



VISEGRAD YOUTH FORUM 2018





Visegrad Youth Forum 2018

The **Visegrad Youth Forum (VYF)** is one of the flagship projects of the **Euro-Atlantic Center**, an independent, non-partisan, non-governmental student organization specializing in the field of international relations and security policy. The project's latest edition, **VYF 2018**, was organised in cooperation with the **Faculty of Political Science and International Relations of the Matej Bel University in Banská Bystrica** and with financial support from the **International Visegrad Fund, NATO – Public Diplomacy Division, the Ministry of Foreign and European Affairs of the Slovak Republic, the city of Banská Bystrica, the Banská Bystrica Self-Governing Region** and the **Rotary Club Banská Bystrica**.

The **partner organizations** of the seventh edition of the **Visegrad Youth Forum** were the **Corvinus Society for Foreign Affairs and Culture, Junior Diplomat Initiative** and the **Foreign Affairs Society**.

VYF 2018 consisted of **three phases**. The **first phase** consisted of a historically first cycle of **four side events** organized in each capital city of the **Visegrad Group**, focused on commemorating **Visegrad cooperation in light of its 25-year anniversary, current topics and issues resonating within the region, and future challenges**. The **first phase** then continued with an online e-learning process for participants of the **final conference in Banská Bystrica**. This form of interactive preparation helped them deepen their knowledge about the topics discussed during the conference. The participants also had the opportunity to discuss current issues and topics regarding **V4 cooperation** and the **Visegrad Group** in general via a closed online group on Facebook.

The **final VYF 2018 conference** represented the **second phase** of the project. The **three-day long event** consisted of a **panel discussion, workshops** and a **North Atlantic Council Summit simulation**. Moreover, the formal programme was enriched with informal and cultural activities, like a **cultural evening in the Museum of the Slovak National Uprising, dinner** at a **traditional Slovak restaurant** and the event's official **welcoming reception**.

The **final phase** of the project consists of establishing a stable and long-lasting **V4+ community** consisting of young leaders from the **Visegrad region** and **neighbouring countries**. This community serves as a **platform for further communication and cooperation**, and is growing each year, with new participants taking part in the **Visegrad Youth Forum** project. During the previous **seven editions** of the **Visegrad Youth Forum** project, more almost **250 young people** from **Central Europe** have taken part in this project.



4 EVENTS
4 COUNTRIES
17 SPEAKERS
30 PARTICIPANTS
1 CONFERENCE



Slovakia behind the Iron Curtain and today

Post-war Slovakia. The political system in Czechoslovakia, oscillating between a totalitarian regime and democracy. Influence of the Soviet Union and the rise of left-wing tendencies in a society opposed to the formation of anti-communist resistance. Emigration of our grandparents, or the impact on art and education behind the Iron Curtain. In this spirit, the opening VYF 2018 event preceding the final conference in Banská Bystrica took place on October 18, 2018, at the University of Economics in Bratislava. Speaking at the event were **Marína Zavacká**, research fellow at the Institute of History of the Slovak Academy of Sciences, whose research focuses on the history of propaganda and the context of building regime loyalties in the 20th century, and **Juraj Kalina**, research fellow at the Institute of History of the Slovak Academy of Sciences and the Archive of the Security Services of the Czechoslovak Republic, whose research includes investigating the forms of anti-communist resistance in former Czechoslovakia and the activities of intelligence services in the 1940s and 1950s.

Opening the discussion, **Mrs. Zavacká** presented articles, photographs and quotations from various leaders and magazines, who were once supporting Hitler's regime and back then were idealizing the working class. Her aim was to prove that the generation raised in the Slovak state was gradually transformed into a generation living in the socialist Czechoslovak Republic. Interactive materials confirmed that propaganda and a celebration of the system took place analogically in both regimes. Following a brief presentation **Mrs. Zavacká** elaborated on a question concerning the post-war history of the renewed republic and its loyalty to the Soviet Union. According to her, it was impossible to avoid a connection with the Soviet Union in 1945. Back during WWII, the idea of "Soviet Slovakia" was backed by many communists, including Gustav Husák. She also mentioned that communism was not only a problem in our region, but in many Western countries as well. As an example, she mentioned Italy and France, where communities of people celebrating communism were present.

The question of the post-war orientation change in foreign policy of Czechoslovakia was answered by **Mr. Kalina**. Following WWII, the mutual East-West mistrust began to grow. Western powers considered Czechoslovakia to be an ally of the USSR, as it took the Soviet's side on numerous occasions. The failure to sign the treaty of alliance with France, as well as the rejection of the Marshall Plan, demonstrated our orientation towards USSR. Many citizens of Czechoslovakia blamed the West that it did not react in February 1948. In reality, the West reacted, but not as most people envisioned it to be. It is still possible to find analytical reports from that period in the CIA archive.

The formation of resistance in Slovakia can be described as a continuous process. Back in 1938-39, several groups were opposed to the totalitarian Nazi regime. In terms of resistance within Czechoslovakia, people were used to surveillance and undemocratic practices during the war, and they took it as a normal thing said **Mrs. Zavacká**. However, many did not like such approaches, which led a large part of the population to flee into exile. **Mr. Kalina** remembered the lost illusions of emigrants from Czechoslovakia about the West, where they could present their opinion, but their ideas about life were quite different. According to him, during the 40-year period of communist rule, about 220,000 people left Czechoslovakia.

The regime also had a strong influence on culture and education. Many writers were changing the texts of their novels every two years, newspapers were frequently censored, editors-in-chief strictly controlled. Since the early 1950s, the education system was heavily influenced by the regime. It all depended on social status and the education of the parents. **Mrs. Zavacká** also mentioned the loss of power of many people who, in communist Czechoslovakia, made decisions about the lives of the citizens, but lost their power following the fall of the Iron Curtain. As an example, she stated the job loss only based on one bad recommendation.

Questions from the audience included topics, such as urgent emigration of our grandparents, the life in the socialist Czechoslovak Republic, the formation of resistance within Slovak territory or the topic of political and religious dissidents.

Dynamic Visegrad for Europe: The priorities of the SK V4 PRES 18-19

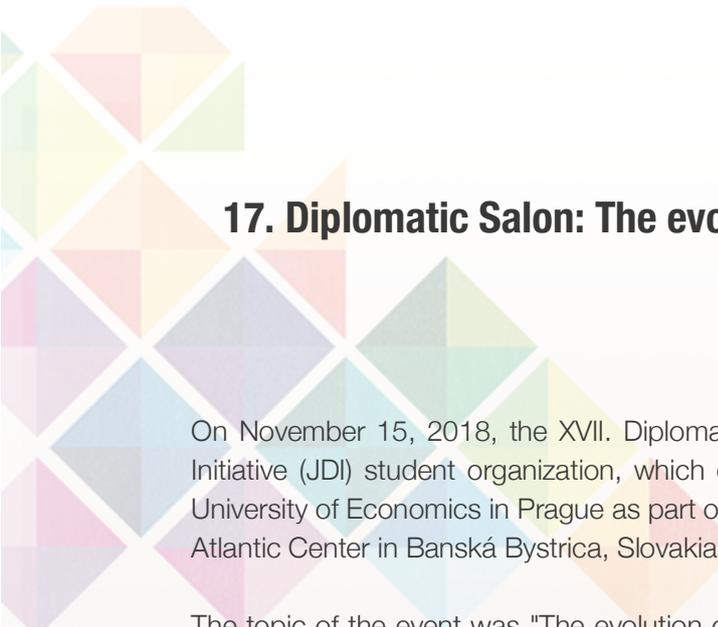
The cycle of side events preceding the final Visegrad Youth 2018 conference continued, as the Euro-Atlantic Center organized a roundtable discussion in partnership with the Corvinus Society for Foreign Affairs and Culture titled “Dynamic Visegrad for Europe: The priorities of the SK V4 PRES 18-19” at the Corvinus University of Budapest on the November 8, 2018. Speaking at the event were **András Máté Lázár**, National Visegrad Coordinator, Head of Unit for Regional Cooperation at the Hungarian Ministry of Foreign Affairs and Trade, **Dániel Bartha**, Executive Director at the Centre for Euro-Atlantic Integration and Democracy and **Marian Varga**, First Secretary at the Embassy of Slovakia to Hungary. Moderating the discussion was **Peter Stepper**, Research Fellow at the Antall József Knowledge Centre.

After a short introductory speech, the priorities and main achievements of the previous Hungarian V4 presidency were presented in the first part of the lecture. Speakers mentioned some of its biggest successes and also parts, where they potentially saw room for improvement, or more precisely, highlighted the areas, on which Slovakia should focus more in-depth during its presidency.

The main topic of the event was the Slovak presidency of the V4 and its biggest challenges. The speakers discussed not only the contemporary state of the Visegrad region and its stance towards the structures and organizations, such as European Union and NATO, but also the future political direction of the V4. According to the presented opinions of the speakers, the countries of the Visegrad region should focus more on the areas of defense and energy security, as those are the key fields with the most potential for deepening mutual Visegrad cooperation. After the remarks made by the speakers on the said topics, the discussion concluded with several points of view reflecting on both the short and long-term challenges of the V4, tangentially examining the future prospects of the TSI regarding the role and position of the V4 countries within the European Union.

As for the question of the position of V4 member countries within the structures of European Union, the panelists underlined the point that the more V4 countries are united in their political opinions, the more damage it seems to be inflicting in Brussels. This posed a question – what can the countries, and especially Slovakia during its V4 presidency, do to reverse this process? Another topic which the invited guests tackled was the proposed concept of the V4+ cooperation, via which our cooperation with Austria and Slovenia would be strengthened. One of the participants of the discussion put forward a question what the prospect of potential future expansion of the V4 format by the above-mentioned countries is. While the speakers stated that they support the idea of fostering mutual rapports within the V4+ concept, they were skeptical about expanding V4 structures by third-party states, mainly because of the historical elements and bonds between Hungary, Slovakia, the Czech Republic and Poland.

Last but not least, questions asked during the Q&A section focused on the 2+2 format (Hungary - Poland & Slovakia – the Czech Republic) within the Visegrad Group as well as on development, digital technology and economic cooperation between the member states.



17. Diplomatic Salon: The evolution of Czech diplomacy through the years

On November 15, 2018, the XVII. Diplomatic Salon took place, organized by the Junior Diplomat Initiative (JDI) student organization, which operates at the Faculty of International Relations of the University of Economics in Prague as part of the Visegrad Youth Forum 2018 organized by the Euro-Atlantic Center in Banská Bystrica, Slovakia.

The topic of the event was "The evolution of Czech diplomacy through the years", in honour of this year's many notable anniversaries. Three generations of diplomats spoke at the event, namely **Vladimír Galuška**, former Deputy Minister of Foreign Affairs of the Czech Republic and Ambassador to Slovakia and the United States, **Ivana Grollová** from the Department of Multilateral Economic Relations of the Ministry of Foreign Affairs of the Czech Republic and former Ambassador to Mongolia, and **Matti Tetřev** from the Department of Security Policy of the Ministry of Foreign Affairs of the Czech Republic. Chairing the debate was **Radka Druláková**, Vice-Dean for Science and Doctoral Studies at the Faculty of International Relations of the University of Economics in Prague.

Prior to the debate itself, the attending students were greeted by the Deputy Director of the Department of Public Diplomacy **Sandra Miholová**. Then each of the guests got the opportunity to present a selected period from the history of Czech diplomacy and to evaluate its development. The common conclusion was that, in earlier times, everything was slower in terms of communication and international negotiations, which could last for several months, not to mention the time that it took to get to a certain location of said negotiations. The guests shared their own experiences gained during their time at each respective embassy or meetings they have participated in as well, making the subject even more interesting.

Matti Tetřev also focused on the development of the Czech Republic's participation in NATO and the EU, stressing that the Czech Republic was the first post-Communist country to host a NATO summit or the European Commission. On the question asked by **Radka Druláková**, what has remained the same and what has changed in the diplomatic world, the guests have agreed that the way of communication within the Ministry in the form of TICs has remained unchanged. However, this is beginning to change with gradual replacement by e-mails. The nomenclature (ambassador, consul, etc.) has not been altered as well. There was also time for questions from the audience, for example about French President Macron's proposal to create a European army, the level of funding for NATO joint units and a comparison of Czech and Slovak diplomacy.

Historical development of Poland and its socioeconomic relations

On November 23, 2018, the fourth and final event prior to this year's Visegrad Youth Forum conference took place at the SGH Warsaw School of Economics in Warsaw, Poland, capping of the historically first cycle of side events preceding the final conference in Banská Bystrica. The event was organized in cooperation with the Foreign Affairs Society (SKN Spraw Zagranicznych SGH) of the SGH Warsaw School of Economics. Titled "Historical development of Poland and its socioeconomic relations", the event was divided into two thematic blocs.

Speaking in the first bloc was **Konrad Hennig** from the Chancellery of the Polish Prime Minister and analyst at the Visegrad Foundation (Fundacja Wyszehradzka). Being one of the co-authors of the report on the Three Seas Initiatives (TSI) called "Inicjatywa Trójmorza. Jeśli razem, to dokąd i jak?", **Mr. Hennig** focused on said initiative and energy security in the Visegrad region. The TSI provides V4 states with the chance for broader cooperation in terms of energy security, which is beneficial not only for them, but for all countries participating within the framework of the initiative. He further elaborated on the economic growth of Poland and other V4 member states, expressing optimism that the region has come a long way since their totalitarian past. Recently, Visegrad countries have been focusing on coordinated cooperation in terms of infrastructure, with various joint highway projects being planned for the near future, ensuring better interconnectivity within the V4.

Kludia Klonowska, the UN Youth Delegate of Poland, spoke in the second thematic bloc, talking about her experience as a UN youth delegate. She praised the UN for realising that the young generation needs its voice to be heard and for creating the Youth Delegate platform. Additionally, she talked about various projects the youth delegates are involved in, mentioning that in recent years, the focus of said projects were gender equality and sustainable development. Sustainable development has also been a topic she and her colleagues from other V4 states have been very actively involved in, as they are currently organizing conferences in the Visegrad region on said topic. Its thanks to these events that her colleagues and her can make the V4 even more visible globally.

Going backwards? V4 at a crossroads

The panel discussion the 7th edition of the Visegrad Youth Forum took place at the Faculty of Political Science and International Relations of the Matej Bel University in Banská Bystrica on December 6, 2018. Titled “Going backwards? V4 at a crossroads”, the discussion focused on both the current state of the V4 and its future. The panel was introduced by the keynote speech of **Marek Lenč**, Assistant Professor at the Department of International Relations and Diplomacy of the Faculty of Political Science and International Relations of the Matej Bel University. In his speech, he pointed out that despite the successes, which the international community is reaching, there are still many problems we need to deal with and many challenges we need to face. All Central European countries chose a Euro-Atlantic future. Our shared common goal remains – we still want to be part of the European project. That’s because the V4 shares its common interests. Despite several differences, we should show more solidarity to each other, because friends should respect each other despite different opinions and decisions. **Mr. Lenč** concluded his speech by saying that “if you made a mistake and do not correct it, this is called a mistake.”

Speaking at the discussion were **Marko Salíni**, Secretary of the European Affairs Section at the Ministry of Foreign and European Affairs of the Slovak Republic, **András Máté Lázár**, National Visegrad Coordinator of Hungary at Department for Visegrad Cooperation and Central Europe at the Ministry of Foreign Affairs and Trade of Hungary, **Jana Juzová**, Research Fellow at the EUROPEUM Institute for European Policy in Prague, Czech Republic and **Jakub Groszkowski**, Head of the Central European Department at the Centre for Eastern Studies in Warsaw, Poland. The panel was chaired by the Program Director of the Euro-Atlantic Center **Michal Hežely**.

Marko Salíni began by agreeing with **Mr. Lenč’s** speech and especially with the main thoughts in it. **Mr. Salíni** thinks that the problem of populism, extremism is a problem in the entire European Union, not problem just in Central European countries. In his opinion, there aren’t any metaphorical lines between west and east, nor between south and north. As a consequence of growing populism and extremism in the context of next year’s European Parliament elections, we will have a new parliament with new political powers included within it. He mentioned that the Ministry of Foreign and European Affairs of the Slovak Republic created the Department of Strategic Communication, which started the initiative “Foreign Policy Concern Us” (translated from Zahraničná politika sa nás týka). The ministry is fighting against populism and extremism through activities organized for student at universities and secondary schools because the aforementioned elections. In the previous elections, Slovakia ranked last among EU member states with a voter turnout of just 13%. Moreover, **Mr. Salíni** elaborated on the activities of young people and young student, and the importance of fighting against hoaxes via social media as Facebook, Twitter etc.

András Máté Lázár continued by saying that since being in Banská Bystrica for the last time 8 years ago, a lot has changed. In his view, Central European countries have a sense of self-criticism and pessimism. He compared it to a survival skill, which has developed in the region. We should stop to be critical and pessimistic, and think more optimistic, giving much more space to certain things. The situation in the region should be compared in historical perspectives or compared with other parts of Europe. Then we will see that the situation is far better than in the past. In his words, we can’t ignore that tangible statistics are growing. The second thing he wanted to point out is that in region, we have political stability not only from a social but from economic perspective, too.

Domestic politics are very hard to talk about. Mentioning Hungary as an example, we shouldn't only deal with headlines that are a week old, but if we are really interested, we can see that the country overcame 8 years of complex and complicated situations. Here in Central Europe, we surely have made mistakes and still bear the burden of a prevalent heritage of socialism. Socialization of our politicians is also something what influences us. Politicians and the political culture should change in the future, yet we keep in the back of our minds that democracy isn't just institutions and political elites, but it's a state of mind of the people, which was created over a very long period. **Mr. Lázár** thinks that in the meantime, Central Europe is functioning properly, and therefore the region is a good place to live. Sure, we are far from being at the same level as our western European allies are, but he thinks that all governments here in the V4 are striving to be on the same level.

There were some words used so often in the past 30 years that they risk losing their meanings. He thinks that we take them less seriously than they should be taken. As much as the economies of the V4 countries are doing very well, as much as our countries all together were successful since entering the European Union. It's also important to underline that the Visegrad Group is very successful initiative. Sometimes it's hard to see because we don't put enough attention to it, but the cooperation is very flexible and effective. Talking about integration, **Mr. Lázár** mentioned Schengen, the International Visegrad Fund, negotiations about the EU budget, highspeed railway connection as important initiatives between V4 countries. There are many things we can do together and that's the point of Visegrad. There are many expectations that things will be very good in the future and we should keep our minds open.

Jana Juzová joined shared the point of view of **Mr. Lázár**, even though she was speaking from a different position as a representative of a civil society think-tank. She agreed with many things and points the previous speakers mentioned. Cooperation of V4 countries is very valuable. But the problem is that a lot of things within the initiative are not visible. The cooperation, development, modernization and many important issues were overshadowed by the whole discussion about the migration crisis and seeking solutions on the European level. V4 countries have many specifics, e.g. historical experience, and we have something unique we can bring to the EU. But right now, it seems that the only thing that unites us is a similar attitude towards Brussels. What's important for us, what we should ask ourselves, is how we want to present ourselves. We need to find unity and a common voice on other topics and areas instead of simply blocking initiatives, which we don't agree with. The debate in Visegrad should not focus on the European politics, for example how to solve the migration crisis, but we should focus on supporting projects here in the V4. Unity in the region isn't just strong just in agreements, but in its initiatives as well. Yet, when it comes to solutions, there is no agreement. She ended by asking what the position of the V4 in the Union is, adding that it's very unclear.

Jakub Groszkowski stressed out that the image of Central Europe has changed. The majority of people in Central Europe thought that it is enough to imitate the West in order to achieve future progress. We need to find out what we really want, what kind of market or economy we want to develop. He believes that we need to find solutions for basic European problems together. We are not in the European Union as guests. We need to act as states and societies that know what's the best for our countries. The European Union is like a playground where everyone wants to represent their own interests. But the interests are not the same and we should realize that. Another point **Mr. Groszkowski** made was that it won't be easy for us to come to an agreement with our European partners. One of the biggest problems in Central European societies is that we are very much divided. He wasn't sure about the use of populism as a way how to describe our opponents. He had the



impression that we often considered different opinions of other people to be populist and we consider them to be traitors, saying that we only need to look at our parliaments. When was the last time Central European parliaments agreed on something? The only thing that the governments in the Czech Republic, Slovakia, Poland and Hungary agreed on was the migration crisis – there was unified disagreement about Global compact for migration. What we need to do in Central Europe is to develop new ways of communications within our societies.

On the question, how we can stay unified while also improving our relationship with the EU, **Mr. Salíni** answered that V4 countries are not at the same position in many things. Even the Visegrad cooperation is a very pragmatic cooperation, but the questions about migration changed our image. We realize that we need to focus more on a pro-European agenda and to communicate with our European partners. We want to use the V4+ format as a platform for dialogue with France, Germany, BENELUX states and Baltic states. In regards to the migration crisis, we realize that we are troublemakers, but we need to communicate and discuss to change our opinions, especially about this topic. Based on the absence of a history of colonialism, we only have 5 embassies in Africa, which isn't comparable to France, Britain or Spain. Despite that, we want to take part in Africa, that's why actively contribute to the EU-Africa Trust Fund, exemplifying positive cooperation.

Western states respect us because the V4 is the only original group in Europe that holds annual meetings with Eastern Partnership countries since 2010. Another success of V4 states is the Western Balkan Fund, based in Tirana, Albania, which is inspired by the International Visegrad Fund. **Mr. Lazár** brought up the question what V4 can give to Europe, but stressed the need to be very careful with this question. In terms of Central European countries, we need mutual help. That's positive for common relations, because we speak and stand for something. On the other hand, Western states could say that Central Europeans are asking for money and they don't even behave how they should. In this regard, we seem to have taken up the role of a black sheep. But from another perspective, we are arguing for keeping a policy in the European Union, which is actually working and contributed to the economic growth not only in our region, but in Europe as well. Another example of a topic that Visegrad countries tried to bring on the table and keep on the agenda was the dual quality of products. It is important to see issues being brought up not as blocking something, but as something being advanced. We should see the opportunity in that and not to dwell on the negatives.

Mrs. Juzová sees the potential of the V4 in EU during policy debate, as the V4 has the potential to come up with interesting ideas and solutions. Even though the public is skeptical about the EU, it's skeptical in terms that the EU needs to be reformed. Concluding the discussion, **Mr. Groszkowski** pointed out that it's the role of national governments to please the public and majority of the people, not the EU's. V4 cooperation is limited to political cooperation between national governments. But the connection is not just between the governments, but between the people.



Changing the course of the Visegrad region

The main topic of the workshop sessions at the **Visegrad Youth Forum 2018** were compelling issues and challenges within the Visegrad Group. The agenda consisted of **four key questions**, which needed to be addressed by the participants from V4 countries:

The V4 towards the European Union:

Regarding the topic that resonates most among Visegrad countries, the participants believe that one of the biggest issues is **financing** and that the V4 should try to persuade the EU to devote enough development funds for the new **EU multiannual financial framework** for the years **2021-2027**. Another problem is the **freedom of press and the role of independent media** in V4 countries, as in Hungary and Poland there are so-called "government-owned" media outlets, which often leads to clashes between the interests of the government and our "common good".

Disinformation and propaganda are more prevalent, not only in Slovakia, Poland, Hungary and the Czech Republic, but also in the entire European Union, often with the aim to weaken the Union, which is why young experts believe that V4 states should improve **media literacy and critical thinking** in their respective countries, with emphasis being put on the **value of information** and how it can influence society, and also pay more attention to **education**. The participants believe that the EU should **present** what is behind the **European Union** in a better way, as well as the **EU's agenda and institutions**. This way, eurosceptics could be persuaded to see the benefits of the Union.

Perhaps the most important question regarding V4 and EU is the future model of **integration** of each respective country and whether it should be deeper or not. **Slovakia** sees further integration as a requisite for **better development**. The **Czech Republic** believes that with deeper integration, the **EU** could be **more competitive** with the USA and China. **Poland** insists that integration should be based on **common values**. **Hungary**, on the other hand, says that integration should stay as it currently is. However, with deeper cooperation within the EU, the Visegrad Group could promote the **exchange of students** within the region and thus raise more money for Erasmus+ projects.

The V4 towards NATO:

As for the V4-NATO relationship, the participants believe that there are **no pressing issues** within the Alliance and the Visegrad Group. The Slovak, Polish, Hungarian and Czech **membership in NATO** is **not in question**, however, the only pressing issue is the **relationship with Russia**, because its definition with Russia varies. **Slovakia** believes a **platform for deeper discussion** regarding Russia-NATO relations should be created. The **Czech Republic** thinks that the Alliance should strengthen its **presence in NATO member states**, while Slovakia and Poland add that this should involve NATO's eastern flank and the Baltic states bordering Russia. **Hungary** sees this as an opportunity for the Alliance to be more involved in the **Ukrainian crisis**.

An interesting proposal is the **exchange and sharing of cyber information** within the V4, with the Baltic states as an example. The Czech Republic, Hungary and Slovakia are supporting this initiative, while Poland believes this to be a good idea, but is afraid of leaking said information to Russia. **Military expenditure** is a topic, which also resonates within the V4 and NATO. Among V4 member states,

only Poland matches the commitment to spend **2%** from their **GDP** on defence. Slovakia, the Czech Republic and Hungary pledged to fulfil the criteria by **2024**. Proposals about raising expenditure to **3-4%** were also discussed, yet V4 states agree that the 2% threshold is already enough. Last but not least, participants believe that when talking about NATO, increased initiatives regarding **strategic communication** (with the current StratCom initiative kept in mind) would be welcomed, which would lead to better presentation of the Alliance within the V4.

The stance of the V4 on migration policy:

The V4 isn't fully in line with the current **EU migration policy**, preferring preventive solutions rather than proposals such as mandatory quotas. The Visegrad Group also **isn't united** regarding migration policy. Slovakia, Poland and the Czech Republic are considering accepting refugees by their religion, Hungary, however, has very strict opinions on this matter. The **Czech Republic** proposed that the V4 should show **more solidarity** to other countries, accepting circa 500 refugees and creating a **platform for integration**, which would make integration within society easier for migrants. **Slovakia** opposed this, saying that solidarity should be shown, but not through financial support. Slovakia believes that the **legislative process** must be **improved** and a **common system for identification and relocation** created. **Poland** believes that the V4 could benefit from the experience of western countries and use it to their benefit when dealing with migrants. **Hungary**, though, still states that its southern borders should be strengthened, but accepts that if **EU migration policy** was **improved**, Hungary would support it.

The V4's fight against far-right extremism and populism:

The V4 agrees that overall euro-scepticism overall and low participation on European Parliament are prevalent due to the "**scapegoat Brussels syndrome**", and populism being used by political entities for their own political gains. **Poland's** issue is that **far-right extremism** is **connected** more to **populism** than to nationalism, as nationalistic rhetoric is used in a populist way. In **Hungary**, the far-right party **Jobbik** is currently **collapsing**. However, the government is using populism and propaganda, mainly in reference to migration. **Slovakia** is also affected by extremism, with the far-right **Kotleba – LSNS** party being **in the country's parliament**. The **Czech ODS** party represents populist and extremist tendencies in this part of the V4.

The participants believe that the **migration crisis** was the **impetus** of the rise of populism and extremism. This could be fought via **education**, creating **classes in school** that would **battle the spreading of hoaxes**. The participants say that the **V4** should create a **common policy** that would **tackle extremism and populism** as a whole.

The workshops concluded with the participants highlighting the idea that for V4 states, as countries with limited economic potential, it is crucial to be a member state not only of organization such as NATO and the EU, but mainly of the Visegrad Group. As a new platform for deeper cooperation, participants proposed and even agreed on a new format of cooperation between the V4 and other countries. They have proposed the V4 + Baltic states Forum (which would tackle cyber-security issues), the V4 + Austria Forum (beneficial for the economic sector), the V4 + Balkans Forum, and others.



Joint Statement from the North Atlantic Council Summit Simulation

The following joint statement has been created and agreed upon during the North Atlantic Council summit simulation at the Visegrad Youth Forum 2018 organized by the Euro-Atlantic Center.

We the Alliance reaffirm our commitment undertaken at the NATO Summit 2018 to raise our defense expenditures to 2% by 2024.

We commit ourselves to strengthen trans-Atlantic cooperation as a cornerstone of European security.

For this reason, we commit ourselves to cooperate within the framework of the Permanent Structured Cooperation (PESCO), working towards common military research and development projects and procurement to successfully and effectively reach the aforementioned goal. We consider PESCO to be a tool capable of achieving this goal while maintaining high efficiency and increasing our interoperability and capacity to cooperate effectively, and without discrimination of other NATO members.

Hereby we propose to structure PESCO as following:

PESCO aims to complement the standing NATO standardization agreement while also reaffirming that safeguarding peace and security in Europe is the responsibility of NATO. The outcomes of the PESCO projects will be mainly used by the participating states and will maintain the opportunity of full inclusivity for all non-EU NATO allies.

(DISCLAIMER: This joint statement is addressed to policy makers to inform them of the opinions of young V4 leaders and should serve as recommendation material.)



VISEGRAD YOUTH FORUM 2018



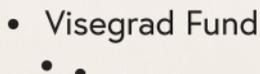
ORGANISER



PARTNER ORGANISATIONS



FINANCIAL SUPPORT

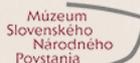


MESTO BANSKÁ BYSTRICA



BANSKOBYSTRICKÝ
SAMOSPRÁVNÝ KRAJ

INSTITUTIONAL PARTNERS



COMMERCIAL PARTNERS



@EACenter



@euroatlanticcenter

www.vyf.eac.sk