

RESOLUTION
of the Senate of the Republic of Poland
dated 17 March 2011
commemorating the 20th anniversary of the founding of the Visegrad Group

On 15 February 1991, at Visegrad Castle in Hungary, President Václav Havel, President Lech Wałęsa and Prime Minister József Antall signed the "Declaration on cooperation between the Czech and Slovak Federal Republic, the Republic of Poland and the Republic of Hungary in striving for European integration".

This was how the Visegrad Group came into being, a child of the 1989 Central European Autumn of Nations, an initiative put forward by the President Václav Havel in his speech to the Sejm of the Republic of Poland in January 1990. A group of states exiting from the Communist social and economic system and breaking free from the political domination of the USSR, at a time when the Warsaw Pact and the Council for Mutual Economic Assistance were still in existence, declared new joint objectives and the ways to achieve them.

It was then recognised that it was necessary not only to eliminate the social, economic and moral aspects of the totalitarian system, build a state of law and a modern market economy, but also to achieve - as the Declaration reads - the full involvement of the Group's states "in the European political and economic system, as well as the system of security and legislation".

Today, 20 years after the Declaration was signed, we can conclude with satisfaction that the Group's states, which were then regaining their sovereignty, have managed to achieve in large measure their essential, agreed objectives, and in many cases to accomplish more than what was envisaged by its "Founding Fathers".

The Visegrad Group states:

- all joined the Euro-Atlantic structures by 2004, hence regaining their European citizenship, of which they were deprived after World War II,
- entering into the Central European Free Trade Agreement in 1992, created an instrument which continues to serve the further reintegration of the Old Continent, currently also including the Western Balkans and the Republic of Moldova,
- established, in 2000, the sole institution - the International Visegrad Fund, which supports the Group's internal integration in the areas of culture, science and education, as well as cooperation with the peoples of the Ukraine, Belarus, the Southern Caucasus and the Western Balkans (the "Visegrad+" programme),
- less than two weeks after joining the European Union, agreed in May 2004, new objectives, areas and mechanisms of enhanced cooperation.

The year 2011, the year in which the EU Council Presidency is held successively by Hungary and then by Poland, symbolically crowns the 20 years of the Group's history.

The Visegrad Group states have also developed cooperation in the parliamentary dimension: in June 1991, in Cracow, the first Visegrad meeting was held, attended by the most senior representatives of the Polish Senate and parliamentarians from Czechoslovakia and Hungary; since 1998, cooperation has been maintained at the parliamentary committee level, and from 2006, regular meetings have been held between the Group's Speakers of Parliament, who in April 2007 agreed the rules for the institutionalisation of cooperation at parliamentary level.

The Senate of the Republic of Poland, being highly appreciative of the boldness and far-sightedness of the Visegrad initiative, and of the Group's achievements, wishes to express gratitude both to its initiators and to all those who have been implementing the ideas enshrined in the Declaration of 15 February 1991 through their social and political activities over the past 20 years.

At the same time, the Senate of the Republic of Poland notes new perspectives for tackling the challenges facing Central Europe, such as energy security or military cooperation, which will require from the Visegrad Group's partners both joint strategic thinking about the future as well as systematic consultations over their current policies.

The Senate of the Republic of Poland, being aware of the political potential inherent in the concerted activities of our countries, and appreciating the value of good neighbourliness, as well as the community based on the historical and spiritual heritage of this part of Europe, encourages the parliaments, governments, local governments and non-governmental organisations of our states to continue in their endeavours to maintain the best possible relations within the Group, ensure broader financing, develop forms and scales of cooperation, promote creative collaboration within the Group's surrounding international environment, and to open up their activity to the needs of neighbours striving towards the same objectives that had earlier bonded our nations.

The Resolution is subject to promulgation in the Official Journal of the Republic of Poland "Monitor Polski".