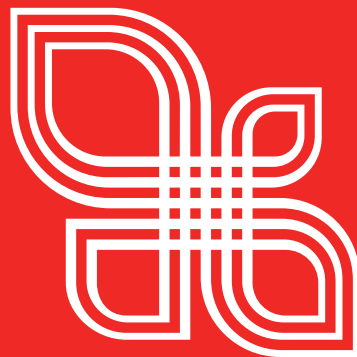


# REPORT

## ON THE POLISH PRESIDENCY OF THE VISEGRAD GROUP

1 July 2016 – 30 June 2017



Polish Presidency of the Visegrad Group  
July 2016–June 2017

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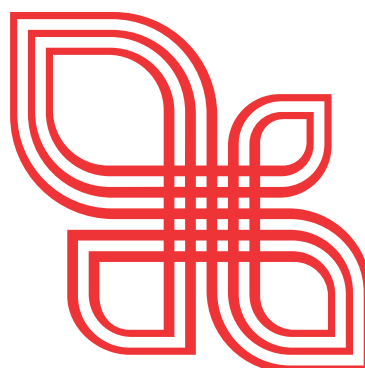
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## INTRODUCTION

The strengthening of regional cooperation plays one of the key roles among the foreign policy priorities of the Polish government. Poland's taking over of the Visegrad Group (V4) presidency in July 2016 has been one of the most important tools for achieving this goal.

The Polish presidency commenced at a particular moment, when the British society voted in favour of leaving the European Union. Europe and the world were facing numerous challenges, including the migration crisis and the instability in the south, as well as the continuing threat in the east of Europe.

From the very beginning of the Polish Presidency, considerable emphasis was placed on the flexibility within the framework of the V4, which made it possible to respond quickly to the above-mentioned challenges.

A summary of the annual Polish presidency of the Visegrad Group, this report that we are presenting to you, shows how much was achieved by all its members. We were active and visible participants in the debate on the future of the European Union. Thanks to the commitment of all the V4 states, the voice of the Group was taken into account by its partners and had a significant impact on the direction of discussions on matters concerning major challenges faced by Europe.

This report outlines the activities of all Ministries, which, within their respective spheres of competence, coordinated the Visegrad Group's efforts in relation to particular topics, where the presentation of a single position of the four Central European states was advisable and necessary.

I am convinced that thanks to the joint commitment of all the states the Polish V4 presidency has contributed to making the V4 brand even stronger in Europe. To ensure the sustained success of the European project, it is extremely important that the Visegrad Group continues to build the strength of our region by supporting the Union with the strength of its Member States.

*Witold Waszczykowski*

*Minister of Foreign Affairs of the Republic of Poland*



## SUMMARY

**“We want the European Union to develop like the Visegrad Group, be safe, develop fast, and address the issues important for its citizens”.**

– Polish PM Beata Szydło.

(Warsaw, 19.06.2017)

During the fifth presidency of the Visegrad Group (V4), the government of the Republic of Poland achieved the key objectives outlined in the programme priorities:

- the position of the V4 states was coordinated on a regular basis in relation to the current political situation and the European agenda; a new contribution to the discussion on the coexistence of EU Member States was developed together with the governments of the Czech Republic, Slovakia and Hungary, taking into account the security and cohesion of the Group – e.g. **Declaration on the future of Europe; Joint statement of the Prime Ministers of the Visegrad Group on the amendment of Posting of the Workers’ Directive;**
- during several meetings at the level of ministers and experts, the areas of cooperation between the V4 states were expanded to include new and important goals for the region, such as innovation and start-up development – e.g. **the Warsaw Declaration;**
- security cooperation was consistent with the objectives pursued at the NATO summit in Warsaw;
- the cooperation among the V4 states was intensified with respect to migration and asylum issues, the protection of the European Union’s borders, and ensuring the security of our citizens – e.g. **Joint Statement of the Ministers of the Interior on establishment of the Migration Crisis Response Mechanism;**
- Visegrad cooperation in Poland involved all levels of government administration as well as Parliaments and civil society organizations; during more than a dozen conferences and seminars, experts outlined the possible areas for cooperation among the V4 states, based on their common heritage and values, and by mobilizing social and civic organizations;
- meetings in the “V4+” format (with non-member countries) continued to be held at the political level, based on the key strategic ministries for the region, such as transport, infrastructure and energy – e.g. **Letter of intent on the implementation of cross-border sections of the Baltic–Adriatic corridor.**

The Polish presidency took place at a difficult political and historical moment, hence the Group’s activities focused on European and security issues. The activities concentrated on developing a common position of the V4 states in the context of Brexit, on the future



of the EU and proposals for institutional reform in the face of the migration crisis. At the Prime Minister's summit (2.03.2017), the V4 states shared their common expectations on the key issues concerning the future of the EU: the migration crisis, the Single Market, cohesion policy, the Multiannual Financial Framework, energy security, and climate policy. Most of the recommendations in the **V4 Declaration: V4 on the future of Europe** were reflected in the provisions of the Rome Declaration, confirming Central European countries' sensitivity to and understanding of the challenges faced by the EU.

The Visegrad Group remained an important partner for many countries, which was confirmed by numerous meetings with European and global partners in the "V4+" format. V4 Prime ministers met **the German Chancellor** (Warsaw, 26.08.2016), **the Prime Minister of Ukraine** (Krynica-Zdroj, 6.09.2016), **the Benelux Prime Ministers** (Warsaw, 19.06.2017), and the **President of France** (Brussels, 23.06.2017). At the level of Foreign Ministers, the V4 held meetings with **Western Balkans** (Warsaw, 29.11.2016), **the Egyptian FA Minister** (Cairo, 20.12.2016), **the Benelux FA ministers** (Brussels, 05.03.2017), **countries of the Eastern Partnership** (Warsaw, 12.04.2017), **Baltic and Nordic states** (Sopot, 30-31.05.2017), and **the FA Minister of the Turkish Republic** (Bratislava, 26.05.2017). These meetings significantly contributed to the strengthening of political cooperation with our partners and the raising of V4's political importance.

A number of meetings in the V4 format and with partners outside the Group ("V4+"), especially Bulgaria, Croatia, Romania and Slovenia, were held at the level of Ministers of Defence, Interior, Economy and Development, Culture, Transport, Environment, Sports, Agriculture, etc. Numerous expert conferences and seminars contributed to the strengthening of V4 sectoral cooperation. On the occasion of these consultations, a number of joint documents / declarations were adopted, which set out future actions in concrete terms, including:

- **V4 + Bulgaria, Croatia, Romania and Slovenia on cohesion policy after 2020;**
- **V4 + Croatia and Lithuania on cooperation in the field of fair and affordable pricing of medicinal products;**
- **V4 + Bulgaria, Romania and Slovenia for a stronger inclusion of the research potential of the Central and Eastern European (EU13) countries into the implementation of projects within Horizon 2020 in the field of agriculture, including bio-economy.**

An important issue for the Government of the Republic of Poland was the question of security in the region and the implementation of the NATO Warsaw Summit decisions. This topic was discussed i.a. during meetings of V4 presidents (14-15.10.2016, Rzeszow), Ministers of Defence (2.02 and 18.05.2017) and of Foreign Affairs (29.11.2016, 12.04.2017, 26.05.2017, 30-31.05.2017), Chiefs of the General Staff (3-4.10.2016 and 20-22.06.2017), as well as secretaries of National Security Councils and security advisors to the presidents of V4 states (30.11.2016 and 13.06.2017).

Ensuring the Group's consistency remains a key priority for every V4 presidency. It is not only about improving the infrastructure between the four V4 states, but also about



cohesion understood as a flow of information, cultural values, free contacts between citizens and institutions, and the cooperation of local governments. In this context, the V4 Presidency supported the International Visegrad Fund, whose mission is to increase the level of mutual knowledge about and support for Visegrad cooperation among citizens. Expanding knowledge about the V4 in the countries of the Group is the basis for increasing effectiveness and mutual trust.

Emphasising the importance and strength of the V4, the Group's presidents highlighted shared history, achievements, and potential of experiences of V4 states. The increasing activity of the parliaments of the V4 member states is a factor that gave a new impetus to the strengthening of Visegrad cooperation. The unprecedented number of working and official meetings and a lively exchange of correspondence attest to the great potential and growing importance of parliaments for the development of international cooperation.

The Polish Presidency showed that despite the divergences in some areas, the V4 states continue to invest in mutual cooperation, defining and implementing common goals. The Visegrad Group is a unique achievement on a European scale, as well as an expression of the constructive and pragmatic cooperation among its member states. Visegrad cooperation is and will remain an important instrument for promoting the common interests in the region.<sup>1</sup>

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<sup>1</sup> For the purpose of this report a list of activities of Polish embassies during the PL V4 Presidency has been prepared. This list (available only in the Polish language version) can be found on the Polish MFA website under the following address: [https://www.msz.gov.pl/pl/polityka\\_zagraniczna/europa/grupa\\_wyszehradzka/polska-prezydencja\\_w\\_grupie\\_wyszehradzkiej\\_2016\\_2017/](https://www.msz.gov.pl/pl/polityka_zagraniczna/europa/grupa_wyszehradzka/polska-prezydencja_w_grupie_wyszehradzkiej_2016_2017/)



## STRONG VOICE OF THE V4 IN THE EUROPEAN UNION

**“The voice of the Visegrad Group must be heard in discussions about Europe’s security”.**

*– Minister Witold Waszczykowski, at the GLOBSEC conference in Bratislava,  
26 May 2017.*

One of the V4’s negotiation achievements and successes was the drafting and acceptance by the Prime Ministers of the V4 states of a joint declaration on the future of the European Union at the Warsaw summit (2.03.2017), the provisions of which **were reflected in the Rome Declaration**. Equally important was the joint statement of the Prime Ministers of the Visegrad Group of 11 May 2017 on the amendment of Posting of Workers Directive in the European Union, which expressed a clear position on proposals for the revision of internal market regulation, which is an important instrument of European integration, and which brings tangible benefits to both EU citizens and entrepreneurs.

- **Migration crisis**

In view of the ongoing migration crisis in Europe, the main theme of meetings of interior ministers of the V4 states was the **reform of the European Asylum System**. At the meeting (21.11.2016), the ministers of the interior discussed various ideas on how to solve the migration problem, focusing, among others, on the Dublin III Regulation, which makes the allocation mechanism conditional on the influx of migrants and the potential of individual states. **Ministers upheld their opposition to the relocation system, which they considered ineffective**. They consistently stressed the necessity of tightening the external borders of the European Union. **A joint statement on the establishment of the Migration Crisis Response Mechanism** was adopted, which aims to support refugees outside the EU, as well as exchange information and joint efforts to seek new solutions. At a meeting extended to include Austria, Belgium, Bulgaria, Croatia and Slovenia, it was agreed that the agreement between the European Union and Turkey, as well as the border protection of states along the so-called West Balkan route had contributed to a certain improvement of the situation. It was noted that further steps were necessary to improve safety. The interior ministers of the V4 states (12.06.2017, Warsaw) upheld their opposition to refugee relocation as an ineffective tool attracting further waves of migration.

- **Energy**

Energy security was a key priority for the Polish Presidency. At the meeting of the Presidents of the V4 states in Lancut (14-15.10.2016), **a vision of energy independence for the V4**, based on real diversification which can benefit the entire region was presented. This diversification would be based on the LNG terminal in Swinoujscie and the so-called Northern Gate. The issues of gas supply security were discussed at a meeting of the V4 Energy Ministers during the 26th Economic Forum in Krynica (6-8.09.2016) and at a meeting of experts at the Visegrad Group Gas Forum in Warsaw (11.10.2016). Solidarity mechanisms proposed by the V4 **were included in the new regulation on the security of natural gas supply to the EU adopted** by the COREPER.





- **Climate policy and environment protection**

The issues of climate policy and biodiversity, in the context of economic and social development, were discussed by the Ministers of Environment in the format V4+ Bulgaria, Romania, Belarus, and Ukraine (3-4.10.2016, Tuczno). In their joint statement the ministers noted the problems related to the integration of biodiversity into the policies of other sectors. The ministers also discussed the methods of protecting biodiversity along with the needs of area development, ecosystem assessment processes and ecosystem services (i.e. urban planning and regional planning, e.g. the mining industry, infrastructure, energy, and construction).

- **Digital Agenda –Digital Single Market**

The cooperation of the digital markets, which had previously been given less prominence, was discussed at the summit of the prime ministers of the V4 states (28.03.2017, Warsaw), in a document important for future V4 cooperation: **the Warsaw Declaration**. The declaration addresses the coordination of innovation policy among the V4 states. The digital agenda outlined in the document was brought to a new level of cooperation on the EU forum. **A real counterweight was created to offset protectionist themes emerging in the European debate on the Single Digital Market**, or such that deepen the developmental differences between EU regions. The Declaration aims to strengthen cooperation among companies from the V4 states in projects related to R&D, infrastructure, services, cyber security, and digital literacy.

During the Polish V4 Presidency attention was also paid to the issues of electronic communication and digitisation. The document adopted by the heads of telecommunications regulators of the V4 states at the meeting of Ministers of Digitisation (6.02.2017, Warsaw) – *“Common paper of the Visegrad Group on the Commission Proposal for the European Electronic Communication Code”*, defines **cooperation on the revision of the legal framework for the electronic communications sector, indicating common priorities** in relation to the main proposals of the European Electronic Communications Code. This document is the basis for the further active participation of the Visegrad Group states in the debate on the future shape of the EU electronic communications market.

- **Internal market – support for economic growth and employment in the EU**

Internal market security is based on its effective control, which was discussed at the meeting of representatives of customs and market surveillance authorities and V4 national product safety coordinators (19-21.10.2016, Poronin). The organisation of a joint inspection action on product safety in August-September 2017 was declared. Toys were selected as the product group to be subject to coordinated checks.

- **Finances**

Initiatives in the financial area were discussed at the expert level. Workshops and seminars organised by the Ministry of Finance (23-24.03.2017, Warsaw) and the Ministry



of Development (26.01.2017, Krakow) were the fora for exchange of experience and information on legal regulations in the V4 states in areas related to the functioning of the financial markets and management review. The participants in the meeting exchanged views on ongoing EU work on new regulations in the field of capital markets, in the banking sector, and regarding financial supervision and prudential requirements. At a meeting organized by the Ministry of Development, it was noted that the adopted solutions depend, in particular, on the amount of allocation for the co-financing of ESF projects in a given operational program and country and the number of implemented projects. Regional partner workshops of financial intelligence units of the V4 states (10-11.05.2017), organised by the General Inspector of Financial Information, discussed experiences in the area of anti-money laundering and terrorist financing, in particular related to the creation of central bank and payment records, combating fiscal crime (mainly in relation to VAT), and the use of financial intelligence units in this area.

The annual meeting of the **heads of customs administrations of the V4 states**, organised by Hungary's National Tax and Customs Administration, was also attended by the chiefs and general directors of customs and tax administrations of Slovenia and a delegation from Austria. Hungary presented its experiences related to the application of the EKAER system (Electronic Trade and Transport System) for risk analysis related to customs procedures, and proposed closer cooperation at the expert level on the exchange of information between customs and tax authorities. The discussion covered risk management methods in tax evasion detection, cooperation and exchange of information at the international level, as well as the mechanism of electronic exchange of invoice data (e-invoicing) in V4+ 2 countries (V4 expanded by Slovenia and Austria). The results of cooperation to date on combating illegal trade in base oils, and the systemic use of X-ray equipment (Poland's proposal) were discussed at the customs session, where views were also exchanged on the debate on the reform of the management of the Customs Union that had been going on in the EU for several years. The meeting's conclusions include:

- Continuation of coordination of the fight against the practice of customs value underestimation.
- Organisation by Hungary of a meeting of the working group on post-clearance audit. The Group will deal with the issues of exchange of information, as well as the analysis of experiences at the national level.
- Continuation of cooperation against illegal trade in base oils, *inter alia* in the form of operations (16 EU Member States and Europol currently participate in customs operations). It was also decided to resume discussion on this subject within the Customs Cooperation Working Party (CCWP) in order to bring about changes in EU regulations and to subject trade in base oils to control under the EMCS system.
- Willingness to coordinate positions and priorities related to the reform of the management of the customs union at the V4/V4+ level. The priorities proposed by Poland were adopted as the starting point for these efforts. The level of customs attachés in Brussels was identified as the most convenient level of coordination. Interest was expressed in the EKAER system used by Hungary.



Hungary declared that it would organise a working group on the use of X-ray scanners that would address i.e. exchange of information and training.

- **Agriculture**

**Food security** is an important element of the safety of our states. In response to the situation on the European food products market, at a meeting in Warsaw (2.03.2017), the V4 Prime Ministers supported actions aimed at eliminating unfair market practices and **unequal treatment of markets** as well as protecting consumer interests. **A decision was taken to establish a working group to tackle the problem.**

In line with the priorities of the Polish Ministry of Agriculture, as part of the Polish V4 Presidency, **an analysis of the Multiannual Financial Framework 2014-2010 in the context of the Common Agricultural Policy (CAP) and the future of this policy after 2020** was conducted as well as a debate on the proposals to simplify the CAP included in the Omnibus Regulation. During the meeting of the V4+ 3 (Bulgaria, Romania, Slovenia) agriculture ministers on 25-26 October in Warsaw, the parties signed **the Common Declaration of the Ministers of Agriculture of the Visegrad Group and Bulgaria, Romania and Slovenia for the stronger inclusion of the research potential of the Central and Eastern European (EU-13) countries** into the implementation of projects within Horizon 2020 in the field of agriculture, including the bioeconomy.

At the international conference on the future of the Common Agricultural Policy after 2020 and the trading in agricultural land (11.03.2017, Jasionka), the ministers of agriculture of the V4 and Lithuania pointed out that **maintaining the two pillars in the future CAP was a priority, expecting a real simplification of the Common Agricultural Policy**, its alignment with cohesion policy, and a significant strengthening of the producer's position. The topics discussed included the need to reduce administrative burdens, the role of research and innovation in agriculture, and the need to create conditions for the competitiveness of the European agricultural sector in the world. As regards **trading in agricultural real estate in the EU**, the ministers agreed that it should not be subject to ordinary market regulations, and **Member States should have exclusive competence in the field of land protection**. Discussion in this regard will be continued at the meeting of **the international expert working group for assessing the legal status of trade in agricultural land in the EU Member States, established on the initiative of the Polish Minister of Agriculture.**



- **Demographic challenges**

**“We want you to make your dreams come true here, in your own countries and (...)**

**help us all make our dream about the development and safety of our region come true”– Prime Minister Beata Szydło**

(Warsaw, 28 March 2017)

The issues of demographic change remain a major challenge for the governments of the Visegrad Group. All the V4 states face the problems of low birth rates and relatively low employment rates for women, especially those with young children. Despite significant improvements – relatively long parental leave – there is still a shortage of child care facilities, especially for children under the age of three.

The problem of migration of young people was highlighted by the Presidents of the V4 states (14-15.10.2016, Lancut) and the V4 ministers of labour and social policy (16.09.2016, Warsaw). The Presidents agreed that young people needed support in two areas: a good start for entrepreneurship and work in the country, and a start into establishing and caring for one’s family. Measures supporting young people (like the “500+” programme in Poland) should have an international dimension in the form of joint scholarships and other forms of support for young, innovative people at the regional level. At the ministerial level, the need for close cooperation and intensifying ongoing consultations at the working level was stressed. Methods of combating abuse in the labour market were discussed at the meeting of ministers of **labour and social policy and representatives of the social partners from the V4 states** (27.04.2017, Warsaw). The participants recognised the results of the Social Dialogue Council in Poland and paid attention to, *inter alia*, the challenges of digitization and automation; labour shortages and employment of workers from third countries; promoting internal mobility; and combating illegal employment. The discussion at all levels focused on the draft amendment to Directive 96/71/EC on the posting of workers in the framework of the provision of services, which raises a number of concerns, not only from the legal point of view but also from the perspective of practical application of the proposed legislation. In the opinion of the ministers, the arrangements for posted workers in international transport violate the basic principles of the internal market.

- **Health**

On March 3, 2017 an informal meeting of health ministers of the Visegrad Group (V4) and Croatia and Lithuania was held at the Ministry of Health in Warsaw, at which **the Memorandum of Understanding on cooperation in the area of fair and affordable pricing of medicinal products** was signed. One of the outcomes of the Memorandum was the establishment of the Coordination Committee. The initiative to ensure fair and affordable prices of medical products (fair pricing), as one of the three priorities of the Polish V4 Presidency, had already been discussed at several expert meetings.



- **Science, Technology, and Innovation**

**“... we need sovereignty 2.0” – Deputy Prime Minister of Poland M. Morawiecki**

(Congress of Innovators, Warsaw, 28.03.2017)

Innovation is yet another “milestone” that can define the direction of development and joint actions of the V4 states. After accession to NATO and the EU, this is, according to Poland’s Deputy PM M. Morawiecki, the fourth industrial revolution that gives Poland an opportunity to be at the “very heart of economic development in the world”. In the **Warsaw Declaration** (28.03.2017, Warsaw), the prime ministers of the Visegrad Group undertook, among other things, to **strengthen cooperation on research, technology, innovation and digital transformation of the region, in particular the use of EU funds**, and to promote our region as a research and innovation centre on the international arena. A decision was made to create a separate financial line within the Visegrad Fund, which will support R&D projects developed by groups of researchers and entrepreneurs from the V4 region.

Issues related to new technologies and innovative solutions for the financial and insurance sectors were also the subject of the **Impact’16 fintech/insurtech Congress** (7-8.12.2016, Wroclaw), attended by several hundred IT industry representatives from the Visegrad Group. During the Impact’17 conference (30-31.05.2017, Cracow), a meeting of V4 ministers of science and higher education with Mr Carlos Moedas, European Commissioner for Research, Science and Education took place. The main topics discussed included the creation of the next EU Framework Program for Research and Innovation and increased participation of EU-13 Member States in centrally-managed EU programs, in particular Horizon 2020. The ministers signed the **Joint Statement of the Ministers of Science and Higher Education of the Visegrad Group on the future of the European Research Area and of the European Higher Education Area**. Parallel to the meeting of the ministers, a meeting of the Agency for Academic Mobility was held, with participation from: the European University Institute (EUI), the International Visegrad Fund (IVF), the CEEPUS Office and agencies from the V4 states, Germany, Austria, and France.



## CREATING SYNERGIES THROUGH EXTENDED DIALOGUE

**“The future of Europe is important for all our countries. This future must be based on reform and unity of the European Union”– Prime Minister Beata Szydło**

(Summit of the Prime Ministers of V4 + Benelux, 19.06.2017, Warsaw)

The Polish Presidency was open to dialogue and consultation with other partners from outside the Visegrad Group. Responding to the current political situation, the Government of the Republic of Poland undertook consultations with European states.

The main theme of the meeting of the **Prime Ministers of the V4 states with the Chancellor of Germany A. Merkel (26.08.2016, Warsaw)** was preparation for an informal summit of the EU-27 heads of government on the future of the EU after Brexit. The talks in Warsaw focused on the planned reforms in the EU and the issues concerning internal and external security of the EU, migration crisis as well as effective counter-terrorism. One of the themes of the meeting was also the issue of regulations on the posting of workers and proposals for changes in the asylum system. At this meeting the intensification of military activities of the Russian Federation against Ukraine was also discussed.



*Source: Chancellery of the Prime Minister of the Republic of Poland*  
*Meeting of heads of government of Visegrad Group countries with Chancellor Angela Merkel (26.08.2016, Warsaw)*

**The V4 Prime Ministers along with the Heads of Government of Benelux (19.06.2017, Warsaw)** talked about migration policy, defence policy, the Eastern Partnership, Brexit, issues related to the EU internal market, relations with the Russian Federation, and the future of the European Union. Each Prime Minister emphasized that the talks were open and factual; the need for dialogue was stressed.

**The heads of government of the Group met with French President Emmanuel Macron (23.06.2017, Brussels).** The talks focused on the future of the EU, and the social and economic aspects of the single market, including the issue of posted workers.



Under the Polish V4 Presidency, a working **meeting of heads of diplomacy of the V4 and Benelux** was organised (on the eve of the FAC meeting, 06.05.2017, Brussels). The topics discussed at the meeting included: Brexit and the future of the EU, enlargement of the EU and the situation in the Western Balkans, the Eastern Partnership (EaP) including preparation for the 2017 EaP Summit, migration, security and defence (including relations with Russia), transatlantic relations, and the Middle East Peace Process.

The GLOBSEC conference in Bratislava on 26 May 2017 was an occasion for a **meeting of the Foreign Ministers of the V4 states with the Foreign Minister of Turkey**. The participants discussed the issues of Turkey's cooperation with the European Union, the situation in Syria, and the Russian-Ukrainian conflict. The ministers agreed that Turkey remains one of the pillars of European security. The meeting of the foreign ministers of the V4 and Turkey confirmed the importance of consultation among NATO allies representing the Alliance's eastern flank.

- **Neighbourhood and Enlargement Policy**

Dialogue with the neighbouring countries of Central and South-Eastern Europe continued in order to strengthen the political dimension of Visegrad cooperation. Meetings were organised with Eastern Partnership and Western Balkan states and the Baltic and Nordic countries.

The Economic Forum in Krynica (6.09.2016) was also an occasion for a meeting of **the heads of government of the V4 states and Ukraine**. The main topics discussed included cooperation and joint initiatives of V4 + Ukraine, cooperation to strengthen infrastructure in the Carpathian region, and the security situation. The prime ministers of the V4 states and Ukraine stressed the importance of long-term cooperation, which supports the development of partner countries and stabilization in the region of Central and Eastern Europe. After the meeting the V4 Prime Ministers issued a joint statement.



*Source: Chancellery of the Prime Minister of the Republic of Poland  
Meeting of heads of government of the V4 states and Ukraine (Krynica, 6.09.2016)*



**The meeting of the Foreign Affairs (FA) Ministers of the V4 and Western Balkan states** (Albania, Bosnia and Herzegovina, Montenegro, Macedonia, Serbia, Kosovo) with the participation of the FA Ministers of Bulgaria, Croatia, Romania, Slovenia, and Italy as well as the EU High Representative for Foreign and Security Policy F. Mogherini (29.11.2016, Warsaw) addressed the integration process of the Western Balkans (WB) with the EU. Issues related to migration, energy security, hybrid threats, and organized crime were also discussed. **The foreign ministers of the V4 adopted a joint statement on the current state of accession negotiations of the WB states and security problems in the region.**



*Source: Ministry of Foreign Affairs of the Republic of Poland  
Meeting of the Foreign Ministers of the V4 and the Western Balkans (29.11.2016, Warsaw)*

The main issues discussed at the meeting of **the foreign ministers of the V4 with the Baltic and Nordic States** (30-31.05.2017, Sopot) included: security problems, Eastern policy, the future of the European Union. Regional energy and infrastructure projects were also on the agenda, including the Baltic Pipe project, which is important for Poland and the region. The ministers stressed the need for action to strengthen the security and stability in the region and build constructive relations with neighbours, while respecting international law and the integrity of the partners' borders. The meeting of ministers and deputy foreign ministers of the V4 was also an occasion to discuss the intensification of cooperation in the field of security, Eastern policy, and the future of the European Union in the context of Brexit.

A meeting of **deputy foreign ministers of the Visegrad Group and the Eastern Partnership** was held for the first time in history (15.03.2017, Minsk). The deputy ministers agreed that the priority was to seek common ground between various groups in the region.

The meeting of **the foreign ministers of the V4 states and the Eastern Partnership** (12.04.2017), Warsaw) was also attended by the foreign ministers of Croatia, Estonia, Romania, and Sweden, secretaries of states at the MFAs of Bulgaria and Slovenia, and the EU Commissioner for European Neighbourhood Policy and accession negotiations.





The talks mainly revolved around the issues of connectivity, which is one of the key priorities of the EaP. At the end of the meeting, the foreign ministers of the V4 accepted a joint statement on the future of the Eastern Partnership, in which they appealed for an intensification of sectoral cooperation, mainly within the scope of the above-mentioned connectivity.



*Source: Chancellery of the President of the Republic of Poland  
Meeting of the foreign ministers of the V4 and Eastern Partnership states with the President of the Republic of Poland (Warsaw, 12.04.2017)*

**“The Enlargement Academy” (ER)** is a project implemented by the Ministry of Foreign Affairs of the Republic of Poland, which aims to share the Polish experience of the reform process, particularly in connection with accession to the EU, with the Western Balkan countries. The Academy showcases Poland’s success and the scale of transformation that was possible thanks to EU funds, e.g. in agriculture. In Cracow (18-23.09.2016) 23 persons from Albania, Bosnia and Herzegovina, Montenegro, Kosovo, Macedonia and Serbia – employees of the ministries of foreign affairs, European integration, agriculture, justice and other offices – participated in lectures on the Visegrad Group: its history and experience of building strategic partnerships in relation to current European policy. The visitors participated in study tours to, *inter alia*, the National School of Judiciary and Public Prosecution, the Local Action Group in Dunajec-Biala in Zakliczyn Commune, Rzeszow University, the Podkarpackie Aviation Valley, and the Border Guard post in Medyka. The ER familiarized the participants with Polish history and culture.

The working seminar *“Young people for human rights”* organized in the V4 + Eastern Partnership format (22-23.02.2017, Warsaw) was attended by employees of the ministries responsible for youth policy, youth activists, representatives of national youth councils



and National Agencies of the Erasmus+ Programme, national coordinators of the Council of Europe *No Hate Speech* campaign, and other experts. The discussions focused on the activities and projects carried out by young people to promote human rights, including the campaign of the Council of Europe against hate speech – No Hate Speech.

- **V4 cooperation with non-European partners**

The Polish minister of foreign affairs presided over **consultations of the ministers of foreign affairs of the V4 states with Egypt** held as part of the EU-LAS meeting in Cairo (20.12.2016). These consultations confirmed the considerable potential for economic, political, cultural and tourist cooperation between both sides. The V4 states noted the stabilising role and importance of Egypt as a partner in counteracting illegal migration and in the fight against terrorism and Islamic radicalism in the Middle East and Africa.

Under the Polish V4 Presidency, the following **meetings of the Political Directors of the Ministries of Foreign Affairs of the V4 states** were organised: V4 + Canada in Ottawa (26.09.2016); V4 + Nordic Countries in Warsaw (24.10.2016); V4 + Baltic States in Warsaw (22.11.2016) and V4 + Benelux in Brussels (11.12.2016); V4 + Lebanon in Beirut (26.01.2017); and V4 + Egypt in Cairo (20.04.2017). In February 2017, consultations were held with the political directors and heads of strategy planning departments of the MFAs of the V4 and Turkey on security in the Black and the Mediterranean Seas, security in the Middle East, foreign policy of the US, Russia, and China, as well as the European Global Strategy and regional cooperation.



## SECURITY AND STABILITY OF THE REGION

**“...The new defence policy must be based on cooperation with the NATO and on common definitions of threats that arrive to Europe to the same extent from the south and from the east”.**

**– Polish PM Beata Szydło**

(Summit of the Prime Ministers of V4 + Benelux, 19.06.2017, Warsaw)



*Source: Chancellery of the Prime Minister of the Republic of Poland  
Summit of the Prime Ministers of V4 + Benelux, 19.06.2017, Warsaw*

- **Defence policy**

The subject of defence policy and internal security of the Visegrad Group countries was discussed at most V4 meetings at all levels of the government administration.

At a meeting on 2 February 2017 in Niepolomice, the V4 defence ministers adopted a document on the directions for further cooperation within the Visegrad Group, in which the V4 states agreed on key issues, including European defence and NATO as the guarantee of security. The ministers set out the details of the deployment of the Visegrad Battlegroup in the Baltic States in 2017. The Czech Republic, Slovakia and Hungary expressed their willingness to participate in the establishment of the Multinational Division North-East in Elblag. It was agreed that the training provided by US forces stationed in Poland would be taken by all V4 armies.



The deputy defence ministers of the Group's states (24-25.11.2016, Szczecin) discussed the possibility of V4 cooperation to implement the decisions taken at the NATO Summit in Warsaw. In line with the decisions taken at the meeting of the V4 defence ministers in Liblice (05.2016), the V4 presence was intended to be of training capacity for the time being. The importance of Visegrad defence cooperation in ensuring the security of the region, in particular the northern part of the eastern flank, was stressed. The talks also addressed the issues related to the Common Security and Defence Policy (CSDP) and the implementation of the European Global Strategy in this field. The state of play on the preparation of the Visegrad Battlegroup (V4 BG) for an EU duty tour in the second half of 2019 was also discussed. The Centre for Ground Operations - Ground Component Headquarters presented its current tasks and role within the V4 Battlegroup in the first half of 2016.

- **Internal affairs/ security**

Security of citizens remained one of the most important elements of the Group's policy. The V4 Ministers of the Interior held several meetings. The ministers identified the common priorities pursued by the V4 states and developed a constructive V4 position with respect to migration and border issues, such as: a) undertaking ongoing activities to ensure adequate protection of the external borders of EU Member States, b) increasing support to third countries, c) rejection of obligatory and automatic solutions. It was agreed that, in order to coordinate the positions, V4 states will hold regular consultations on the European agenda discussed at meetings of the EU Council on Justice and Home Affairs. In November 2016, ministers of the interior discussed the shape of a common migration policy. The meeting was also attended by ministers of the interior of Austria, Croatia and deputy ministers of the interior of Belgium, Bulgaria, and Slovenia. The V4 ministers consistently expressed their opposition to the EU refugee resettlement system and adopted a Joint Statement on the establishment of the Migration Crisis Response Mechanism. The Mechanism aims to exchange good practices on refugee support outside the EU. Poland will coordinate the initiative within the Visegrad Group.

The issues of co-operation with local governments, administrative reform and the establishment of citizen-friendly offices, while addressing security challenges, were the main topics of the meeting of the Visegrad Group ministers responsible for public administration and the conference "V4 Good Government Forum" (12-13.12.2016) with representatives of Bulgaria and Romania.



## V4 IDENTITY AND VISIBILITY

*“... without the Visegrad Group which promoted the credibility of Central Europe in the eyes of Western allies, it would be much more difficult to turn around our strategic situation”.*

**President of the Republic of Poland Andrzej Duda**  
(Lancut, 14-15.10.2016)

The issues of the cultural identity of the European community of the V4 states were part of the agendas of the meetings of **Presidents** (14-15.10.2016 Rzeszow/Lancut), **Speakers of Parliament** (3-4.12.2016, Przemysl), **Prime Ministers** (22.07.2016, 28.03.2017, Warsaw) and **Foreign Ministers** (26.05.2017, Bratislava).

**The International Visegrad Fund** remained the basic tool for strengthening cultural ties and promoting the V4. In 2017, the headquarters of the Fund was moved to modern premises, meeting today's logistical and organizational needs. During a formal meeting at the Fund's headquarters (26.05.2017, Bratislava), the Ministers of Foreign Affairs stressed the importance of the International Visegrad Fund for developing sustainable bonds between the societies of the V4 states. The ministers noted that the Fund effectively supports the implementation of cultural, scientific and youth cooperation projects. It was declared that all countries would continue to support the Fund.



*Source: Ministry of Foreign Affairs of the Republic of Poland  
Visit of the foreign ministers of the V4 states in the headquarters of the International Visegrad Fund (Bratislava, 26.05.2017)*

During the **meeting of the Ministers of Culture V4** (1-2.06.2017, Gdynia) the discussion on the identity and consistent image of the V4 states continued, summarizing the implementation of joint cultural projects included in the Expert Report and the activities of



the International Visegrad Fund in this area in 2016/17. The ministers also presented the 2015 International Visegrad Award to the winner – the Art Museum in Olomouc.

Organized by the Book Institute together with the Ministry of Culture and National Heritage of the Republic of Poland, the expert conference **“New Spaces of Reading – Visegrad Conference 2017”** (16-17.05.2017), was devoted to national programmes promoting readership and the role of public institutions in promoting readership. The experts attempted to answer the questions of what actions should be taken at the institutional level, taking into account the role of the education system, family, and media. The discussion focused on the role of libraries in promoting readership and new models of the functioning of libraries in local communities. The participants talked about the forms of cooperation between institutions at different levels – international, state, non-governmental, local –to promote readership. Also discussed was the role of new technologies in the promotion of readership and the resulting changes in contemporary culture, as well as the impact of digitization on readership.

The initiatives of Polish diplomatic missions, which participated in the promotion of cultural heritage and innovativeness of the V4 states around the world, were also an important element of building the image of the Group’s member states.

The idea of Visegrad cooperation is a constant element of public awareness in V4 countries. Numerous exhibitions organized or co-organized by the Sejm of the Republic of Poland, such as the *“From Visegrad to Visegrád”* exhibition (19-27.09.2016, Warsaw), and the *“1956: Poland - Hungary. History and memory”* exhibition opened in front of the Sejm building (27.6-11.07.2016, Warsaw) aimed at presenting the history of V4 states.

## • **Tourism and sport**

The national tourist organisations of Poland, the Czech Republic, Slovakia and Hungary have been consistently developing a joint tourist offer to the so-called distant countries for over 15 years. The projects submitted by individual countries at the high-level meeting of the V4 tourism ministers and presidents of national tourism organisations (14-15.02.2017, Warsaw), assuming joint promotion were included in the *Marketing plan* for 2017. Poland, Czech Republic, Slovakia and Hungary earmarked €315,000 for these activities in 2017. The 2017 Marketing Plan assumes promotion in the USA, Russia, India, Latin America, Belarus, Kazakhstan, South Korea, and China.

In the field of youth, cooperation among youth organisations was continued with respect to organising joint events. The following events were organised under the honorary patronage of the Speaker of the Sejm: International Visegrad Basketball Tournament in Przemysl, Championship of the Podkarpacie Region under the Patronage of the Mayor of Przemysl, 1st Przemysl Forum of Transportation and Logistics, Visegrad Ultramarathon of the Przemysl Fortress, International Youth and Athletics Competition in Team Games and Athletics – Visegrad Group Games.

At the **23rd Meeting of the Steering Committee of the International Olympic Hopes Tournament**, organised in Warsaw on 15-16.12.2016, the Tournament competitions held in 2016 and plans for the competitions in 2017 were discussed. The Polish ministry of sport and tourism announced a new programme, which as of 2017 will be specially dedicated to Polish organisers and participants of these competitions.



## COHESION AND RELATIONSHIPS

***“There is a need for a bold and comprehensive vision of the EU reform, its policies and national approach, so that the project of a common Europe can regain its confidence and a sense of unity among its citizens”***

**Jerzy Kwieciński, Secretary of State at the Ministry of Development**

(Meeting of ministers for cohesion policy of the V4 states and Bulgaria, Croatia, Romania and Slovenia, Warsaw, 2.03.2017)

- **Cohesion Policy**

The meeting of ministers responsible for economic affairs and cohesion policy of the V4 states with representatives of Bulgaria, Croatia, Romania and Slovakia (14-15.07.2016, Warsaw) identified the convergence of the positions of the countries of the region with regard to policies supporting innovation and competitiveness of national economies. The ministers expressed their opposition to the protectionist measures undertaken by some EU Member States that distort the free competition character of the single European market. An expert debate was held at the meeting on the new challenges facing cohesion policy and effective communication and promotion of its effects. Among the issues discussed were the preliminary results of the study *“An ex-post evaluation and a forecast of benefits obtained by EU-15 states as a result of cohesion policy in the V4 states”* and the actions that should be taken to promote these results.

At the *“Evaluation in theory and practice of V4+4”* meeting of experts (8-9.09.2016, Zakopane), representatives of the Visegrad Group together with Bulgaria, Croatia, Romania, Slovenia and the European Commission raised issues related to joint initiatives and discussed the results of a study on the benefits that the EU-15 countries derived from support given to the V4 states within the framework of cohesion policy. The discussion also focused on evaluation methodology for 2014-2020. The next meeting of representatives of the Visegrad Group states and Romania, Bulgaria, Slovenia and Croatia (22-23.09.2016, Warsaw) was devoted to cohesion policy in the 2014-2020 programming period and exchange of experiences on the implementation of new mechanisms in cohesion policy. The participants discussed the planned amendments to EU regulations in the area of cohesion policy (the so-called *“Omnibus regulation”*) in order to identify areas that could receive support from all V4+4 countries during the negotiations. The meeting of experts in December 2016, which discussed the scope of the draft joint document of the Visegrad Group states and Bulgaria, Romania, Slovenia and Croatia on the future of cohesion policy was the outcome of the arrangements made during meetings of ministers of the V4, Bulgaria, Romania, Slovenia, and Croatia. **The meetings led to the adoption by the ministers responsible for cohesion policy in the V4 and Bulgaria, Croatia, Romania and Slovenia (March 1-2, 2017, Warsaw) of a joint document of V4+4 on cohesion policy after 2020 and a brochure promoting the results of cohesion policy** illustrated by completed projects. The meeting, attended by the Commissioner for Regional Policy, Ms. Corina Cretu, was also an opportunity to exchange views on the shape and structure of future cohesion policy.



*Source: Ministry of Economic Development of the Republic of Poland  
Meeting of the ministers responsible for cohesion policy in the V4 and Bulgaria,  
Croatia, Romania and Slovenia (Warsaw, 1-2.03.2017)*

The Polish Ministry of Economic Development organised an expert meeting (11.01.2017, Zakopane) of the V4 states attended by institutions involved in the implementation of **Interreg cross-border cooperation programmes** and representatives of the European Commission (EC). The discussion focused on the future of Interreg after 2020 – the aims and scope of cross-border cooperation programmes. The representatives of the V4 states and the EC discussed the possibilities of strengthening and perhaps extending the scope of cross-border cooperation in Europe, increasing visibility of its results and better coordination with other programmes, including regional and national ones. A separate session was devoted to the allocation mechanism for Interreg programmes, and the possibility of creating a separate arrangement for territorial cooperation, and thus a separate set of indicators.

- **Urban policy**

At a conference (27.10.2016, Warsaw) representatives of the European Commission, the V4 states and Bulgaria, Romania, Slovenia and Croatia (V4+4), as well as local governments and experts, discussed progress in the **implementation of the EU Urban Agenda**. The participants presented actions undertaken so far and planned at the EU level to strengthen the participation of cities in the implementation of EU and





national development goals. They also discussed national priorities and partnership participation. Conclusions on the functioning of the cooperation mechanism and recommendations for future partnerships were also presented.

- **Transport**

*“The core network corridors of TEN-T”* conference (19.10.2016, Warsaw) was attended by the ministers responsible for transport in the V4 states and the Vice-President of the European Parliament Committee on Transport and Tourism. During the conference the representatives of **the Czech Republic, Poland, and Slovakia signed a letter of intent on the implementation of cross-border sections of the Baltic-Adriatic corridor**. The aim of the declaration was to stress the importance of implementation of key cross-border sections in the Baltic-Adriatic corridor in accordance with the TEN-T standards and within relevant, specific dates. During the conference the development of the core network corridors of TEN-T Baltic Sea-Adriatic Sea and the North Sea-Baltic Sea was discussed. The importance of core network TEN-T corridors crossing through Poland for regional and urban development and prospects of the development of the shipping and logistics industry was also discussed, emphasising the importance of corridors for the strengthening of cooperation for the development of transport networks.

At the **V4 + Republic of Korea High Level Meeting on transport and infrastructure** (21.11.2016, Warsaw), the heads of delegations signed a document that will provide a formal basis for developing future cooperation in the field of aviation, road and rail transport, as well as intelligent transport systems (ITS).

The Ministry of Maritime Economy and Inland Navigation of the Republic of Poland organised a high-level conference on inland waterway transport (IWT) (31.01.2017, Warsaw), during which ministers, experts, and representatives of the European Commission discussed the importance of IWT for international transport and economy, sharing their experiences and plans for the future. **On this occasion, the ministers from Poland, the Czech Republic and Slovakia signed a memorandum of cooperation on the development of inland waterway transport, including the Danube – Oder – Elbe project.**



## **ANNEX:**

### **List of selected documents adopted during the Polish Presidency in the V4**

- I. Communiqué following a Meeting of Prime Ministers of the Visegrad Group with the Prime Minister of Ukraine on 6 September 2016, Krynica
- II. Joint Statement of the Prime Ministers of the Visegrad Group (V4), 16 September 2016, Bratislava
- III. Joint Statement of the Prime Ministers of the Visegrad Group (V4), 15 December 2016, Brussels
- IV. Memorandum among the Ministry of Maritime Economy and Inland Navigation of the Republic of Poland and the Ministry of Transport of the Czech Republic and Ministry of Transport and Construction of the Slovak Republic on the preparation of the proposal of the Danube-Oder-Elbe water corridor, 31 January 2017, Warsaw
- V. Common Paper of the Visegrad Group on the Commission Proposal for the European Electronic Communications Code, 6 February 2017
- VI. Joint Statement of the Prime Ministers of the Visegrad Group (V4), 2 March 2017, Warsaw
- VII. Joint Paper of the Visegrad Group, Bulgaria, Croatia, Romania and Slovenia on Cohesion Policy after 2020 adopted on 2 March 2017 in Warsaw by the Ministers responsible for Cohesion Policy, in parallel to the adoption of the COTER position on the future of Cohesion Policy, followed by a joint session of V4+4 and COTER, as a sign of enhanced cooperation with the Committee of Regions
- VIII. Joint Declaration of Visegrad Group Prime Ministers on Innovation – “Warsaw Declaration”, 28 March 2017, Warsaw
- IX. Joint Statement of the Prime Ministers of the Visegrad Group on the Amendment of Posting of Workers Directive 11 May 2017
- X. Joint Statement of the Ministers of Interior of the Visegrad Group on the Migration Crisis Response Mechanism adopted in Warsaw on 21 November 2016, Warsaw
- XI. Joint Declaration of the Foreign Ministers of the Visegrad Group on the Western Balkans, 29 November 2016, Warsaw
- XII. Joint Statement of the Ministers of the Environment of the Visegrad Group and Bulgaria, Romania and Ukraine as an observer, 3 October 2016, Tuczno
- XIII. Joint Statement by the Foreign Ministers of the Visegrad Group on the future of the Eastern Partnership, 12 April 2017, Warsaw



XIV. Joint statement of the Ministers of Science and Higher Education of the Visegrad Group, 31 May 2017, Cracow

XV. Joint Declaration of the Agriculture Ministers of the Visegrad Group and Bulgaria, Romania and Slovenia on the Common Agricultural Policy (CAP) after 2020, 2 June 2017, Warsaw

XVI. Belweder Declaration adopted at the conference of Ministers of Economy of the V4 + 4 countries, 14 June, 2017, Warsaw

XVII. Joint Statement of Ministers of Interior of the Visegrad Group, 12 June 2017, Warsaw

XVIII. Migration Crisis Response Mechanism Action Plan 2017-2019, 12 June 2017, Warsaw

XIX. Memorandum of Understanding on Cooperation in the Field of Fair and Affordable Pricing of Medicinal Products, 3 March 2017, Warsaw

XX. A message developed and adopted during the “Young People for Human Rights” working seminar with representatives of the Visegrad Group states and the Eastern Partnership, 23 February 2017, Warsaw



## List of meetings of V4/V4+ during the Polish Presidency

### Presidents

Meeting of Presidents of Visegrad Group states (V4), 14-15 October 2016, Rzeszow/Lancut  
*(European Commissioner for Energy Union Maroš Šefčovič also participated in the session on gas market security).*

### Prime Ministers

1. Meeting of the Prime Ministers of the V4 states, 21 July 2016, Warsaw
2. Meeting of Heads of Government of the V4 states and Germany, 26 August 2016, Warsaw
3. Meeting of the Prime Ministers of the V4 and Ukraine, 6 September 2016 (on the sidelines of the Economic Forum in Krynica), Krynica Zdroj
4. Participation of the V4 Prime Ministers in the Informal EU-27 Summit, 16 September 2016, Bratislava
5. Coordinating meeting of the Heads of Government of the V4, 3 February 2017, La Valetta (before the informal EU-27 summit)
6. Meeting of the Prime Ministers of the V4 states, 2 March 2017, Warsaw
7. Meeting of the Prime Ministers of the V4 states, 28 March 2017, Warsaw
8. Joint Statement of the Prime Ministers of the Visegrad Group on the Amendment of Posting of Workers Directive, 11 May 2017
9. Summit of the Prime Ministers of V4 + Benelux, 19 June 2017, Warsaw
10. Meeting of Prime Ministers of the V4 states with the President of France (on the occasion of the European Council), 23 June 2017, Brussels

### Parliamentary

1. Meeting of the Speakers of the V4 Parliaments, 7 September 2016 (on the occasion of the "Carpathian Europe" conference), Krynica Zdroj
2. Informal Meeting of the Speakers of V4 Parliaments, 3-4 December 2016, Przemysl
3. Meeting of the Foreign Affairs Committees of the Parliaments of the V4 states, 27-28 February 2017, Warsaw
4. Meeting of the Speakers of V4 Parliaments, 6-7 March 2017, Warsaw
5. Meeting of the Speakers of V4 Parliaments, 23-24 April 2017, Bratislava



## **Ministries of Foreign Affairs**

1. Meeting of the Foreign Ministers of the V4 states, 9 July 2016, Warsaw – held on the occasion of the NATO summit in Warsaw.
2. Meeting of the Foreign Ministers of the V4 states (before the meeting of the Foreign Affairs Council - FAC), 17 July 2016, Brussels
3. Informal Meeting of the Foreign Ministers of the V4 on the sidelines of the 71st session of the UN GA, 19 September 2016, New York
4. Meeting of the Foreign Ministers of the V4 (before the FAC meeting), 14 November 2016, Brussels
5. Meeting of the Foreign Ministers of the Visegrad Group and the Western Balkan countries (V4 + Albania, Bosnia and Herzegovina, Montenegro, Macedonia, Serbia, Kosovo and Bulgaria, Croatia, Romania, Slovenia and Italy + The High Representative of the Union for Foreign Affairs and Security Policy) 29 November 2016, Warsaw
6. Meeting of the Foreign Ministers of the V4 and the Arab Republic of Egypt, 20 December 2016, Cairo
7. Meeting of the Foreign Ministers of the V4, 16 January 2017, Brussels
8. Working Coordination Meeting of the V4 Foreign Ministers, 6 February 2017 (on the sidelines of the FAC)
9. Meeting of the Foreign Ministers of the V4 and Benelux on 5 March 2017, Brussels
10. Meeting of Deputy Foreign Ministers of the V4 states and the Eastern Partnership, 15 March 2017, Minsk (Belarus)
11. Meeting of the Foreign Ministers of the V4 states and the Eastern Partnership, 12 April 2017, Warsaw
12. Participation of the V4 Foreign Ministers at the GLOBSEC conference, 26 May 2017, Bratislava
13. Meeting of the V4 Foreign Ministers at the International Visegrad Fund (IVF), 26 May 2017, Bratislava
14. Meeting of the Foreign Ministers V4 + Turkey (on the occasion of the GLOBSEC conference), 26 May 2017, Bratislava
15. Meeting of the Foreign Ministers of the V4 and the Baltic and Nordic states, 31 May 2017, Sopot.

## **European Affairs Ministers**

25.07.2016, Bratislava; 20.09.2016, Brussels; 18.10.2016, Luxembourg; 12.12.2016, Brussels; 23.01.2017, La Valetta; 30.01.2017, Brussels; 20.03.2017, Brussels; 21.03.2017, Warsaw; 11.04.2017, Brussels; 24.04.2017, Brussels; 27.04.2017, Luxembourg; 16.05.2017, Brussels; 22.05.2017, Brussels;



*Apart from the above-mentioned meetings, a permanent consultation mechanism was maintained via various channels of communication (mail, telephone), depending on the dynamics of events on the EU agenda.*

*State for European Affairs accompanied the Prime Minister at the meetings of heads of government of the V4 convened during the Polish Presidency:*

21.07.2016, 26.08.2016, 2.03.2017, 28.03.2017 and 19.06.2017 in Warsaw; 6.09.2016 in Krynica Zdroj; 3.02.2017 in La Valetta (before the EU summit in Malta); 20.10.2016, 15.12.2016; 9.03.2017, 29.04.2017 and 22.06.2017 in Brussels (before the European Council).

#### **V4 Political Directors at the Ministry of Foreign Affairs**

26.09.2016 in Ottawa – V4 + Canada format; 24.10.2016 – V4 + Nordic Countries format; 22.11.2016 in Warsaw – V4 + Baltic States format - 11.12.2016 in Brussels - V4 + Benelux format; 26.01.2017 in Beirut – V4 + Lebanon format; 22.02.2017 in Ankara – V4 + Turkey format; 21.03.2017 in Chisinau – V4 + Moldova format; 20.04.2017 in Cairo – V4 + Egypt format; 14.05.2017 in Brussels – V4 + Romania and Bulgaria format; 28.06.2017 in Tbilisi – V4 + Georgia format.

Consultations with heads of strategy and planning departments of the Ministries of Foreign Affairs of the V4 states with experts of the “Think Visegrad “ think tank, 6 February 2017, Warsaw

Meeting of the National Coordinators of Visegrad Cooperation: 22 September 2016, Budapest; 23 November 2016, Bratislava; 3 March 2017, Warsaw; 11 May 2017, Prague.

#### **Ministerial – other ministries**

1. Meeting of Interior Ministers of the V4 states, 11 July 2016, Warsaw
2. Meeting of Ministers responsible for Economic Affairs and Cohesion Policy of V4+4 (V4+ Bulgaria, Croatia, Romania and Slovenia), 14 July 2016, Warsaw
3. Meeting at the level of ministers of energy of the V4 states as part of the 26th Economic Forum in Krynica, 6-8 September 2016, Krynica Zdroj
4. Meeting of the Ministers of Labour and Social Policy of the V4 states, 16 September 2016, Warsaw
5. Meeting of the Ministers of the Environment in the format V4+ Bulgaria, Romania, Belarus and Ukraine, 3-4 October 2016, Tuczno near Poznan
6. Meeting of the Chiefs of General Staffs of the V4 states, 3-4 October 2016, Sopot
7. Meeting of the Ministers of Agriculture of the V4+3 (V4+ Bulgaria, Romania, Slovenia), 25-26 October 2016, Warsaw
8. Meeting of the Ministers of the V4+4 (V4+ Bulgaria, Romania, Slovenia, and Croatia)



responsible for cohesion policy, 15 November 2016 (on the eve of the General Affairs Cohesion Council), Brussels

9. Meeting of the Ministers of Interior of the V4 states (V4+ Austria, Croatia and deputy ministers from Belgium, Bulgaria and Slovenia) on the shape of the common migration policy of the European Union, 21 November 2016, Warsaw
10. V4–Republic of Korea High Level Meeting on transport and infrastructure, 21 November 2016, Warsaw
11. Meeting of the Ministers of Administration of the V4 states (V4 Good Government Forum), 12-13 December 2016, Warsaw
12. Meeting of the V4 Ministers of Digitization, 6 February 2017, Warsaw
13. Meeting of the Ministers of Tourism and Presidents of National Tourist Organizations of the V4 states, 14-15 February 2017, Warsaw
14. Meeting of the Ministers responsible for Cohesion Policy in the V4 and Bulgaria, Croatia, Romania and Slovenia, Warsaw, 1-2 March 2017
15. Informal meeting of the Health Ministers of the V4 states and Croatia and Lithuania, 3 March 2017, Warsaw
16. Working Meeting of the Ministers of Agriculture of the V4 and Lithuania with the EU Commissioner for Agriculture and Rural Development, 11 March 2017, Jasionka near Rzeszow
17. Meeting of the Ministers of Water Management the V4 and Bulgaria and Romania, 22 March 2017, Warsaw
18. Meeting of the Ministers of Employment and Social Affairs of the V4 states, April 27, 2017, Warsaw
19. Meeting of the V4 Ministers of Science and Higher Education, 30-31 May 2017, Cracow
20. 27th Meeting of the Ministers of Culture, 1-2 June 2017, Gdynia
21. Meeting of the Interior Ministers of the V4 + Baltic States, 12 June 2017, Warsaw
22. Meeting of the Ministers responsible for Economic Affairs and Cohesion Policy of V4+Bulgaria, Croatia, Romania and Slovenia (V4+4), 14 June 2016, Warsaw
23. Meeting of the Ministers of the Environment of the V4 + Bulgaria and Romania, 28-29 June 2017, Zakopane

#### **Other V4 meetings**

1. Expert meeting “Evaluation in theory and practice of V4+4” (V4+ Bulgaria, Croatia, Romania and Slovenia), 8-9 September 2016, Zakopane
2. Meeting “Programme Period 2014-2020: First years of implementation” V4+4 (V4 + Romania, Bulgaria, Slovenia and Croatia), 22-23 September 2016, Warsaw



3. Gas Forum of the Visegrad Group, 11 October 2016, Warsaw
4. Expert meeting on Cohesion Policy in the context of the review of the Multiannual Financial Framework and its role after 2020, 12 October 2016, Warsaw
5. Conference V4 “The core network corridors of TEN-T”, 19 October 2016, Warsaw
6. Conference V4+4 (V4+ Bulgaria, Croatia, Slovenia and Romania) on barriers in the EU internal market, 21 October 2016, Warsaw
7. Expert Meeting V4+4 (V4+ Bulgaria, Croatia, Slovenia and Romania) on the EU Urban Agenda, 27 October 2016, Warsaw
8. Meeting of the Secretary of State at the Ministry of Digitalization Marek Zagorski with the Members of the European Parliament from the V4 states, November 14, 2016, Brussels
9. Expert meeting V4+ Croatia, Lithuania, Latvia and Slovenia on affordable medicines, 22 November 2016, Warsaw
10. V4 expert Meeting on e-Health, Warsaw, 29 November 2016, Warsaw
11. Meeting of Secretaries of National Security Councils and National Security Advisers of the V4 states, 30 November 2016, Warsaw
12. Expert meeting of the V4 and Bulgaria, Croatia, Romania and Slovenia on the future of cohesion policy, 12 December 2016, Warsaw
13. Meeting of the Steering Committee of the International Olympic Hopes Tournament of the Visegrad Group, 15-16 December 2016, Warsaw
14. Expert meeting on Interreg 2020+, 11 January 2017, Zakopane
15. Expert meeting on simplification of management and control procedures of the operational programmes co-financed by the European Social Fund, 26 January 2017, Cracow
16. V4 Meeting of Experts on the Migration Crisis Response Mechanism, 31 January 2017, Warsaw
17. V4 inland navigation conference, 31 January 2017, Warsaw
18. Meeting of Directors General responsible for cohesion policy of the Visegrad Group and Bulgaria, Croatia, Romania and Slovenia, 2 March 2017, Warsaw
19. V4+ Eastern Partnership working seminar “Young People for Human Rights”, 22-23 February 2017, Warsaw.
20. Consultations of the V4 Directors for Security Policy, 3 March 2017, Warsaw
21. Meeting of the V4 Expert Working Group for assessing the legal status of trade in agricultural land in the EU Member States, 23 March 2017,
22. Expert meeting on the functioning of the financial market, 23-24 March, Warsaw





23. Conference of Paying Agencies of the V4 states and Bulgaria, Romania and Slovenia 24-26 April 2017, Rzeszow
24. The first meeting of the Coordination Committee on cooperation in the field of fair and affordable medicinal products, 27-28 April, Warsaw.
25. Meeting on the "Connecting Europe Facility" (CEF) in the transport sector, 10 May 2017, Warsaw
26. Regional Workshop for Heads of Financial Intelligence Units, 10-11 May 2017
27. New Spaces of Reading – Visegrad Conference 2017, 16-17 May 2017
28. Expert meeting on e-health, 17 May 2017, Warsaw
29. Meeting V4+ Bulgaria, Croatia, Romania and Slovenia on audit issues, 17-19 May 2017
30. Annual meeting of the Directors-General for Civil Protection, 23-24 May 2017, Czestochowa
31. Working meeting V4+ Lithuania, Latvia and Estonia on public procurement, 30 May 2017, Warsaw
32. Consultations of V4 Secretaries of Security Councils and National Security Advisers, 13 June 2017
33. Meeting of Chiefs of Staffs, 20-22 June 2017, Krakow
34. Expert meeting "Summary of joint evaluation projects V4+ 4", 23 June 2017, Wojanow
35. International Evaluation Conference, 21-22 June 2017, Wroclaw