

**Conclusions
by the Heads of the Defence Committees of the Parliaments
of the Visegrad Countries**

(Budapest, 21-22 February 2018)

We, the Heads of the Defence Committees of the Visegrad Countries (Visegrad Four, V4), having met in Budapest on 21-22 February 2018 under the Hungarian V4 Presidency, in the light of the international challenges facing Europe, recognise the importance that the security and defence policy dimension is gaining more and more prominence in the cooperation between the V4. Our common objective is to preserve the security and stability of the region, one of the important pillars of this being the further enhancement of V4 defence cooperation, which we intend to support through the parliamentary dimension as well and we deem it essential that the foremost goal of our cooperation and all related measures above all should be the provision of peace and prosperity.

We reaffirm our commitment to implement the priorities of the Hungarian V4 presidency program: we will continue to harmonize our positions and to more efficiently include our individual considerations on strategic issues that are on the agenda of NATO and the European Union, such as the strengthening of the Alliance's Eastern flank, a more effective stance against challenges from the South or the enhancement of the EU's military capabilities.

We welcome the fact that it has been possible to strengthen the unity of NATO during the recent summit meetings in Warsaw and Brussels. We do not envisage strengthening the defence capabilities of the European Union against that of the Alliance. Deepening our defence cooperation has to be complementary to our transatlantic commitments, avoiding a duplication of efforts.

We welcome the review of European security and defence cooperation and look ahead with expectation to further progress made with a view to strengthening European defence. Mechanisms and institutional changes proposed for introduction have to serve the purpose of the objectives set forth in the strategic documents. We stress that the defence of Europe and its citizens continues to be the overall objective.

We maintain that in accordance with these same principles, Member State parliaments also play an important role in achieving common objectives.

In the reopened debate about an EU Battle Group (EU BG) concept we urge to maintain the V4 cooperation and to find common ground on open issues. Special emphasis has to be given to coordinated defence procurement as well as the strengthening of defence industry cooperation in the process of enhancing defence planning and capability development cooperation.

We support that the V4 EU Battle Group, first created in 2016, which can be truly considered to be the flagship of V4 security and defence policy cooperation, be also available in 2019 and later on as an EU rapid reaction capability, with a view to strengthening the V4 brand.

We welcome the agreement by the Visegrad Ministers of Interior about joint assistance in the protection of EU external borders when the need arises. In the field of defence, we support the objective of the Hungarian V4 presidency, according to which the Hungarian CEDC (Central European Defence Cooperation) presidency from 1st January 2018 aims to strengthen the cooperation further in the format of CEDC, building on the crisis management efforts of the previous Austrian and Czech CEDC presidencies as well as the efforts made with respect to the role of the defence forces, including the organization of joint exercises.

We underline that it is possible to achieve results by focusing on the external dimensions of migration, which is well demonstrated by the decreasing migration trends on the Central Mediterranean route. It is recalled that the Visegrad Countries also have an important interest in stabilizing the Mediterranean region, and Libya, in particular. The continuously deteriorating security situation of the G5 Sahel-countries (Burkina Faso, Chad, Mali, Mauritania and Niger) has a significant spill-over effect on countries of the region and Europe as well. We support the strengthening of the EU's regional role with a view to overcoming crises surfacing in the Sahel-region, the terrorism, the increasing number of migrants, the organized crime and the illegal trade.

We welcome the Permanent Structured Cooperation (PESCO) stipulated by the Lisbon Treaty. We welcome the launch of PESCO in December 2017, our common objective is to create an inclusive and flexible framework. We welcome and look forward to the opportunities offered by such new EU initiatives like the European Defence Fund (EDF).

*Signed in Budapest, on 22 February 2018**

On behalf of:

Defence Committee of the Chamber of Deputies of the Parliament of the Czech Republic

Committee on Defence and Law Enforcement of the Hungarian National Assembly

National Defence Committee of the Sejm of the Republic of Poland

National Defence Committee of the Senate of the Republic of Poland

Committee for Defence and Security Affairs of the National Council of the Slovak Republic

* The Senate of the Parliament of the Czech Republic was not represented by Members of the Parliament at the meeting of the Defence Committees of the Parliaments of the V4 Countries.