

Think  
Visegrad  
V4 Think-Tank Platform

# NEWSLETTER

2016/01

Think Visegrad in Brussels

## Editorial



Dear colleagues,

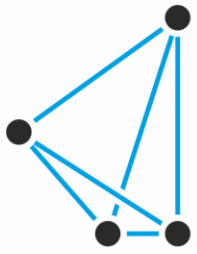
It is my pleasure to share with you the first newsletter of the 'Think Visegrad in Brussels' project. My name is Zuzana Pickova and I am the Head of Brussels Office of EUROPEUM Institute for European Policy, which is leading the implementation of the project. Despite not having had a chance to meet all of you yet, I am sure that our interactions will intensify as the project progresses, symbolizing the strength of the relations between our institutions. Our common determination to highlight the work that we do and extend it to Brussels is an exciting and ambitious endeavour. Discussing this idea with fellow Brussels-based think-tankers, EU policy-makers, government and business representatives, I noted positive feedback and acknowledgment that such initiative was badly needed. With financial support from the International Visegrad Fund, our mission is to strengthen the voice and visibility of the Central European countries at the heart of EU decision-making. EUROPEUM is honoured to have your confidence in rolling out the pilot project, which is scheduled from June to December 2016. Through this newsletter, we'll regularly keep you posted of all the main developments and inform you of upcoming activities. I am looking forward to working together with you on delivering them and welcome your feedback and suggestions at any stage.

Kind Regards  
Zuzana Pickova  
Head of EUROPEUM Brussels Office

 EUROPEUM  
Brussels Office

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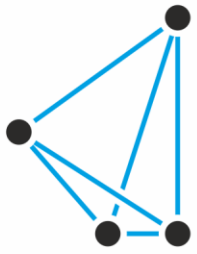


## 1. What is the 'Think Visegrad in Brussels' project?

In the first half of 2016, eight think-tanks from the Visegrad Group that have been cooperating in the Think Visegrad platform, agreed on the idea proposed by the EUROPEUM Institute for European Policy, to create a common representation office in Brussels. The main motivation for it is the need to encourage debate on issues of common interest to the EU and the V4 and explain the positions of the V4 to a wide audience. We would like to project an image of constructive partners, to explain the dynamics of the debates within our regions and to highlight our active contributions to EU policy-making.

With this view and with the aim to boost discussions specifically on the Czech Republic and the EU, EUROPEUM has opened its Brussels office in January 2016. In the six months, it has gained useful experience to build upon in the implementation of the 'Think Visegrad in Brussels'. It is designed as a pilot project lasting from June to December 2016 and it is financed by the International Visegrad Fund with the total budget of 27 500 EUR. As part of it, we'll deliver a feasibility study that will assess options for establishing a full-fledged office dedicated entirely to the Think Visegrad members, which might be one of the possible follow-ups to the pilot. The project brings together all the members of the Think Visegrad network, namely:

- Research Center of the Slovak Foreign Policy Association (RC SFP), Bratislava (main coordinator)
- Central European Policy Institute (CEPI), Bratislava
- Centre for Eastern Studies (OSW), Warsaw
- Institute of East-Central Europe (IESW), Lublin
- Institute for Foreign Affairs and Trade (IFAT), Budapest
- Centre for Euro-Atlantic Integration and Democracy (CEID), Budapest
- EUROPEUM Institute for European Policy, Prague
- Institute of International Relations (IIR), Prague



## 2. What we will do in practice

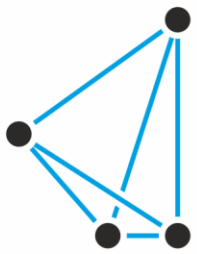
We have drawn up an agenda comprising several ambitious tasks, which can be divided into external and internal categories. Regarding the external activities, the most visible should be two public events that we'll organize in Brussels throughout autumn and winter. These should serve as flagship opportunities to present the positions of V4 countries to a large, influential audience. Secondly, we aim to hold a roundtable discussion between the Permanent Representatives at the EU of the V4 countries and select Brussels or V4-based think-tankers, which would be an occasion for candid discussions in a more private setting.

The second set of activities that we will be carrying out focus on services to the project members. Concrete deliverables include a monthly newsletter, monitoring of EU policy in agreed-upon areas, and hosting experts from V4 think tanks that would like to undertake short term research in Brussels. We'll provide these colleagues with working space at our premises and offer help in reaching out to EU officials and policy-makers, relying on our established networks. The outcome of such a research stay should be a policy paper on an EU-related topic that will be disseminated in Brussels, in the Visegrad countries and in other EU member states.

Regarding the future of 'Think Visegrad in Brussels', we will produce a feasibility study that will examine the legal and financial requirements for opening a permanent office in Brussels beyond this initial stage. We will also propose a structured work plan for the next year and prepare a year-end report taking stock of the pilot project.

## 3. Upcoming events

The coordinators from the respective Foreign Affairs Ministries and the project members have already decided the topic of the first public event that we'd like to hold at the very beginning of autumn. It will address Security Challenges from the V4 Perspective. In the coming days, EUROPEUM will prepare the first draft of the agenda, on which we'll be happy to receive your contributions and comments. Regarding the topic of the second event, no decision has been taken yet, but the following have been discussed in more detail by the National Coordinators: Eastern Partnership and ENP, Future of the Multiannual Financial Framework after 2020 and EU Enlargement.



#### 4. What has EUROPEUM in Brussels done so far?

Building on a long history of EUROPEUM in Prague, we started our office in Brussels from scratch. The main activities of the Brussels office are the following:

- networking and connecting with relevant partners
- organizing events
- conducting research and publishing
- promoting EUROPEUM's outputs and advocacy

Since we first assembled the desk and plugged in all the cords at our small office at Louise in January 2016, we've noted several achievements. Thanks to the welcoming Brussels community and many open doors, we've had a successful head start on the events, delivering four high-level events in the course of just two months. Our events in April and May were kindly hosted by the Permanent Representation of the Czech Republic to the EU and included:

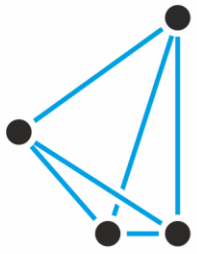
- a [book launch](#) and debate at the occasion of the 12th anniversary of the EU Eastern Enlargement
- a large [policy debate with Foreign Affairs Minister](#)

In cooperation with a public affairs agency, we further organized:

- a policy briefing by the Slovak EU ambassador on the priorities of the Slovak EU Presidency
- a [conference on EU Better Regulation Agenda](#)

Regarding research, we've been focusing on the policy of Better Regulation and its impact on both consumers and businesses. Zuzana, the Head of Brussels Office, published a [policy paper](#) examining the topic and presented it at a [roundtable on better regulation](#), in a panel featuring representatives from the European Commission, the Dutch EU Presidency, BusinessEurope, Impact Assessment Institute and experts from the V4 countries. Subsequently, Zuzana was invited to the conference of Directors and Experts on Better Regulation organized by the upcoming Slovak EU Presidency in June 2016, to reflect on the outcomes of the meeting on behalf of EUROPEUM. In her next paper, she is planning to examine the application of better regulation principles to a concrete policy, namely the Digital Single Market Strategy.

In addition, EUROPEUM's Brussels Office has been contributing to the Brussels Monitor. Tereza Novotna, post-doctoral researcher based at the Institute for European Studies at the Université libre de Bruxelles and an associate research fellow at EUROPEUM, examined in its March edition the structural and personnel [reform of the EU diplomatic service](#).



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## 5. Introducing EUROPEUM's team

EUROPEUM's Brussels Office is run by Zuzana Pickova, in cooperation with Tereza Novotna and with the support of the Prague office, supervised by the Director of EUROPEUM Vladimir Bartovic. Research activities are coordinated by Martin Michelot and communication with you is facilitated thanks to Filip Hartmann. EUROPEUM's Prague-based secretariat and local events are managed by Martin Vokalek. For financial matters of the project, you'll most likely be in touch with Radomir Spok. You can find all our [contact details on the website](#).

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