

CONCLUSIONS

of the

Meeting of the European 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

The Representatives of the European Affairs Committees of the Visegrad Group countries:

Regarding the 20th anniversary of the Visegrad Group:

- underline that the establishment of the Visegrad Group constitutes an important event in the history of the region and of the whole European Union;
- acknowledge that the V4 contributed to building a new order in Europe, facilitated integration of our countries into the European Union and NATO structures;
- stress that the V4 may serve as a model of regional cooperation for other countries and point out that the Group should continue to strengthen democracy and civil society in Central Europe;
- recognise that the parallel cooperation between the EU affairs committees, which was established six years ago, is a good framework for exchange of views, coordination of policies and promotion of common values.

Regarding the Eastern Partnership:

- stress that a closer integration of the Eastern Partnership countries, as well as further involvement of the European Union in the Eastern dimension is required;
- support the establishment and deepening of sectoral cooperation and extending EU programmes to the Eastern Partnership countries;
- look forward to further active implementation of the Eastern Partnership programme by the countries holding the Presidency in the Council of the European Union, by the European Commission and other member states;
- underline the need for a balanced relationship between Eastern and Southern dimensions of the European Neighbourhood Policy (ENP);
- encourage all the countries of the Eastern Partnership to continue the process of democratisation, and to enhance the participation of their representatives and the civil society in all initiatives established under the Eastern Partnership, including the parliamentary level (EURONEST).

Regarding the Western Balkans:

- stress their support to the European perspective for the Western Balkan countries. EU enlargement should be based on cohesion, conditionality and social communication, together with the EU capacity to accommodate new member countries;
- underline that accession of the Western Balkan countries will strengthen the stability of the whole region;
- encourage providing information to the civil society to make it aware of the benefits of enlargement;
- hope that the accession negotiations with Croatia will be completed soon to make it possible for the Accession Treaty to be signed during the Polish Presidency;
- congratulate Montenegro for securing the candidate status during the European Council meeting of December 17, 2010, and hope that Montenegro will fulfill European Commission's criteria soon, which will allow to open the accession negotiations during the Polish Presidency.

Regarding the energy policy and state of play in the energy sector:

- underline the need for completion of the common energy market construction in the field of electricity and natural gas and thus call for the implementation of the Third Energy Package;
- believe that the Agency for Cooperation of Energy Regulators (EREG) will contribute to the elimination of obstacles to cross-border exchange of electricity and thus will lead to an efficient and transparent internal market in electricity and natural gas;
- recognise the importance of developing trans-European energy networks, in this respect prompt their governments to continue the Visegrad Group countries' enhanced cooperation on diversification of routes, sources and suppliers of energy carriers, as well as on development of energy infrastructure by implementing gas interconnections and modernisation of existing electricity and natural gas networks.

Regarding the development of the transport infrastructure:

- consider that cooperation within the Visegrad Group is a good occasion to exchange views and prepare common positions regarding the transport policy at the EU level;
- believe that EU should have a cohesive transport system ensuring that disparities in infrastructure between EU regions will be overcome by further development of the basic transport infrastructure, especially by the Trans European Networks;
- underline the importance of the EU funds in the transport sector, enabling the realisation of key investments in this field.

Regarding the current EU issues:

- declare its concerns that the Proposal for a Council Directive on a Common Consolidated Corporate Tax Base (CCTB) might be in breach with the principle of subsidiarity. V4 suggests to scrutinise this draft in a 8-week period which expires on 18 May 2011;
- welcome the opening of labour markets in Germany and Austria for member states that joined EU in 2004. In this respect, express its concerns regarding the new law on social wage dumping adopted by the Austrian Parliament and highlight the importance of keeping the same conditions for every agent present on the single market.

Regarding the exchange of experiences between the Presidencies:

- underline the importance of good preparation of the Visegrad Group countries for the EU Presidency both at the governmental and the parliamentary level. In this respect, consider it essential and in line with the spirit of the Visegrad Group to sustain the mutual support between the chambers which have already held the Presidency and those who will do so in a close future.

Opole, May 5, 2011

/--/ Edmund Wittbrodt

/--/ Stanisław Rakoczy

Chairman of the EU Affairs Committee
of the Senate

Chairman of the EU Affairs Committee
of the Sejm