions has never seemed so narrow as it is today.

Strategic priority should be given, therefore, to the task of not being squeezed by the aforementioned arc of crisis to the extent in which the V4 member states would opt for individual ways to cope with the challenge. Poland may be inclined to focus on the eastern dimension with Slovakia, and to respond to an ever closer eurozone integration with Hungary and the Czech Republic, while neglecting the migration and the Balkans issues of the south, an area of importance for the Hungarians, Czechs and Slovaks.

Preserving unity inside the V4 and avoiding situations where they could be played off of one another by those outside of the group should become the priority of all priorities. In these times of profound crises to the European order, nothing else is worth the time and energy of Central Europe.



Instead of defining new external priorities, the Visegrád should keep focusing its existing resources on the Western Balkans and on the Eastern Partnership countries

ANDRÁS RÁCZ

(b. 1980) is a Hungarian historian, international relations specialist, Senior Research Fellow on Eastern Neighbourhood and Russia at the Finnish Institute of International Affairs (FIIA) and Member of the Board at the Centre for Euro-Atlantic Integration and Democracy (CEID). The views expressed here are his own.

In order to avoid the trap of wishful thinking, defining the external priorities of the Visegrád Group should start from taking a closer look at the resources available. Two factors seem to be clear. First, it is highly unlikely that the resources currently available for foreign policy in the Visegrád countries would significantly grow, mainly due to domestic economic reasons. This applies to financial, personnel and infrastructural resources alike. Second, and obviously not unrelated to the first element, the same stagnation will apply to the International Visegrad Fund; though the budget of the IVF is gradually growing, there will be no strategic raise in the funding any time soon.

All in all, the countries of the Visegrád region do not have the resources necessary for any strategic shift in their foreign policy orientations. Opening a new consulate here or deploying a few more diplomats there is not equal to setting a fundamentally new foreign policy direction. No Visegrád country can suddenly become a major player in Africa or a key actor in Asia just because its leaders declare so. Such a shift would take years, if not decades.

Another factor that may help define the external priorities is the geopolitical changes taking place in the two foreign

policy areas of traditional focus for the V4. The migration crisis is heavily affecting the Western Balkans countries both in terms of economy and stability. Consequently, there will be a great need to increase the resources dedicated to research into the core reasons and trends of migration, preferably by supporting the already well-established migration research centres in the region.

So too, the Eastern Partnership region is much more unstable than it has ever been since the dissolution of the Soviet Union. We should not forget: there is an active war going on in the direct neighbourhood of the Visegrád, namely the conflict in Eastern Ukraine. Due to the geographic proximity of these regions to Central Europe, the Visegrád countries cannot afford abandoning them and begin defining brand new foreign policy priorities. This is simply not the right moment to do so.

Hence, in my opinion, instead of defining new external priorities, the Visegrád should keep focusing its existing resources on the Western Balkans and on the Eastern Partnership countries, focusing mainly on Ukraine and Moldova from the latter. This is in our best interest, not only for reasons of coherence and visibility, but also for the very security of the Visegrád region.

HOW CAN V4 **HELP**
DEMOCRACIES
FLOURISH?



Euromaidan 2013



We need to understand the local needs and context better, and find novel ways to support local actors. We must listen to new voices, even if they are surprising or critical

ÉVA BÖRDŐS

(b. 1981) is a lawyer (Eötvös Loránd University) and political scientist (Central European University). She is head of the development cooperation programs at the Foundation for Development of Democratic Rights (DemNet) in Budapest and a member of the board at the Hungarian Association of NGOs for Development and Humanitarian Aid (HAND).

The promotion of democracy in developing countries has been the centre of donor attention over the last several decades, and after the successful democratization of Central and Eastern Europe, many expected the newly emerging donors, especially the Visegrád countries, to lead the way.

While the V4 designed their own national development systems individually, experts advocated for closer cooperation in sharing their transition experience with developing countries. Scholars, activists and officials urged for more joint projects and pointed to possible synergies to develop cooperation—specifically focused on the promotion of democracy—which could be brought into the V4’s international affairs. Despite the similarities of their development cooperation, history, values and challenges, experts tend to agree that the synergies have largely gone untapped. Strong rhetorical commitments towards democracy promotion have rarely been translated into practice.

In the meantime, the discourse about the nature of democracy itself has also changed significantly. It seems it is time to go back to square one and ask: what it is exactly developed countries in the West, including the V4, wish to promote? Why have so many attempts of transporting the Western type of democracy failed? Democracy, as known in the West, is not a model that fits all, and as such it cannot

and should not be imported from the outside. Though, the question remains: to what extent can we make compromises and “expand” the meaning of democracy?

This debate will continue as the implementation of the new Post-2015 agenda, which placed good governance at its core, progresses. We must listen to those encouraging us to be less timid about promoting democracy and capacity building. We need to understand the local needs and context better, and find novel ways to support local actors. We must listen to new voices, even if they are surprising or critical, include original, non-formalized groups and move forward from a purely project-based approach.

As this new era starts, the V4—often criticized for their “own” approach to democracy—has the chance again to unite forces. Thanks to the core element of the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs), universality, such endeavours may serve as an opportunity for the V4 themselves to discuss the meaning of democracy. We need to remember that by adopting the SDGs, all UN member states have committed themselves to “build effective, accountable and inclusive institutions at all levels”, to ensure “public access to information and protect fundamental freedoms”, to “reduce corruption and bribery in all their forms” and to promote “the rule of law at the national and international levels”.



As the natural bridge between the East and the West, we can offer insight into many of the controversial issues dividing Europe today

PAVOL DEMEŠ

(b. 1956) is a Slovak expert in civil society and international relations, a non-resident senior fellow with the German Marshall Fund of the United States, the Director for Central and Eastern Europe of the GMF US (2000-2010), Foreign Policy Advisor to the President of the Slovak Republic (1993-97) and Slovak Minister of International Relations (1991-92).

A group of us who were involved in organizing the February celebration for the 25th anniversary of the Visegrád Group thought a pleasant precursor to the festivities would be to meet with students and other young citizens the day before the event. The reasons for the meeting were varied, but it seemed appropriate to commemorate the anniversary of our partnership with a discussion which included the next generation, who must take up the charge and define the future uses of the organisation. It took place at the Charles University in Prague, a storied institution known for promoting discussion and a more fitting location for conversing about the – at times turbulent – contemporary EU and V4 issues would be difficult to find.

It also afforded the opportunity for us to deliver a report, which we had been preparing, related to these important issues of the day: migration, the refugee crisis and coordinated national policies to mention just a few. It is our feeling that the bonds that were named and solidified a quarter of a century ago are just as strong and important as they are today. No matter the crises we are facing, there is no tendency to dissipate, dissolve or rearrange the group. Through our coordinated efforts, either nationally or regionally, we can help each other overcome issues which are splintering the basis of

European identity and the European project as a whole.

One of our greatest offerings to Europe is also being undermined through a series of internal and external issues; issues which have the capability of weakening the democratic forces of the civil societies in the Visegrád Group. The contribution I am referring to is that of the new, Central European narrative. As the natural bridge between the East and the West, we can offer insight into many of the controversial issues dividing Europe today. Sadly, the current state of our political and democratic institutions is less than stellar, and this is one of the main roadblocks in our drive to become a more predominant voice in Europe. While there are times when we might disagree, largely due to differing historical perspectives, we have no desire to become isolationist or detach from the larger European framework. Further, I do not think the Visegrád Group will destabilise the existing or future European unity, nor do I think we will build a “bad guy” reputation within the European Union. On the contrary, I think the people of the Visegrád Group value that we are part of the larger European and transatlantic family, and we will be searching to find new ways of adding value to these organisations, to protect the European project and values which we started to develop after ‘89.



People trusted Brussels because they believed that it was the ally of the people against the local corrupt elite. Now it is perceived as ally of the elite against the popular will



IVAN KRASTEV

(b. 1965) is a Bulgarian political scientist, Chairman of the Centre for Liberal Strategies in Sofia.

Democracy is not the problem in Central and Eastern Europe. What you see in this region is a crisis, but it is much more a crisis of liberalism than a crisis of democracy. The crisis of liberalism in my view takes form in several major dimensions.

The first problem is the restriction of national sovereignty, and the simple solution would be to return to a sovereigntist view of politics and the state. In the beginning of the transition to the EU, people trusted Brussels much more than their own governments because they believed that Brussels was the ally of the people against the local corrupt elite. What changed is that Brussels is now perceived as the ally of the corrupted elite against the popular will.

The following two issues—the burgeoning resentment of the populous and migration and the unsettled and unequal position of the second generation of migrants—are linked, however indirectly, as Visegrád is not as homogenous a place as many pretend it to be.

Evidently, Poland has once again become an important country, and herein lies the problem—the success has incentivised people to give up more power to politicians while, paradoxically, still maintaining a general mistrust of politicians as a whole.

Why are people not afraid that the government is going to dismantle, for example, judicial review?

I think the reasons behind this behaviour is a general resentment—people have started to believe that the separation of power is an excuse for politicians not to deliver. Accountability becomes nearly impossible because when short-comings or missteps occur, politicians use a myriad of excuses which they argue block their attempts at making effective progress.

From this point of view, the separation of powers, instead of being regarded as an instrument in the hands of the people against the elite, transforms into an alibi for the elites' inaction or ineptitude. This results in a strong anti-institutional sentiment, and therefore, people become uninterested in parties. This combination of factors has a unique influence on a much more active citizenship; an influence which can lead to the desire for a strong leader.

This notion seems to be prevalent in the Visegrád, but beyond the longing for a strong leader, the populace seems to want someone brazen, someone ready to cross borders and take a stance against political correctness. In fact, this very affronting nature is becoming something essentially important in itself.



The Eastern Partnership was inspired by the Visegrád Group and it has taken on a similar functionality of another porch showing Europe that multilateral cooperation is possible

RADOSŁAW SIKORSKI

(b. 1963) is a Polish politician and journalist, former Minister of National Defence (2005-2007), Minister of Foreign Affairs (2007-2014) and Marshal of the Sejm (2014-2015), currently a Senior Fellow in the Center for European Studies at the Harvard University.

The original function of the Visegrád was about convincing our partners from Western Europe that since we were able to cooperate with each other, we would also make constructive members of the European Union. However, the V4 also created a buffer for the more developed economies of the West from the social and political aspects of the former communist states once held under the sway of the Soviet Union; the V4 acted, in essence, as an Eastern porch to the EU.

From the very beginning, the issue of democracy has been of the utmost importance for the Visegrád Group, and when this fundamental component was challenged, we did not hesitate to act. This was exemplified by the suspension of Slovakia's active membership in the V4 when it was ruled by Prime Minister Vladimír Mečiar.

Since our progress and determination during the years that preceded our accession was so focused, the V4 was presented as the paragon of successful transformation for the Eastern Partnership (EP). More generally, the EP was inspired by the Visegrád Group, and—to protract the metaphor—it has taken on a similar functionality and purpose of another porch, to the now extended European house, showing Europe that multilateral cooperation is possible.

The reason for this hesitation is not our unwillingness to help burgeoning or

struggling nations, but because we know all too well the amount of time and effort it takes to forge the foundations of modern, European-centred societies.

We spent eight years turning Poland into a democratic Mecca and to make Warsaw a home for numerous pro-democratic institutions; efforts which coalesced with a congress, established by Bronisław Geremek, on the 10th anniversary of the Community of Democracies. We managed to organise a new seat to ODiHR (Office for Democratic Institutions and Human Rights)—the most significant institution of OSCE—which supervises elections in countries around the world. Furthermore, I have had the good fortune to be the initiator of the European Endowment for Democracy (EED).

Poland has also become the place for dialogues and discussions on democratisation, housed in a centre in Natolin (a district of Warsaw). Moreover, the Polish Institute of Diplomacy organised trainings and workshops for diplomats especially from the EP countries. Long standing support for Bielsat TV for Belarus and assistance to Ukraine during EuroMaidan come in accord also with V4 priorities.

The brand we worked hard to create was priceless; it was one of the pillars of our co-operation with the USA, and the weakening of this brand is deteriorating our capability to shape the world.



What does have the potential to greatly diminish or harm the V4 brand in emerging democracies is a lack of foreign policy strategy and an ambivalence in bilateral relations

VLAĐKA VOTAVOVÁ

(b. 1988) is a Czech international relations expert, Director of AMO: Association for International Affairs, foreign policy think tank and NGO founded in 1997.

One could rightfully hesitate when deciding whether the V4 is a stakeholder that is entitled to help other world democracies prosper. Looking back at the last few years, we have seen what some have called an unprecedented “democratic backlash” in all four Visegrád countries. This pattern went hand-in-hand with the ever-rising position of populism, and not to mention the persistent structural problems such as barriers in the rule of law, a lack of democratic accountability, corruption and clientelism in the state and self-governing institutions.

That being said, we should not prevent V4 foreign policies from focusing on empowering civil societies, offering human rights assistance or promoting democracy. As the history of deeply-rooted democratic societies shows us, a perfect democracy is simply non-existent; the path towards it never ends, and this challenging process of building a democracy requires constant cultivation and care. Even now, we are witnessing an increasing support of illiberal tendencies in the stable democracies with far more developed political culture such as the U.S. or France. Nevertheless, it does not automatically mean they are leaving or abandoning the democratic narrative with which they have followed. In numerous occasions in modern history, democracy has proven its capacity to absorb these, at times, destabilising elements.

What matters in the case of the Visegrád Group is its proven track record with political, economic and—the only partly finished—societal transition to democracy. The experience far from being smooth and often criticized for a number of shortcomings remains credible from

the perspective of our eastern or southern partners, countries that are in a more painful transition period at the moment. Specifically, the practice of the last twenty-five years indicates that the countries that are able to profit the most from the lessons the V4 learned are those in the regions of the Western Balkans and the Eastern Partnership. By no chance, the practitioners refer to “lessons learned” instead of “best practices”, a wording that is linked to the V4’s ability to admit their mistakes and provide others with recommendations on how to avoid them. Together with their combined histories and non-imperial past, the Visegrád Group is strengthening its trustworthiness.

On the other hand, what does have the potential to greatly diminish or harm the V4 brand in emerging democracies is a lack of foreign policy strategy and an ambivalence in bilateral relations. An example of this inability to rethink old patterns was shown when the Czechs sold arms supplies to the Egyptian state apparatus while simultaneously supporting the transition to democracy. Yet, the V4’s active participation in democratic assistance in North Africa at the outset of the Arab Spring illustrates a growing awareness of the influence the V4 can have, even outside the traditional, European borders.

Unfortunately, the V4 are missing the opportunity to utilise the observations it gained during the Arab Spring in the MENA region, and transform this knowledge into rational answers to the refugee crisis. Only time will tell how the Visegrád response, lacking in humanitarian and liberal dimensions, will damage the V4 reputation inside of Europe and abroad.

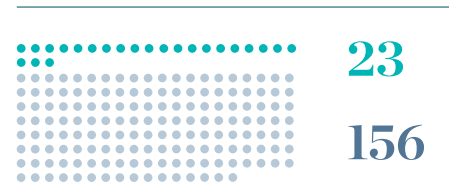
WHAT ARE
THE MAIN ARISING
**NEW SECURITY
CHALLENGES**
AND HOW SHOULD
THE VISEGRÁD
COUNTRIES ADDRESS
THEM?

MILITARY BALANCE IN THE V4 NEIGHBORHOOD

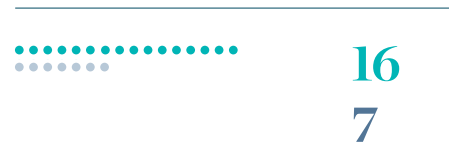
■ ACTIVE ARMED FORCES (in thousands)
■ ESTIMATED RESERVISTS (in thousands)

SOURCE:
The Military Balance 2016

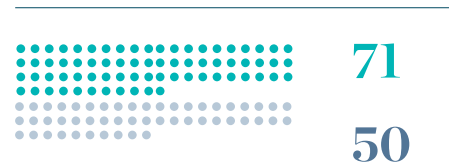
AUSTRIA



LITHUANIA



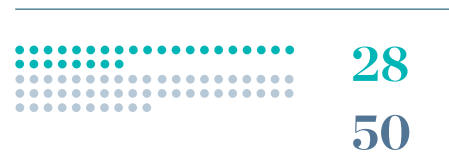
ROMANIA



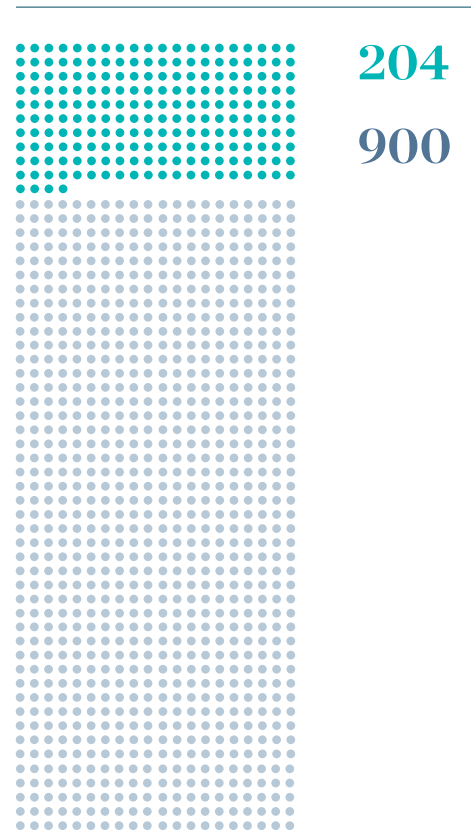
CROATIA



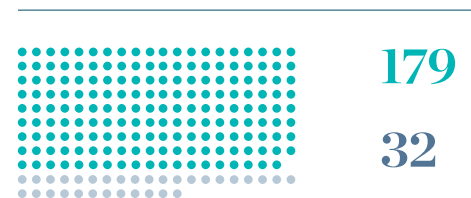
SERBIA



UKRAINE



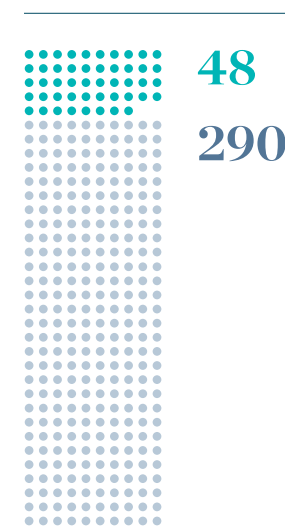
GERMANY



SWEDEN



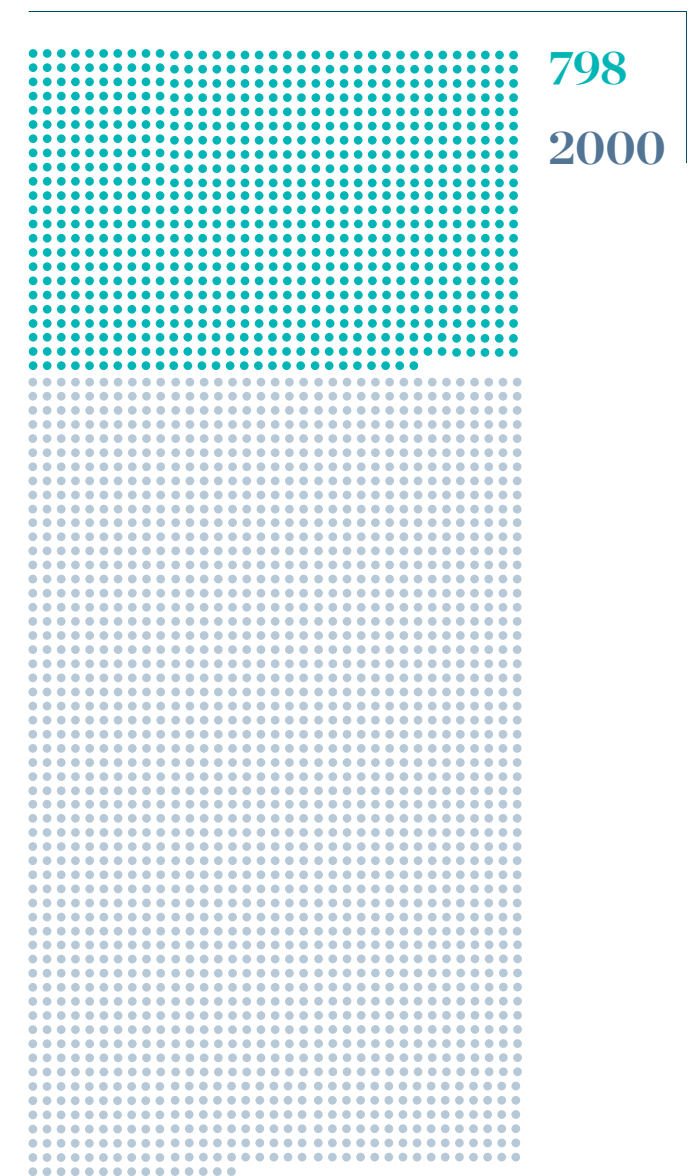
BELARUS



SLOVENIA



RUSSIA



CZECH REP.



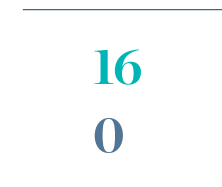
HUNGARY



POLAND



SLOVAKIA





Energy companies could merge to compete on a global level, and a Visegrád bank should be created to support small and medium-size businesses, especially in the technological sector

TOMASZ CHŁOŃ

(b. 1961) is a Polish diplomat and hungarianist, Ambassador of Poland in Estonia (2005-2010) and in Slovakia (2013-2015).

There is no meaningful debate about Visegrád's future and security challenges without considering the European Union and NATO at its core. The causes and consequences of the crises surrounding the European Union and the transatlantic area are interconnected. Sometimes one cannot help but make parallels even with the Cold War and consider the area on the verge of a geopolitical conflict. While these are the external factors which should be deliberated, the internal factors relate primarily to the European project's weakness in upholding the ambitions of new generation and, in particular, the Visegrád Group's (V4) economic model based on a cheaper work force which is now dwindling away.

As a result, the V4's answer to political, social, economic and military security threats and risks should be comprehensive and imbedded in the institutional framework of the EU and NATO. To highlight the regional dimension, it is also crucial to expand its strategic infrastructure especially when it comes to developing the connection between the countries (e.g. the Via Carpathia) and the energy and research sectors (a more assertive use of EU funds). Furthermore, energy and banking companies could merge to be able to compete on a global level and a Visegrád bank should be created to support small and medium-size businesses, especially in the technology sector. Such infrastructural undertakings would be indispensable also for creating stronger links between Visegrád and Northern and Southern Europe.

Combining the capabilities of the Central European countries creates numerous opportunities that one member would not be able to accomplish which is why the V4 defence industries should merge as well. In my opinion, the Czech Republic may play a pivotal role, given its considerable influence on Slovakia. As for Poland, it should be the main advocate for this process since they spend more on defence than all other nations that joined NATO after 1989 combined.

Moreover, V4 security policies need more consistency and trust. In the context of the EU, the V4 Battlegroup cannot become a mere episode, and the active use of battlegroups could be promoted to protect borders, for instance.

The geopolitical map is changing and NATO is in dire need of new defence planning and procedures of the highest quality, and Visegrád must become more of a common operational space. AWACS should not require parliamentary decisions or "visas" for tanks. As for capabilities, they must take into consideration the compatibility of defence systems and the synergy of industries.

In twenty-five years, Visegrád has probably achieved more than its founders could have hoped for. However, its governments could convene a panel of wise individuals which, together with expert help, would propose a strategy for the development of the group for the next quarter century and which could also be the answer to the existing security challenges.



The integrity of Central Europe is in peril

MATTHEW KAMINSKI

(b. 1971) is an American journalist, executive editor of POLITICO's European edition, former member of the Wall Street Journal Editorial Board.

Who would have thought that Europe's margins – places that always, as Czeslaw Milosz wrote, “knew far more about the West than the West ever knew or cared about the East” – could change the world by remaking the continent, bring down an empire of tyranny and rekindle the dream of a free, liberal and whole Europe. Those who were lucky to see their creation come to life were Walesa, Michnik, Havel and, believe it or not, Orbán.

Driven apart by history, culture and mutual distrust, these four countries came together as never before and forced the West to take their insistent demands to become part of the “European family” seriously. It is too easy to forget now that the motivation to get these seemingly quixotic entreaties into the EU and NATO came from their own internal drive. Kohl in Berlin as well as Bush and Clinton in Washington were all lukewarm in receiving, patronizing and worried about offending Russia.

Despite this international hesitancy, the Visegrád group forced their way in through the front door. Or that once in, these upstarts could play a role far beyond their financial sway or military capabilities. Within weeks of joining NATO, Hungary was on the frontlines of the alliance's first war and most direct dealings with Yugoslavia. The Poles harnessed their long track record of democratic stability and economic growth to become a power in the EU – both the leaders of the East and Berlin's junior coalition partner in Brussels. As a Brussels mandarin recently told me, fifteen years ago, who would have thought Poland, that fractious, rural country, would one day wield more power in the EU than Spain.

And who would have thought that having led the liberal charge into Europe, the East would now be leading the illiberal brigades. Orbán the former Budapest student leader who headed the Liberal International has turned into a champion for national sovereignty, Hungarian nationalism and the outright rejection of liberalism. Criticism of his shift in political leaning is not of import for this discussion; however, the more significant point is that Orbán has shaped and driven this new mood through his country and the broader region. Whether the issues concentrate on migrants, trade, the trans-Atlantic alliance, open borders or fuzzier notions like “solidarity,” “democracy,” “free speech” and the “ever deeper union,” scepticism is the new norm in the East and the West. It is the force behind the British campaign to “Leave” the EU and the rise of Jeremy Corbyn atop Labour. It is propelling the far-right in France and the far-left in Spain to unprecedented electoral gains. And the Visegrád Four – with Kaczynski reigning supreme in Warsaw, Fico in Bratislava and the revolving cast of pro-Putin, Eurosceptics

inside Prague Castle (Havel, presumably, has turned a few times by now in his grave) – are the trendsetters.

The integrity of Central Europe is in peril and yet the reasons do not stem from Putin's aggressions, even in the midst of his revanchist kick right next door in Ukraine, nor America's waning interest in Europe, though both hold tangible consequences. No, today the source of the most evident danger to what the Visegrád club struggled so hard against in the nineties has transformed from the ominous shadows of external threats to their own reflections in a forgotten or purposely avoided black mirror.

In no particular order, consider the greatest achievements of the past twenty-five years from a Visegrád point of view: security, provided by NATO; open borders, thanks to Schengen; and being part of a prosperous bloc that trades freely and searches for common solutions as no other group of nations anywhere in the world do.

Of course, if you ask them, the last thing the Visegrád leaders want is to undercut any of those achievements. Last November, when I posed a similar question to Orbán he said “Hungary's national interest was to reinforce Schengen, NATO and the EU”. The new Polish government desperately wants NATO, preferably American, boots on its soil, and for all Easterners of a certain age, a world without visas and border checks is rather utopian.

Yet, this world – a world with a reunified Berlin and the stronger, expanding alliances of NATO, the EU and Schengen zone – still lies in jeopardy. Forces will be unleashed on Europe in this decade that, in no small way, were either born or reinforced in the Visegrád countries, and these forces will pose a very real, existential threat to Europe. Who would have thought.



The reaction of the Visegrád countries has to have two levels: regional and broader, European and Trans-Atlantic

ROBERT ONDREJCSÁK

is a Slovak political scientist and international relations expert, Director of Centre for European and North Atlantic Affairs, a think tank based in Bratislava. Co-founder of the Centre for European and North Atlantic Affairs (CENAA) and director of Strategic Policy Institute (STRATPOL), a think tank based in Bratislava.

Perhaps it is a paradox, but the most important arising “new” security threat which determines V4 security is a very traditional one. While accepting threats posed by international terrorism, the proliferation of weapons of mass destruction, failed states and other so-called “new threats”, for Central Europe the revanchist Russian approach towards our broader region and in post-Soviet space is the most important threat. Russia destroyed all of those principles which in post-Cold War and pre-2014 period constituted the main pillars of our security: the pre-eminence of territorial integrity and the refusal of using military tactics as tools for reaching political goals. Both of these violations can be exemplified by the destabilizing and invasion of Ukraine. Moreover, the Russian military forces in their offensive posture outnumber the capabilities of their regional neighbours several times over, and they regularly engage in conventional as well as unconventional exercises, including, unfortunately, nuclear attacks against those in close proximity (e.g. Poland and Sweden). Russian authorities also try to deny the freedom of states to choose their strategic and foreign policy objectives (e.g. again

Ukraine), and they occupy significant territories belonging to their neighbours (e.g. South Ossetia, Abkhazia, Crimea, Donbas and Transnistria).

The reaction of the Visegrád countries has to have two levels: regional and broader, European and Trans-Atlantic. On a more global scale, we have to attach ourselves to strengthening the most important alliance which guarantees our security, NATO. We need to argue in favour of strengthening the presence of our allies in the region as well as the overall transformation of the alliance in order to be able to address its members’ security needs, with a focus on Moscow’s aggressive actions. At the regional level there should be a strengthening of V4 cooperation in the field of security and defence as well as an increasing level of support for integration and transition ambitions in our direct neighbourhood, with a focus on Ukraine, naturally. The Central European security cooperation is a long-term priority, but so-far very few real results were produced, having the V4 Battle Group as a most prominent example. We need to fulfil the goals with real, measurable steps and to finally utilise the huge potential which certainly exists.



*To understand our situation,
we must embrace the fact that
our perceptions of common
threats are not wholly unified*

TOMÁŠ POJAR

(b. 1973) is a Czech diplomat and security analyst, former Deputy Minister of Foreign Affairs (2005-2010) and Czech Ambassador to Israel (2010-2014), currently works as at the CERVO Institute, a private college based in Prague.

Chaos in the Middle East will continue to make the region a breeding ground for Islamic extremism and terrorism. Adding to the throngs of refugees, more people will flee the instability stemming from the war zones and overall non-functioning states of the Middle East. Russia will test American and European resolve, attempting to regain its control over as many “lost” territories as possible or at least prevent their full and irreversible integration into other alliances. As a result of fostered tensions related to the migration and economic crises, European domestic security challenges will arise from the fragmentation and radicalisation of the population. A growing distrust in leading European elites and the elites of individual member states will test the existing political systems. To say the least, the outlook for our geo-political situation is not optimistic.

The Visegrád Group has a limited ability to address these challenges as a unified front. However, every Visegrád member state can strengthen the resilience of its own population as well as contribute to the defence of Schengen borders and aid in reinforcing NATO capabilities. On this

point, it is unfortunate that only Poland meets the 2% criteria in defence spending - the other three should meet their obligations as well. If they do not, joint action of the V4 should be based on the principle of “the coalition of willing”. The rest can always join once they are prepared to commit the necessary resources.

To understand our situation, we must embrace the fact that our perceptions of common threats are not wholly unified due to our varied historical experience as well as our different geographical locations. We do share worries regarding the Middle East, terrorism and migration. Regarding Russia, however, we differ on the degree and urgency of the situation. An additional reason for this disunity stems from our competing views on the ruling governmental constellations.

The V4 defence cooperation can be strengthened, but it is unlikely to happen simultaneously. Any effective and meaningful collaboration and integration of forces will always be based on bilateral, rather than trilateral or multilateral, cooperation. The same, sadly, can be said about the cooperation of the intelligence agencies and police forces.



*The Visegrád countries
should become a driving force
in establishing a realistic and
effective European security
policy*

PÉTER SIKLÓSI

(b. 1966) is a Hungarian defence policy expert , Deputy State Secretary for Defence Policy and Planning of the Hungarian Ministry of Defence since 2010, former Defence Counsellor at the Hungarian Permanent Representation to NATO (2007-2010) and Head of the Defence Policy Department of the Ministry of Defence (2000-2007).

Our deeply globalised world is characterised by enormous political, economic, military, demographic, technical and environmental changes. These changes are taking place with increasingly higher velocities and are generating tensions especially in fragile societies.

Currently the most acute security challenges are coming from Europe's periphery and its wider neighbourhood. We have to simultaneously cope with challenges from both various directions and of diverse natures. On the one hand, Russia seeks to restore its super power status with means that had been hoped to be outdated in 21st century Europe. On the other hand, extreme Islamic militants—some with European citizenship—were able to take advantage of the division and fragmentation of states in the Middle East, and conquered territories of significant size to establish their own “state”. As a result, the number of migrants to Europe has increased drastically and terrorist attacks have been carried out in Western Europe.

These challenges appear to be staying with us for at least the coming years if not decades. The security situation might easily deteriorate further if the current trends will not change and the revenues of oil producers will decrease significantly. Increasing nationalistic sentiments by fabricating

tensions stemming from “causes” outside the country is a common practice to drive attention away from domestic problems. These elements could coalesce in the ever more fragile security environment.

The diverging demographic trends of Europe and of its southern neighbours are also concerning developments. While Europe is struggling with the challenges of an ageing populace, overpopulation is an acute problem in the Middle-East and especially in Africa. All of these developments might be multiplied by the negative effects of global warming. As a result, the migratory pressure on Europe will increase significantly.

In such a deteriorating security situation, a deliberate and robust European policy is needed to meet these serious, in some cases existential, challenges. The Visegrád countries should become a driving force in establishing a realistic and effective European security policy. As the unified response of the Visegrád countries to the migrant crisis has shown recently, Central European states fully understand the critical nature of current developments. This provides us with a solid basis on which we can formulate a strong V4 voice. I am fully convinced that Europe badly needs a new impetus. And this time the new impetus might come from our region.

Introduction

FROM RES PUBLICA 5

Are the ideas on which the Visegrád Group was founded still relevant in today's European politics?

RUDOLF CHMEL 10

MIROŚŁAW FILIPOWICZ 12

GÉZA JESZENSZKY 14

PETR PITHART 16

JACQUES RUPNIK 18

DANIELA SCHWARZER 20

What does the rising importance of geopolitics in Europe mean for V4?

JANUSZ BUGAJSKI 26

MARTIN BUTORA 28

PAWEŁ KOWAL 30

JÁNOS MARTONYI 32

ALEXANDR VONDRA 34

What should the Visegrád Group contribute to the common European project beyond blocking power?

PÉTER BALÁZS 40

ERHARD BUSEK 42

KAREL SCHWARZENBERG 44

KRZYSZTOF SZCZERSKI 46

MAGDALÉNA VÁŠÁRYOVÁ 48

What are the values that bind us together?

OLGA GYÁRFÁŠOVÁ 54

JACEK PURCHLA 56

LIBOR ROUČEK 58

BALÁZS TRENCSENYI 60

Does V4 need euro zone?

PÉTER ÁKOS BOD 66

MAREK CICHOCKI 68

MARTIN FILKO 70

DANUTA HÜBNER 72

ZDENĚK TŮMA 74

Could innovation be the future of economic growth in the V4 region?

PÉTER ÁRVAI 80

RUT BÍZKOVÁ 82

JADWIGA EMILEWICZ 84

IVAN MIKLOŠ 86

STEFFEN ROTH 88

What should the climate policies in the V4 region look like?

DAVID BUCHAN 94

MACIEJ BUKOWSKI 96

VOJTĚCH KOTECKÝ 98

JURAJ MESIK 100

JÁNOS ZLINSZKY 102

Energy security – what has been accomplished and what remains to be done?

VÁCLAV BARTUŠKA	108
JERZY BUZEK	110
MATTHEW BRYZA	112
JÁN KLEPÁČ	114
ANITA ORBÁN	116

How could the improvement of infrastructural connectivity contribute to the regional development and cohesion in the Visegrád Group?

ĽUBOŠ ĎURIČ	122
MATEUSZ GNIAZDOWSKI	124
MARTIN KVIZDA	126
PIOTR NAIMSKI	128
GYÖRGY WÁBERER	130

Where should the external priorities of the Visegrád lie?

JUDY DEMPSEY	136
ALEXANDER DULEBA	138
MICHAL KOŘAN	140
OLAF OSICA	142
ANDRÁS RÁCZ	144

How can V4 help democracies flourish?

ÉVA BÖRDŐS	150
PAVOL DEMEŠ	152
IVAN KRASTEV	154
RADOŚŁAW SIKORSKI	156
VLAĎKA VOTAVOVÁ	158

What are the main arising new security challenges and how should the Visegrád countries address them?

TOMASZ CHŁOŃ	164
MATTHEW KAMINSKI	166
ROBERT ONDREJCSÁK	168
TOMÁŠ POJAR	170
PÉTER SIKLÓSI	172



V4 – 25 YEARS

–
THE CONTINUING STORY
OF THE VISEGRÁD GROUP

–
1991 – 2016

EDITORS:

Wojciech Przybylski and Vít Dostál, Pavlína Janebová,
Tomáš Strážay, Zsuzsanna Végh

ASSISTANT EDITOR:

Karolina Jesień

LANGUAGE EDITOR:

Galan Dall

GRAPHIC DESIGN:

RZECZYOBRAZKOWE

PUBLISHED BY:

Fundacja Res Publica im. Henryka Krzeczковского
ul. Galczyńskiego 5, 00-362 Warszawa

www.res.publica.pl, fundacja@res.publica.pl

FUNDED BY:

-
- Visegrad Fund
-

PHOTOS

TASR/Pavel Neubauer (p. 8-9), AFP/EASTNEWS (p. 10, 16, 18, 32, 38-39, 42, 72, 164),
MTI/Photoshoot (p. 14), Andrzej Stawiński/REPORTER (p. 20), SIPA PRESS/EastNews (p. 28),
Wojciech Stróżyk/REPORTER (p. 30), Bartosz Krupa/EASTNEWS (p. 34), Wygoda/EASTNEWS
(p. 44), Maciej Luczniewski/REPORTER (p. 46), Pavol Frešo (p. 48), M. Lasyk/REPORTER (p.
56), PAP/Šimánek Vít (p. 58), CEU/Daniel Vegel (p. 66), Robert Laska (p. 68), TASR/Štefan Puškáš
(p. 70, 114, 152), AP/Judita Thomova (p. 74), Krzysztof Kaniewski/REPORTER (p. 82), PAP/STF
Bartłomiej Zborowski (p. 84), AP/EASTNEWS (p. 86), Mariusz Gaczyński/East News (p. 96), PAP/
Myšková Marta (p. 98), TASR/Michal Svítok (p. 100, 168), Kardos Gabor (p. 102), PAP/Photoshot
(p. 110), AP/EASTNEWS (p. 112), PAP/STF Michael Reynolds (p. 116), Jerzy Undro/REPORTER
(p. 120-121), MUNI/Photoshoot (p. 126), PAP/STF Andrzej Hrechorowicz (p. 128), PAP/STF Maciej
Kulczyński (p. 142), Evgeny Feldman (p. 148-149), Beata Zawrzet/REPORTER (p. 156), IWM/
Dejan Petrovic (p. 154), Jakub Stadler (p. 170)

ISBN: 978-83-945261-0-8



24