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Policy Paper

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Visegrad Security Cooperation Initiative (VSCI) is a project organized by the Slovak Atlantic Commission and its partners from the Visegrad group countries: Jagello 2000 (CZ), International Centre for Democratic Transition (HU) and Euro-Atlantic Association (PL).

Its creation would not be possible without the financial support from the International Visegrad Fund.

Through systematic work in the joint expert groups, the project identifies shared security and defence interests of the Visegrad group countries and analyzes the possible means of their common realization. The process results in the elaboration of common policy papers that could represent the intellectual as well as practical impetus to the political and expert discussions on the common foreign policy strategies.

This analysis is elaborated as a result of several months lasting work of the Trans-Atlantic Security Expert Group.

Hereby, we recommend you the second analysis from the Visegrad Security Cooperation Initiative series elaborated by the Energy Security Expert Group.

Trans-Atlantic Security

*Jaroslav Nad', István Gyarmati,
Tomasz Szatkowski, Libor Frank*

Methodology

The representatives of four non-governmental organizations from all Visegrad group countries, namely the Slovak Atlantic Commission, the International Centre for Democratic Transition of Hungary, the Euro-Atlantic Association of Poland and Jagello 2000 of the Czech Republic, have realized that V4 cooperation in defence and security is not systematic, sufficient and that there is a space for further improvement.

Therefore, they have agreed to prepare this expert paper with short history overview summarizing the weaker but also the stronger moments of V4 cooperation and coordination in defence and security and also proposing concrete steps for its further improvement with the goal to distribute the outcomes of the project in the governmental, non-governmental and academic milieu, but also to the decision makers from all countries at the beginning phase of the Slovak V4 presidency and also few months before the start of the Hungarian European Council Presidency followed by the Polish one in the year of 2011.

Initially, there were heads of expert groups selected in all countries responsible for the national inputs to the common V4 expert paper.

Their mission was to discuss with their national expert groups composed of the representatives of academic institutions, civil society organizations, military and the relevant ministries on their outlook on the Visegrad group cooperation in defence and security. The specific character of the project implied that the primary national expert groups include the most prominent security and defence analysts and professionals from all Visegrad countries. The objective of these groups was to answer relevant key questions on perception on the national interests of respective country, elaborate on the threat perceptions, and also on the relationship in defence and security cooperation between V4 member countries with the ambition to come up with concrete proposals on the way ahead.

Through systematic work in the expert groups and further common drafting of the final expert paper the project has identified shared security and defence interests of the Visegrad countries and analyzed the possible means of their common realization. This common policy paper could represent the intellectual as well as practical impetus to the political and expert discussions on common foreign, defence and security policy strategies.



SLOVAK ATLANTIC COMMISSION
SLOVENSKÁ ATLANTICKÁ KOMISIA
Klariská 14, 811 03 Bratislava,
Slovak Republic
Phone/fax: 00421/2.544.106.09
e-mail: sac@ata-sac.org
www.ata-sac.org



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1. Historical background

a) Conjunctions of interests – The opportunity for co-operation

The V4 group is for all its member countries important as one of the main dimensions of their regional cooperation, and probably the most successful one. All countries perceive the Group as an important factor of their Central European identity – a successful platform and pattern, which is complementary, or at least not competitive to other forms of international cooperation where countries take part in. The V4 is the most cohesive and mature.

There are many examples for a positive teamwork of all Visegrad countries. Naturally, it all comes first of all from the same geographical location and very similar historical experience. Friendly attitude of most of the Western countries in 1990's, negative Russian occupation experience, determination in expanding the zone of security and prosperity and above all, the values of the Western World which eventually prevailed within the Clinton administration backed up beliefs for a possible integration to Euro-Atlantic defence and security structures.

The shared historical experience of the member countries, common issues and threats they are faced with and also close political and interpersonal connections create the potential that can be used for promoting shared interests at the European or generally international level. To what extent it can be used, it depends on the political will and decisions of the representations of member countries. There are certainly many other areas where these countries surf on the same wave. Nevertheless, some experts still think that each country has a reason to prefer individualism or bilateralism rather than a common V4 approach.

After the positive idealistic and enthusiastic approach towards the deep V4 countries cooperation at the beginning of its existence, several disillusionments came based on either domestic political turbulences in all countries or on major changes in the world security order.

At the beginning of third millennium NATO started to lose its importance, by both the U.S. inclination to go alone in the War on Terror, as well as the sudden German emancipation and their veto to the NATO

Art. 4 consultations on Turkey in 2003. Even worse than that was the revival of neoimperialism and growth of strength of Putin's Russia. This perception gave ground for more realistic approach within the V4 foreign and security policy, giving also more significance for regional cooperation.

Further development within the Visegrad Group requires the analysis of the V4's activity until these days, clear identification of areas of reasonable permanent and close collaboration, and defining the conditions necessary to follow the generally declared political intentions through to the level of specific projects and activities. Since this paper has a goal to touch primarily upon defence and security issues, let us put the impetus on at least a few of them.

So where we see conjunctions of interests in defence and security between all V4 countries? Mainly, countries with the Schengen outer borders feel a need for the *stabilization of periphery*. There is a clear mutual interest in transformation of the close neighbourhood to an area of common shared values and with institutional anchorage. Mainly efforts in Euro-Atlantic integration of the Western Balkans countries are vivid. Visegrad also thinks that despite of (or because of?) the last development in Ukraine should the effort for further enlargement of security and defence structures to the East well continue.

Generally speaking, the Visegrad countries *share also security threats and challenges* both worldwide and domestically. Obviously, very strong tool for a deeper V4 cooperation in defence and security is a *common membership in both EU and NATO*. Today, defence and security policy is created more on international than on national level. Therefore, it should be a basic interest of all V4 countries to mutually discuss policymaking. Moreover, when all countries have very similar financial possibilities and are undergoing significant defence budget restrictions. It is however obvious, that V4 needs a natural leader especially in the defence and security dimension and Poland may have adequate ambition to be the biggest contributor and a central actor in defence for other regional partners.

V4 countries are also linked by a relatively *low influence in Brussels*, comparatively small participation in the EU operations and joint initiatives, policies, projects, and programs, and also *shortage of representation* in European institutions and in the NATO structures.

In terms of *military power and capabilities*, all Visegrad countries could be defined as hinge powers with primarily regional interests. All countries have some degree of military crises management capabilities, while they are (maybe except of Poland) hardly capable to fight at high intensity. All countries have a *clear will to participate in international crises management operations* mainly under the umbrella of NATO, but also EU and UN. There are some examples where joint participation in operation appeared to be very much successful (Czech Republic and Slovakia in KFOR, Slovakia and Hungary in UNFICYP, Poland and Slovakia in Iraq). It is largely based on the similar or even the same military technology used in armed forces and also very similar training and structures of armed forces. The experts agreed that these facts could create a higher cooperation on a V4 level in military. In military terms, however, these quite politically spectacular actions also proved, that so far in joint operations V4 countries have to rely on support of either NATO or the U.S.A.

b) Success stories

Since its creation in 1991, the Visegrad cooperation has come a very long way. It is not very easy to evaluate whether the Visegrad group is more successful or not. In our opinion, the V4 is definitely a useful thought, the greatest advantage of which, paradoxically, is a weak institutionalization, which allows more flexible action. V4 certainly did not fully use its potential to be a successful project as it limits itself by a hysterical refusal of effective structures which would enhance solution of concrete topics of a common interest. The complex evaluation is probably affiliated with expectations one might have. Nevertheless, Visegrad cooperation has several clear and significant success stories which are worth to elaborate on:

Firstly, Visegrad group has the name, it has the trademark, it has the logo and last but not least it has a robust reputation abroad. Since its creation, there was only a *positive agenda* on the table. Taking into account several *hard times* some Visegrad countries had (and still have) to overcome in their bilateral relations, it should be highly valued that V4 is not (and hopefully will not be) a tool for bilateral problems solving. Countries are mostly satisfied with the elastic formula of the group, seeing it as one of the sources of its success. Any measures to strengthen institutionalization of the group should be only gradual and pragmatic.

During the first years after the fall of the era of communism countries well coordinated for example the *removal of the Soviet armed forces* from the V4 countries. In 1992 established the V4 countries the *Central European Free Trade Agreement (CEFTA)* that appeared to be a successful project during the economy transition in Central and South-West Europe. The creation of the *International Visegrad Fund* in 2000 with many successfully realized projects could be evaluated as the most successful V4 project. It has sufficient working structure and financing.

The integration period was a greatly significant opportunity for the Visegrad group to show its potential and importance. The formation and activities of the V4 played a significant role namely in fulfilling the foreign and defence policy priorities of the member countries – their integration into the European Union and NATO. We can say that the outcome was mainly positive, but not only. In these terms, recently, was quite a successful cooperation during the Schengen integration period. Nevertheless, the Visegrad group showed its good prospective to be a tool for mutual support and common standpoints on multinational fora during the integration period but also during membership. After the completion of integration tasks, the V4 group seeks the objective of its existence as well as its position within the system of international institutions and initiatives. However, contrary to the concerns that the Visegrad group will cease to exist after the EU accession, the European dimension gave the V4 further concrete rationales.

The group succeeded in being the nucleus of the EU-12 common stance in questions like budget perspective 2007-2013 and climate package. The V4 countries backed up the idea of the Eastern Partnership, which shows that there is a great deal of affinity in terms of the foreign policy concepts. Moreover, after recent gas crisis, there is an impression that the mutual understanding as far as the energy security is concerned, has also deepened. This track of success received its greatest recognition in critical words of the French President Nicolas Sarkozy, who warned against the custom of the V4 meetings before the European Council summits.

As a matter of fact, representatives of all countries consider periodical V4 meetings on different levels (presidents, ministers of foreign affairs and defence, CHODs, political directors, national armaments directors, etc.) to be very useful. There is certainly space for improvement while talking about real outcomes with concrete proposals for cooperation.

These meetings serve well for consultations on many aspects, including information sharing on future plans and realized solutions, but it often depends on the president of the meeting to prevent expert debate to become a meaningless discussion club which unfortunately many times happens.

c) Failures

Even though there are several positive examples of V4 cooperation, generally speaking, the Visegrad group has for the most part lost its steam in dealing with the foreign, defence and security problems as an autonomous Central European political initiative. Shared interests in these areas have been primarily attended at the level of other international organizations or institutions and the existing cooperation has become complicated due to complicated approach of individual countries and their bilateral issues. Poland has been striving to play in another league, the Czech Republic had sometimes gone very individually, both were using V4 only selectively; while disputes between Hungary and Slovakia regarding their minorities many times reduced the readiness for action and credibility of the entire entity of V4. The Visegrad Group does not usually accomplish the role of a coordinator of its members' policies towards third parties, not even in the case, when the positions of the Czech Republic, Poland, Slovakia, and Hungary are actually identical and the need for a common standpoint is obvious and desirable.

It is therefore obvious, that the V4 group has undergone better but also worse times. There are several missed opportunities and unexecuted projects, visible failures and misunderstandings in the history of V4. Since we focus on security and defence, let us summarize at least few of them:

Frankly speaking, sub-regional cooperation in defence and security has not largely used its quite significant potential to become a more actively used platform for discussion and coordination of processes in dealing with foreign policy and security questions. If a common political will can be found, V4 has the potential for cooperation in security matters as a specific sub-unit within the European Union or NATO.

Even though we have mentioned in previous chapter that the outcome of co-operation during the integration period was mainly positive, we unfortunately have some examples, where agreed and coordinated standpoints of all V4 countries were not kept. V4 has suffered from a lack of a real

harmonization during the EU and NATO accession process. This was obviously caused either by existence of bilateral problems between some V4 member states or by national interests of others, which were not in line with "common good" of V4 group.

Common (CZE-POL-SVK) international brigade based in Slovak town of Topolčany, V4 modernization of helicopters initiative and also non-ability to create common V4 EU BG in the past as well as almost all other military initiatives were unsuccessful and not feasible and sustainable due to a lack of political will and also a lack of appropriate financing.

Currently, the V4 group serves as a not very well working tool for defining of national positions on NATO and EU level. The good point is that it unofficially serves as an argument or even inspiration for the national positions. The problem is that this "benchmarking" works in the end not at the beginning of the process of positions generation.

The roots of these problems are lying in *non-existence of the formal but also informal mechanisms of cooperation in defence and security.* There are several annual meetings on ministerial or expert level of defence and foreign ministries representatives, but the substance, *the outcomes of these meetings are poor.*

As a matter of fact, there is a *fairly rare coordination in the attainment of mutual interests.* Moreover, in the last years, we have been able to observe *more or less disharmonic cooperation* in the energy security, very limited cooperation and coordination in the military technology and national protectionism in defence industry and very recently non-ability to agree on common experts to the "Experts Group" for the new NATO Strategic Concept. It is highly probable, that common candidates would have much stronger position and V4 countries could have had more than one representative in this group.

Another vivid negative example is the *vague V4 position on the relationship with the Russian Federation,* which seems to be a taboo topic within the Visegrad Group, despite the fact that Russia has an enormous significance for the Central European countries. Autonomous cooperation of V4 countries with third parties is oriented particularly to the strong countries within the EU (Germany, France, and UK) and a strategic partnership with the U.S.A. Still, it is primarily conditioned by individual interests and bilateral links, while the role of V4 becomes marginalized.

V4 countries also have a remarkable but not effectively utilized potential of soft power at their disposal towards the Western Balkans. They can also advise these countries based on their experience from their own political and economic transformation, as well as the EU/NATO accession procedures. To a certain extent, the role of the V4 countries could become more prominent also within the Eastern Partnership, while the grouping could play the role of a mediator between the EU and the countries in the East of Europe.

2. Concrete proposals for the Future

We have tried in the previous chapters to objectively review V4 cooperation and also to summarize the most significant successes and failures in its history. Nevertheless, the main objective of this paper is to bring up concrete proposals for the way ahead. We strongly believe that the V4 group has a potential to be a more important and successful institute than just a discussion club of relatively weak position on international forum. Ideally, V4 should serve as a joint platform for preparation, execution, and implementation of initiatives, projects, policies, and strategies based on shared interest, specifically towards the EU, NATO, and other international institutions. V4 countries should strive for maintaining the platform in order to strengthen their relatively marginal role in international organizations and international politics in general. Many experts believe that the current structural changes and economic crises will further enlarge the currently existing gaps between the new and old EU and NATO members, which can lead to a creation of a status of second level membership. Additionally, most of experts believe that due to the fact that new member states were among the biggest losers of the current crisis, the austerity packages will hardly hit the defence budgets and therefore both the national and the regional level of security will decrease.

In the next months, a very interesting time comes for the Visegrad group. There are new governments established in Hungary, the Czech Republic and Slovakia, all of them centre-right. In addition, there is a Hungarian minority political party represented in the Slovak government, which may improve the relatively disturbed Slovak-Hungarian relationship. Moreover, Hungary and Poland will be subsequently presiding over the EU Council in 2011 which brings a unique opportunity to make the V4 agenda visible and promote it within the context of common foreign and security policy of the entire EU. Even if Hungary and Poland belong to different "troikas", this gives ground

for long reaching cooperation, including other V4 states, which would advocate regional interests. Also, it presents the opportunity to increase the practical authority of the V4 countries or the entire region.

Therefore, with interest to enhance quality and quantity of cooperation and coordination of the V4 group in defence and security, we propose the following real steps and arrangements that should be taken in the near future:

General recommendations

- **Do not look only for absolutely joint interests, help each other!**

The Visegrad group countries should look for pragmatic proposals and find concrete solutions even though it will not mean a concrete success or immediate benefit for one or two countries. One day the countries could help one of them, the other day it can be vice versa.

- **Creation of specialized V4 units at MFAs and MoDs**

Creation of specialized V4 units in all countries would be a very positive tool in order to enhance quality and quantity of V4 cooperation and projects. Currently existing structures are many times overloaded with regular day-to-day work, sometimes also with sensitive and problematic bilateral relations and on the other hand they still have to coordinate the V4 projects, which is many times problematic to synchronize. This cooperation can also lead to a mutual support between the foreign ministries in establishing and running joint diplomatic and consular missions in countries and areas where no Visegrad country has an embassy or a consulate general. Similar case already exists in Cape Town, where on a basis of the Czech consulate a V4 house has been created.

- **Mutual consultation and coordination forum at MoD and MFA level**

Real mutual consultations of ministers, CHODs, political directors, armaments directors, etc., are very important – not a discussion club as it many times happens today. Concrete (signed?) agreements, joint actions, coordinated voting and lobbying could be very motivating and supportive. For example, during EU working sessions, the cooperation of V4 countries could be very effective. Qualified majority could be stopped by five countries at minimum,

which for V4 means to find only one other country to stop the process.

- **Mutual support for personal nominations**

The voice of Visegrad countries in Brussels is mostly weak. Mutual support of personal nominations to higher positions in international organizations would therefore be crucial and more than welcomed. A practical formal/informal mechanism should be worked out. It could ideally work on V4 rotation principle, which has in several cases already been highly positively perceived by some organizations, where few concrete examples of such cooperation have already appeared.

- **Common guaranty clause on defence and security solidarity**

All Visegrad group countries are members of both NATO and the European Union. Therefore, in line with existing obligations, there should not be any obstacle to officially announce the clause on defence and security solidarity, as it is currently discussed in Nordic countries based on the Stoltenberg report. All governments should issue a mutual declaration in which they commit themselves to clarifying how they would respond if a Visegrad country were subject to external attack or undue pressure. Such declaration would complement, not replace, the V4 countries' existing foreign and security policy allegiances.

- **Defence industry cooperation**

There is a large space for strategic cooperation in common acquisition, but also in research and development of military technologies. Further steps based on existing MoU for V4 cooperation in defence industry and armaments are desired. Joint procurement and industrial programs are very challenging undertakings requiring strong political will and professionalism of public administration in all partner countries. The heritage of the Warsaw Pact brings both chances and weaknesses in these matters. The weakness is the fact that the V4 defence industrial potential is not absolutely complementary and in most sectors it does not offer cutting edge technologies (aerospace, precision guided missiles, reconnaissance). On the other hand, both the fact that the V4 armed forces still use some post-Soviet equipment and its derivatives and that their industrial, maintenance and repair complexes still possesses a competence in that area of equipment might be beneficial. The failure of the joint V4 program to upgrade Mi-24 is however not encouraging. As the

reason of that was seen the competition between the V4 industrial complexes and Russian energetic action, which prevented access to technologies and licenses in order to maintain their hold on such projects. It is therefore questionable whether such ambitious undertakings are feasible. There should be an expert group established to answer all these questions.

- **Annual V4 Defence and Security conference**

Official annual V4 defence and security conference would be a very interesting step towards common informal cooperation of state institutions, NGOs, academia and the private sector in defence and security with a goal to exchange information and opinions on defence and security issues and to implement it to the respective defence and security policies. The conference could be organized each year in different country and co-financed by all actors from all countries.

- **Common defence and security publication / magazine**

This specialized magazine would be a result of cooperation of experts in defence, security and foreign policy from all Visegrad countries. The creation of such publication that could be published twice or four times a year would fill up a gap that exists. It could be another interesting step towards common informal cooperation of state institutions, NGOs, academia and the private sector in defence and security with a goal to exchange information and opinions on defence and security issues and to implement it to the respective defence and security policies. The magazine could be co-financed by the International Visegrad Fund and also by sponsoring.

- **Creation of common V4 military education**

All V4 countries' armed forces are now much smaller than they used to be during the Warsaw Pact period or even during 1990's. Therefore, it would be useful to reflect this reality to military education. The creation of a joint system of military education would massively decrease necessary financial costs and would also enable broader specialization and better reputation of military education of all V4 countries in NATO member countries. There are many options for cooperation in this sphere, we should start to work on, but as a minimum, education of higher military ranks including generals' course and also training and education of civilians and military personnel in area of security and defence policy and in the crisis management could be very much useful.

- **Common capabilities and training of armed and security forces**

This is quite a large area where an expert can find many concrete examples for a close cooperation. It would be certainly worth to create an expert group, with a goal to find options for deep cooperation. This could include the creation of permanent modules of the armed forces specialized for natural catastrophes and the consequences management (disaster response unit), creation and a common use of a specialized training areas in all countries, a common training of armed forces with possibility to be deployed to the same operation under NATO, EU or UN, common V4 air force capabilities (possibly joint air surveillance over V4 territory), transport capabilities, medical services, etc. Another idea is a joint advanced training of the pilots (possibly at the School of Eaglets in Dęblin in Poland) maybe in exchange of the introduction of the Czech advanced training planes. Another form of cooperation in training might be a joint centre for concept and experience sharing and training in expeditionary missions which might be set up in Poland, which so far has most significant experience in that field.

- **Common V4 EU Battle Group**

There is a discussion taking place over the prospects of perspective building of the Visegrad EU Battle Group after 2015. In order to reach a success, the framework nation must be clearly defined at the beginning of the process and other three countries must show strong political pledge. Based on the size of armed forces, Poland could become a natural leader. There is also option to include Ukraine or other countries to such a project.

- **Coordination in energy security**

As a matter of fact, discussions over the possibilities of increasing the energy security of V4 countries and protecting the common interest, in particular towards the Russian Federation, are critical. The fact that the energy security can be addressed the most effectively on a regional and on a European level provides a great possibility for potential cooperation of V4 member states. The Visegrad group attaches great importance to energy security in various dimensions, seeing it as a safeguard of competitive conditions of its economy and a defence against Russian use of gas and oil supply as a political tool. Despite some disturbing moments in V4 coordination

in energy field, the recent V4 + declaration to create a "north-south-east triangle of gas supply," networks connected to the pipeline from the Baltic to the Adriatic as a result of the energy summit in Budapest in February 2010, is completely in accordance with the interests of all V4 countries. Moreover, it might be very important for the far future, that, according to the US companies, Poland may possess the largest resources of shale gas in Europe, reaching 1.4 to 3 trillion cubic meters. This would suffice Poland for its internal demand for 100 to 200 years and would allow the export of gas from Poland mainly to other Central European countries where the triangle network could also be utilized to transport gas. If it comes true, there might be a need to secure the future of the shale gas within the EU environmental regulation.

- **Struggle against extremism, illegal migration, corruption, and organized crime**

In order to improve economical climate and thus prosperity and living standard of citizens in all V4 countries, concrete steps in fight against extremism, corruption and organized crime. These are often biased with illegal migration. An expert group should be established to exchange lessons learnt in this field and to elaborate on concrete proposals for cooperation.

- **List of V4 experts in defence and security**

Designated institution should put together and maintain a list of V4 experts in the security and defence field, eventually it could set up a website for them to communicate and post publications in order to develop a resource for both experts and larger community.

Recommendations for the NATO Strategic Concept approval phase

Based on all V4 countries' strategic documents for defence and security, NATO is the basis for the European security and the Visegrad group believes that its security interests will be basically channelled through the Alliance in the long-term as well. That can be reasoned by the long history of the NATO in shaping the strategic culture and also by understanding the overwhelming role and provided capabilities of the United States within the Alliance. Today, NATO needs a new Strategic Concept because the world has changed significantly since 1999, when the current concept was adopted.

The new NATO Strategic Concept must be more significant than the previous ones. The reason is that the changes that have occurred and, indeed, do occur in international relations radically change the security landscape, question even most basic assumptions and foundations of security policy thus have a revolutionary effect on institutions, including international institutions, such as NATO, as well as the instruments at our disposal, including the military.

On May 17, 2010 the group of experts led by Hon. Madeleine Albright presented its analysis and recommendations on a new strategic concept for NATO in a paper called Report on NATO's new Strategic Concept. The Visegrad Group was represented only by one person in the group of experts, by Professor Adam Roffeld from Poland. In our opinion, the Visegrad Group did not have significant voice in the reflection and consultation phases. Therefore, V4 should become a much more important platform for discussion on national standpoints and their consequent advancement within the Alliance.

Based on our opinion, following are the main basic principles, which should be supported by all V4 countries and covered by the new NATO Strategic Concept:

- The New Strategic Concept has to be a short political document, understandable with the ambition not to answer all questions, but to destine clear direction of the Alliance and main visions of transatlantic security. It has to lead further development of the organization and its transformation.
- The short public document must be complemented by a long (internal) one that can and will serve as basis for further planning.
- NATO must remain the cornerstone of security, not only in Europe. Transatlantic relations must remain the foundation of security.
- Confirming the commitments anchored in the Art. V of the Washington Treaty must be the core element of the Strategic Concept and should be complemented by concrete implementation initiatives, such as contingency planning for those states who wish it. This commitment must not remain a "paper tiger" only but has to be supported, as recommended by the Albright report, by concrete defence plans for all, appropriate exercises, deployments, etc.
- We believe that the Concept should also define the relationship between NATO and CSDP. In the upcoming process of the new Strategic Concept drafting we should be careful not to be constrained with limitations of the current NATO – EU cooperation framework. The process should overcome these institutional difficulties. As stated in the Declaration on Alliance Security, we are determined to ensure a truly functioning NATO-EU strategic partnership which is able to address common security challenges.
- The new Concept should also clearly define NATO's commitment to partnership policy with an accent on good and pragmatic relations with Russia, while strongly emphasizing open door policy. Russia's role cannot be seen in isolation. The requirements of collective defence as well as international operations, including the fight against terrorism, constitute part of our relations with Russia.
- Regarding future enlargement, NATO should focus on the crucial candidates from the Western Balkans, which means that these countries may join the NATO in short-term time period. Other, strategically very important, but more problematic, would be Georgia and Ukraine if they confirm their transatlantic orientation.
- The new Strategic Concept should find the right balance between the capabilities for expeditionary operations and defence of the territory. It is therefore important to focus on those capabilities which can adequately fulfil the widest range of tasks. Rather than creating a list of capabilities, SC should focus on the ways how to develop them. In this light we see multinationality as the right approach.
- In terms of NATO non-art. 5 operations, they should remain an important component of NATO's effort for more stabilized security environment. In conducting them we should always seek a UN Security Council mandate. But its absence, because of any reason, should not keep our actions back if our security or any of the Allies would be threatened and in trouble. It is quite clear that a failure in Afghanistan would reduce the credibility of NATO. NATO should focus more on military tasks; and less importantly on civilian tasks, while the EU should concentrate more on police tasks and developmental issues. Anti-piracy missions are important, but they are

not among the most crucial tasks and we should avoid duplicity while dealing with this issue.

- NATO should develop Alliance wide missile-defence capacity, by possibly also involving Russia in such architecture, but not giving Russia the right of veto, should such a system be used in case of concrete threat.
- The Visegrad Group is not capable to cope fully with the new threats not respected enough in the Strategic Concept of 1999 (cyber-defence, consequences of climate changes, energy security, etc.) on its own. For this reason, V4 has to rely on NATO in this matter and NATO should reflect these threats to its new Strategic Concept.

Recommendations for the V4 cooperation during HU and PL EU Presidencies

Throughout the year of 2011, the Visegrad Group countries will have a unique opportunity to push forward some of their priorities, since Hungary and Poland will consequently lead the European Union. On contrary, during the Czech presidency in the first half of 2009 the Group did not use its potential. Frankly speaking, V4 was usually silent and did not bring a common proposal or position on any significant topic. Neither had it a common position or approach on any substantive issue.

Following are only some proposals which the Visegrad Group should achieve and what it should focus on during 2011:

- Open a large discussion on deeper V4 countries' (but also other new EU members') appearance in EU (defence and security) structures including agreed mutual support of the V4 countries nominations of representatives for the CFSP/CSDP high posts
- Initiate the debate about the balancing of EU activities in the CFSP/CSDP field with a goal to bring more attention on regions of V4 foreign and defence policy interests
- Support the common financing instrument which would allow for more use of the European civilian and military capabilities in the crisis management.
- 2011 can be the year of opportunity to revise such EU missions, which in reality represent only the interests of selected countries (African EU missions).

- Put more focus on energy security of the EU and trying to establish an optimal relationship with the Russian Federation.

- Announce an agreement to create the joint V4 EU Battle Group which will be in the stand-by period in 2015.

This document will be presented to the Foreign Ministers of our countries not later than September 2010 by every signatory in his own country and be sent to the outgoing Hungarian and the incoming Slovak Presidency of the V4 group.

Jaroslav Nad'

nominated by
Slovak Atlantic Commission
Slovakia

Libor Frank

nominated by
Jagello 2000
the Czech Republic

Amb. István Gyarmati

nominated by
International Centre for Democratic Transition
Hungary

Tomasz Szatkowski

nominated by
Euro-Atlantic Association
Poland