



10/29/2018

POST-CONFERENCE REPORT

**The Visegrad Group Contribution
to European Security -
Common Challenges and Goals**

POST-CONFERENCE REPORT

The Visegrad Group Contribution to European Security - Common Challenges and Goals

Publisher:



Warsaw Institute

Wilcza St. 9

00-538 Warsaw

Poland

www.warsawinstitute.org

office@warsawinstitute.org

Partners:



Századvég School of Politics (Hungary)



European Values Think-Tank (Czech Republic)



Slovak Security Policy Institute (Slovakia)



The Project is co-financed by the **International Visegrad Fund**.

Table of Contents

Introduction	4
Keynote Speech	6
The Impact of Uncontrolled Migration Movements on Internal Security in European Union	7
Migration as a European Challenge	8
The European Migration Crisis – at the Crossroad between Challenges and Opportunities	11
The most important dimensions of mass migration regarding the interests of V4 countries	14
Disinformation – Manipulation Methods, Consequences and Neutralization	16
Foreign influence operations in light of the Swedish elections held in early September 2018	19
The notion of Russian disinformation	17
Russia's Influence on Europe	22
Effective Defence Spending: R&D, Acquisitions and Modernization	25
V4 Should Improve NATO's Deterrence Policy Via Solid Defense Policy and Space Technology	26
Common Threat Perception as a Basis for Any Defence Strategy	29
V4 Defense Cooperation – Reality vs Aspirations	31
The Dynamics and Future Opportunities of Defense Sectors in the V4 Region	34
Activities of the Visegrad Group in the Context of the European Security	37
The Visegrad Group – an important platform for regional cooperation	39
Visegrad Group – successes, relative successes, symbolic actions and failures	41
Germany, the East–West Rift, and the V4	45
Elements of Conceptual Assumptions of Poland's Policy towards the Visegrad Group and the Three Seas Initiative	48

© COPYRIGHT 2018 Warsaw Institute

The opinions given and the positions held in materials in the Post-Conference Report solely reflect the views of authors.

Introduction



Dear Readers,

This report is a substantive summary of the most important topics discussed during the conference „**The Visegrad Group Contribution to European Security - Common Challenges and Goals**”. The conference was held on September 10, 2018 at the University of Warsaw, gathering nearly 100 people from think tanks, politics and business. The event was the first stage of the strategic grant from **the International Visegrad Fund**, which also provides four special additions to the quarterly published by the Warsaw Institute - **The Warsaw Institute Review**. The subject of the upcoming series of articles will be threats to the security of Europe, described from the perspective of the Visegrad Group countries.

Security nowadays is the most important aspect of a properly functioning state. Therefore, together with our partners in the Visegrad Group countries, we started a discussion of experts on the critical challenges for Europe's security. The most important of these are: migration to the EU, threats from Russian disinformation, contemporary forms of influence on decision-making processes in EU Member States, as well as obstacles for cooperation in creating a common European security strategy. An important element of the initiated discussion is also the answer to the question whether **the Visegrad Group will be able to shape a common position on the future model of European security**, with the proper protection of the interests of all the countries in the region.

The Conference „The Visegrad Group Contribution to European Security - Common Challenges and Goals” consisted of four panels and each of them had its substantive partner:

- Századvég School of Politics, Hungary: **The Impact of Uncontrolled Migration Movements on Internal Security in European Union**
- European Values Think tank, Czech Republic: **Disinformation - Manipulation Methods, Neutralization and Consequences**
- Slovak Security Policy Institute, Slovakia: **Effective Defense Spending: R&D, Acquisitions and Modernization**
- Warsaw Institute, Poland: **Activities of the Visegrad Group in the Context of the European Security**

At this point, I would like to thank our partners for fruitful cooperation and thank the International Visegrad Fund for co-financing this project.

I would like to express my gratitude to the distinguished experts and guests of our event for their presence and active participation.

I wish you a pleasant read!



Krzysztof Kamiński
President of the Board
Warsaw Institute

Keynote Speech

Maciej Małecki

Member of the Polish Parliament, Chairman of the Sejm Energy and Treasury Committee, Poland



During the opening keynote by Maciej Małecki was stressed the importance of friendly relations between the Visegrad countries. Maciej Małecki discussed the strategic dimensions of security in the Visegrad Group. He stressed the significance of unity, which can be observed in the context of the approach to migration policy. Chairman noticed that the Visegrad countries should coherently object to the forced relocation of refugees and the strengthening of the EU's external borders. The following topic covered the approach to energy policy, including the strategy towards Nord Stream 2. Maciej Małecki emphasised that **the key challenge for the Visegrad countries is the diversification of energy** resources, the development of projects such as the North-South Corridor or the Baltic Pipe, the latter being extremely strategic from the Polish perspective.

„The Visegrad Group is proof that it is possible to create friendly ties in international politics. These ties connect Poland, the Czech Republic, Slovakia, and Hungary – the Visegrád Four (V4). The **strong relationships** are built on newer and older common history, a shared geographical neighborhood, vivid contacts - both social and sometimes even familial, economic cooperation – but above all, an awareness of our **common interests**”.

SESSION I

The Impact of Uncontrolled Migration Movements on Internal Security in European Union



The first session of the Conference highlighted the threats resulting from uncontrolled migration movements in Europe. Migration movements, which have been observed for several years, became a major threat to European identity and integration. The experts emphasized the significant impact of solidarity between the Visegrad countries on this policy and stressed the need to vote together on the forum of the European Union. It was noticed that the so-called Old Union countries impose a certain narrative on V4 countries on the approach to migration policy. The goal should be to achieve a common compromise between all 28 EU members.

The issues of migration policy were discussed by:

- **Tamás Péter Baranyi** - Antall József Knowledge Center, Hungary;
- **Viktor Marsai** - Migration Research Institute, Hungary;
- **Norbert Tóth** - National University of Public Service, Hungary;
- **Norbert Arok** - Századvég Foundation, Hungary (moderator).

Partner:



Századvég School of Politics (Hungary)

Migration as a European Challenge

Tamás Péter Baranyi

Antall József Knowledge Centre, Hungary



Irregular mass migration, which has come to the forefront of public interest since the 2015 crisis, is often referred to as a phenomenon being able to disunite the European Union. Fortunately, it might not be the case, yet it is widely accepted that no other issue has ever brought up so many centrifugal tendencies. In order to contradict such an approach, one may deem that migration's gravest security threat consists in neither terrorism nor organized crime, but its potential impact on European politics and the continent's unity.

As for the migration issue, most analysts tend to point out a difference between Eastern and Western European countries. Such an outlook might be useful as intellectual shorthand but it must be challenged with the perspective of a North-South division. The fact of borrowing this dichotomy from the postcolonial studies lexicon seems apt to describe some of the heaviest contradictions in Europe's asylum policies.

In this sense, the migration tendencies, which have been prevalent since the end of the Second World War, are regulated in such a way to advance the cause of Northern countries while the Southern ones receive most of the burden. For decades, the latter were obliged to offer help for refugees and migrants from Africa and the Middle East while the Northern countries, insulated from direct contact with migration, could only cherry-pick people they needed in their labor market.

Furthermore, the Dublin Regulation, being an attempt to control „secondary migration”, solidified the practice, according to which irregular migrants are to be sent back to the country where they first entered the EU territory. This procedure put even more strain to the Southern countries of the Community, thus resulting in a legal framework that made it hard to influence the situation on the spot. Many Eastern European states, though virtually absent from the problem before 2015, tend to notice the issue of a Western import, thus sympathizing with the Southern countries. There emerges a certain feeling that EU-border countries are prone to deal with the matter on their own, especially in the face of such a question that makes Eastern European countries aligned with Southern ones, the most obvious example of such an alignment is that of Hungary and Italy. Interestingly enough, they are against the migration quota system, a phenomenon easily explainable with geographic and generic tendencies. Namely, Italy has already admitted many migrants on its territory while Hungary still remains free of this trouble.

Also the duration of granting asylum brought about yet another issue to be dealt with. The present system largely depends on the experiences of World Wars and the Cold War, both of which resulted in long-lasting regime changes. Today’s migration tendencies look different, though. Obviously, any Republicans who fled Spain after the Civil War were not in a good position to return in 1950, while the Tunisians who escaped from the 2011 political turmoil were granted a possibility to return safe and sound only a year later. Beyond those considerations, also economic migration plays a part since such migrants are not entitled to any social protection systems, though they often tend to undertake efforts to enter the previous category.

In sums, the EU’s asylum policies rely upon some experiences of earlier conflicts while such clashes have already undergone some profound changes. The system has traditionally been in favor of Northern countries whereas geographical realities would have suggested paying more attention to the Southern ones. Such a Eurocentric view did not encompass many other economic, political, anthropological, and societal aspects that ultimately appeared more common in the Middle East and Africa, rather than in Europe.

For the sake of a better asylum system that aims to be effective, controllable while also humanitarian in nature, the EU institutions should reconsider their hitherto policies. Such a step would also be imperative if we sought to withdraw „migration issue” from the agenda of the European Union, an issue that sometimes seems to constitute the community’s most serious wedge. The present system keeps operating in an „emergency mode”, relying on outside deals (e.g. with Turkey or Egypt), ad hoc solutions, not to mention the extreme strain borne by only some countries.

Naturally, there are no easy answers to this question. Yet there emerge some aspects we are apt to focus on. Northern countries of the EU should actively involve in controlling migration through the Mediterranean and the Balkans so that Southern countries do not feel abandoned with their problem. Rights and opportunities of asylum-seekers must be clear and respected while such a new type of migration has to be accounted for rather than being uncritically described with notions that still date back the previous centuries. One should also consider pull factors, including genuine humanitarian inclusiveness, easy profit of telecommunication companies, and political popularity as none of them should drive politicians to depict Europe

as a kind of a „Canaan”. In fact, such a discourse encourages people to take their risky journey to Europe, during which they die in great numbers, are stopped right before reaching Europe’s territory or may arrive in the continent to face administrative burdens, discrimination, all of them being quite far from the aforementioned Canaan. In turn, responsible European politics should encourage young people from war-torn and deprived countries to take part in rehabilitation, reconciliation, and reconstruction of their homelands. Obviously, the nations of Europe need to undertake initiatives with the aim of building stability and well-being in such regions. Otherwise, such undertakings may lead to further division into zones of prosperity and those of conflict. Border security and people registration constitute yet another important step; still, they seem less urgent provided that all the above points are well addressed before.

Migration is, therefore, a true security issue being able to undermine the unity of the EU. In order to withdraw from the EU agenda – or at least to downgrade – the Member States need to address the North-South dynamics. It would be necessary to introduce a more even situation where all concerns and headaches of the Southern states shall be taken into account. Rights and opportunities of asylum-seekers should be clear but differentiated on the grounds of their respective regions and conflicts. Moreover, the EU needs to ease pull factors while emphasizing encouragement and support vis-à-vis the sending regions. Moreover, it is vital to control the migrant flow, all by strengthening the EU’s external borders.

In the meantime, migration should be taken seriously as the issue touches all European states. In 2018, fewer migrants came to the Old Continent than it was the case before 2015. Nonetheless, the issue is as high on the agenda as has been for three years. It is partly due to the overstrained system as well as to its political consequences. The presumption of this tendency is that the migration issue would not cease to undermine unity if fewer migrants arrive at the EU territory. With neither the need to underlie controversies nor a principled agenda, the issue may persist even if number of expatriates continues to decline.

Tamás Péter Baranyi
Antall József Knowledge Centre
Hungary

The European Migration Crisis – at the Crossroad between Challenges and Opportunities

Viktor Marsai

Migration Research Institute, Hungary



Although it is commonly known that the 2015 migration crisis resulted with some serious repercussions for Europe, I would like to argue that such irregular influx of migrants provided both the European decision-makers and the public with some essential opportunities. In a wider context, such advantages could have a comparable impact to that of their negative consequences.

In order to understand my point of view, we need to step back and examine Europe's broader strategic background in recent years. If we analyze the key position of the Old Continent, it becomes clear that its defense capabilities and resilience declined significantly after the Cold War. The peace dividend, which emerged during the aforementioned period, increased not independently of the rising financial demands of Europe's social welfare systems. If we implement the idea of the Copenhagen School – represented by Barry Buzan, Ola Waever and Jaap de Wilde – about the widening meaning of security and the ever-growing number of security sectors (political and military, but also social, economic, and environmental ones), it becomes clear that the countries of the post-bipolar Europe preferred the latter ones rather than any other „hard security” elements. As Tamás Csiki pointed out in his analyses, such inclinations led to a sharp reduction in Europe's defense capabilities, armies' contraction and limited commitment for sacrifices in the field of national security. Apart from losing both hardware and knowledge, the biggest challenge was that –

due to the perception of peace and prosperity – both decision-makers and public opinion started to consider stability as a normal standard of their life, not claiming any investment and sacrifices (see also the works of George Friedman). Contrary to some realist theories considering peace to be just a break between war/conflicts, European people believed that the continent had eventually come to the never-ending fairy tale of peace and prosperity. The security matters somewhat deteriorated when the financial crisis jeopardized such well-being, perceived as the second pillar of the 2008 dream. It is not accidental that the greatest cuts in defense budget happened in the years 2008-2015 and even the loudest warnings, including a 2011 speech delivered in Brussels by the U.S. Secretary of Defense Robert Gates – were no longer able to reverse these tendencies.

There sparked two major crises that managed to emphasize the faith of European societies in their surety, thus enabling them to focus on hard security. The downturn came amid the Russian aggression in Ukraine in 2014, a military operation that almost totally destroyed the very basic presumptions about the cooperative post-bipolar international system, at the same time warning against the necessity to strengthen conventional military forces in Europe. The second shock came to pass with the 2015 migration crisis, which not only raised the concern about the infiltration of terrorists into Europe but also put a huge burden on the social and economic systems of numerous countries. Furthermore, the arrival of as much as 1.5 million people – mainly from cultures and beliefs being distinct from the European heritage – sparked some deep tensions. Although Islam was not unknown in Europe, in many aspects the Muslim worlds shaped the continent's identity, for instance by transferring the ancient Greek knowledge, philosophy and literature. Nonetheless, such mass arrivals within a short period raised questions whether European societies were ready to successfully integrate this influx. In addition, in the light of the flow of migrants, it became clear that Europe could no longer protect its own border while its inefficient asylum and migration systems needed to be reconstructed.

Over the last three years, there emerged some never-ending debates about migration. While the process is still going on, we are currently able to distinguish three positive phenomena. First, most European decision-makers have realized that they could not cope with a new flood of migrants such as they managed to solve the problem back in 2015. Therefore, borders protection, combat against illegal migration, and mitigating push factors in their countries of origin have been more emphasized rather than pure humanitarian approaches. At the beginning of the crisis, it was not evident that such an approach would end up successfully. Secondly, the European public has recognized that their security and stability could not be treated as something normal; instead, it stemmed from investments and sacrifices. It made possible the increase of defense spending in numerous countries and the increase of budget for other security actors. Last, but not least Europe recognized the link between its present and future – deeply than ever – to other, sometimes forgotten part of the world as the Middle East and Africa. Frankly speaking, our knowledge about the trends and processes in these regions seems still very limited. Yet the crisis provides us with an opportunity to pay more attention to these neglected parts of the world. Such an attitude may both help us to cope with challenges as well to gain opportunities, including economic ones.

Of course, all achievements depend on commitment and encouragement of both the decision-makers and the public. If they „forget” this lesson after a few „peaceful” years, the process could be easily doomed to failure. As the citizens of our countries and the European community, we should keep in our mind the experiences of the last years, and, while hoping for the best, we should be aware that the worst might yet to come.

Viktor Marsai

Migration Research Institute
Hungary

The most important dimensions of mass migration regarding the interests of V4 countries

Norbert Tóth

National University of Public Service, Hungary



Mass migration affects at least three major societal dimensions of the V4 subregion. On one hand, it touches upon identity issues. In addition, it is directly linked to a competence-sharing conflict between the European Union and its member states. Finally, it is also about a kind of emancipation process held in relation to the so-called “old members” and the “new(er) member states” (thus the entire V4 subregion) within the European integration process.

1) While discussing the identity issues, one needs to at least answer the following questions in this respect. The demos of the European Union can be actually grateful for the today’s mass influx of migrants, mainly from outside the Old Continent, as they force them to reconsider their identity. These questions constitute the very core of the European integration while the Europeans, as well as the European nations, should sometimes refurbish, check and – if necessary – also update their hitherto identities. Last time, this process was carried out with only a moderate participation (“participation without a membership”) of the V4 countries societies at the time when the Convention on the Future of Europe was drafting the text of the Treaty establishing a Constitution for Europe that eventually never entered into force, due to the fact that its “successor”, the 2007 Lisbon Treaty, took over the vast majority of its content. For instance, the drafters refused to incorporate a reference on Christianity into the text, even though this notion played – and till plays – an essential role in elaborating

our common heritage, also understood in terms of Europe's culture and traditions. We need to examine what it means to be a European while by doing so, we should also compare this integrity to our distinct national identities. While following the example of the late Samuel P. Huntington, an American political scientist and the author of the early 2000s book entitled "Who Are We?: The Challenges to America's National Identity", the Europeans should answer the question of identity with a clear reference to their national and religious belonging before they eventually decide to tackle such issues as mass migration. Who are we? Who can be referred to as a European? Why is Europe so attractive? Does the European identity exist, and if yes, was it artificially created by elites or was it rather organically developed over the centuries or millennia? If it is true for the latter, what are the major components of such European identity? This also involves the identification of the identity of those coming (there also emerges questions why they are coming, where they are coming from and whether they can be referred to as refugees or mostly immigrants) to Europe these years because if one of the elements of European identity changed, then the entire European integration might fail. We also need to consider the issue why Europe can be successful while other regions of the world keep struggling. Last but not least, we also need to answer the question with regard to the ultimate goal of European integration, being an alliance of independent European nations or a European super state; referred to as European Confederation of States or United States of Europe).

2) Mass migration also contributes to the competence sharing between the EU and its members. Migration policies (refugee issues as well as the immigration policy) belong to the category of shared competences. This means that the European Union has the right to acquire some competences from the members in this field, if certain requirements are met. The V4 countries should be extremely cautious on that matter while they have an interest of freezing integration processes in relation to migration policies until the identity issues are decided.

3) The concept of emancipation might sound somewhat strange; yet while analyzing the history of European integration it seems clear that the founding States still enjoy some prerogatives that should be revisited for the sake of European integration. For instance – and except two cases – so far, most presidents of the European Commission have originated from the Inner Six; it is thus inevitable for the V4 countries to obtain more strategically important positions within the EU institutions. The European integration rolls ahead quickly while there emerges a risk that the institutions and organs of the EU may become an effective tool in the hands of deeply involved Western European States as the integration process starts to resemble more like the state of ordinary international relations in the period of an increased political integration. Countries of the V4 and beyond should have their say if they wish to become really equal members of the EU.

Norbert Tóth

National University of Public Service
Hungary

SESSION II

Disinformation - Manipulation Methods, Consequences and Neutralization



During the second session of the Conference experts discussed the following issues: the threats resulting from a spreading information war in Europe, the dangers of undesirable information proliferation, or the role of social media in the present times. The case of the Russian Federation which is particularly active in the spread of untrue information in European countries was discussed. It was noted that the Russians do not create new problems, but use European weaknesses. The attacks take place primarily through the use of internal disputes and warming up the temperature of political discussions, thus directly affecting the destabilization of countries, governments or even international organizations.

The issues of disinformation were discussed by:

- **Wojciech Kuchta** - Safe Cyberspace Foundation, Poland;
- **Katarina Tracz** - Free World Think-Tank, Sweden;
- **Cécile Vaissié** - Université Rennes 2, France;
- **Radko Hokovský** - European Values Think-Tank, Czech Republic (moderator).

Partner:



European Values Think-Tank (Czech Republic)

The notion of Russian disinformation

Wojciech Kuchta

Safe Cyberspace Foundation, Poland



Despite being extremely popularized by the media and getting into the scope of public opinion all around the world, the notion of Russian disinformation still sounds enigmatic to most people. Almost everyone has at least heard of the so-called “fake news” while many has been directly exposed to this phenomenon. Yet very few people have actually had a chance to understand mechanisms behind the idea. Surprisingly enough, disinformation constitutes only a tiny piece of all active measures being very well known to both Western academics and security experts issue.

Developed and enhanced by Soviet intelligence services, the aforementioned measures were essentially aimed at whole spectrum of actors in democratic countries: ranging from average taxpayer and voter, through artists and celebrities to politicians and other important stakeholders. Their task was to come up with political events to be conducted in the most favorable way for the Kremlin, mostly by exerting indirect influence and pressure on decision-makers. More precisely, this technique is still being applied: in 2000, a new-old subject was restored to the teaching program of Moscow’s Military Institute of Foreign Languages. Its students are thus supposed to attend the course in the so-called *specpropaganda* (special propaganda) being a significant part of Soviet traditional psychological warfare methods¹.

¹ J. Darczewska, *Anatomia rosyjskiej wojny informacyjnej. Operacja krymska – studium przypadku* [The Anatomy of Russian Disinformation Warfare. The Crimean Operation – Case Study], Warszawa 2014, Punkt Widzenia OSW, 42, p. 9.

This coincided with the creation of the Doctrine of Information Security of the Russian Federation that introduced the notion of information warfare to many faculties and universities in Russia. Its idea was to “bolster the state mass media, expand their capabilities to promptly convey reliable information to Russian and foreign citizens” for the sake of “social development, the consolidation of Russian society, and the spiritual rebirth of the multinational people of the Russian Federation”². In fact, it revived a classic Soviet approach to information in a new political reality.

Such attitude may be expressed in two basic terms, namely polarization and subversion. The former attempts to amplify existing issues and non-issues in democratic societies in order to create real political problems. They may be directly aimed to disrupt state’s functioning (as it could be observed by Russia’s interference in the Catalan referendum) or to cause distrust within societies so that they could no longer rely on their own governments and public institutions (e.g. by spreading rumours about contaminated vaccinations for ordinary citizens and “pure” ones for the elites³). This serves to distract public opinions attention from internal problems of the Russian Federation and sets a fertile ground for populists who act against their own governments. Such steps are also helpful to legitimize Russian actions (e.g. Catalan referendum as an excuse for the annexation of Crimea). The other term, subversion, is directly aimed to prepare the battlefield before intervention, as it took place in Crimea and Eastern Ukraine in 2014⁴.

A new element used for implementing active measures is the scale and specialization. Along with the birth of social media, disinformation gained access to single users and like-minded groups gathered in so-called echo chambers. These new channels let Russian disinformation spread within and across societies while they will soon enable creating tailored campaigns addressed to single individuals. Such solutions would prevent the West from developing active countermeasures based on the analysis of modern information infrastructure as well as on information security strategy regarding democratic values.

Wojciech Kuchta
Safe Cyberspace Foundation
Poland

2 Information Security of the Russian Federation, 2000.

3 D.A. Broniatowski et al., Weaponized Health Communication: Twitter Bots and Russian Trolls Amplify The Vaccine Debate, *AJPH Open-Themed Research*, October 2018, Vol. 108, No 10, p. 1381.

4 M. Galeotti, I’m sorry for the creating the ‘Gerasimov Doctrine’, *Foreign Policy*, online access.

Foreign influence operations in light of the Swedish elections held in early September 2018

Katarina Tracz

Free World Think-Tank, Sweden



There has been a major focus on the issue ahead of the aforementioned vote, not only at the domestic level. Sweden's handling of foreign influence operations has gained quite a bit of international attention. Internationally, the country is mentioned in terms of being a role model for combatting influence operations at the national level. The work of the Swedish Civil Contingency Agency (MSB) is well known and appreciated across both Europe and the U.S.

So what is known about influence operations against Sweden ahead of the elections?

In media and the public debate, there has been a particular focus on a growing activity from fabricated Twitter accounts, also referred to as bots. According to a report from Sweden's Defence Research Agency (FOI), a sharp increase in the level of activity could be observed between August and September 2018:

- 6 percent of all Swedish Twitter accounts discussing societal issues or politics ahead of the elections were „bots” while as much as 17 percent of all Sweden's Twitter accounts were automatically held, also including accounts that have been removed by Twitter.
- The bots indicated a distinct preference for sharing material from “alternative media”, associated with the far right.

- It was much more common for such accounts to express support for the far right Sweden Democrat party (SD) compared to what authentic accounts did. 47 percent of the bots seemed to back the SD party whereas only 28 percent of the genuine accounts did the same.
- Support for traditional parties was very low amongst the bots and amounted to between 1 and 3 percent.

Moreover, in the final weeks before the elections, the Swedish Security Service (SÄPO) described to have observed a sharp increase in activities that aimed to question the very legitimacy of the poll. For instance, there have been reported some cyberattacks against government agencies and political parties, notably the (formerly) ruling Social Democrat party. These attacks have been traced eastwards, pointing towards Russia and North Korea.

However, when it comes to attribution, it cannot be stated who is behind these actions. As for today, it has been impossible to point to any instances of foreign interference. Nonetheless, it is worth noting that this behavior is in line with what Russia's hitherto steps in other European countries and the U.S.

We also cannot say much about the impact of these operations. What we can observe, however, is that the overwhelming dominance of far right parties on the internet was not translated directly into voter behavior. The SD, for instance, retain a much stronger online presence (28 percent of genuine Twitter accounts supported the party) than in parliament where the party gained 17.5 percent of the vote.

This is what has been exposed so far regarding influence operations before the Swedish elections. I would like to stress the aspects of influence operations that are generally not gaining the same amount of attention as fake social media accounts, fabricated news and bots.

There are three major aspects of influence operations that are not highlighted to the same extent as they should be:

1) Methods. We need to look beyond what is happening in the Internet and see the entire toolkit being used in influence operations. This ranges from fabricated news to economic operations, not to mention investments and strategic acquisitions, extortion, energy warfare, cyberattacks, support to fringe and extremist groups, and various forms of deception. The concept has been referred by academics to as „full spectrum warfare” and envisages the use of non linear/non military means to obtain geopolitical advantages

2) Messages: We have seen a clear preference from the Kremlin for what is broadly referred to as right wing populist movements. These are associated with far right extremism, anti migration activism etc. Thus, we cannot limit our attention to this type of messaging. The Kremlin is ideologically promiscuous, while its support ranges from left wing radicals and activists – such as the peace movement in Sweden – to right wing extremist groups. Their goal is to increase polarization and sow distrust in Western democratic societies.

3) Actors. Russia is the foremost actor that keeps engaging in this type of activity targeting Europe and the West. However, it is not the only one to carry out such activities. In Sweden and several other European countries, Islamist players – such as ISIS/Daesh – remain active as well. There emerges also a need to look at China from this perspective. The Middle Kingdom is already disposing of many of its instruments in the full spectrum conflict toolbox to pursue its strategic goals. I am concerned that if we focus all our attention on Russia, we will miss the advance of a much more powerful state actor in this sense.

By highlighting and learning more about the various aspects of influence operations – just beyond the ones that take place online, also in social media – we can increase our resilience against any further foreign influence operations.

Katarina Tracz
Free World Think-Tank
Sweden

Russia's Influence on Europe

Cécile Vaissié

Université Rennes 2, France



The Kremlin has started a new information war against the West being part of a hybrid war that had violently intensified on the Ukrainian soil. In 2016 – thus a year before the presidential election in France – French society became abruptly conscious of a renewal of Russian influence following the publication of two books on this topic that aroused quite large public interest¹. They were followed by some other works while even more of them will eventually be printed.

Some European countries have been aware of this hybrid war well before France, which explains why it is so important to launch an international cooperation in order to study the tools used by the Kremlin. Indeed, these instruments are basically the same everywhere, even if they are smartly adapted to the state's local specificities. The active use of the medias being created, financed and directed by the Kremlin (including RT and Sputnik), pro-Putin websites as well as trolls and bots in the social media can thus be observed in every European (and not only European) country. This is to be followed by such issues as financing of various political parties, maintaining close relations with far-right and extreme-left groupings and/or, manipulating some Russian-speaking diasporas and/or Russian churches, hacking major sites, exerting economic influence, and developing or reemerging networks of “useful idiots”, agents

¹ I was the author of the first publication: Cécile VAISSIÉ, *Les Réseaux du Kremlin en France*, Paris, les petits matins, 2016. The second one was published shortly afterwards: Nicolas HÉNIN, *La France russe*, Paris, Fayard, 2016.

of influence or plain agents. Not to mention that the fact that the Russians seek to create new mythologies or revive the Soviet ones: today's Russia is supposed to be, at the same time, the country of "family and Christian values" (even in spite of the statistics on the number of fatherless families and/or those with just one child) and the heir of the Stalinist "Russia" so as to please various European publics, both on the right and on the left side of the political arena.

Many of these tools were already applied in the past; in December 2013, a Russian political analyst Aleksandr Morozov wrote that Putin was getting ready "to have a new Komintern policy" in order to achieve his goal, which was "the maximal putinization of the whole world"². The notion of Kominform was also used by the Czech secret services in a report on their 2014 activity³. In a sense, such renewal of old practices makes the Western defense much easier: many books have been written on the Komintern techniques while some current NATO and EU member states could then find themselves on the other side, which could provide with some interesting information from within.

I would also like to emphasize three other aspects of the Kremlin disinformation practices. First of all, and except for some occasional "fake news", Russia's authorities do not "create" problems as mentioned by its media.. Instead, they simply blow the existing problems out of proportion and importance with the aim of generating both fears and anxieties in our societies – as evidenced by the issue of migration – and to sow discord between European countries. So Putin would have intention to dismantle the European Union that, despite all its defects that need to be corrected, maintains its economic and geopolitical power. Therefore, in this context of war – even if it is "only" of a hybrid, character – each country and government should be particularly careful not to make any gross public mistakes, whereas the already existing problems between particular EU members ought to be solved with dignity and without any scandals. It will be essential to compare potential dangers in terms of their political weight and answer the question whether "Brussels" in fact constitutes a bigger threat for some national identities than the "Russian world" as conceived by Mr Putin?

The second point is that, in order to spread disinformation, the Kremlin uses, apart from its own medias and social media websites, also some NGOs, think tanks, cultural and religious centers and associations, as well as its European "friends". Each of these organizations seeks to address a specific population group, including businessmen, politicians, believers, people interested in Russian language and culture, etc.). In France, some of local institutions tend to disseminate – sometimes even unconsciously – the Kremlin propaganda, which subsequently leads to its "Frenchification". This is the main strength of these networks: they complete and quote each other while mixing both cynic manipulation and naive convictions.

Some Russian personalities are particularly visible in these groups on a transnational level. For instance, Vladimir Yakunin, an extremely affluent former Soviet KGB officer who has long belonged to so-called Putin's inner circle, is the co-chairman of the French Dialogue franco-russe [French-Russian Dialogue] organization, responsible for regrouping mainly

² <https://www.colta.ru/articles/media/1466>,

³ <https://gordonua.com/news/politics/cheshskaya-razvedka-rossiya-pytaetsya-sozdat-v-evrope-novyy-komintern-96763.html>,

companies and businessmen interested in doing business with Russia. Interestingly, their activity ultimately consists in lobbying against Western sanctions on Russia. In 2003, Yakunin established the Dialogue of Civilizations Research Institute being in charge of holding highly prestigious annual international meetings in Rhodes while in July 2016, he launched the Berlin-based DOC Research Institute supposed to be an international think tank. Therefore, only a month later, Mr Yakunin, who remains under both American and Australian sanctions, was granted a visa paving the way for him to work in Germany.

Much attention shall be drawn to the third point. Experts widely discuss Russian disinformation and propaganda practices, which is a necessary step. Nonetheless, any other essential interrogations should not be neglected. For example, in Germany, supporters of the AfD party actively participated in the recent violent demonstrations that took place in the city of Chemnitz. This political grouping is known for its excellent relations with the Kremlin. It is also quickly spreading within the Russian-speaking diaspora in Germany; moreover, it focuses on this community to the point that it even organized some political meetings held in the Russian language. Could the Kremlin stimulate such demonstrations to destabilize Angela Merkel and Germany? Possible ideological infiltrations in some European armies, support of combat groups (e.g. Sistema) at least in Germany and in France, or major participations in some Central Europe economies and banking systems could present real danger while letting the conflicts escalate. Also the fact of existing some fragile financial investments does not just concern Central Europe, as shown in an op-ed that has recently been published by Elisabeth Schimpfössl entitled «Is Russian Money in London silencing us?». In addition, the Skripal case certainly contributed to a slight change in such attitude while the worst solution would to remain silent in front of the Kremlin practices targeted at our countries.

Cécile Vaissié

Université Rennes 2

France

SESSION III

Effective Defence Spending: R&D, Acquisitions and Modernization



The third panel was devoted to military cooperation in the V4 group. The experts discussed about the role of international organizations, such as NATO, in ensuring security in the Visegrad region. The need to develop a new format of joint military exercises under the V4 and the modernization of national armies, with the cooperation of national armaments sectors was highlighted. It was emphasized that the countries of the Visegrad Group have much greater defense potential when they are united.

The issues of effective defence spending policy were discussed by:

- **Petr Bohacek** - Association for International Affairs, Czech Republic;
- **Radko Hokovský** - European Values Think-Tank, Czech Republic;
- **Marian Majer** - Ministry of Defense, Slovakia;
- **Gergely Nemeth** - Ministry of Defense, Hungary;
- **Juraj Krupa** - Slovak Security Policy Institute (moderator).

Partner:



Slovak Security Policy Institute (Slovakia)

V4 Should Improve NATO's Deterrence Policy Via Solid Defense Policy and Space Technology

Petr Bohacek

Association for International Affairs, Czech Republic



Building the European Pillar of NATO

Europe's NATO-based security infrastructure is referred to as unsteady; the Alliance's technological, strategic and political superiority is deteriorating while we can blame both asymmetrical and dysfunctional dynamics within its structures. Firstly, low European defense spending and unequitable contributions triggered the political crisis with Donald Trump's NATO policy being only its symptom. His attacks on multilateralism constitute an existential threat to Europe, a contentment based on this principle. Nonetheless, transatlantic ties appear stronger than the incumbent U.S. administration. When the United States emphasized the transatlantic bond, perceived in terms of the world's strongest political, economic and security partnership, Europe was expected to pick up the slack and improve the mutual relationship. Technologically speaking, European weakness is lowering the credibility of NATO's deterrence policy, especially in face of Russian A2/AD capacities and the overall local battlefield advantage in the Baltic States. Furthermore, the inability to quickly transport Alliance follow-up forces to the Eastern flank additionally acts to the detriment of the deterrence policies. All these issues have their origin in the Old Continent. Therefore, it is essential to address these matters through a build-up of NATO's autonomous European pillar. This need includes also the consolidation of the European defense industrial base and new military capacities.

In order to perform this task, it is essential to introduce some changes in the European approach to defense spending and acquisition. The previous client relationship between the United States and Europe proved ineffective as European partners mainly reduced the U.S. main benefit of the transatlantic security partnership in the post-Cold War period to the purchase of American weapons. However, the urge for setting up a bilateral security defense policy and the Buy American approach diminished the economic rationale for military expenditures in the time of peace. For Europe, which lacks innovation or R&D investments across sectors, massive investments into the EU's single market defense industry may bring about similar effects as the massive funding of U.S. military research during the Cold War. They ultimately resulted in an immense technological leap of both Silicon Valley technologies and Internet industry. Also, U.S. equipment comes up as the most expensive while offering many unequal offset policies. With low defense budgets and the unavailability of cheaper European alternatives, such a state of affairs may lead to the acquisition of Russian or Chinese equipment, thus incurring severe security implications. Moreover, technology transfers seem highly unfavorable for Europe whereas the U.S. offset policies entail strict bilateral relations with restriction on both use and production. This ultimately prevents hampers the creation of a European industrial policy. Approaching defense investment with a holistic economical approach will decrease the continuing European malaise of low military spending. It is yet critical to boost the EU budget to 1.3 percent just in order to allow more defense industry support. In a broad perspective, these steps will lead to cheaper, more available and interoperable European military equipment.

The V4 contribution to European defense industry and NATO deterrence

Such a state of matters gives rise to some implications for the Visegrad Four whose members are expected to play a fruitful and indispensable role in Europe's security infrastructure. The long-repeated East-West division within the EU structures in regards to political capital, wages, economic converges or food quality has also trickled down into the security area, where it may bring about even more serious consequences. Only two out of the initial 17 PESCO projects are led by an Eastern European state. Speaking of the V4 and other post-Communist countries, they frequently complain about their weak position in Brussels, compared to their Western counterparts. Some of such arguments might hold true while the fault falls on Eastern European politicians, diplomats, administrations and on their inability to define their interests, set the agenda and pursue it in a long-term perspective. The failures of national governments get to be blamed on Brussels.

All defense matters start with such an industry. The large national defense industries of former Warsaw Pact countries were destroyed in the 1990s as demand and defense spending evaporated together with largely held privatization. The V4 has yet to work to build up its national capacities and incorporate them into the EU-wide industrial base. The EU defense initiatives, especially the €13 billion European Defense Fund, offer an immense ability for its development. However, while PESCO has been voted on by unanimity, the EDF projects still need to be accepted under the qualified majority voting procedure. Such an undertaking entails the risk that most funding will flow to bigger Western defense conglomerates at the expense of Eastern European SMEs that do not dispose of such considerable lobbying and political power. The EDF money is subject

to competition and it cannot be allocated according to national cohesion funds. V4 SMEs need to go out this framework and compete for this large money pool to avoid being locked out of the key supply chains. National governments have to be proactive and provide assistance, possibly in connection with PESCO projects. If they failed to fulfill such a function, the European defense industry might be consolidated under the dominance of Western European industries, locking out Eastern European economies due to the political deficiency of national capitals. Thanks to the financial aid and SME support, the V4 countries are able to lead the way and ensure Eastern European incorporation in the EU defense industrial base.

As for defense policy terms, one of the clear points of the EU defense agenda for the V4 must take into account the need for improving NATO's deterrence policy. Firstly, as a strategic Central European region, the V4 has to be invested heavily into military mobility to ensure the eastward advance of the Allied forces. They may also have to consider innovative approaches, such as the incorporation of satellite technologies, including the mapping of infrastructure with infrared radiometry using capacities of the Prague-based European Global Navigation Satellite Systems. Secondly, the V4 should find ways to develop European capacities to face Russian A2/AD and integrated multi-layer air defense systems that consist of naval launch systems, ballistic missiles and in ISR (Intelligence, Surveillance, and Reconnaissance). All these technologies are dependent on satellite communication while anti-satellite techniques, currently being heavily developed in Russia and China, can be yet another form of a niche area contribution from the V4. The Czech Republic's expertise in laser technology should thus focus on dazzling and spoofing of satellite communication by blinding the optical signal receivers without any long-term damage.

The Visegrad group lacks a strategic long-term agenda in all aspects of the EU debate. It needs to act, instead of blaming Brussels. The defense and security area offers an ideal opportunity for such a clear and effective policy to be incorporated. Europe will not wait for the Visegrad Four to act the same way while the world will not wait for Europe.

Petr Bohacek

Association for International Affairs
Czech Republic

Common Threat Perception as a Basis for Any Defence Strategy

Radko Hokovský

European Values Think-Tank, Czech Republic



Such questions as an effective defense spending on research and development, acquisitions, and overall modernization are primarily dependent on one key factor: a commonly shared threat perception. Without any prevalent awareness of who and what we need to build our military against, we cannot be certain what exactly to purchase while, more importantly, there will be no shared feeling of urgency to actually invest into such facilities. In other words, as long as a political community—including the general public, politicians, and defense professionals—do not provide substantial definitions who the potential enemies are and what kind of battles need to be fought, there will not be any political eagerness to spend enough resources on defense whereas their effectiveness will significantly deteriorate.

This is why the European Union and European NATO allies are so heavily struggling with defense expenditures. Most of them lack a common perception of the threat. As long as we do not come up with such recognition, most defense talks will be of rather theoretical and hypocritical character. To a large extent, the lack of a common threat perception among the EU member states is explained by a different location on the map of geopolitics and security environment as such countries as Portugal, Sweden, Italy or Poland dispose of a distinct perspective. Nevertheless, ething all the European allies are affected by the threat of polarisation in their respective societies as well as the radicalization of its parts, growing political instability, and conflicts. Nonetheless,

such different national – and even local – root causes of the polarisation still exist while we are able to identify clear external factors behind them. Those external drivers exhibit various levels of relevance in respective parts of Europe; however, dealing with them requires common European effort, also in the matter of defense.

The three major threats for Europe are Russian and Chinese aggression, Jihadist insurgency in the European neighborhood and mass irregular immigration. All of them keep generating societal polarisation and thus, also the weakening resilience.

Putin's Russia is a direct military peril to both EU and NATO member states and partners in Eastern Europe. Such state of matters requires the use of decisive military deterrence and active protection of our allies. As for the hybrid issue, Kremlin keeps exerting multiple hostile influences and disinformation operations that attempt to both polarize and radicalize European societies. Speaking of China, its presence seems much softer in most European states but the Middle Kingdom has intention to exert influence on decision-makers and thus to limit the political independence of its European allies. Both Russian and Chinese operations in Europe are compatible and aim to be mutually reinforcing.

Militant Islamic extremism is spreading across the immediate European neighborhood. The surge of the Islamic State was only visible and extreme manifestation of a more general phenomenon that jeopardizes European security in two major ways. First, it provokes instability, conflicts and mass migration in the neighborhood. Military defeat and neutralization of any Jihadist groups – before they take control of strategic locations in Africa or the Middle East – should be one of the core missions for common European forces. Second, fighting Jihadists abroad at an early stage of their insurgency shall essentially prevent European Muslims from further radicalization processes. In addition, the fact of eliminating the number of popular spots for foreign terrorist fighters translates into fewer radical assailants.

Finally, mass irregular immigration is not perceived in terms of a typical military threat; yet its effective and sustainable prevention cannot possible without defense forces. Even without Islamist insurgencies in Africa, the continent will be a source of unprecedented tensions and conflicts that eventually result with millions of irregular migrants, mainly due to a population boom in the poorest and most unstable countries, climate change, environmental degradation, drinking water shortage, and food scarcity. For the sake of Europe's stability, the African soil will appear its most important battlefield as its military forces should focus on peace-making, peace-building and conflict prevention.

However, some threats and tasks for European defense forces seem clear for some while they are disputed and questioned by others. Such state of matters is likely to persist until an imminent danger emerges, transforming Europe's common perception of security among the general public and political representation only if theoretical debates on defense spending assume the form of serious actions.

Radko Hokovský
European Values Think-Tank
Czech Republic

V4 Defense Cooperation - Reality vs Aspirations

Marian Majer

Ministry of Defense, Slovakia



Political prerequisites

Change of the security environment that took place following the crisis in Ukraine and Crimea has exerted a significant impact on security and defense-related behavior of the national governments in Europe. Such an argument can be supported by at least three crucial indicators:

- **An increase of defense budgets:** European NATO nations increased their budgets by 40 billion USD since 2014. In Slovakia, the defense budget has increased from 0.99 percent of GDP in 2014 to 1.27 percent of GDP in 2018 (1.15 billion EUR). Moreover, the mid-term ambition to obtain to 1.6 percent of GDP in 2020, 1.7 percent of GDP in 2021 while 2 percent of GDP in 2024 seems to confirm this trend being in line with NATO and PESCO commitments¹;
- **Support for modernization efforts** – European countries have launched a number of modernization programs. Such investments are best evidenced by a Slovakian project, thanks to which, 20 percent of the Slovak defense budget is currently being invested to the enhancement

¹ Defence Expenditure of NATO Countries (2011-2018), https://www.nato.int/cps/en/natohq/news_156770.htm, and Základné pozície delegácie SR na samite NATO v Bruseli (11. a 12. júla 2018) <http://www.rokovania.sk/Rokovanie.aspx/BodRokovaniaDetail?idMaterial=27583>.

of the Slovak Armed Forces since 2016. This share is to be even increased in the following years²;

- **Quite positive political and public atmosphere** in respect to security and defense. Nonetheless, many EU countries (including Slovakia) are currently characterized by strong anti-NATO and anti-EU extremist elements, as well.

NATO vs. PESCO

Permanent Structured Cooperation of the European Union (PESCO), officially launched on December 11, 2017, by Council, should become a significant motivation for defense capabilities development in the Union.

As a term, PESCO was present in European defense policy since the adoption of the Lisbon Treaty adoption; yet, it was not implemented in day to day reality. Therefore, the role of PESCO should be neither overestimated nor underestimated, as it resulted from a number of compromises within the process of its preparation. The crucial condition for almost all PESCO members, **being no duplication to NATO**, has been agreed while PESCO commitments are completely in line with most serious NATO commitments. Also, it has been agreed, all components of PESCO will complement with the similar processes present already in NATO, such as Coordinated Annual Review on Defence (CARD) with NATO Defence Planning Process (NDPP) and PESCO National Implementation Plans with NATO Defence Capability Reviews. This is crucially important especially for small and middle-size nations with a single set of armed forces. Moreover, a positive aspect of the EU – NATO **cooperation** is present in coordinated effort within EU Military Mobility Project and NATO Enablement Plan for SACEUR's Area of Responsibility³.

Effectivity of the PESCO implementation will depend also on the exploitation of financial incentives for member states, such as European Defence Fund with its research (preparatory action worth of 90 mil EUR for 3 years) and capability development (the EDIDP program) parts in the form of the EDIDP. In this respect, one should distinguish the presence of the **multiyear financial framework EU 2021-2027**, containing a defense chapter that envisaged three budget programs (security, defense capabilities, and crisis mechanism). Thus, the financial aid should be divided as follows:

1. European Defence Fund - **13 billion EUR**, out of which 4.1 billion EUR for joint research and 8.9 billion EUR for capability development projects
2. Military Mobility – European Commission supports Action plan of military mobility by special tool Connecting Europe Facility worth of **6.5 billion EUR** for projects of transport infrastructure development.

² Návrh Dlhodobého plánu rozvoja obrany s dôrazom na výstavbu a rozvoj ozbrojených síl Slovenskej republiky s výhľadom do roku 2030, http://www.mosr.sk/data/files/3561_dlhodoby-plan-2017.docx.

³ Read more in: Brussels Summit Declaration, Para 16, https://www.nato.int/cps/en/natohq/official_texts_156624.htm, and in Joint Declaration on EU-NATO Cooperation, https://www.nato.int/cps/en/natohq/official_texts_156626.htm.

Slovakia became one of the PESCO members in November 2017 once the country's Prime Minister backed this process at the European Council while the Slovak government adopted the National Implementation Plan. Also, it is the only of Central and Eastern European countries leading its own PESCO project, which was approved by Council in the first project wave in January 2018.

The aim of the **Slovak Euro-Artillery – Indirect Fire Support Project**, announced on 24 November 2017 (with participation of IT, observers: BG, CZ, ES, EL, IE, HU, SI, PL and potentially also HR, FR, and FI), is to develop an interchangeable mobile precision artillery platform including land battle decisive ammunition, interchangeable non-lethal ammunition and common fire system control to be deployed in multinational operations. Such is an insufficient capability within EU (and NATO). Moreover, Slovak Ministry of Defence also participates in further four projects: Network of logistic Hubs in Europe and support to Operations; European Medical Command; Military Mobility; and Armoured Infantry Fighting Vehicle / Amphibious Assault Vehicle / Light Armoured Vehicle⁴.

Conclusions - problems of Visegrad cooperation

In spite of some positive features of general financial and capabilities development within NATO and EU, the Visegrad defense partnership still remains very limited. The group is unable to overcome continuous problems in this field and deepening cooperation seems to be in many aspects rather a long-term ambition than short-term reality. The most prominent complications are as follows:

- National priorities – the V4 joint procurement seems to be almost impossible. Therefore, we should still seek some „low hanging fruit” solutions;
- Almost no multilateral solutions in procurement and no good examples concerning the exploitation of NATO and EU agencies (NSPA, EDA);
- Limited budget for R&D – European ambition within PESCO requirements was originally targeted at 2 percent of the total defense spending; however, the reality seems far from it, as evidenced by an average figure of 0.6 percent in the EU. Interestingly, the reality in the V4 appears even worse; for instance, in Slovakia, this proportion amounts to no more than 0.09 percent. Moreover, according to many critics, research is considered only as a way to avoid European legislation, such as in case of 8x8 APCs project in Slovakia⁵.

Marian Majer
Ministry of Defense
Slovakia

⁴ Read more in: Brussels Summit Declaration, Para 16, https://www.nato.int/cps/en/natohq/official_texts_156624.htm, and in Joint Declaration on EU-NATO Cooperation, https://www.nato.int/cps/en/natohq/official_texts_156626.htm.

⁵ Read more in: Sedem výrokov SNS o transportéroch, v ktorých nepovedali celú pravdu, <https://dennikn.sk/976277/sedem-vyrokov-o-transporteroch-v-ktorych-sns-nepovedala-celu-pravdu/>.

The Dynamics and Future Opportunities of Defense Sectors in the V4 Region

Gergely Németh

Ministry of Defense, Hungary



The overall growth of the defense sectors and their armed forces witnessed a sharp decline since the end of the Cold War while in many countries it was already struggling before. A natural side effect of this recession was the marginalization of the armed forces within their respective societies¹. Such a situation took place since the legitimization of modern governments stems from their ability to provide welfare while security comes as an eternal second. The European societies proved especially keen to prefer welfare and education before anything else and politicians did not miss that point. The global financial crisis exaggerated the degradation of the Armed Forces even further, resulting with the emergence of miniaturized „bonsai armies”² subsequently followed by the loss of the combined arms warfighting capability in many national force structures. The former Warsaw Pact countries suffered even more because in their case, the age of decreasing defense funds coincided with the slow and painful transformation from the Soviet-type mass army structure into reformed, NATO interoperable, specialized and more deployable structures.³

1 Sheehan, J.: Where have all the soldiers gone? The transformation of modern Europe. New York: Mariner Books, 2009. ISBN-13: 978-0547086330.

2 Pérez-Forniés, Claudia, Cámara Noelia, Gadea Maria Dolores: Cyclical Properties of Spanish Defence Expenditure. Defense and Peace Economics, 2014, Vol. 25, Iss. 1, p. 8.

3 Young, Thomas-Durell: The Challenge of Reforming European Communist Legacy ‘Logistics’. The Journal of Slavic Military Studies. 2016. Vol. 29, Iss. 3, – p. 352-370.

A reversal of such negative trends seems to have taken effect since the Defence Investment Pledge in 2014. Since that time, funds for defense have intensified in many countries while the hitherto stagnating defense sectors seem to have a chance to revitalize their capabilities through some new strategic planning efforts. The Hungarian Zrínyi 2026 Defence Programme is one of the prime examples in this case as it envisages a complete modernization of the Armed Forces while relying on powerful political support and a reinforced defense budget. At the same time it remains under the heavy influence of the NDPP requirements, thus disposing of the potential to contribute more to both NATO and EU defense capabilities.

Thus, the Zrínyi 2026 Defence Programme gives a sign to the transformation within the structures of Hungarian Defence Forces. Prominent members of the government have already emphasized that the comprehensive modernization of the HDF, undertaken within the Zrínyi 2026 Defence Programme, would further enhance the quality of Hungarian contribution to the burden-sharing and to the wider European security. This was reportedly said by Hungarian Minister for Foreign Affairs and Trade Péter Szijjártó on the margin of the NATO Summit in July 2018⁴ while Minister of Defence Tibor Benkő also emphasized the importance of a European Army⁵.

The new plan is significant by its sheer volume, meaning that by 2024 the defense budget will be increased by 2 percent of GDP with a view to having a 20-percent share for the forces development. These ambitions stem from the Welsh-established Defence Investment Pledge. The delivery on the pledge will also help Hungary to fulfill Allied requirement and to develop military forces in the context of the NATO Defence Planning Procedure.

Such a massive transformation offers a logical basis for enhanced cooperation between countries, in both V4 and European multinational frameworks. In that sense, the very fact that the Visegrad countries are struggling with the same transformation issues – due to their shared legacy – suggests some important opportunities for concerted efforts.

V4 Ministers of Defence already started the renewed defense planning cooperation in 2012 by committing for delivering capabilities for Allied objectives through the NATO Defence Planning Process⁶. By doing so, they have attached the V4 defense planning cooperation to the overall transatlantic system, which constituted a very rational decision, especially given the efficiency and depth of the NDPP. It aided the V4 countries to figure out where their common endeavors would add values to both national and collective capability development. Additionally, by borrowing procedures and the capability hierarchy from the NDPP, they also created the lingua franca within the V4 defense community without any costs or other additional difficulties. During this meeting, various capability areas have also been identified “with a potential for intensified cooperation”⁷. Moreover, the cooperation aimed to extend to existing or planned NATO structures, namely the Centre of Excellence within V4 countries, the Multinational Logistics Coordination

4 http://mandiner.hu/cikk/20180711_szijarto_noveljuk_a_hozzajarulasunkat_a_nato_erejehez.

5 <http://propeller.hu/itthon/3371999-magyar-honvedelmi-miniszter-szerint-is-kellene-egy-europai>.

6 <http://www.visegradgroup.eu/calendar/2012/joint-communique-of-the>.

7 <http://www.visegradgroup.eu/calendar/2012/joint-communique-of-the>.

Centre and the Deployable CIS modules, while also entailing defense planning contribution (V4 JLSG HQ⁸) as well as operational formations (V4 EUBG)⁹.

Thus, the reversal of the defense spending trends since the Wales Summit, coupled with similarities of both challenges and opportunities in the transformation of the Armed Forces seems to be creating strong legitimacy for enhanced military cooperation within the region, based on the NDPP. These efforts may well be augmented by emerging niche concepts, like the PESCO program, being yet another decisive capability development initiative besides the NDPP and a potential area for cooperation. Although the concept is still at the early stage, its clear advantage consists in assigning funds to multinational defense R&D from outside national defense budgets while it also facilitates multinational industrial cooperation¹⁰.

Gergely Németh
Ministry of Defense
Hungary

8 https://honvedelem.hu/cikk/60734_meeting_of_v4_army_logistic_chiefs.

9 <http://www.visegradgroup.eu/calendar/2012/joint-communique-of-the>.

10 https://eeas.europa.eu/headquarters/headquarters-homepage/34226/permanent-structured-cooperation-pesco-factsheet_en.

SESSION IV

**Activities of the Visegrad Group
in the Context of the European Security**

The fourth session was indicated that the Visegrad countries should seek to work out common levels of cooperation in the security context. Panelists emphasized that Europe is in a deep crisis, which should bring together all the countries of the region in order to effectively influence decisions made at the EU forum. Speakers also analyzed the current situation on the European arena, pointing out that V4 countries are dealing with German-French domination, which should lead the Visegrad Group members to an effective response and solidarity in the region. The experts addressed the topic of leadership in the Visegrad Group, marking the role of Poland as the natural leader of the organization. However, significant differences in the perception of the topic from the perspective of each Visegrad country were stressed. Dichotomy associated with a different perspective has a negative impact on the Group's cohesion, and hence, the possibility of real influence on other countries and decisions taken at the EU level. During the discussion, the issues of the Three Seas initiative as a new concept of cooperation in the region, were widely discussed, which supported by good practices and Visegrad cooperation, can expand the sphere of security in the region of Central and Eastern Europe. It was emphasized that the solidarity of the Visegrad Group does not deny the active participation of its members in the European Union, but only strengthens the voice of our region in Europe.

The issues of European Security were discussed by:

- **Piotr Bajda** - Cardinal Stefan Wyszyński University, Poland;
- **Marcin Kędzierski** - Jagiellonian Club, Poland;
- **Aleksandra Rybińska** - Polish-German Cooperation Foundation and Warsaw Institute, Poland;
- **Andrzej Zybertowicz** - Nicolaus Copernicus University in Toruń, Poland;
- **Tomasz Grzegorz Grosse** - University of Warsaw, Poland (moderator).

The Session was conducted by:



Warsaw Institute (Poland)

The Visegrad Group - an important platform for regional cooperation

Piotr Bajda

Cardinal Stefan Wyszyński University, Poland



In the following paper I would like to focus on the three smaller Visegrad countries: Slovakia, Hungary and the Czech Republic as, while discussing the security policy of the V4 states, we sometimes tend to forget about their perspective. Nonetheless, such issue should be tackled as these states play a slightly different role on the international arena while disposing of distinct – as compared to the Polish reality – foreign policy instruments used to both achieve their assumed goals as well as to feel secure, as this conviction has been questioned throughout history. The fact of being a small country determines not only their regional position but also it exerts essential influence on their attitudes towards the neighbouring superpowers.

Importantly, these states need to continuously deal with some specific deficits at different levels. A typical tiny country with few inhabitants is characterized by political, military and economic weakness, which is often associated with its powerless image; for instance, even world leaders tend to confuse Slovakia and Slovenia. Thus, such states tend to compensate for their strengthlessness by remaining active within various international organisations, joining defensive alliances or – while speaking of the European Union – also by a far-reaching Europeanization whose scope is much larger than that of medium-sized countries such as Poland or Romania. In addition, all small countries that acceded to the EU in 2004 have recently entered the monetary union.

In Slovakia, Hungary and the Czech Republic, membership within the V4 structures seems to be valued higher than in the neighbouring Poland. Each of these states enjoys an exclusive status of the founding member, which seems to act to their benefit as a considerable image value. In addition, a country that holds the rotating Presidency over the Group (this function is currently assumed by Slovakia) may speak on behalf of 60 million Central European citizens on the European arena. The Visegrad Group constitutes a kind of a screen enabling these states to achieve their goals under the umbrella of the V4 initiative. Such partnership is particularly helpful in the case of some sensitive topics that would be difficult to be implemented by the aforementioned countries, exposing them to the anger of the world's most powerful players, including Germany or Russia. Thus, the Czech Republic, Slovakia and Hungary will not risk any conflicts with them. In the light of entailing such possibility, these V4 states decided not to participate in the NATO Advance Presence program; instead, they opt for setting up the Visegrad Battle Group – along with their Polish partner. Moreover, they will have no intention to issue any strong reaction to Russia's annexation of Crimea; however, as V4 members, they will endorse the Eastern Partnership program or the idea of integrating the Western Balkans into the European Union.

The Visegrad Group will continue to be an important platform for regional cooperation for Poland's smaller partners and a way to build the country's security architecture with no need to irritate Russia or Germany.

Piotr Bajda

Cardinal Stefan Wyszyński University
Poland

Visegrad Group - successes, relative successes, symbolic actions and failures

Marcin Kędzierski

In cooperation with **Eugeniusz Chemiczuk**

Jagiellonian Club, Poland



Established in the 1990s, the Visegrad Group aimed to act for the further coordinated integration of Central European countries with the Euroatlantic world. While cooperation could have generally been referred to as fruitful before primary goals have been achieved, its later character significantly deteriorated. Speaking of both security and defense, these two issues have never been a priority for the V4 countries. However, starting from 2014, the situation has been gradually changing due to the Member States' expected increase in the matters of regional security.

In fact, such situation did not take place, which predominantly stems from extremely distinct perception of the issues of security and potential threats. Most of the V4 members are located on the southern side of the Carpathian Mountains, perceived as a natural barrier for any massive Russian invasions. Hence, Hungary and Czech Republic are much more worried about illegal immigration while Poland's perception of threats is somewhat similar to that of the Baltic States. Such significant divergences led to the following serious consequences for both defense and security policy:

- Poland, Lithuania, Latvia, Estonia, and Romania launched mutual cooperation within the so-called Bucharest 9 (B9) more than within the V4 initiative.
- The V4 members (except for Poland) prioritize their cooperation within the European security leadership (Berlin-Paris axis), while Poland, altogether with Romania and Estonia, prefer to enhance its relations with the United States. Bearing in mind recent differences in the American and European perception of i.a. NATO, further transatlantic split will only deepen any further division within the Visegrad Four.
- Hungary, Slovakia and Czech Republic represent distinct approaches to the threat coming from revisionists' foreign policy of the Russian Federation. Therefore, they seem to apprehend military aspect of instability as unlikely to happen or to believe that current relationship with Russia is worth more than a likelihood of their potential deterioration.

These issues result in a rather symbolic cooperation between the V4 countries. All the outcomes of such partnership in this field of security policy can be divided into four main categories: successes, relative successes, symbolic actions and failures.

Successes:

Generally, the V4 is highly efficient in ad hoc events, like exercises, training or meetings. There is a set of exercises conducted every year that are aimed at improving practises, training, mobility and logistics issues in the region. They served as a significant improvement for certain procedures and standards as well as helped to bridge the gap between former Warsaw Pact members and old NATO members. Yet, generally speaking, these drills are conducted on a relatively small scale, compared to U.S.-led NATO exercises in Poland or those in the Baltic States.

Relative Success:

The V4 Battlegroup created in the framework of the EU Common Security and Defence Policy. Despite its permanent nature and positive influence on organizing common military drills, it never managed to achieve its initial scope, e.g. by carrying out common equipment procurement or systematic defence planning.

Symbolic actions:

Permanent, mostly annual, meetings of V4 held with participation of representatives of governments, usually taking place at a low level. Some conferences have resulted with either successes or relative successes; however, most of them enable nothing more than just maintaining the hitherto security and defense framework within the V4 partnership.

Failures:

The attendance of the V4 states within the PESCO (Permanent Structured Cooperation) program has failed to propose – or to enable structural participation in any joint project – despite the need to replace significant amount of the Post-Soviet military equipment in the stock. There are many reasons for that, including industry protection, lack of industry cooperation between the V4 members as well political will or different priorities in senior partner choice.

Conclusions

The Visegrad Group has significant problem with coordination in the security and defense context while any strategically important issues have never been treated seriously. However, the V4 established robust framework for a potential improvement of the cooperation. For instance, both the V4 Battlegroup and annual meetings on ministerial level may eventually develop into a deeper cooperation in the near future. On the other hand, remaining security and defense projects, such as PESCO research and development programs, are object of particular interest only on the state level as the Visegrad Group has not created any particular motivation for its members to engage in them within the V4 structure.

Armed Forces of V4 Countries in Comparison

Equipment/ Country	Poland	Czech Republic	Slovakia	Hungary
Tanks (modern)	~1000 (247)	110 (30)	30 (0)	34 (0)
IFYs & APCs (modern)	~2700 (~800)	~600 (213)	~100 (>60)	~1000 (>150)
Fighter Airplanes (modern)	94 (48)	35 (35)	12 (0)	13 (13)
Ships (modern)	42 (4)	0	0	3 (0)
Artillery Piece (modern)	~660 (24)	94 (0)	~50 (~25)	~365 (0)
Soldiers (Active)	>100.000	>24.000	~17.000	~31.000
Annual Budget, CSD (Gdp %)	12 bln. (2,01%)	>2,2 bln. (1,1%)	1,3 bln. (1,22%)	1,2 bln. (0,91%)

**SOURCE: VARIOUS ASSESSMENTS, INCLUDING SIPRI
AND OFFICIAL INFORMATION OF STATES' MINISTRIES OF DEFENCE**

V4 Members' Participation in International Peacekeeping missions

Mission/Country	Poland	Czech Republic	Slovakia	Hungary
UNAMA & ISAF (Afghanistan)	✓	✓	x	✓
EUFOR Althea (Bosnia- Herzegovina)	✓	✓	✓	✓
KFOR & EULEX (Kosovo)	✓	✓	x	✓
MONUC (Congo)	✓	✓	x	x
UNOCI (Côte d'Ivoire)	✓	x	x	x
UNFICYP (Cyprus)	✓	x	✓	x
UNMEE (Ethiopia and Eritrea)	x	✓	x	x
UNMISS (South Sudan)	✓	x	x	x
UNIFIL (Lebanon)	✓	x	x	✓

**SOURCE: COUNTRIES' OFFICIAL PAGES OF MINISTRY OF FOREIGN AFFAIRS
ON OFFICIAL ENGAGEMENT IN INTERNATIONAL PEACE COOPERATION**

Marcin Kędzierski
In cooperation with **Eugeniusz Chmiczuk**
Jagiellonian Club
Poland

Germany, the East-West Rift, and the V4

Aleksandra Rybińska

Polish-German Cooperation Foundation and Warsaw Institute, Poland



The Visegrad Four (V4), a loose alliance of the Czech Republic, Hungary, Poland, and Slovakia, grabbed the limelight in 2016 with its vocal and uncompromising resistance against admitting asylum-seekers from overwhelmed frontline EU states. Such solution, referred to as „relocation scheme, was introduced by Martin Selmayr, the Secretary-General of the European Commission. Although the group was set up only in 1991, the migration crisis has transformed the V4 into a political factor to be reckoned at the EU level. Thus, its role is expected to become more important after Brexit. When the United Kingdom leaves the EU, Germany will lose a crucial partner who blocked French aspirations for European governance, also in the matter of a transfer union.

The Visegrad States, especially Poland, will gain their importance for Germany as the latter will need partners to balance any attempts of Southern European countries – such as Italy – to trigger a significant transfer of funds (also in the framework of the upcoming EU budget for 2021-2027), as well as to soften up some EU fiscal rules. The structural problems of the common currency have remained unresolved, thus being a major challenge for Berlin and Brussels, as exemplified by the dispute between Rome and the EU Commission over the Italian budget proposal for 2019. All the aforementioned events occurred in the midst of a chaotic and probably „hard” Brexit.

Such a state of affairs means that the idea of a „multi-speed” Europe, despite declarations to the contrary by French President Emmanuel Macron, is not likely to go beyond its purely theoretical aspect. The political chasm between Eastern and the Western EU Member States has recently become more palpable as all these players argued over such issues as the Nord Stream 2 gas pipeline, posted workers, different quality of some goods distributed in Central and Eastern European markets, and reform of the EU’s asylum system. Europe has no intention to intensify these matters, bearing in mind that Russia keeps exploiting these splits while the U.S. President Donald Trump has clearly identified their nature in order to use them as arguments against the EU, thus striving for bilateral agreements with selected EU countries. Naturally, the American leader seeks to target Germany and its commercial excesses, which seems quite clear for the leaders in Berlin. The United States is the only player being able to block the further implementation of Nord Stream 2, for instance by imposing sanctions on any companies that participate in the project. Yet the country’s intention would be simply to open a European market for American liquefied gas (LNG).

Therefore it is in Germany’s interest to prevent Europe from falling apart into separate blocks as each of them could develop at a different speed on the path of integration. Even so, the state is not ready to renounce Nord Stream 2, and it still pretends that it is a „purely” economic – and not a geopolitical – project. Furthermore, Berlin takes advantage of the so-called „power politics” in order to exert an increasing pressure on its Eastern European partners, mainly Poland. Such a state of matters entails an attempt to depict the Three Seas Initiative as targeted against the EU, not to mention some – more or less – veiled threats of „consequences” if Poland decides to strengthen its ties with Washington without consulting Berlin. Until recently, Germany and the United States were involved in a „partnership in leadership”, established by President Bush. Germany’s role as a global player depends on the strength of its relationship with Washington while its weakening translates into Germany’s fragile global position. Such is also the reason why Germany does not advocate the idea of setting up a permanent U.S. base on Polish soil.

Additionally, Germany is currently undergoing both a political and leadership crisis as it has neglected in prior years to take advantage of its position and power to effectively lead Europe and find solutions to its problems, including migrant and euro crises. To make a long story short, Germany is growing weaker, which presents a unique opportunity for Poland and other V4 states – a region inhabited by about 65 million people – to gain momentum and at least partially fill that void. Thus, the V4 has yet to overcome its own divisions. Speaking of the relationship with the EU core, in 2017 it has become evident that the V4 could not be perceived in terms of a homogenous group. The Czech Republic and Slovakia are strongly dependent on the German economy while Slovakia is the only eurozone member among all the states. In some cases, it seemed that Poland and Hungary stayed on one side whereas the Czech Republic and Slovakia adopted a distinct standpoint.

The Visegrad Group needs to remain focused on common interests, such as protecting the single market, preserving Schengen and EU subsidies as well as opposing liberal migrant policies coined in Berlin and Brussels. In addition, its states should express their readiness „to stay together” during upcoming talks on the EU budget. Any issues that seem to oppose the V4 countries, including

their relations with Russia, are not as dramatic as depicted by the media. For instance, Hungary receives 85 percent of its gas supplies from Russia because it has no other source of the raw material. The construction of an LNG terminal in Croatia and interconnectors in Romania might resolve this matter in the future while Budapest has already signaled its eagerness to diversify the sources of its gas supplies.

The V4 is involved in joint undertakings where is a common understanding. It does not dispose of any seat or secretariat as it consists of a political lobby group of Member States. With its fruitful functioning during the migration crisis, the alliance is very likely to succeed in the future, especially if combined with the Three Seas Initiative.

Aleksandra Rybińska

Polish-German Cooperation Foundation and Warsaw Institute
Poland

Elements of Conceptual Assumptions of Poland's Policy towards the Visegrad Group and the Three Seas Initiative

Andrzej Zybertowicz

Nicolaus Copernicus University in Torun, Poland



- The main thesis of the speech: The Visegrad Group and the Three Seas Initiative should be perceived as one of the main roads to search possible ways out of the EU crisis.
- Structural contexts for the advancement of the V4 initiative and the Three Seas project:
 - » Speaking of the European Union as a whole and many of its institutions, one may distinguish a phenomenon of simulated democracy. Such issue seems best evidenced by the controversial promotion of Martin Selmayr, an influential EC official, to the post of Secretary General, which eventually prevented other candidates from taking part in the competition¹.
 - » In addition, the European Union needs to deal with yet another key disadvantage, hereby referred to as the simulated polycentrism. To put it simply, the problem may be reduced to the dilemma of „European Germany or German Europe”.

¹ <https://www.independent.co.uk/news/world/europe/martin-selmayr-promoted-director-general-jean-claude-juncker-eu-brussels-a8221356.html>.

- > The aforementioned question of simulated polycentrism is traditionally associated with multiple dimensions of intra-Union clientelism, not to mention the insurmountable and excessive distance between the elites and ordinary citizens of the Member States. Such a state of affairs, along with some other reasons, accounts for all surprises that took place in previous years, including the „wave of populism”².
- All the above contexts contribute to serious communication deficits within the European Union as well as they limit cognitive competences of its decision-making milieus and cities of network policy and they foster monocentral practices being incompatible with the spirit of the European solidarity (*see*: the Nord Stream 1 and 2 gas pipeline projects).
- As for the Three Seas Initiative, its aim is – apart from addressing some EU’s structural deficiencies – also to make up for any potential shortcomings within the Community’s vertical integration fields (the North-South axis), mainly in terms of road and energy infrastructure as well as forms of capital, intellectual and cultural cooperation.
- Smaller EU countries have usually no intention to challenge the duumvirate of Berlin and Paris. Speaking of many decision-making situations, they remain rather passive while waiting for any reactions from larger states. In such a way, they are subject to typical power and coordination tensions and formulas according to the divide and rule (*divide et impera*) principle on one hand while the classic prisoner’s dilemma on the other (interestingly, who can be referred to as a prison director), pursuing somewhat the model of a „common land” tragedy.
- In such a context, Poland is responsible for becoming the region’s leader while assuming both the burden and the risk of developing the V4 and Three Seas projects. In addition, the special relations between Poland and the United States may exert a positive impact on the regional leadership process, which can be only possible with a very careful approach to this task. It is crucial to consciously avoid any instances of pride and triumphalist rhetoric of such leadership. Thereupon, both Poland and its elites keep struggling with various scarcities, including organizational, intellectual and even emotional ones.
- In order to overcome such deficits, we should consciously discount the so-called *late comers advantages*, for instance by taking advantage of both positive and negative institutional experiences that have hitherto stemmed from the EU horizontal integration (the West-East axis).

Andrzej Zybertowicz

Nicolaus Copernicus University in Torun
Poland

2 See, e.g. Max Haller, *European Integration as an Elite Process: The Failure of a Dream?*, Routledge 2008.

© COPYRIGHT 2018 Warsaw Institute

The opinions given and the positions held in materials in the Post-Conference Report solely reflect the views of authors.

This publication was co-financed by the International Visegrad Fund.



Warsaw Institute
Wilcza St. 9, 00-538 Warsaw, Poland
+48 22 417 63 15
office@warsawinstitute.org