

Think  
Visegrad  
V4 Think-Tank Platform

# NEWSLETTER

2016/04

Think Visegrad in Brussels

## Editorial



Dear readers,

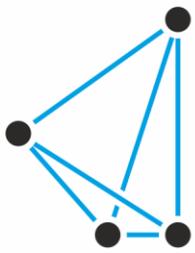
I am happy to share with you the fourth and final newsletter of 'Think Visegrad in Brussels' (TVB). The pilot project ran from June to December 2016 and this first phase is now coming to an end. I would like to take this opportunity to thank you for your interest in TVB and I hope you'll follow also future activities of the Visegrad think-tanks in Brussels and beyond. This newsletter reports on two events the TVB organized in the course of November and December, debating 'The Visegrad Contribution to the EU Digital Single Market' on 30.11.2016 and 'Security in Europe from the Visegrad Viewpoint' on 9.12.2016. We are also proud to say that the private roundtable of V4 EU Ambassadors and Brussels-based think-tanks that took place on 24.10.2016 met with positive feedback from both sides and proposals for repeating the initiative on a more regular basis. Continuing the TVB Research Fellowships, the TVB hosted Dr. Zsuzsanna Csornai from the Institute for Foreign Affairs and Trade (IFAT) in Hungary, who focused on the balance of power in the EU after the Brexit referendum and its implications for the Visegrad region.

This newsletter presents the remaining three of the eight think-tanks participating in the core of the Think Visegrad platform and in TVB, namely The Institute for Foreign Affairs and Trade (IFAT), The GLOBSEC Policy Institute (formerly CEPI) and The Centre for Eastern Studies (OSW).

I hope you will enjoy the reading and I wish you wonderful Christmas holidays and all the best for 2017.

Kind Regards  
Zuzana Pickova  
Head of EUROPEUM Brussels Office

 EUROPEUM  
Brussels Office



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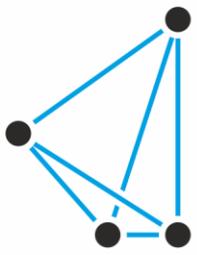
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## 'It's Now or Never for Visegrad in Digital', highlighted Conference Organized by TVB and Polish V4 Presidency

On Wednesday 30<sup>th</sup> November, TVB organized a conference on 'The Visegrad Contribution to the EU Digital Single Market' together with the Polish V4 Presidency and hosted by the Permanent Representation of Poland to the EU. The conference debated two aspects of the DSM in particular: how to create a regulatory environment to support innovation and how to ensure digital skills to materialize it. It included two high-level panels and two presentations by young winners of the Visegrad Hackatons that demonstrated cutting-edge digital skills in practice.

The debate voiced optimism about the possible contribution of the Visegrad Group in the Digital Single Market. Krzysztof Szubert, the Strategic Advisor to the Minister of Digital Affairs of Poland and a keynote speaker at the conference, called on the V4 to work together in the EU policy-making, taking inspiration from a fruitful cooperation in telecommunications. The conference praised the Visegrad countries' innovation potential and cutting-edge ICT skills, while identifying challenges of the middle skills gap and geographical differences. The agreement was that the V4 states can go far and ahead if they address these issues by uniting main actors from the public and the private sphere in a decisive action. It is crucial that they act quickly as this is a now or never moment for them. A full report from the conference can be found at the following link: <http://www.europeum.org/en/articles/detail/1088/report-the-visegrad-contribution-to-the-eu-digital-single-market-conference>.



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## Post Brexit Europe Could Be an Opportunity for the V4 According to Analysis

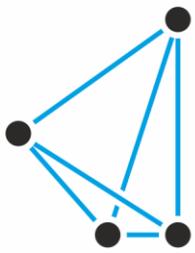
In November, TVB hosted Dr. Zsuzsanna Csornai from the Institute for Foreign Affairs and Trade (IFAT) for a research fellowship in Brussels. The focus of her analysis was Brexit and its implications for the EU's policies. "My research would definitely have been different had I not taken the opportunity to come to Brussels", stated Dr. Csornai. She stressed that she largely benefited from the meetings with four Permanent Representatives to the EU, not only because it is "always useful to speak with practitioners rather than simply reading". In fact, she explained that her meetings brought concrete changes to her research, in redirecting it to more relevant objects and in broadening the spectre of institutions examined.

In her paper, Dr. Csornai analyses the balance of power in the EU after the Brexit referendum, with a specific focus on the V4 and its advocacy role. Based on her preliminary conclusions, it appears that Brexit could constitute an opportunity for the V4 to strengthen its relations with Germany, given the economic ties between the countries. It could also bring the possibility for the V4 to intensify cooperation with the Nordic Countries, with which the V4 countries share the inter-governmentalist approach to economic issues in the European integration. The full analysis will be published online at [www.europeum.org](http://www.europeum.org).

## EUROPEUM Contributed to Brussels Debate on the Future of the Visegrad Cooperation

*"V4 has always been a pragmatic cooperation, never a romance or a love affair,"* asserted the Director of EUROPEUM, Vladimir Bartovic at a roundtable discussion on 'Present day challenges of the CEE region: the Future Perspective of the VISEGRAD Cooperation'. The event took place on November 14<sup>th</sup> on occasion of the 25<sup>th</sup> anniversary of the formation of the Visegrad Cooperation and was organized by the Antall József Knowledge Centre and the Wilfried Martens Centre for European Studies.

It gathered directors of think-tanks from the region and from Brussels to debate the future of the V4 cooperation in light of current developments. Mr. Bartovic considered especially the meaning of the outcome of the US elections for the Visegrad Group, given its present situation of 'internal fracture' between on the one hand Poland and Hungary and on the other, Slovakia and the Czech Republic. All the speakers agreed that the Visegrad cooperation will outlive the moment of crisis for, as Director Bartovic mentioned, its pragmatic nature will always enable it to find a platform on which to cooperate.



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## **‘Security in Europe’ in the View of Visegrad Policy-Makers and Analysts**

On Friday, 9<sup>th</sup> December the TVB organized a conference on ‘Security in Europe’ in cooperation with CEPS (the Centre for European Policy Studies) the European Policy Institutes Network. It featured two panels focusing on two points: the V4 in the post-BREXIT strategic and geopolitical framework and the role of partnerships and neighbourhood policy in Central European security. The speakers were Ambassador David Konecký, Permanent Representative of the Czech Republic to the Political and Security Committee; Botond Feledy, Senior Fellow at the Center for Euro-Atlantic Integration and Democracy; Tomasz Żornaczuk, Head of Central Europe Programme at the Polish Institute of International Affairs and Tomáš A. Nagy, Research Fellow at GLOBSEC Policy Institute.

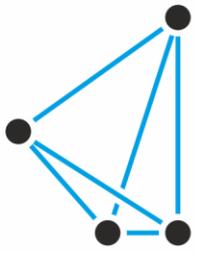
The speakers asserted that the V4 don't have any alternative security concept apart from NATO and EU and so their main responsibility is a good cooperation within these alliances. Their major focus within them is on the EU neighbourhood and on concrete deliverables which the V4 can bring to EU security and defence such as the V4 battlegroup. The key topic of the debate was trust and solidarity. V4 need to share capabilities, for which trust in institutions is essential. At the moment, it is however undermined by populist leaders that threaten the established governance systems. The speakers recommended on one hand to prepare our institutions for this challenge and on the other to make new leaders understand the costs of exiting them. ‘Responsibility is a negative sum game’, one of them reckoned – if we don't work together we lose much more.

## **Introduction of Think Visegrad in Brussels’ Core Member Think-tanks:**

TVB brings together eight think-tanks, two from each of the Visegrad Countries that cooperate within the Think Visegrad platform. The following are introduced below: IFAT from Hungary, The GLOBSEC Policy Institute from Slovakia and OSW from Poland.

### **The Institute for Foreign Affairs and Trade (IFAT)**

The Institute for Foreign Affairs and Trade (IFAT) was founded in July 2014 as the direct legal successor of the Hungarian Institute of International Affairs (HIIA).



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As the background institute of the Hungarian Ministry of Trade and Foreign Affairs (KKM), the IFAT pursues research, focusing on the priorities of the Hungarian foreign policy. It is also an active shaper of the professional public life related to the Hungarian foreign policy and foreign trade, including the engagement of the broader public through organization of conferences, public debates and professional workshops. The institute publishes the only professional foreign policy journal of Hungary, the Foreign Policy Review.

Within its EU related activities, the Institute has analysed mainly the EU's future perspectives during the second period of 2016. Our researchers focused particularly on Brexit and its impacts on the EU and the V4. They considered the implications for the approaches driving the EU integration: would the ever-closer-union come into real existence or would it be overcome by the intergovernmentalist stance. In addition, taking into account the EU's Global Strategy, IFAT analysed the repercussions of Brexit referendum on the CSDP.

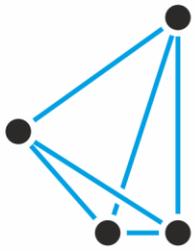
You can find more information on IFAT at <http://kki.gov.hu/en>.

## The GLOBSEC Policy Institute

The GLOBSEC Policy Institute is a policy-oriented think-tank dealing with foreign policy and international environment. It builds upon the experiences of the Central European Policy Institute that existed until 2015. While being an integral part of the GLOBSEC organization it focuses on research which is relevant to decision-makers, business leaders and all the concerned citizens. Its ambition is to help people make sense of the world and the world make sense to people - through better policies. The Institute wants to secure impact so that values of the GLOBSEC organisation – liberal and democratic order in the transatlantic world - are deeply embedded in the agenda of governments.

The work of GLOBSEC Policy Institute is organized around four pillars: Defence and Security, Future of Europe, European Neighbourhood, and Energy. Furthermore, Strategic Communication is an integral, multidisciplinary area of the Institute's ambition. Regarding the Future of Europe, the Bratislava Initiative is one of the cornerstones of the programme. The Initiative aims at generating new implementable ideas on how to better organize the EU, at restoring trust into the reinvigorated European project, and at preventing Europe from sliding into the paralysis of protectionism and dangerous nationalism.

For more information, please consult <http://www.cepolicy.org>.



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## The Centre for Eastern Studies (OSW)

The Centre for Eastern Studies (OSW) is an independent public research institution monitoring events and analysing the socio-political and economic processes taking place in Russia, Germany, Ukraine, Belarus, the Visegrad Group states, the Baltic rim countries, the Balkan states and Turkey. The Centre also carries out regional research projects focused on security, integration of energy markets, migration and integration processes in Germany, Central Europe, the Balkans, the Caucasus, Central Asia, the Nordic-Baltic and the Black Sea regions.

OSW has a research programme covering the field of *China – EU relations*, specifically China's foreign and economic policy towards the EU, China's relations with key European states, and the cooperation between China and Central-East European states taking place within the '16+1' format. Furthermore, OSW is a partner in the project “*EU-STRAT – The EU and Eastern Partnership Countries: An Inside-Out Analysis and Strategic Assessment*”, funded by the Horizon 2020. Since 2015 OSW has been a member of an international research team aimed at systematic monitoring of current migration dynamics in Ukraine (both internal and international migration, particularly to V4 and the EU). The project is entitled: “*Ukraine's migration monitoring: forced and labour mobility*”.

With partners from the V4 and the Western Balkans, it conducts a project called “*European Integration of the Western Balkans: Can the Visegrad group Countries Serve as Role Models?*”, aiming at identifying practical lessons for Serbia and the Western Balkans which could make the EU enlargement process towards this region speedier and more efficient. The project is based on the assumption that there is a regional dimension in sharing experiences of the EU integration process, both in the case of the V4 and the Western Balkans.

For more information, please see <https://www.osw.waw.pl/en>.



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