



“Think Visegrad” - V4 Think Tank Platform

Project Report Document

January 2020 – January 2021

February 2021

Three pillars, on which the “Think Visegrad – V4 Think-Tank Platform” is based, remained without change despite the unprecedented challenge represented by the COVID 19 pandemic. The platform’s experts worked to both *short- and long-term analyses*, while initial activities were also undertaken in relation to *Civil Servants Mobility Program (CSMP)*, as well as *Think Visegrad Fellowships* for non-V4 fellows. The platform also successfully organized the *V4 Presidency Mid-Term Review Conference*, though in the online format. Through the *Think Visegrad in Brussels* project the platform has also continued to increase its visibility in Brussels.

The *core network* of think tanks has remained stable, containing eight think tanks (two per each V4 country). The platform has also remained *open to cooperation* with think tanks and experts from outside (for the list of the “core network” members and other participating think tanks please see Annex 1).

As a follow up of the debate on some procedural revisions, which the Think Visegrad platform conducted with the V4 policy planners, some changes were implemented in the development of *short-term analyses*. The number of analyses was reduced from 12 to 6 and the time frame for their development was extended. At the same time, assignments were formulated in a more detailed manner. In addition, a more intensive communication mechanism between the authors of each analysis on one side and the representatives of the MFA of the V4 President country was established. Implemented changes aimed to improve the quality of the development process, as well as to provide the authors with a valuable feedback at different stages of their work (for the list of short- and long-term analyses see Annex 2).

Think Visegrad core network members also choose *8 visiting fellows from non-V4 countries*, who were supposed to spend their fellowships in the respective think tanks. However, due to the spread of the COVID 19 pandemic 3 fellowships were postponed to 2021 (for the list of “Think Visegrad” visiting fellows from non-V4 countries see Annex 3).

The implementation of the *Civil Servants Mobility Program* was severely affected by the COVID 19 pandemic. Long-term travel restrictions did not allow the Think Visegrad members to proceed with the study trips for civil servants from Ukraine, Kosovo and Georgia. In fact, the 2020 edition of the program was postponed to the 2021.

The organization of the *V4 Presidency Mid-Term Review Conference* also experienced significant difficulties due to the spread of the pandemic. Originally scheduled for April, the conference was moved to 22 September. Due to travel restriction for the participants, it was only organized as an online event. Thematically the conference focused on the impact of the COVID 19 pandemic both on the EU, as well as global level, while taking into the consideration the point of view of the V4 countries. The main organizer was EUROPEUM Institute for European Policy from Prague. As a side event of the conference, the online meeting with the IVF Director Edit Bátorfi was organized. Think Visegrad platform coordinators also had their online meetings throughout the year.

On the basis of the agreement with the IVF director Edit Bátorfi, a *public follow up of the mid-term conference* was organized on the topic “Future of the EU after COVID 19”. Besides experts from the Think Visegrad platform, the public event was also attended by the Czech deputy foreign minister Aleš Chmelař and his Slovak counterpart Martin Klus.

The project *Think Visegrad in Brussels*, led by EUROPEUM, continued to enjoy active support of all Think Visegrad platform core members. The main focus was on the organization of online events, both public and closed, since the implementation of the fellowships part was heavily affected by the COVID 19 pandemic.

The beginning of the Polish V4 Presidency (2020-21) was marked by the organization of an *online chat with the Polish minister of Foreign Affairs* Jacek Czaputowicz for the experts from V4 think tanks. Think Visegrad experts had a unique opportunity to discuss various issues of their interest with the foreign minister of the presiding country. This initiative might become an inspiration for the following V4 Presidencies.

It is worth to mention that all analyses developed by Think Visegrad experts continued to be *available exclusively for the MFAs of the Visegrad countries*. The equal rights, equal contribution principle in Think Visegrad was demonstrated by the nomination of authors of both short- and long-term analyses, while the *Visegrad spirit of cooperation* was maintained through the engagement of the authors from all V4 countries in case of each of the analyses. Last but not least, the Think Visegrad platform continued to implement all the activities in a very *cost efficient way* (for the financial report please see Annex 4).

Annex I List of the “core network” members and other participating think-tanks

The “core network” members:

- Research Center of the Slovak Foreign Policy Association (RC SFPA), Bratislava (main coordinator)
- Globsec Policy Institute (GPI), Bratislava
- Centre for Eastern Studies (OSW), Warsaw
- Polish Institute of International Affairs (PISM), Warsaw
- Institute for Foreign Affairs and Trade (IFAT), Budapest
- Centre for Euro-Atlantic Integration and Democracy (CEID), Budapest
- EUROPEUM – Institute for European Policy, Prague
- Institute of International Relations (IIR), Prague

Other participating think tanks:

Czech Republic: *Mendel University Brno*

Hungary: *Equilibrium Institute, Danube Institute*

Poland: *EURACTIV.pl, Polish Economic Institute (PIE)*

Slovakia: *STRATPOL, Strategic Analysis*

Annex 2 List of short-term and long-term analyses

Short-term analyses:

Analysing and comparing the V4 response to the COVID-19 crisis: comparison of crisis management mechanisms, evaluation of the level of co-ordination and assessing impact on broader regional (Central European) co-operation, potential of co-ordination of exit strategies and economic recovery plans

Author: *Ignacy Świącicki (PIE), Warsaw*

Co-author: *Vladimír Bartovic (EUROPEUM), Prague*

Co-author: *Juraj Mesík (independent analyst), Bratislava*

Co-author: *Dániel Varga (CEID), Budapest*

Assessment of the Franco-German initiative of European Recovery from the Coronavirus Crisis

Author: *Vladimír Bartovic (EUROPEUM), Prague*

Co-author: *Edit Inotai (CEID), Budapest*

Co-author: *Soňa Muzikárová (GLOBSEC Policy Institute), Bratislava*

Co-author: *Marek Wąsiński (PISM), Warsaw*

CFSP and its place in foreign policies of the V4 countries

Author: *Alisa Muzergues (GLOBSEC Policy Institute)*

Co-author: *Alica Kizeková (IIR)*

Co-author: *Gergely Varga (IFAT)*

Co-author: *Karolina Zbytniewska (EURACTIV.pl)*

V4 countries and anti-regime revolution in Belarus

Author: *Kamil Kłysiński (OSW), Warsaw*

Co-author: *Anton Bendarzsevszkij (Danube Institute), Budapest*

Co-author: *Alexander Duleba (SFPA), Bratislava*

Co-author: *Věra Pachta Řihácková (EAP CSF)*

Nagorno Karabakh- an independent evaluation of the situation and possible scenarios. Consequences for the V4 countries.

Author: *András Rácz (CEID), Budapest*

Co-author: *Emil Aslan (IIR), Prague*

Co-author: *Ján Cingel (Strategic Analysis), Bratislava*

Co-author: *Arkadiusz Legieć (PISM), Warsaw*

V4 countries and #NATO2030 process

Author: *Matúš Halás (IIR), Prague*

Co-author: *Roger Hilton (GLOBSEC Policy Institute), Bratislava*

Co-author: *Gergely Varga (IFAT)*

Co-author: *Wojciech Lorenz (PISM), Warsaw*

Long-term analyses:

Impact of COVID-19 on the future of Europe debate: it should cover the major internal EU policy issues at stake: Conference on the Future of Europe, MFF, European Green Deal, migration, further integration of Eurozone, measures to restart the EU economies and possibly others, implications for the V4, recommendations

Author: *Juraj Hajko (SFPA)*

Co-author: *Vladimír Bartovic (EUROPEUM)*

Co-author: *Dániel Bartha (CEID)*

Co-author: *Melchior Szczepanik (PISM)*

Impact of COVID-19 on global issues: it should cover position of major powers (US, CN, RU), multilateralism, trade and international economy, development co-operation, EU strategic autonomy and EU

Author: *Konrad Popławski (OSW), Warsaw*

Co-author: *Tamás Baranyi (IFAT), Budapest*

Co-author: *Alica Kizeková (IIR), Prague*

Co-author: *Juraj Mesík (independent expert), Bratislava*

Economic Implications of a Post-Covid World: Pitfalls and Opportunities for the V4

Author: *Lubor Lacina (Mendel University Brno)*

Co-author: *Jakub Jakóbowski (OSW), Warsaw*

Co-author: *Soňa Muzikárová (GLOBSEC Policy Institute), Bratislava*

Co-author: *Katalin Szilágyi (Equilibrium Institute), Budapest*

The Impact of the Outcome of US Presidential Election

Author: *Tamás Baranyi (IFAT), Budapest*

Co-author: *Matej Kandrik (STRATPOL), Bratislava*

Co-author: *Danielle Piatkiewicz (EUROPEUM), Prague*

Co-author: *Mateusz Piotrowski (PISM), Warsaw*

Annex 3 List of “Think Visegrad” visiting fellows from non-V4 countries

Nino Gozalishvili (Georgia), Ph.D candidate in Nationalism Studies and Comparative History at Central European University / Visiting Research Fellow at Center for Euro-Atlantic Integration and Democracy (CEID)

Topic: *Disintegration through Integration? Turning to the Transnational Approach to Study: National-Populism on the Example of the Visegrád Group*

Dženeta Karabegović (Bosnia and Herzegovina and USA), University Assistant at University of Salzburg in the Division of Political Science and Sociology / Visiting Research Fellow at the Institute for International Relations (IIR)

Topic: *Visegrad Countries and Migration Leadership Potential: Contextualizing Opportunities in light of the New Pact on Migration and Asylum and Beyond*

Aliaksei Patonia (Belarus), Saudi Aramco Fellow at Oxford Institute for Energy Studies / Visiting Research Fellow at the Polish Institute of International Affairs (PISM)

Topic: *Hydrogen at the Gates: Towards a New Chapter in the EU-Russia Energy Relations*

Dmytro Tuzhanskyi (Ukraine), Director, Institute for Central European Strategy / Visiting Research Fellow at the Institute for Foreign Affairs and Trade (IFAT)

Topic: *Rethinking Ukraine's neighborhood policy in Central and Eastern Europe, using the experience of the V4 states*

Grégoire Roos (France), Independent Advisory Consultant at United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organisation (UNESCO) / Visiting Research Fellow at GLOBSEC Policy Institute

Topic: *The V4 and EU Strategic Autonomy – Consensual Voice, Discordant Tones*

To be completed in 2021:

Ekaterina Baramidze (Georgia), Program Director at The Levan Mikeladze Foundation / Visiting Research Fellow at the Research Center of the Slovak Foreign Policy Association (RC SFPA)

Topic: *Role of education institutions in youth employment in the V4 countries*

Vasil Navumau (Belarus), Editor of web-based portal devoted to e-Government, e-Democracy and online-services in Belarus (e-gov.by) / Visiting Research Fellow at the Centre for Eastern Studies (OSW)

Topic: *Fake news in times of pandemic: how disinformation is used by governments for reaching strategic aims during COVID-19. Cases of Ukraine and Belarus*

Nicholas Nelson (USA), Director, Strategic Development at ST Engineering North America / Visiting Research Fellow at the EUROPEUM Institute for European Policy

Topic: *Security Specialization as a Growth Engine for the Visegrad Four*

Annex 4 - Financial report (attached)

- € 103.900,25 EUR – annual budget
- € 89.420,91 EUR – total expenses

- € 14.479,34 EUR – saved resources