



FINAL DECLARATION

Meeting of the Speakers of Parliaments of the V4 Countries

Bratislava, 19 - 20 March 2015

The Speakers of Parliaments of the Czech Republic, Hungary, Republic of Poland and the Slovak Republic, present in Bratislava upon the invitation of Peter Pellegrini, the Speaker of the National Council of the Slovak Republic on the occasion of the Slovak presidency of the Visegrad Group,

- aware of their status as elected representatives of their countries;
- conscious of the challenges the national parliaments currently face in internal, social, European and global affairs,

in closing their joint meeting on 20 March 2015 agreed on the following conclusions:

- We appreciate the importance and the hitherto progress of the Visegrad cooperation, which is entering its 25th year of existence and which has become an established trademark and an expression of the historic need for regional cooperation in the Central European region.
- We recognise the particular importance of a parliamentary dimension in the Visegrad cooperation that is based on the legitimacy of national legislative assemblies representing the electorate. We should reflect this importance in the regional dialogue as well as in discussions at other levels of society.
- We perceive the potential of inter-parliamentary cooperation and parliamentary diplomacy, not only within the Visegrad region but also at multilateral level, mainly in the EU. In this regard, and also in the spirit of the current Slovak presidency of the V4 we express our determination and commitment to promote active participation of national parliaments in EU policy making, as well as inter-parliamentary dialogue on European issues.
- We recall the importance of national parliaments not only for the shaping of the internal political and social discourse but also for formulating positions on foreign policy issues. Geopolitical development in the close and the more distant neighbourhood and new international and global challenges inspire considerations about enhancing the V4+ cooperation platform to include a parliamentary dimension. Sharing and exchanging know-how and practical experience in identified areas seem promising in this regard.
- In relation to the above and in the effort to contribute to the external relations of the EU we express our readiness to intensify interaction with parliaments in the countries of the Western Balkans and of the Eastern Partnership, as regards joint projects focused on improving the efficiency of legislative assemblies as well as assistance in the process of reforms or stabilisation and association.
- We are convinced that representative democracy, mainly in the form of parliamentary assemblies, should remain a priority setting for the governance of public affairs. However, we welcome constructive considerations on new forms and means of interaction between voters and their elected representatives, which should be based mainly on participation, communication, responsibility and transparency on either side of the dialogue.
- We focus our attention on opportunities offered to our national economies in the digital age that place higher demands on the production, readiness and qualifications of the workforce, transparency

and effective control mechanisms of economic governance based on modern technologies (mainly information and communication technologies), stable and dynamic infrastructure as well as diversification of input resources.

- We take note of the contents and outcomes of the meetings of foreign affairs committees and economic affairs committees of the V4 parliaments, attached to this declaration, which took place in Bratislava on 25 February 2015.
- We express our determination to be inspired in future cooperation by the ideas of this declaration, trusting that it will serve as a foundation for the next meeting of the presidents of national parliaments of the V4 countries to be held under the presidency of the Czech Republic in the Visegrad Group between 1 July 2015 and 31 June 2016.
- We agree to inform of this declaration our respective parliaments along with the respective parliamentary committees, dealing with matters corresponding in content and policy with the above stipulations. The respective governments will also be informed in order to maintain consistency of actions.
- We express our support to the incoming Slovak Presidency of the Council of the EU in the second half of the 2016 and we strongly believe that it will bring the central European views, perspectives and issues dear to our citizens into the European attention. In this respect we will be open to the exchange of best practices in view of the preparations of the parliamentary dimension of the Slovak Presidency of the Council of the EU.

This document has been drafted in the English language in six original copies.

Done in Bratislava on 20 March 2015



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Speaker
Chamber of the Deputies
of the Parliament of the Czech Republic



Přemysl Sobotka
Deputy Speaker
Senate
of the Parliament of the Czech Republic



István Jakab
Deputy Speaker
National Assembly of Hungary



Marek Kuchciński
Vice-Marshal
Sejm of the Republic of Poland



Jan Wyrowiński
Vice-Marshal
Senate of the Republic of Poland



Peter Pellegrini
Speaker
National Council of the Slovak Republic

CONCLUSIONS

of the

Meeting of the Foreign Affairs Committees
of the Chamber of Deputies and Senate of the Czech Republic,
the Hungarian National Assembly,
the Sejm and the Senate of the Republic of Poland and
the National Council of the Slovak Republic

Bratislava, 25 February 2015

The Representatives of the Foreign Affairs Committees of the V4 countries reaffirm their commitment to continue and strengthen their cooperation. The Foreign Affairs Committees of the National Parliaments of the Visegrad Group countries agree that the most pressing challenges to current geopolitical situation are now external. The annexation of Crimea by Russia and the subsequent intervention in Ukraine represent the most blatant breach of the OSCE principles since the signing of the 1975 Helsinki Final Act. The V4 Foreign Affairs Committees therefore call on Russia to respect its obligations under international law, refrain from the threat or use of force and respect the inviolability of frontiers and territorial integrity of Ukraine.

The V4 countries and Russia have a long record of cooperation on issues of bilateral and international concern. Although the vision of the V4 countries for the relations with Russia was a partnership for prosperity and security, Russian intervention in Ukraine has affected mutual relations. In this respect, the Foreign Affairs Committees of the V4 countries reaffirm their support for the EU approach towards the military conflict in Ukraine, including the introduction of EU restrictive measures, and underline the need for maintaining a strong EU position based on unity. The V4 Parliamentarians stress that sanctions are used as an instrument; not a goal in itself.

The Foreign Affairs Committees of the V4 countries welcome that the OSCE-led Trilateral Contact Group, supported by Chancellor Angela Merkel and Presidents François Hollande, Petro Poroshenko, and Vladimir Putin, signed an agreement on a ceasefire and heavy weapons withdrawal in Eastern Ukraine based on the implementation of the September 2014 Minsk agreements. The Parliamentarians express hope that all parties to the signed Minsk II agreement on 12 February 2015 would respect the commitments and implement them as agreed.

The V4 Parliamentarians reaffirm their strong support for the full and unconditional implementation of the Minsk Protocol and its Memorandum as a basis for a sustainable political solution to the crisis, based on the respect for Ukraine's independence, sovereignty and territorial integrity within its internationally recognized borders. The Foreign Affairs Committees of the V4 countries once again reconfirm their commitment to the policy of non-recognition of the illegal annexation of the Crimean peninsula by the Russia.

The Foreign Affairs Committees of the V4 countries express their support for the European perspective of the Eastern Partnership countries.

The Middle East

The Foreign Affairs Committees of the V4 countries call attention to the fact that Europe's security is further threatened by a turmoil spreading in Libya, Syria and Iraq. They stress that the fight against ISIL represents a common struggle to protect our roots, heritage, way of life and our civilization achievements and values. Therefore, it is our common duty as well as our shared responsibility. For this fight to be effective and successful it must be consequent and multidimensional - military measures must be complemented by a whole range of other steps targeting the supply and logistics area.

The Foreign Affairs Committees of the V4 countries further emphasized that the politically fragile situation in Iraq, the war in Syria, later exacerbated by military activities of ISIL in both Syria and Iraq, have contributed to the largest wave of refugees since World War II. The efforts to deal with this humanitarian crisis have so far proven insufficient and inadequate. Therefore, the V4 Parliamentarians call on their governments to increase the support to sustain the needs of the refugees, internally displaced persons, as well as protect religious minorities, including Christians.

Expressing the interest in a peaceful co-existence of civilizations and readiness to be actively involved in solving existing problems by dialogue, the Foreign Affairs Committees of the V4 countries also pay attention to the Middle East Peace Process and expressed support for all the efforts aimed at creating the conditions for tangible progress in the peace process as well as improving the overall state of Israeli-Arab relations.

[Conclusions were adopted by acclamation]

CONCLUSIONS

of the

Meeting of the Foreign Affairs Committees and Committees on Economic Affairs
of the Chamber of Deputies and Senate of the Czech Republic,
the Hungarian National Assembly,
the Sejm and the Senate of the Republic of Poland and
the National Council of the Slovak Republic

Bratislava, 25 February 2015

Concerning the energy security in the EU and the V4 countries and completion of the interconnections in the sector of gas, oil and electricity the Representatives of the Foreign Affairs Committees and Committees on Economic Affairs of the National Parliaments of the Visegrad Group countries:

- stress that energy security can be reached effectively only through a well-balanced and diversified energy mix built upon an effective use of all indigenous energy sources and adequate gas, oil and electricity infrastructure;
- underline that the V4 energy policy should be based on liberalisation, energy efficiency, mutual solidarity and cooperation in order to increase energy security and competitiveness on energy market within the EU;
- diversification of sources and transport routes of gas, oil and electricity remains a priority for the V4 countries, especially because of fact that the energy prices in the V4 countries are among the highest within the European Union;
- welcome the intention of the V4 countries to jointly undertake efforts to elaborate regional preventive and emergency plans based on common risk assessment, in order to further enhance the cooperative approach towards the increased regional security of supply;
- ask the institutions of the European Union to pay increased attention to security of energy networks against external attacks from the digital environment and through this to support the increase of energy security in the European Union;
- **concerning the sector of gas**
 - highlight that the level of security of supply in the V4 countries is higher compared to 2009 gas crisis, also due to the commonly realised measures including the reverse gas flows and new gas interconnections. However, additional measures, especially regarding timely implementation of the gas projects of common interest within the North-South Gas Corridor is needed to further increase energy security in the region;
 - welcome that the realisation of the project of interconnection between the Slovak Republic and Hungary, which represents a significant part of the North-South Gas Corridor, is in the final stage;

- strongly support inclusion of the project of interconnection between the Slovak Republic and Poland, which is still in initial phase, in the second list of projects of common interest;
- **concerning the sector of oil**
- note that the project of reconstruction and reinforcement of capacity of the Adria pipeline is important project from the point of view of diversification of oil sector; it has been included among the projects of strategic importance on the European level;
 - welcome that the Prime Ministers of the Slovak Republic and Hungary officially opened the faucet of reconstructed part of the Adria -Friendship 1 pipeline between Sahy and Szazhalombatta on 9 February 2015;
 - note that the project of oil transport connection between Bratislava -Schwechat is a perspective project of diversification, which will allow transport of oil in the direction east-west/west-east; the project will increase energy security and is internationally recognised as a strategic corridor;
- **concerning the sector of electricity**
- the key cross-border projects are Slovak-Hungarian interconnections between Gabčíkovo - Gonyu and Rimavska Sobota - Sajóivánka, which were included among the projects of common interest; they will contribute to the increased security of electricity supplies as well as increase of net transmission capacity of the north-south energy flows.

[Conclusions were adopted by acclamation]