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Activities of the Visegrad Group in the Context of the CFSP of the EU

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**DYNAMIC
VISEGRAD
FOR EUROPE**

SLOVAK PRESIDENCY 2018/2019 OF THE VISEGRAD GROUP

Research hypotheses:

- The Visegrad Group is unable to set common Agenda in the area of CFSP within the EU;
- The Visegrad Group is regional forum of economic but not political interests.

Research questions:

- 1) Did V4 cooperation help its Member States to join the EU?;
- 2) Are there still common interests within the V4 countries?;
- 3) Who is the main partner of V4 at the European level?

Europeanization

Europeanization is an incremental process reorienting the direction and shape of politics to the degree that EC political and economic dynamics become part of the organizational logic of national politics and policy-making.

Ladrech, 1994

Europeanization refers to: Processes of (a) construction (b) diffusion and (c) institutionalisation of formal and informal rules, procedures, policy paradigms, styles, 'ways of doing things' and shared beliefs and norms which are first defined and consolidated in the making of EU decisions and then incorporated in the logic of domestic discourse, identities, political structures and public policies.

Radaelli, 2003

Europeanization is understood as the change within a member state whose motivating logic is tied to a EU policy or decision-making process. The prime concern of any Europeanization research agenda is therefore establishing the causal link, thereby validating the impact of the EU on domestic change.

Ladrech, 2010

All the V4 countries entered the EU in 2004.

Kroměříž Declaration (2004) on the state and future of the cooperation:

- *„the key objectives set in the 1991 Visegrad Declaration have been achieved“*
- determination to *„continue developing the cooperation of the Visegrad Group countries“* within the EU and NATO.

*The Visegrad Group countries are strongly determined to jointly contributing to the **fulfilment of the European Union's common goals and objectives** and to the successful continuation of the European integration. They reiterate their:*

- 1) commitment to the **enlargement process** of the European Union.*
- 2) readiness to assist countries aspiring for EU membership by sharing and transmitting their knowledge and experience.*
- 3) Readiness to use their unique regional and historical experience and to contribute to shaping and implementing the European Union's policies towards the countries of Eastern and Southeastern Europe.*

Areas of cooperation:

- cooperation within the V4 area (strictly speaking);
- cooperation within the EU ;
- cooperation within other partners;
- cooperation within NATO and other international organisations.

Instruments of the cooperation

- rotating **annual presidency** of the V4 - each of the member states that consecutively assumed leadership over the Group is obliged to develop a separate programme concerning current activities that allows the V4 member states to maintain permanent cooperation;
- **official annual summit** of the prime ministers of the V4 countries held in June;
- **occasional unofficial meetings** of prime ministers or other ministers
- (mainly foreign ministers) that aim to seek a common position or are held due to upcoming international events;
- meetings at the level of deputy ministers of foreign affairs that lay the groundwork for official meetings of prime ministers;
- working groups

Bratislava Declaration (15 February 2011, marking the 20-year anniversary of the cooperation):

- *“implementing EU key priorities and programs”;*
- *„political and economic integration in Europe, including EU and NATO enlargement, prosperity, security and stability of the continent”.*

The document stresses the need to improve the V4 **visibility on the international arena** by means of active promotion of closer relations between the EU and the member states of the **Eastern Partnership** and the **Western Balkans**, which includes assisting them in their European aspirations and engaging in the **development of the Common Foreign and Security Policy and the Common Security and Defence Policy of the EU** while taking the interests of the Central European region into consideration

Budapest Declaration (2014)

- a fresh impetus in the field of security cooperation
- the new strategy not only assumes joint military exercises and training, but also an increasingly closer cooperation in the defence industry
- collaboration on the **V4+** forum, meetings of experts and foreign ministers (Denmark, Estonia, Finland, Iceland, Latvia, Lithuania, Norway and Sweden...)



- **The Visegrad Group Partners** [PM/HS, FM, MD]
 - Romania, Bulgaria (10)
 - Croatia (8)
 - Ukraine (7)
 - Benelux, Slovenia, Austria (4)
 - Sweden (3), Germany(3)
 - Baltic States (2), France (2),
 - UK (1),
 - Turkey, Egypt, Japan, Korea...

The EU Battlegroup of the V4

The battlegroup was designed to serve in **the first half of 2016** (Poland provided a main battalion, support units and operational command composed of 950 soldiers in total. The Czech Republic delegated 750 soldiers, while Hungary and Slovakia 400 each)

On the 27th March 2018 V4 Ministers of Defence decided that the second battlegroup will be on call in **the second half of 2019.**

The advantages of the Visegrad cooperation:

- creates the possibility of specialization for the Visegrad Group countries in the European Union – Eastern Partnership, Western Balkans;



The weak points of the Visegrad cooperation:

- disproportionate political and economic strength of individual members (Poland's dominant position);
- disproportionate military capabilities and different perceptions of national security (divergent perception of the threat from Russia);
- different visions of further European integration (euroscepticism);
- Political problems at the EU level (the threat of the rule of law in Poland, Hungary);
- The Sławkowski Triangle.

The Czech Republik 2017

Prime Minister: Andrej Babiš (ANO 2011) · **Governing parties:** , ANO 2011, ČSSD

ANO 2011, Centrism

Česká Strana Sociálně Demokratická (ČSSD); Czech Social Democratic Party, Social democracy

Hungary 2018

Prime Minister: Viktor Orbán (FIDESZ) · **Governing parties:** FIDESZ, KDNP

Magyar Polgári Szövetség (FIDESZ); Hungarian Civic Union, National conservatism

Kereszténydemokrata Néppárt (KDNP); Christian Democratic People's Party Christian democracy, Social conservatism

Poland 2015

Prime Minister: Mateusz Morawiecki (PiS) · **Governing party:** PiS

Prawo i Sprawiedliwość (PiS); Law and Justice, National conservatism, Social conservatism

Slovakia 2016

Prime Minister: Peter Pellegrini (SMER-SD) · **Governing parties:** SMER-SD, SNS, MH, SIEŤ

Smer - Sociálna Demokracia (SMER-SD); Direction - Social Democracy, Social democracy

Slovenská Národná Strana (SNS); Slovak National Party, Nationalism, National conservatism

Most - Híd (MH); Bridge, Minority interests (HUN), Liberal conservatism

Sieť (SIEŤ); Network, Liberal conservatism, Christian democracy

Conclusions:

- The Visegrad Group is unable to set common Agenda in the area of CFSP within the EU;
- The Visegrad Group is much more effective in the area of economic cooperation than in political issues.

„WHEN TWO PLUS TWO DOESN'T EQUAL FOUR”

A. Łada, A. Fuksiewicz, 2017