



Regional integration

EAST CENTRAL EUROPE IN THE
INTERNATIONAL WORLD ORDER

What is the V4?

Visegrád Group, also known as Visegrád Four, or the European Quartet

Cultural political alliance of Hungary, Czech Republic, Slovakia, and Poland

Originated from a meeting of leaders in 1991 in the city of Visegrád

The name comes from the place selected for the 1335 Congress of Visegrád

Here the Bohemian (Czech), Polish and Hungarian rulers agreed to create new commercial routes to bypass Austria in order to have easier access to European markets

The Alliance's goal is to advance military, economic, cultural cooperation as well as cooperation in energy affairs

To a certain extent it is a lobby group within the EU

History

While there was a history of cooperation early on between the countries, the Austro-Hungarian monarch and later communism made the cooperation more difficult (if not impossible)

After 1989 relations were reestablished

February 15, 1991 – Visegrád Group created in order to aid integration into NATO and EU

After the dissolution of Czechoslovakia in 1991, both the Czech Republic and Slovakia became members

All countries of the cooperation are members of the EU since 2004

At the same time only Slovakia has the Euro (since 2009)

Why is this cooperation beneficial?

They support each other politically, also have common interest

Together they are a stronger bargaining power

Their GDP together would be the 4th largest in the EU

Even if their interests don't always align, on a case by case basis they help each other

For example, V4 countries are all pro-nuclear power so they cooperate in issues concerning these

The International Visegrád Fund is the only institutionalized form of regional cooperation within the V4 countries – support regional and non-governmental initiatives in the region

How does the alliance work?

The V4 was not created as an alternative to EU/NATO, nor does it want to compete with them

The alliance is aimed at achieving better cooperation with the neighbouring countries and also helping bring about stability in the region

There is a rotating presidency – every year a different country presides over the group

They write programs for the group

The V4 is not alone in Europe as a regional organization, it cooperates with other such organizations such as the Benelux countries or the Nordic Council of Ministers, countries of the EU's Eastern Partnership and the Western Balkans

Current Hungarian position on the V4 alliance

August 28, 2023 – Tibor Navracsics (minister for regional development)

V4 alliance must be strengthened

According to him Germany, France and the US is growing appart, isolation is growing amongst the Western nations within the EU as well. The desire for a federal Europe and more powers for the European Parliament is growing. In a situation like this the countries of the V4 alliance have produced the largest economic growth in the past 4-5 year within the EU and became the strongest partnrs of Germany. This is why the V4 cooperation is needed.

The role of the V4 countries is to fight against the „divide and conquer” strategy which Moscow and Brussels both use

All wars, including the war in Ukraine strengthen regional cooperation and this is especially neccessary now