



“Think Visegrad” – V4 Think Tank Platform

Project Report Document

February 2021 – January 2022

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The COVID 19 pandemic can be considered the most important challenge for Think Visegrad for the whole year 2021. The spread of the pandemics in two waves influenced the issuance of assignment of both **short- and long-term analyses**, it also had negative impact on the management of the **Civil Servants Mobility Program (CSMP)**, as well as **Think Visegrad Fellowships** for non-V4 fellows. The platform successfully organized the **V4 Presidency Mid-Term Review Conference** in Cieszyn, Poland, though in a different term than originally planned. Despite all the difficulties related to the pandemic **Think Visegrad in Brussels** continued to increase the visibility of the Think Visegrad platform in Brussels.

The **core network** of think tanks has remained stable, containing eight think tanks, two per each V4 country. (For the list of the “core network” members please see Annex 1). The platform remained open to cooperation with think tanks and experts from outside the network, however, lower number of assignments reduced significantly possibilities for this type of cooperation.

According to the agreement with the V4 policy planners from 2019 the number of **short-term analyses** was reduced from 12 to 6, while the time frame for their development was extended. At the same time, assignments were expected to be formulated in a more detailed manner. As a result, a more intensive communication mechanism between the authors of each analysis on one side and the representatives of the MFAs was expected to be established in order to improve the quality of the development process. Nevertheless, in the year 2021 this opportunity was exhausted only partially. Due to the spread of the pandemic and related changes in the priorities of the MFAs only 3 assignments for short-term analyses were issued in 2021 (all three by the Hungarian V4 Presidency). To certain extent this applied to long-term analyses, as their number only reached three (out of planned four). In addition, since the assignments for two long-term analyses were issued only in the second half of the year, their submission date was postponed to the beginning of 2022. (For the list of short- and long-term analyses please see Annex 2).

Think Visegrad core network members also enabled **9 visiting fellows from non-V4 countries** to spend their fellowships in the respective think tanks. 3 out of these fellows were chosen already in 2020, but due to the restriction related to the pandemic they were not able to travel, so their postponed their fellowships to 2021. On the other hand, 3 other fellowships were postponed to 2022 (for the list of “Think Visegrad” visiting fellows from non-V4 countries please see Annex 3).

The implementation of the **Civil Servants Mobility Program** was severely affected by the COVID 19 pandemic as well. Long-term travel restrictions allowed the Think Visegrad members to proceed with the study trips for civil servants from Ukraine, Kosovo and Georgia only to a limited extent. At the end, 9 experts from Ukraine, 10 from Kosovo and 16 from Georgia were able to participate in the 2021 edition of CSMP (originally this was a postponed 2020 edition). The re-introduction of the COVID-19 restrictions resulted in the postponement of the visits of 2 Kosovo delegations to Poland and the Czech Republic and 2 Ukrainian delegations to Hungary and the Czech Republic.

Due to the COVID 19 restrictions the **V4 Presidency Mid-Term Review Conference** was moved from the first half of 2021 to 24 September. Thematically it focused on the EU's Open Strategic Autonomy, while taking into the consideration the points of view of the experts from all V4 countries. Polish and Hungarian V4 Presidency programs were also discussed, together with the socio-economic development of Central European countries. After the series of online meetings the Think Visegrad platform coordinators were finally able to meet in person and discuss the most important challenges related to the functioning of the network. One of these challenges is the future cooperation with the Think Balkans network, which was established in the six Western Balkan countries in 2019 and is modelled after the Think Visegrad platform.

The project **Think Visegrad in Brussels**, led by EUROPEUM, successfully continued to focus on the promotion of Think Visegrad and V4 as such through the organization of both online and on-site events, as well as to the implementation of the fellowships part.

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 was demonstrated by the balanced nomination of authors of both short- and long-term analyses by the core members think tanks, while the **Visegrad spirit of cooperation** was maintained through the regular engagement of the authors from all V4 countries in the development process. It is worth to underline that the Think Visegrad platform continued to implement all the activities in a very **cost efficient manner** (for the financial report please see Annex 4).

Annex 1 List of the “core network” members

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

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

Short-term analyses:

Afganistan

Evaluation of the developments. Comparison of lessons learned from the engagement in our four countries. How the end of the NATO/Western countries 20 years engagement is shaping debate about future stabilization/crisis management efforts by NATO and/or EU.)

Leading author: Roger Hilton (GLOBSEC Policy Institute), Bratislava
Co-author: Peter Wagner (IFAT), Budapest
Co-author: Matúš Halás (IIR), Prague
Co-author: Patryk Kugiel (PISM), Warsaw

Belarus

How the situation has evolved in the last months and how it effects the V4 countries

Leading author: András Rácz (CEID/independent), Budapest
Co-author: Pavel Havlíček (AMO/Europeum), Prague
Co-author: Alena Kudzko (GLOBSEC Policy Institute), Bratislava
Co-author: Wojciech Konończuk (OSW), Warsaw

Follow-up on the EU strategic discussion on Western-Balkans

EU role in the Western Balkans & the V4 potential in the region (in view of the upcoming EU-Western Balkans summit on the 6th Oct)

Leading author: Jana Juzová (EUROPEUM), Prague
Co-author: Ferenc Németh (IFAT), Budapest
Co-author: Tomáš Strážay (SFPA), Bratislava
Co-author: Tomasz Żornaczuk (PISM), Warsaw

Long-term analyses:

Reflection of the V4 cooperation and its goals for the future

Leading author: Mateusz Gniazdowski (OSW), Warsaw
Co-author: Daniel Bartha (CEID), Budapest
Co-author: Jana Juzová (EUROPEUM), Prague
Co-author: Tomáš Strážay (SFPA), Bratislava

US – China – V4 (Implications of the US – China relationship for the V4)

Leading author: Alica Kizeková (IIR), Prague
Co-author: Matej Šimalčík ((GLOBSEC Policy Institute/CEIAS), Bratislava

Co-author: *Tamás Baranyi (IFAT), Budapest*
Co-author: *Marcin Przychodniak (PISM), Warsaw*

Priorities of Visegrad in EU Climate Agenda

Leading author: *Veronika Oravcová (SFPA), Bratislava*
Co-author: *Kateřina Davidová (EUROPEUM), Prague*
Co-author: *István Bart and Dóra Csernus (Equilibrium Institute/CEID)*
Co-author: *Agata Łoskot-Strachota (OSW), Warsaw*

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

2020 Fellowships completed in 2021

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*

Giorgi Mukhigulishvili (Georgia), Lead Researcher in Energy and Sustainability Studies, World Experience for Georgia/ Visiting Research Fellow at the Research Center of the Slovak Foreign Policy Association (RC SFPA)

Topic: *Assessment of Energy Security in Georgia, Czechia, and Slovakia and their policy objectives*

2021 Fellowships

Dorina Baltag (Moldova), postdoctoral researcher at the Institute for Diplomacy and International Governance (Loughborough University in London, UK) / Visiting Research Fellow at the Institute for International Relations (IIR)

Topic: *The resilience of the Eastern Partnership - what role for the Visegrad countries*

Anatoliy Klyuchkovych (Ukraine), Associate Professor of the Department of political sciences and public administration of the Uzhhorod national university / Visiting Research Fellow at the Research Center of the Slovak Foreign Policy Association (RC SFPA)

Topic: *Sociopolitical Stability in the Conditions of the Ukrainian-EU Border - Identification of Threats and Challenges*

Alex Hardy (UK), PhD Candidate: Geopolitics & Security, Royal Holloway, University of London / Visiting Research Fellow at the GLOBSEC Policy Institute

Topic: *Artificial Intelligence in the Visegrad 4 – Emerging Strategies, Uncoordinated Approaches*

Valeriu Pasa (Moldova), Policy expert/senior analyst and project manager for the “WatchDog.MD” think-tank/civil society organization / Visiting Research Fellow at the Centre for Eastern Studies (OSW)

Topic: *Russian soft power and influence projection instruments in Moldova*

Elkhan Nuriyev (Azerbaijan), Senior Expert, Russia, Eastern Europe & Central Asia, L&M Political Risk and Strategy Advisory GmbH, Vienna / Visiting Research Fellow at the Institute for Foreign Affairs and Trade (IFAT)

Topic: *The EU-Russia-China Triangle: Post-COVID-19 Scenarios in the Eastern Partnership*

Irakli Sirbiladze (Georgia), affiliated researcher - PWC research center/ journal editor / Visiting Research Fellow at the Center for Euro-Atlantic Integration and Democracy (CEID)

Topic: *NATO’s Vision for 2030 and the Georgia and Ukraine Membership Question*

To be completed in 2022:

Mare Ushkovska (North Macedonia), Council for European Studies and World Society Foundation / Visiting Research Fellow at the EUROPEUM Institute for European Policy

Topic: *Trust in supranational governance during times of crisis: Study of public perceptions in the Czech Republic on sovereignty and European integration in the aftermath of the Covid-19 pandemic*

PISM to select 2 fellows in 2022

Annex 4 - Financial report (attached)

- € 114.479,34 EUR – annual budget
- € 90.800,96 EUR – total expenses
- € 23.678,38 EUR – saved resources