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# **Regional Organization Study: Visegrad Group**

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## Executive Summary<sup>1</sup>

The Visegrad Group was established in February 1991 by the Czech and Slovak Federal Republic, Poland and Hungary with the aim to “harmonize [the countries’] activities to shape cooperation and close contacts with the European institutions and (...) hold regular consultations on the matters of their security”. It is mainly a consultative framework, designated for high level officials’ meetings. It was established as a platform for countries of similar situation and similar economic, social and security problems. Security (rather in the defence sense) was an important part of the group since the very beginning, but as the member countries accessed NATO (1999) and the EU (2004), the role of the group in this respect has weakened. Civil security became of interest to the group in 2001. There are regular meetings of the heads of the civil security bodies and documents on common viewpoints have been signed. They have little significance, however, since a real, practical cooperation is missing. The future development of the civil security area within V4 activities is uncertain.

The financial tool of Visegrad group (The International Visegrad Fund) is useful, as many security related projects have obtained support; however, these projects are small, and of marginal importance in a truly international sense. Compared with activities of the Council of the Baltic Sea States or the Salzburg Forum, the Visegrad group has smaller importance in the field of civil security. This is partially due to the fact that after the EU accession of the V4 countries, EU structures have provided coordination in case of a regional emergency. At the same time, bilateral coordination is well tested and is sufficient in most cases. This leaves a marginal space for the group to operate. As there is little chance for securing more resources for the V4, the practical significance of the Visegrad Group in the area of civil security will likely remain small.

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<sup>1</sup> This case study represents one of Regional Organizations (RO) compiled in the context of the Analysis of Civil Security Systems in Europe (ANVIL) Project. The ANVIL Project aims to map the variety and similarities in Europe's regional civil security structures, practices and cultures and investigate how variety affects the safety of Europe's citizens. The results give policy stakeholders a clear overview over civil security architectures and EU-added value to the debate concerning “not one security fits all”. The ANVIL project is funded by the European Commission within the Seventh Framework Programme. Read more at [www.anvil-project.net](http://www.anvil-project.net)

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## List of Abbreviations

CBRN	Chemical, Biological, Radiological, and Nuclear (Defense)
IVF	International Visegrad Fund
NDGDM	National Directorate General for Disaster Management
OSCE	Organization for Security and Co-operation in Europe
V4	Visegrad Group

## 1. Introduction

After the collapse of Communism in 1989, there was a demand to create a platform for the countries of Central and Eastern Europe to help each other during the transition and in the process of integration with the EU. The Visegrad Agreement was signed in 1991, by Hungary, Poland and Czechoslovakia (from 1993, after the split of Czechoslovakia the Slovak Republic was taken as a new member). The general aim fostering the collaboration was the need to get rid of the remnants of the Communist Bloc, and to overcome historical animosities to follow common goals, including societal transformation and integration into Europe. Among the fundamental issues consultations on security issues were discussed (mainly defense policy and internal security).

During the first years, the Visegrad Group played an important role in negotiations for joining NATO and the EU (EC at that time). Later the role of the organization shifted towards common lobbying and promoting the region's integrity.

The following sections give a description of the Visegrad Agreement, with special attention towards the activities in the field of civil security.

## 2. Analytical Dimensions

### 2.1 Cultural and historical aspects of the Visegrad Group

#### 2.1.1 The establishment of the Visegrad Group

On 15<sup>th</sup> February 1991 a document was signed called 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*. The signing parties were the Czech and Slovak Federal Republic, Poland and Hungary, represented by the Czech and Polish presidents (Václav Havel and Lech Walesa) and Hungarian prime minister (József Antal). This document became the basis for cooperation between the three (after the split of Czechoslovakia - four) Central European countries known as the Visegrad Group (V4).<sup>2</sup>

Common challenges the countries were facing after the collapse of Communism gave rise to the idea to tackle these in mutual cooperation. The most important factors fostering the collaboration were the need to get rid of the remnants of the Communist Bloc in the middle of Europe, and to overcome historical animosities to follow common goals, including societal transformation and integration into

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<sup>2</sup> Czech Ministry of Foreign Affairs (2006): Informace o Visegrádské skupině.

Europe. Indeed, the “back to Europe” slogan was a driving force at the time when the Visegrad group was to be established.

The founding declaration obliged the states to “harmonize their activities to shape cooperation and close contacts with the European institutions and (...) hold regular consultations on the matters of their security”.<sup>3</sup> Hence, matters of security, mainly external, were crucial to the group from the very beginning. No particular attention was paid to the sub-field of civil security as the notion was not yet embraced by the signing countries. At the same time, within the frame of V4 cooperation there is an annual meeting of the disaster management directors, which emerged after the joint declaration signed by all the participants. These declarations highlight the necessity of cooperation, acting towards other regional associations and EU civil protection, and holding annual meetings in the future.<sup>4</sup>

Especially in the first years of its existence, V4 played an important role in talks with NATO and the EU. After that, the intensity of the cooperation has somewhat weakened only to be re-established again in 1998 after the parliamentary elections in the Czech Republic and Slovakia.<sup>5</sup> By the Contents of Visegrad Cooperation which was approved at the Prime Ministers' Summit in Bratislava on 14th May 1999, the areas of further cooperation were closer specified.

The issues of security (in general) were at the core of attention at that time. In this respect, it was stated that regular meetings should take place with the aim of “exchange of information on long-term strategies and concepts of foreign, security and defence policy, exchange of views on the stability and security of the Central and Eastern European region”.<sup>6</sup> In the field of so-called internal security, the issues of illegal migration, illicit drugs, organized crime and terrorism were stressed. Although civil security was not specifically mentioned, large parts of it were in fact covered within the cooperation on environmental issues, namely as “opportunities for co-operation in the field of environmental protection and risks”. Under this heading came both safety issues concerning nuclear energy and flood prevention.<sup>7</sup>

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<sup>3</sup> Visegrad Declaration of 1991. Available at: <http://www.visegradgroup.eu/documents/visegrad-declarations/visegrad-declaration-110412>

<sup>4</sup> Declarations of directors of disaster management authorities following the annual meetings in 2011 and 2012.

<sup>5</sup> Czech Ministry of Foreign Affairs (2006): Informace o Visegrádské skupině.

<sup>6</sup> Contents of Visegrad Cooperation approved by the Prime Ministers' Summit Bratislava on 14th May 1999. Available at: <http://www.visegradgroup.eu/cooperation/contents-of-visegrad-110412>

<sup>7</sup> Ibid.

During the Hungarian presidency in 2001/2, the extension of cooperation to new areas was declared to: management and prevention of disasters, training of police personnel and enhanced cooperation in fighting against international terrorism. Since then, meetings of the heads of civil protection bodies from the four countries have been organized yearly. The extension of cooperation in the civil security sector was apparently connected to the Hungarian attempt to add a new element to the stabilization of the Central Europe region - with Hungarian leadership of the process.<sup>8</sup>

After accession to the EU, the prime ministers of the V4 countries assembled on 12 May 2004 in Kroměříž (Czech Rep.) and signed the so-called Kroměříž Declaration on the state and future of the cooperation. It was stated that „the key objectives set in the 1991 Visegrad Declaration have been achieved“ and the determination to „continue developing the cooperation of the Visegrad Group countries“ within the EU and NATO was stressed. While maintaining and developing the V4 cooperation, the commitment to cooperate with the nearest partners in the region of Central Europe was noted, as well as with other regional groupings in Europe.<sup>9</sup>

On 15th February 2011, the prime ministers of the four countries signed the so-called Bratislava Declaration (marking the 20-year anniversary of the cooperation). The importance of the V4 cooperation was recognized to be especially in “implementing EU key priorities and programs“ and in the contribution to the „political and economic integration in Europe, including EU and NATO enlargement, (and thus to the) prosperity, security and stability of the continent“.<sup>10</sup>

Regarding the aims of further cooperation, the impact of the 2009 global financial and the regional gas energy crises was apparent. The primary aim was, hence, set to be to foster cohesion and enhance competitiveness of the V4 and EU in the global context. In the second place, then, came the issue of energy security. A strong need was stressed to “foster European energy security by extending and deepening the internal energy market and by enhanced V4 regional cooperation within the EU framework”.<sup>11</sup> As a concrete means, the diversification of routes, sources and suppliers were mentioned, as well as the development of the energy infrastructure, with particular attention to the North-South gas interconnections.<sup>12</sup>

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<sup>8</sup> Interview with senior Polish official (1), March 2013.

<sup>9</sup> Visegrad Declaration 2004 (or Kroměříž Declaration). Available at:

<http://www.visegradgroup.eu/documents/visegrad-declarations/visegrad-declaration-110412-1>

<sup>10</sup> Visegrad Declaration 2011 (or Bratislava Declaration). Available at: <http://www.visegradgroup.eu/2011/the-bratislava>

<sup>11</sup> Ibid.

<sup>12</sup> Ibid.

Concerning identification of risks and threats, the 2011 declaration partially sticks with the original 1991 version – in terms of the need to combat terrorism, trafficking of drugs and human beings, illegal migration and extremism. In part, new challenges were added (namely cyber security), reflecting the broadening of the spectrum of threats which found its echo also in the documents of the organizations that the declaration refers to, i.e. the EU and NATO.<sup>13</sup> Although civil security as such remains in the document untouched, the need to protect the “values and the freedoms of our citizens” is explicitly stated. Unlike in the first declaration, the field of environmental risks was not included. One possible explanation for this omission is that the countries have already in the 1990s signed bilateral agreements on mutual help in such cases<sup>14</sup>, and established cooperation on the operational level and thus the inclusion of these issues into the new declaration was not necessary.

### **2.1.2 The evolution of the Visegrad group membership**

The Visegrad group consists of four member states (originally three before the split of Czechoslovakia in 1993). The original intention of the organization was to promote and to deepen cooperation among the (narrowly defined) Central European countries who shared not only the same geographic location but also – more importantly – a common history. The only “enlargement”, that took place, happened after the split of Czechoslovakia which was an original signing party. In this sense, the Czech Republic continued as a successor state and the Slovak Republic was newly included into the cooperation, resulting in what is commonly called the Visegrad Four.<sup>15</sup>

Although there has never been a discussion about a direct enlargement of the group, cooperation with other Central European countries takes place in the so-called V4+ format. By this a broader regional cooperation is understood over concrete projects between the V4 and other countries. The principles of cooperation within the V4+ framework are provided in the Annex to the Contents of Visegrad Cooperation from 2002. Before initiating any such cooperation, it is firstly discussed and coordinated within the V4 group. Among the countries engaged in the V4+ cooperation, Ukraine holds one of the top positions. Recently, this cooperation has been developed especially in the issues of security and energy security.<sup>16</sup> The V4 orients its interest for cooperation mostly towards its

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<sup>13</sup> NATO (2010): Strategic Concept for the Defence and Security of the Members of the North Atlantic Treaty Organization. Available at: [http://www.nato.int/strategic-concept/pdf/Strat\\_Concept\\_web\\_en.pdf](http://www.nato.int/strategic-concept/pdf/Strat_Concept_web_en.pdf)

<sup>14</sup> See country reports.

<sup>15</sup> Visegrad Group website at <http://old.visegradgroup.eu/main.php?folderID=1015>

<sup>16</sup> Pulišová, V., Strážay, T. (2010): Towards Strengthened Cooperation: Assessing Partnership Models Between Ukraine and the Visegrad Group. In: Pulišová, V., Strážay, T. (Eds.): Ukraine and the Visegrad Four: Towards a mutually beneficial relationship. Bratislava: Research Center of the Slovak Foreign Policy Association. ISBN: 978 – 80 – 89356 – 13 – 3. Pp.: 13-36.



eastern neighbours – apart from Ukraine, this means Belarus and also the Western Balkans countries.<sup>17</sup> According to the Czech Ministry of Foreign Affairs, the main partners in the V4+ format nowadays (the state of affairs in 2011) are Ukraine, Bulgaria, Rumania and also non-European countries like Japan, Korea, Israel and Egypt.<sup>18</sup> However, it has to be noted that – especially with respect to the latter group of countries – the cooperation does not necessarily cover the aspects of (civil) security. E.g. with Japan, the gravity point of cooperation lies in the areas of tourism and development aid.<sup>19</sup>

Especially after joining the EU (all V4 countries - in 2004), foreign policy activities grew significantly. Since 2001, the Visegrad Group has begun to develop a relationship with the Benelux countries.<sup>20</sup> In general, the aim here was to exchange information and best practices. In 2003, the fields of cooperation between the V4 and Benelux were determined. These were mostly of a political nature and involved Schengen issues, lessons learned from the organizational functioning of Benelux for the V4 countries or environmental and nature protection issues (such as the implementation of the Natura 2000 biodiversity protection network<sup>21</sup> and the related declaration of support by the Benelux on the Carpathian Convention).<sup>22</sup> The added value of the cooperation so far was seen in sharing experience with defending common interests in the EU in general and in organizing seminars to share knowledge between the Benelux and the V4 in particular.<sup>23</sup>

In 2003, during the Czech presidency, contacts were established with the Nordic Council of Ministers. Rather than a cooperation in a particular field, the purpose was here to get “information about the Council’s experience with regional cooperation (...) and to seek inspiration for the development of the Visegrad Group”.<sup>24</sup>

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<sup>17</sup> Visegrad group website at <http://old.visegradgroup.eu/main.php?folderID=1015>

<sup>18</sup> Czech Ministry of Foreign Affairs (15.2.2011): 20. výročí vzniku Visegrádské skupiny. Online article available at: [http://www.mzv.cz/budapest/cz/aktuality/archiv\\_2011/x20\\_vyroci\\_vzniku\\_visegradske\\_skupiny.html](http://www.mzv.cz/budapest/cz/aktuality/archiv_2011/x20_vyroci_vzniku_visegradske_skupiny.html)

<sup>19</sup> Jagodzinski, A. (2010): A Central European Constellation. Publication on the Occasion of the 15th Anniversary of the Visegrad Group. Bratislava: International Visegrad Fund. ISBN: 80-969464-7-1.

<sup>20</sup> Jagodzinski, A. (2010): A Central European Constellation. Publication on the Occasion of the 15th Anniversary of the Visegrad Group. Bratislava: International Visegrad Fund. ISBN: 80-969464-7-1.

<sup>21</sup> The network of areas under the concern of Nature conservation in the EU, based on the Habitat- and Bird Directives (92/43/EEC, 2009/147/EC, 79/409/EEC).

<sup>22</sup> Visegrad group website [Fields of Cooperation between the Visegrad Group Countries and the Benelux](#).

Available at: <http://www.visegradgroup.eu/2005/fields-of-cooperation>.

<sup>23</sup> Benelux Newsletter (October 2008). Available at: [http://www.benelux.int/pdf/pdf\\_nl/pub/200810\\_Newsletter\\_nl.pdf](http://www.benelux.int/pdf/pdf_nl/pub/200810_Newsletter_nl.pdf)

<sup>24</sup> Publication on the Occasion of the 15th Anniversary of the Visegrad Group. Bratislava: International Visegrad Fund. ISBN: 80-969464-7-1.

The recent speech of the Norwegian minister of foreign affairs, Espen Barth Eide, to the Norwegian Parliament in January 2013 can be seen as an indicator of the further development in this direction. Eide called the cooperation in the field of security and defence policy a successful priority area, also in terms of a closer dialogue which is now emerging between the Nordic-Baltic initiative and the V4 group. The lessons from the Nordic experience should then be the topic of a joint meeting of Nordic-Baltic-Visegrad foreign ministers.<sup>25</sup> In the field of energy security, the Scandinavian energy market served as an inspiration when the North-South energy corridor (an initiative promoted by the Visegrad Group + Romania and Bulgaria) was discussed.<sup>26</sup>

Generally, cooperation within the Baltic States is seen as a reference point for the V4 – in terms of the security area and other issues.<sup>27</sup>

Besides the V4+ concept – which is an open one – also a model of narrow cooperation exists in the form of the so-called Regional Partnership. The Regional Partnership includes cooperation with Austria and Slovenia, exclusively. This cooperation (sometimes also referred to as V4+2) emerged from an Austrian initiative in 2001. The areas of common interest include especially internal security issues, including border-related matters, questions of asylum and consular matters. Other areas of common interest are cultural cooperation and the creation of common infrastructure projects.<sup>28</sup>

### **2.1.3 The member characteristics of the Visegrad Group**

All the V4 countries entered the EU in 2004. Prior to that, in 1999 three out of four countries (with the exception of Slovakia) joined NATO. It was one of the aims of the V4, then, to help Slovakia access NATO in the near future, which the country did in 2004.

In fact, the V4 countries share many similarities, some of which were already noted above. These similarities (given by the geographical location as well as by a common historical experience) were present at the birth of the Visegrad cooperation. The unifying factors are not only the mentioned geopolitical situation, but also the joint history, traditions, culture and values.<sup>29</sup>

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<sup>25</sup> Johannessen, F. (2013): A new spring for Nordic co-operation. Online article available at: <http://www.norden.org/en/news-and-events/news/a-new-spring-for-nordic-co-operation/>

<sup>26</sup> Funch, M. (2011): EU looking north do diversity its energy sources. Online article at: <http://www.norden.org/en/analys-norden/tema/nordic-energy-co-operation-2013-need-or-want/eu-looking-north-to-diversify-its-energy-sources/>

<sup>27</sup> Interview with senior Polish official (1), March 2013.

<sup>28</sup> Jagodzinski, A. (2010): A Central European Constellation. Publication on the Occasion of the 15th Anniversary of the Visegrad Group. Bratislava: International Visegrad Fund. ISBN: 80-969464-7-1.

<sup>29</sup> Polish Ministry of Foreign Affairs. Available at: [http://www.msz.gov.pl/en/foreign\\_policy/europe/visegrad\\_group](http://www.msz.gov.pl/en/foreign_policy/europe/visegrad_group)

Also from the political perspective, the V4 countries have much in common, all being unitary states (republics) with a parliamentary system of government. While the Czech and Polish parliaments are bicameral, Hungary and Slovakia both have a unicameral one. Globally, all of the V4 member states can be seen as higher middle income countries (based on the Gross Domestic Product per capita), with the Czech Republic at 49<sup>th</sup> place in the world (with GDP in purchasing power parity of 27,400 USD), Slovakia 57<sup>th</sup> place (GDP 23,600 USD), Poland 60<sup>th</sup> place (20,600 USD) and Hungary 62<sup>nd</sup> place (19,800 USD).<sup>30</sup> The density of population, too, is not of significant difference, ranging from 107.2 people per square kilometer in Hungary to 134 people per square kilometer in the Czech Republic. Poland and Slovakia lie in between, with 120 and 111 people per square km, respectively<sup>31</sup>.

Probably the largest difference among the V4 countries is in geographic size and population. While the Czech Republic, Hungary and Slovakia all have less than one hundred thousand square kilometers (78,866; 93,030 and 49,035 square kilometers respectively); Poland represents a much larger territory of 312,685 square kilometers. The size of population also corresponds with this. Although there were no significant differences in terms of the density of population, the sheer size of the Polish population (38,501,000 people) is approximately three times higher than that of the Czech Republic, the second most populated of the V4 countries with 10,436,560 inhabitants. While Hungary has more or less the same population as its Czech counterpart (i.e. 9,982,000 people), Slovakia counts as the smallest V4 member state with a population of 5,397,036 people.<sup>32</sup>

#### **2.1.4 The cultural milieu of the Visegrad Group**

The large difference between the V4 countries is represented by the role of traditionalist values. Especially in the Czech Republic – in contrast with the other three of the V4 countries – the role of secular values is eminent. Comparatively, the Czechs adhere to more self-expression values.<sup>33</sup> This can be related to religiosity. It differs among the V4 countries, with Poland having a high level of adherence to religion (mostly Catholic) and the Czech Republic being one of the least religious countries. Hungary and Slovakia are in between the two.

Each member state has its own language. While the Czech and Slovak languages can be seen as very close and – together with the Polish language – belonging to the Slavonic group of languages, Hungarian is part of the Ugro-Finnish language family.

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<sup>30</sup> Index Mundi (2012): Country Comparison according to GDP per capita (PPP) based on CIA World Factbook. Available at: <http://www.indexmundi.com/g/r.aspx?t=0&v=67&l=en>

<sup>31</sup> [http://www.stat.gov.pl/cps/rde/xbcr/gus/polska\\_w\\_ue\\_2008.pdf](http://www.stat.gov.pl/cps/rde/xbcr/gus/polska_w_ue_2008.pdf)

<sup>32</sup> In all four countries data from 2011 census are available at the websites of local statistical offices.

<sup>33</sup> Inglehart, R., Welzel, C. (2009): Development and Democracy: What we know about modernization today. *Foreign Affairs*, March/April 2009, pp. 33-41.

Also in terms of crisis management, the countries share similar threats. Based on the EM-DAT database<sup>34</sup>, the most important natural disasters in all four countries are floods and storms (for more details see the individual country reports). Although there have also some technical disasters – most notably in Hungary and to a lesser extent in Slovakia – none of them has affected the whole region (although the Hungarian Ajka alumina sludge spill in 2010 did affect Slovakia which is downriver and had to develop an emergency plan in response).

To summarize, it can be maintained that – despite some differences – the culture and values of the countries are quite similar and promoting (rather than hindering) cooperation. No cultural feature, in terms of differences, is so crucial as to influence the activities of the group in a substantial way.

## **2.2 Legal/institutional aspects of the Visegrad Group in the respect to civil security**

### **2.2.1 The current legal basis of the Visegrad Group**

All crucial V4 documents (i.e. declarations) have been introduced above. The Visegrad group has remained consistent in its policy over time since its establishment in 1991. The member countries take part in a rotating one-year presidency. During the presidencies, the countries differ in the proposed agenda, yet the basic focus as stressed in the declarations remains the same. An example could be energy security, which was promoted by the Czech as well as the Polish presidency.<sup>35</sup>

Generally, the overall objective of the cooperation is to contribute to “a strong, stable and democratic Europe”, accentuate peace and sustainable development.<sup>36</sup> More specifically, besides non-security related objectives (fostering cohesion and enhancing competitiveness of the V4 and the EU), the emphasis is put on energy security with the aim of “deepening the internal energy market (...) to diversify the routes, sources and suppliers of energy carriers and to develop the energy infrastructure”.<sup>37</sup> Another important objective, as stated in the official declaration of 2011, is to “facilitate the process of enlarging the area of stability and democracy in the EU neighbourhood”. This is to be pursued mainly through the deeper V4 cooperation within the EU Common Foreign and Security Policy and by the activities funded by the Visegrad Fund (IVF). Finally, one of the core objectives is to foster Euro-Atlantic links between NATO and the EU. The V4 took as its objective to

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<sup>34</sup> CRED (Centre for Research on the Epidemiology of Disasters), 2013. The International Disaster database Emdat, Brussels, Belgium: School of Public Health, Universite Catholique de Louvain, Available online: <http://www.emdat.be/country-profile> [Accessed May 9<sup>th</sup>, 2013].

<sup>35</sup> See the documents on particular presidencies at the Visegrad Group website:

<http://www.visegradgroup.eu/documents/presidency-programs/2012-2013-polish>

<sup>36</sup> Visegrad Group: Bratislava Declaration of 2011. Available at: <http://www.visegradgroup.eu/2011/the-bratislava>

<sup>37</sup> Ibid.

contribute to combating terrorism, extremism, human and drug trafficking, illegal migration and to address threats in the area of cyber-security. Significant attention is to be paid to “challenges arising from climate change”.<sup>38</sup>

Although the objectives of the Visegrad Group (as articulated in its declarations) have evolved over time, the major focus has not changed much. Currently, no major reforms are foreseen to take place in the near future in this respect. Civil security issues, that became a part of the agenda in 2001, are of low profile, and they are dealt with in consultative meetings. As mostly general statements are produced after the meetings, with basically no obligation for the parties, no specific legal provisions are involved.

### **2.2.2 The current Visegrad Group institutional framework**

#### **Ruling bodies**

The V4 is an informal, regional form of cooperation. The Visegrad cooperation comprises numerous actors: presidents, prime ministers, ministers, parliaments, governmental institutions, NGOs, research centers, academies and cultural institutions.

The group’s “direction” is provided by the country which is holding the presidency. The V4 groups’ presidency is rotating on a yearly basis (from June till June). The yearly program is approved by the prime ministers of the V4 countries.<sup>39</sup>

V4 cooperation is based on consultations, consisting of regular meetings at all levels (i.e. presidential, prime ministers, ministers of foreign affairs, experts, etc.). The only institutionalized body of the group is the International Visegrad Fund (IVF).

The V4 does not have a secretariat. Its operation is based solely on the principle of periodical meetings of the member states’ representatives on all levels (prime ministers, heads of states, ministers, experts, etc.). Official prime ministerial summits take place on an annual basis (also usually in June). Based on the priorities stated by every presidency, the tasks are such as ensuring broad based political support for a certain initiative (e.g. the Polish presidency of 2012-2013 took as its major task to ensure political support for the North-South gas transport corridor and to initiate cooperation of

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<sup>38</sup> Ibid.

<sup>39</sup> Polish Ministry of Foreign affairs at [http://www.msz.gov.pl/en/foreign\\_policy/europe/visegrad\\_group](http://www.msz.gov.pl/en/foreign_policy/europe/visegrad_group)

the V4 countries in nuclear power) or to articulate a consistent position of the V4 states in a given area, mostly within the EU.<sup>40</sup>

Established in June 2000 and located in Bratislava (Slovakia), the IVF has a mission not specifically security-related. Its aim is “to promote development of closer cooperation among the (V4) countries (...) and to strengthen the ties among people in the region”.<sup>41</sup> Not only the V4 members, but also the Eastern Partnership is of specific interest to the fund as well. Recipients of grants are usually NGOs, municipalities and local governments, as well as universities and public institutions.<sup>42</sup>

Governing bodies of the fund are the Council of Ambassadors and the Conference of Ministers of Foreign Affairs. The latter one is the supreme body of the fund. During its annual meetings, it approves the budget of the fund as presented by the Council of Ambassadors. The Council of Ambassadors, then, meets at least twice a year to discuss whatever is necessary for the implementation of the fund’s objectives. The council approves projects for financing and implementation. The executive body of the fund is the executive director and deputy executive director. The budget of the fund was over 7.5 million EUR in 2012, with equal contributions of the V4 countries.<sup>43</sup>

There is a specific category of “flagship projects” focused on supporting long-term projects providing access to the V4 experience and know-how with the processes of democratic transformation and integration and with regional cooperation. These are aimed to contribute to the overall transformation of the Eastern Partnership countries (Armenia, Azerbaijan, Belarus, Georgia, Moldova and Ukraine)<sup>44</sup> and thus serve as tools for soft security in the region.

### **Observers/associate members**

Apparently there are no other forms than full membership within the group. Agreements and cooperation with countries outside the organization are described in the previous section.

### **Administrative/executive bodies**

Visegrad cooperation has not been institutionalized. Since its beginning, it has been based solely on the principle of periodic meetings of its representatives.<sup>45</sup> Visegrad cooperation – except for the IVF– has not developed any specific administrative structures or executive bodies. It is based on regular

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<sup>40</sup> Visegrad Group Polish Presidency website: <http://www.visegradgroup.eu/documents/presidency-programs/2012-2013-polish>

<sup>41</sup> International Visegrad Fund: official website <http://visegradfund.org>

<sup>42</sup> Ibid.

<sup>43</sup> Ibid.

<sup>44</sup> Ibid.

<sup>45</sup> Visegrad Group old website at <http://old.visegradgroup.eu/main.php?folderID=1011>

meetings of the representatives of the V4 countries. Cooperation is coordinated by the ministries of foreign affairs (e.g. on the Czech side, the coordinator is the director of the Department for Central European Countries). According to the present and specific needs, then, the meetings at the lower levels (particular ministries, expert consultations) are organized by the respective ministerial departments themselves.<sup>46</sup>

The official meetings at the level of prime ministers take place on an annual basis. Between these summits, one of the countries holds the presidency (see above). The presidency-holding country is responsible for drafting a Presidency Program – a one-year plan of action indicating current objectives of the V4 cooperation.<sup>47</sup> Although the official summits of the V4 prime ministers are held once a year, the heads of the government do sometimes meet more often – as an example can be given the meeting of the V4 leaders with the French president and German chancellor in Warsaw in March 2013 concerning – among other issues – the strengthening of the Common Security and Defence Policy.<sup>48</sup>

The bodies of the IVF were mentioned above. The general director is a statutory representative of the fund, responsible for the implementation of the objectives of the fund and operations of the Secretariat – the administrative body of the fund. Financial contributions by individual countries to the fund have had an increasing tendency over time, from the beginning it has risen by over 200 percent.<sup>49</sup>

The presidencies provide the Visegrad Group with specific orientation on certain objectives. More particular issues are dealt with at the level of ministries or as expert consultations. The most important in this respect are the ministries of foreign affairs (see above). Not only is the cooperation coordinated by them, but also many meetings take place particularly at this level: as an example can serve the meeting of the ministers of foreign affairs of the V4 with their Western Balkans partners in October 2012. Also here, one of the crucial points was security in the region. The V4 expressed

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<sup>46</sup> Government of the Czech Republic (4.6.2012): ČR předá předsednictví Visegrádské skupině Polsku. Online available at: <http://www.vlada.cz/cz/media-centrum/predstavujeme/cr-preda-predsednictvi-visegradske-skupine-polsku-96224/>

<sup>47</sup> Visegrad Group old website at <http://old.visegradgroup.eu/main.php?folderID=1011>

<sup>48</sup> Visegrad Group (March 2013): Press statement: V4 Prime Ministers Meet President of France and the German Chancellor. Available at: <http://www.visegradgroup.eu/v4-prime-ministers-meet>

<sup>49</sup> Visegrad Fund website at [visegradfund.org](http://visegradfund.org)

willingness to closely cooperate with the Western Balkans countries, including “further informal meetings of V4 ministers of foreign affairs with their counterparts from the region”.<sup>50</sup>

Different areas of cooperation are covered by the ministries under which the respective agendas rest. Cooperation exists in the fields of defense, health and environment, among others. For instance, at the meeting of the ministers of defense in May 2012 in the Czech Litoměřice, the issues of capability development, interoperability, joint training and exercises and potential joint acquisitions were discussed and areas of potential future cooperation identified.<sup>51</sup> Similarly, in February 2010, the Hungarian National Institute of Environmental Health (in cooperation with the ministries of environment and health) organized an expert meeting discussing the “ways of implementation of the Environmental and Health Information System in the V4 countries”. The ministers of healthcare met in November 2009 (in the format V4+Slovenia) to discuss the emerging problems and governmental measures to tackle the AH1N1 influenza pandemic. In doing so, possibilities for further cooperation on the issue were also discussed.<sup>52</sup> Following this, there were several occasions when cooperation in the field of health care was declared; for instance the 2012 meeting of nursery workers, or annual meetings of health ministers from the Visegrad countries dealt with successful coordination of health issues within the V4 countries during the economic crisis.<sup>53,54</sup> Cooperation in the field of environment is also well established – since 1993 there have been regular yearly meetings of the ministers of environment.<sup>55</sup> Also at the lower administrative level, cooperation has developed: especially regarding floods, starting from 2009 with the aim to share the implementation experiences of the EU Directive on the Assessment and Management of Flood Risks, as well as discussions of ongoing

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<sup>50</sup> Polish Ministry of Foreign Affairs (2012): Joint Statement of the Visegrad Group on the Western Balkans. Available at: <http://www.visegradgroup.eu/calendar/2012/joint-statement-of-the>

<sup>51</sup> Visegrad Group (May 2012): Joint Communiqué of the Ministers of Defence of the Visegrad Group. Available at: <http://www.visegradgroup.eu/calendar/2012/joint-communication-of-the>

<sup>52</sup> Visegrad Group (2010): Annual Report: Activities of the Hungarian Presidency of the Visegrad Group. Available at: [http://www.kulugyminiszterium.hu/NR/rdonlyres/690056A9-E8C4-4225-BE31-7B7E56A22D930/Annual\\_Report\\_2009\\_2010.pdf](http://www.kulugyminiszterium.hu/NR/rdonlyres/690056A9-E8C4-4225-BE31-7B7E56A22D930/Annual_Report_2009_2010.pdf)

<sup>53</sup> MTI 13.04 2012. Health cooperation of Visegrad countries during the crisis. [http://www.galamus.hu/index.php?option=com\\_content&view=article&id=131214:visegrad-egeszsegegyi-egyuettkoedes-valsag-idejen-szakminiszterek-pragaban&catid=76:hazai-vonatkozasu-hirek&Itemid=113](http://www.galamus.hu/index.php?option=com_content&view=article&id=131214:visegrad-egeszsegegyi-egyuettkoedes-valsag-idejen-szakminiszterek-pragaban&catid=76:hazai-vonatkozasu-hirek&Itemid=113)

<sup>54</sup> The 2012 meeting of nursery workers, decided on annual meetings to work out common goals and objectives in the field of health care Hungarian Health Care Workers Organisation: Declaration of nursery workers from the Visegrad Countries Available at: [http://www.weborvos.hu/hirek/deklaracio\\_negy\\_oroszag\\_apoloitol/197570/](http://www.weborvos.hu/hirek/deklaracio_negy_oroszag_apoloitol/197570/)

<sup>55</sup> Czech Ministry of Environment (undated): Spolupráce v rámci Visegrádské skupiny pro životní prostředí. Available at: [http://www.mzp.cz/cz/spoluprace\\_v\\_ramci\\_visegradske\\_skupiny](http://www.mzp.cz/cz/spoluprace_v_ramci_visegradske_skupiny)



projects and flood hazard mapping.<sup>56</sup> Also, the NATURA 2000 network and climate change in general were discussed.<sup>57</sup>

Although the Visegrad Group does not have any organizational structure, it does develop issue-linked working groups. Probably the best known example is from the field of energy security - the V4 High Level Energy Working Group. This was created during the last Hungarian presidency (2009-2010) and contributed to an enhanced cooperation of the V4 countries, effectively contributing to the preparation of the V4+ Energy Security Summit in Budapest in 2010.<sup>58</sup> Also, an independent V4 Working Group on European Affairs and Strategic Issues was established in April 2011 to enhance coordination on EU issues in the area of nuclear energy and clean technologies, especially with respect to the V4 promoted North-South gas interconnections.<sup>59</sup>

### **Civil security within Visegrad Group activities**

Except for the projects on civil security (submitted by NGOs, public organizations and citizens) funded from the Visegrad Fund, cooperative activities in all V4 countries are financed through the governmental bodies that take part in the cooperation. In Poland the Ministry of Internal Affairs and agencies responsible for civil security organize and participate in meetings within their budgets for international relations.<sup>60</sup> As such, there are no specific budgets devoted to civil security allocated to the V4.

### **Accountability**

Standard accountability within the governmental bodies applies. No special accountability regarding the Visegrad cooperation has been formulated. As for the policy objectives, the presiding country prepares a document with the priorities of its presidency (see above) and calls expert consultations on this document. The prime ministers at their summit “assess results of the implementation of the document and take relevant political decisions in those cases where needed”.<sup>61</sup> The fulfillment of the decisions is subject to assessment during the next summit.

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<sup>56</sup> Visegrad Group (2010): Annual Report: Activities of the Hungarian Presidency of the Visegrad Group. Available at: [http://www.kulugyminiszterium.hu/NR/rdonlyres/690056A9-E8C4-4225-BE31-7B7E56A22D930/Annual\\_Report\\_2009\\_2010.pdf](http://www.kulugyminiszterium.hu/NR/rdonlyres/690056A9-E8C4-4225-BE31-7B7E56A22D930/Annual_Report_2009_2010.pdf)

<sup>57</sup> Czech Ministry of Environment (undated): Spolupráce v rámci Visegrádské skupiny pro životní prostředí. Available at: [http://www.mzp.cz/cz/spoluprace\\_v\\_ramci\\_visegradske\\_skupiny](http://www.mzp.cz/cz/spoluprace_v_ramci_visegradske_skupiny)

<sup>58</sup> Ibid.

<sup>59</sup> Annual Implementation Report of the Program of the Presidency of the Slovak Republic in the Visegrad Group. Available at: <http://www.visegradgroup.eu/documents/annual-reports/v4-annual-report-2010>

<sup>60</sup> Interview with senior Polish official (1), March 2013; interview with Polish official (2), March 2013.

<sup>61</sup> Visegrad Group (2002): Annex to the Content of Visegrad Cooperation. Available at: <http://www.visegradgroup.eu/cooperation/annex-to-the-content-of>

## Legal changes

No major changes in the institutional framework have occurred over time. Although there have been suggestions to create a coordination centre which would systematically deal with the V4 agenda,<sup>62</sup> no such reform has taken place. There is no political consensus about creating firmer institutional structures.<sup>63</sup>

### 2.2.3 Decision making process

For changing or reforming the regional cooperation, the consent of the heads of states and/or governments of the V4 countries would be needed. As the V4 is a platform for cooperation rather than an organization, it is hard to envisage a reform. The general direction and aims of the V4 are agreed in official declarations (see above). The particular topics to focus on are, then, presented by the yearly presidencies of the group. Any substantial reform of the V4 arrangements would require the will at the highest level of political decision making and an agreement at the level of prime ministers.

Within the V4, intergovernmental cooperation and decision making is prevalent. An example can be provided from the area of security and defense. In 2011 at their meeting, the V4 defense ministers and political directors of the defense ministries explored the possibility to create a common V4 battlegroup. The battlegroup was officially announced by the ministers of defense of the V4 in 2012 and should be operational in 2016. The content of cooperation was facilitated by an analysis produced by V4 experts within the IVF project (Visegrad Security Cooperation Initiative), containing recommendations for further cooperation in the areas of security and defense.<sup>64</sup> In March 2013, the four prime ministers signed a letter of intent and a memorandum of understanding. The Hungarian presidency coming in July 2013 will then have to prepare a position paper on how to sustain capabilities built for the battlegroup.<sup>65</sup>

As the V4 is not a formal organization, the decision making rests on the national level with the respective ministries, governments and agencies. As shown in the case above, the decision making remains national, but is based on a consent and agreement to cooperate at the V4 level. Hence, no special decision making procedure in case of crisis exists at the V4 level.

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<sup>62</sup> Kubáček, J. (2006): Visegrádska spolupráce v Evropské unii. *Mezinárodní politika*, 9 (30), pp. 18 – 20.

<sup>63</sup> Bilčík, V., Strážay, T. (2006) : Fungovanie Vyšehradskej štvorky pred a po vstupe jej členov do Európskej únie. Bratislava: Výzkumné centrum Slovenskej spoločnosti pre zahraničnú politiku, n. o.

<sup>64</sup> Annual Implementation Report of the Program of the Presidency of the Slovak Republic in the Visegrad Group. Available at: <http://www.visegradgroup.eu/documents/annual-reports/v4-annual-report-2010>

<sup>65</sup> Šuplata, M. (2013): Visegrad battlegroup: A vehicle for regional defence co-operation. Central European Policy Institute. Online. Available at: <http://www.cepolicy.org/publications/visegrad-battlegroup-vehicle-regional-defence-co-operation>

The common will expressed in the declaration is understood as providing practical direction in cooperation, although the formulations (especially in the first declaration) were rather general and not binding.<sup>66</sup>

In terms of civil security cooperation, it is based on consultative and conference-type meetings. Documents produced have a general character, indicating the will for cooperation and possible directions of future cooperation. As such, little decision making in the strict sense is involved.

#### **2.2.4 Activities related to civil security**

##### **Range of threats**

There is a large array of threats recognized by the Visegrad Group. Though not being exclusively a platform for security cooperation, many security-related issues are on the agenda. The official declarations speak of such threats as terrorism, extremism, cybercrime or trafficking, but the topic which has been pushed the farthest in terms of action is energy security. Propelled by the regional gas crisis in 2009 where one member state (Slovakia) had to declare a state of emergency as a result of an insufficient gas supply, the issue appeared in the Bratislava declaration of 2011 and was embraced both by the Czech as well as the Polish V4 presidencies as one of the priorities of common interest.

Although not being a direct part of the declaration, natural disasters have gained some attention as well. According to the joint statement of the environment ministers of the V4 countries from March 2011, “the V4 countries will focus on the protection against flooding, droughts, extreme weather events and other nature disasters”.<sup>67</sup> The chemical, biological, radiological and nuclear safety was made an issue of the Visegrad Group too (see next section).

During the Czech presidency (2011-2012), attention was paid more to civil security within humanitarian aid abroad. In March 2012, the Czech Ministry of Foreign Affairs together with the General Directorate of the Fire Rescue Brigades organized a meeting bringing together those in charge of providing humanitarian aid in the V4 countries and officials from the V4 civil protection and crisis management structures responsible for sending rescue workers and in-kind aid abroad. The aim

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<sup>66</sup> Rusnák, U. (undated): Is there any future for Visegrad cooperation within EU? Online. Available at: [http://www.europeum.org/doc/arch\\_eur/EPF\\_future\\_of\\_Visegrad.pdf](http://www.europeum.org/doc/arch_eur/EPF_future_of_Visegrad.pdf)

<sup>67</sup> Joint Statement of the Environment Ministers of the Visegrad Group Countries 7-8 March 2011. In: Annual Implementation Report of the Program of the Presidency of the Slovak Republic in the Visegrad Group. Available at: <http://www.visegradgroup.eu/documents/annual-reports/v4-annual-report-2010>

was to identify opportunities for cooperation of the V4 countries in this area.<sup>68</sup> Poland's officials consider floods as a threat that could be a focus of the cooperation, as it is relevant for all the countries of V4, and in all countries new methods of flood management are under development (related to the EU Flood Directive).<sup>69</sup>

### 2.2.5 Crisis management cycle

In terms of prevention and response, chemical, biological, radiological and nuclear (CBRN) safety has been made an issue of the V4. In June 2011 the general directors for disaster management of the V4 countries and the experts met to discuss the following areas of action: prevention, detection and response to serious accidents or breakdowns. This meeting was in line with the respective EU Action Plan on CBRN safety.<sup>70</sup> In terms of response, the V4 countries had a practical experience of cooperation – especially of the fire brigades - during the floods of 2010 which affected all four countries.<sup>71</sup> These were however, more bilaterally based operations than within the V4 framework.

Prevention is also addressed in the area of energy security. In October 2010 in Bratislava a meeting took place of working groups on energy security in the gas and oil industries. It was agreed to “create joint prevention plans and risk analyses”.<sup>72</sup> The need stems from the regulation to safeguard security of the natural gas supply of 2010. Special emphasis is put here on regional “cooperation of supplying gas in emergencies”.<sup>73</sup>

Currently, preparedness is probably best expressed in the field of security and defense, namely in the project of the common V4 battlegroup which envisages joint exercises (starting in 2015) and possibly also joint procurement and capabilities-sharing (see above).

Most of the consultation and cooperation activities take place at the operative level – i.e. at the level of specific ministries, their heads or their experts. Representatives of particular ministries (such as the ministers of environment or the Ministry of Defense) meet usually once a year, the experts usually more often.<sup>74</sup> The political level, then, is crucial for determining the overall objectives of the V4

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<sup>68</sup> Report on the Czech Presidency of the Visegrad Group. Available at: <http://www.visegradgroup.eu/documents/annual-reports/czv4-pres-eng-final>

<sup>69</sup> Interview with senior Polish official (1).

<sup>70</sup> Annual Implementation Report of the Program of the Presidency of the Slovak Republic in the Visegrad Group. Available at: <http://www.visegradgroup.eu/documents/annual-reports/v4-annual-report-2010>

<sup>71</sup> General Directorate of the Czech Fire Brigades (2012): V Praze jednali představitelé civilní ochrany zemí Visegrádské čtyřky. Available at: <http://www.hzscr.cz/clanek/casopis-112-rocnik-xi-cislo-5-2012.aspx?q=Y2hudW09Nw%3D%3D>

<sup>72</sup> Ibid.

<sup>73</sup> Ibid.

<sup>74</sup> See lists of meetings and workshops as included in the Reports on Presidencies.

cooperation. The aims of the cooperation, too, are often of a political nature, such as pushing through a particular solution to common energy security at the EU level.

The practical (operative) level within the V4 has a rather limited scope. Police, fire protection and civil protection are important areas, and cooperation can be found there. However, it is mostly through bilateral, cross-border cooperation, with little direct use of the V4 structure. There is fire protection cooperation, with conferences being organized (such as the FIRECO conference in May 2011 in the V4+ format) and experience is shared. Also a continuous cross-border cooperation of V4 neighbouring regions is sustained. This focuses not only on the exchange of experience, but also on dealing with unusual situations.<sup>75</sup>

## 2.2.6 The crisis management approach

### Civil/military role and assets

From the very beginning, the emphasis of the V4 was put on external security within Europe and on the role of NATO. All V4 countries are NATO members and the V4 cooperation originally served to better prepare them for accession to this organization. Up until now, this sphere of security remains important to the V4 members. The announcement to form a common battlegroup, contributing to the European CSDP can be an example. The battlegroup will be in place in 2016 under Polish command. Starting in 2013, joint military exercises were announced to be held, under the auspices of the NATO Response Force.<sup>76</sup> The Visegrad Battlegroup was launched after several years of negotiations and is seen as a “valuable result and a strong symbol of the V4 commitment to European defence cooperation within both EU and NATO”.<sup>77</sup>

In this respect, the solidarity of the V4 plays an important role. The member countries helped Slovakia which – as opposed to the other three V4 countries – did not become a NATO member in 1999 and it was, too, lagging behind in the accession process to the EU. This solidarity took on a concrete form in sharing information and experience.<sup>78</sup> During the final accession talks with the EU, however, this solidarity evaporated. Each country participating at these talks looked at its interests separately. Although many demands of the countries were similar, they failed to be unified into a

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<sup>75</sup> Annual Implementation Report of the Program of the Presidency of the Slovak Republic in the Visegrad Group. Available at: <http://www.visegradgroup.eu/documents/annual-reports/v4-annual-report-2010>

<sup>76</sup> Friedman, G. (17. 5. 2011): Visegrad: A New European Military Force. Online Article at <http://www.stratfor.com/weekly/20110516-visegrad-new-european-military-force>

<sup>77</sup> Weiss, T. (2012): Visegrád Battlegroup: A Flagship That Should Not Substitute For Real Defence Cooperation. *V4 Revue*. Online. Available at: <http://visegradrevue.eu/?p=806>

<sup>78</sup> Bilčík, V., Strážay, T. (2006): *Fungovanie Vyšehradské čtvorky před a po vstupu jej členov do Európskej unie*. Výskumné centrum Slovenskej spoločnosti pre zahraničnú politiku: Bratislava.

specific common posture.<sup>79</sup> A similar situation occurred when the final text of the European Constitution was discussed.

The V4 does not have “its own” assets to respond to a crisis. The V4 is not a body that could respond to a crisis, however, mechanisms of cooperation in different fields of security (energy, health, etc.) are developed (see above). With its initial focus on securing NATO membership of the Visegrad countries, it is not surprising that the military cooperation is well articulated and developed (see the section on the V4 battlegroup above). Gradually, cooperation in other (civilian) fields of security has gained ground as well.

Especially regarding foreign engagement, the mix of civilian and military approach has come to be discussed. Thus, under the Polish presidency, the civil-military synergies in operation are to be reflected (a task for the ministries of defense in cooperation with the ministries of foreign affairs). Especially of concern are “regulations and practical aspects of the secondment of civilian personnel to military operations and military personnel to civilian missions”.<sup>80</sup>

### **Way of doing business**

Although there are lessons learned from certain activities mentioned (such as the lessons learned from the “Visegrad House” in Cape Town – a mutual representation in third countries)<sup>81</sup>, they are not developed in a systemic manner and thus do not cover most of the cooperation. Under the Polish presidency of 2013, it is the aim in the area of security and defense to exchange “lessons learned and best practices in operations, based on experience from participation in international crisis management activities”.<sup>82</sup> However, past experience suggest that the V4 will remain a consultative body with mainly a facilitation function. The main focus is on keeping contacts, meetings, common lobbying, and financing several fields through the Visegrad fund. Yet, disaster response is not among the main objectives of the agreement. It applies particularly to cooperation within civil security.<sup>83</sup> An example for such cooperation is within the fire brigades contacts. In 2009, the official presidents of professional chambers of the fire protection and the representatives of the fire brigades of the V4 and

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<sup>79</sup> Dančák, B.(1999): *Integrační pokusy ve středoevropském prostoru II*. Brno: Masarykova Univerzita. Brno.

<sup>80</sup> Visegrad Group (2012): Program of the Polish Presidency. Available at:

<http://www.visegradgroup.eu/documents/presidency-programs/2012-2013-polish>

<sup>81</sup> Polish Ministry of Foreign Affairs (December 2012): Mutual representation in third countries and visa representation agreements were discussed by MFA Undersecretary of State Janusz Cisek and Secretary General in the Ministry of Foreign Affairs of the Czech Republic Jaromír Plíšek during their meeting in Warsaw. Available at:

[http://www.mfa.gov.pl/en/news/czech\\_republic\\_mfa\\_secretary\\_general\\_pays\\_a\\_visit\\_to\\_poland](http://www.mfa.gov.pl/en/news/czech_republic_mfa_secretary_general_pays_a_visit_to_poland)

<sup>82</sup> Visegrad Group (2012): Program of the Polish Presidency. Available at:

<http://www.visegradgroup.eu/documents/presidency-programs/2012-2013-polish>

<sup>83</sup> Interview with senior Polish official (1).

Ukraine met. Since this event, the meetings of the representatives of the fire rescue brigades started to take place annually as a form of experience sharing.

## **2.3 The relations between the Visegrad Group and citizens, governments and stakeholders**

### **2.3.1 Citizens**

For informing the general public, V4 uses its website: [www.visegradgroup.eu](http://www.visegradgroup.eu). The term “Visegrad Four” is known to 53 percent of Czechs, whereas 20 percent of them identified the V4 as an alliance or cooperation among the Czech Republic, Poland, Hungary and Slovakia. About 40 percent, on the other hand, were not familiar with the term “Visegrad Group” at all. Generally, the cooperation is better known in cities of more than one hundred thousand inhabitants. The results of a public survey show that the knowledge of the V4 in the Czech Republic is rather superficial and touches mostly only on the name of the cooperation as such. The topic is not considered to be important by Czech society. This might be also a result of an insufficient communication on the V4 activities in the media and other channels addressing directly the general public.<sup>84</sup> In Poland, the V4 is little known to the public, and its role is rather recognized only by experts (Wach 2010).

### **2.3.2 Relations between the Visegrad Group and governments**

The V4 is mainly a consultative structure with very limited executive power. The group relies on the resources of the engaged ministries. The governments (member states) contribute financially to the IVF from which grants are financed (see above). Except for these – very small - payments, there are no other financial contributions of the countries to the Visegrad Group.

The V4 is an institution where the governments participate annually in meetings. The heads of governments, ministers of foreign affairs and other ministries are also present. Customarily, the sectoral ministers meet once a year. At the level of lower officials and experts, the meetings are usually more frequent, especially in areas such as foreign policy, finance, defense or regional development.<sup>85</sup>

Taking into account the tasks related to civil protection which are mostly associated with ministries of interior, the meetings have not been as numerous as in the other areas. They are typically held yearly. However, during the last Czech presidency, a ministerial conference took place in November 2011 in Poznan (Poland). There was a conference of heads of border management services; a meeting of the

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<sup>84</sup> Zenkner, P., Wartuschová, T. (2011): Kolik lidí zná Visegrád? Results from a public opinion survey. Available at: <http://ustavmezinarodnichvztahu.cz/article/pruzkum-ipsos-tambor-kolik-lidi-zna-visegrad>

<sup>85</sup> See Report on the Czech presidency of the Visegrad Group. Available at: <http://www.visegradgroup.eu/documents/annual-reports/czv4-pres-eng-final>

V4/Austria Working Group on Combating Extremism; and, finally a meeting of the heads of V4 civil protection services – an outcome of which was the Joint Statement of Heads of V4 Civil Protection Services of June 2012. In the area of health, there was a meeting of V4 and Austrian health ministers on challenges facing healthcare systems during the economic crisis.<sup>86</sup>

Strategic and policy guidelines are provided by the official declarations and by the programs of the presidencies (see above). There is a review of the achievements at the annual summits after a presidency of the particular country has ended. However, the documents contain rather general formulations close to wishful thinking, with little practical relevance.<sup>87</sup>

As has already been noted earlier, the V4 started with a very strong orientation towards NATO. Cooperation in this regard is reflected in the security strategies (the “roof” documents on security and defense) of the countries, which make an explicit link also to the V4.<sup>88</sup> As the nature of the cooperation is rather intergovernmental, the national parliaments are not directly involved. At the same time, the V4 does not possess any responsibilities or powers as such (see above).

### **2.3.3 Relations between the Visegrad Group and stakeholders**

The Visegrad Group’s activities involve mostly governmental actors. In terms of civil security these are agencies responsible for civil security systems. Also some experts from the academic circles take part in meetings, but they have only an advisory role.

The discussion during the first meeting of presidents and representatives of the firefighters’ organizations in 2009 led to conclusions on the importance of informing citizens and organizing informational activities with respect to fire prevention. All the V4 representatives of the fire brigades agreed that there was a problem with financing such information projects in their respective countries.<sup>89</sup>

## **2.4 The role of private sector in maintaining civil security**

The V4 cooperation is realized at the level of the states institutions. As such it involves little involvement of profit-oriented nor non-profit organizations. However, both profit and non-profit oriented organizations are invited for meeting, particularly conference-like meetings. A specific case is

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<sup>86</sup> Ibid.

<sup>87</sup> Interview with senior Polish official, March 2013; Interview with Polish official from a government ministry, March 2013.

<sup>88</sup> See e.g. the Czech Security Strategy 2003 or 2011.

<sup>89</sup> Fire Rescue Brigade of the South Bohemian Region (November 2009): V Brně jednali experti požární ochrany z pěti zemí. Available at: <http://www.firebrno.cz/v-brne-jednali-experti-pozarni-ochrany-z-peti-zemi>



the Visegrad Fund, through which activities of NGOs and public institutions are financed (see table 1, below for overview of all the security related projects).

## 2.5 The relations with the EU, UN and other regional organizations

NATO was the first institution to relate to and to pursue membership of for all V4 countries. The prevalent strong orientation in this direction was confirmed by the declaration of the V4 ministers of foreign affairs and of defense “Responsibility for a Strong NATO” of 2012. Through this declaration, interoperability of the defense systems is promoted, as well as joint exercises. Civil engagement is mentioned in relation to Afghanistan: “it is essential for the Visegrad Group that the military and civilian engagement in Afghanistan leads to a successful transition”.<sup>90</sup> Generally speaking, the V4 has established itself as a reliable partner within NATO.<sup>91</sup>

The EU, too, appeared to play an increasingly important role within V4 activities. These two institutions – the EU and NATO – can be viewed as primary reference organizations for the V4. Since the very beginning, the activities of the V4 group have focused on regional activities with the aim of strengthening the identity of the Central European region. A successful continuation of European integration has been at the core of the agenda, including a commitment to the enlargement process of the EU. The willingness to share their special experience and thus to contribute to stability, security and development in the region, led the countries to formulate a key objective of cooperation, namely to “contribute to shaping and implementing the European Union’s policies towards the countries of Eastern and Southeastern Europe”.<sup>92</sup>

This approach has been recently strengthened. The Polish presidency of 2013 emphasizes close cooperation in coordinating the positions of the V4 countries on common foreign and security policy, especially regarding the European External Action Service, its staffing, efficiency and experience sharing. The presidency also claimed the objective to deepen EU security and defence cooperation. Shared positions of the V4 on issues of common interest should be presented to organizations such as

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<sup>90</sup> Permanent Delegation of the Czech Republic to NATO in Brussels (April 2012): Declaration of the Visegrad Group “Responsibility for a Strong NATO”. Available at:

[http://www.mzv.cz/nato.brussels/en/news\\_articles\\_speeches/declaration\\_of\\_the\\_visegrad\\_group.html](http://www.mzv.cz/nato.brussels/en/news_articles_speeches/declaration_of_the_visegrad_group.html)

<sup>91</sup> Mykulanyets, L., Šmíd, T. (2007): Whither V4? EU Entry as a Turning Point in Visegrad Cooperation. *Global Politics*. Online. Available at: <http://www.globalpolitics.cz/eseje/whither-v4>

<sup>92</sup> Declaration of Prime Ministers of the Czech Republic, the Republic of Hungary, the Republic of Poland and the Slovak Republic on cooperation of the Visegrad Group countries after their accession to the European Union (12.5.2004). Available at:

[http://www.cvce.eu/obj/declaration\\_on\\_cooperation\\_of\\_the\\_visegrad\\_group\\_countries\\_after\\_their\\_accession\\_to\\_the\\_eu\\_12\\_may\\_2004-en-7063cfbd-9788-4468-98f2-6742787a17ef.html](http://www.cvce.eu/obj/declaration_on_cooperation_of_the_visegrad_group_countries_after_their_accession_to_the_eu_12_may_2004-en-7063cfbd-9788-4468-98f2-6742787a17ef.html)

the UN, EU, NATO and OSCE. Traditionally, the activities related to the Eastern Partnership play an important role as well.<sup>93</sup>

There are two regions of interest nowadays for the V4: the countries of the Eastern Partnership and the Western Balkans. Further development of cooperation with Eastern neighbours was launched by the Czech EU presidency in 2009 and over the time, the Eastern Partnership developed into a flagship initiative of the Visegrad Group. In this respect, a special program was established within the IVF to finance programs related to the Eastern Partnership, as agreed by prime ministers of the V4 countries.<sup>94</sup>

### 3. The Quality Issue

#### 3.1 Effectiveness

So far there has been no common action in disaster preparedness or response through the V4 cooperation. In the agenda for the Polish presidency of 2013, the V4 cooperation in disaster response is mentioned among tasks for the V4 agenda. As far as disaster preparedness is concerned, activities are connected with the environment-related tasks with special emphasis on the guarantee on financial liability of hazardous industrial installations.<sup>95</sup> In general, establishment of the V4 cooperation is considered to be successful; however there are skeptical voices, too. Firstly, the region is not homogenous, e.g. the approach and mentality of Poles, Slovaks, Czechs and Hungarians concerning the EU, and political cooperation are different and this can undermine a successful cooperation. Moreover, there are tensions between Hungary and Slovakia.<sup>96</sup> Secondly, the original role of the V4 agreement overlaps with other international forums and organizations (NATO, EU). A typical field where cooperation is needed is in the field of anti-terrorist activities. In general, the probability of terrorism in the V4 regions is considered to be very low (Samson 2011)<sup>97</sup>. However, related issues like nationalism or organized crime related activities as well as the possibility of future

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<sup>93</sup> Visegrad Group Polish presidency website at: <http://www.visegradgroup.eu/documents/presidency-programs/2012-2013-polish>

<sup>94</sup> International Visegrad Fund (2011): Two Decades of Visegrad Cooperation. Bratislava: International Visegrad Fund. ISBN 9788097082802

<sup>95</sup> The Polish presidency, Visegrad 4 integration and cohesion. Available at: <http://www.visegradgroup.eu/documents/presidency-programs/2012-2013-polish>

<sup>96</sup> Gaciarz J. Conclusions: A Mixed Record in the Current Crisis. In Gostynska A., Parkers R. (Eds.) Towards a V4 Position on the Future of Europe, p. 35-37. Report of the Polish Institute of International Affairs ISBN 978-83-62453-47-4 Available at: <http://www.pism.pl/Publications/Reports/PISM-Report-Towards-a-V4-Position-on-the-Future-of-Europe>

<sup>97</sup> Samson Ivo 2011. Evaluating Terrorism as a New Security Threat in Central Europe, Rekawek K. (ed.). Non-military aspects of security in V4 countries- prospects for co-operation V4 papers no 3, p. 35-47.

terrorist attacks make it important to deal with terrorism in the region (Mareš 2011).<sup>98</sup> There are also difficulties in cooperation concerning secret services and member states' sovereign foreign policies. Nevertheless, in this field the V4 cooperation is both effective and efficient (Marton 2011).<sup>99</sup>

The capacity of the V4 is not directly used in response to crises. However, bilateral cooperation between countries often occurs. Moreover, if any coordination above the bilateral level is required, then EU structures are utilized. The only practical use of V4 is indirect, as meetings helping to establish contacts, which are helpful in times of emergency, common lobbying and facilitation. There are common exercises for the V4 countries (see EU cooperation and bilateral cooperation in country reports), however they are not organized within the frame of the V4 agreement.

Some of the projects funded by the IVF have aimed at establishing a common platform for V4 countries in disaster response and management (see Table 1). These are however small-scale projects without regional impact.

To summarize, the effectiveness of the V4 in terms of civil security can hardly be assessed as there are very little operational aspects involved. The meetings' and consultations' effectiveness are sceptically assessed as they appear to produce little added value.<sup>100</sup>

### 3.2 Efficiency

The main financial instrument to enhance V4 cooperation is the IVF. This is a fund for strengthening (cultural, scientific, partnership etc.) ties among people within these countries and also to establish possibilities to cooperate with other regions. The fund was established in 2000 and the V4 countries share the costs equally.<sup>101</sup> In 2012 the overall budget was 7,530,701 euro, within this the administrative costs and public relations of the fund amounted to nearly 700,000 euro<sup>102</sup>. The fund aims at enhancing cooperation, through several schemes like small grants, strategic grants, scholarships and partnership projects financed within this framework. It is not, however, strictly dedicated to disaster management. Rather, security-related projects are just a small proportion (less than 2 percent in 2012) see table 1.

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<sup>98</sup> Mareš, Miroslav 2011: Terrorism-Free Zone in East Central Europe? Strategic Environment, Risk Tendencies, and Causes of Limited Terrorist Activities in the Visegrad Group Countries. *Terrorism and Political Violence*, Vol. 23. 2, p. 233–253.

<sup>99</sup> Péter Marton, 2011 Anti-terrorism in the Visegrad Framework: Less is More and Better, In: Rekawek K. (ed). *Non-military aspects of security in V4 countries- prospects for co-operation*, V4 papers no 3, p. 11-26. Available online at: <http://www.pism.pl/projektv4>

<sup>100</sup> Senior Polish official (1).

<sup>101</sup> <http://visegradfund.org/about/basic-facts/>

<sup>102</sup> <http://visegradfund.org/about/budget/>



Table 1. Security and disaster management related projects funded by the IVF (International Visegrad Fund) within 2003- 2013.<sup>103</sup>

Year	Project name (country of main coordinator)	Funding (euro)
2013	Cross border cooperation for safety Volunteers fire guard in Wierchomla, Piwniczna Zdrój (PL)	5,990
2012	Intensifying professional collaboration for safer road transportation among the Visegrad countries (HU)	15,000
	Workshop for building V4 network researching spatial and social aspects of Disaster Management (HU)	9,000
	Better cooperation for better operation of the future Visegrad EU Battle Group (PL)	20,000
	The Modern System of Driver Education as an Implementation to Reduce Accident Rate (SK)	10,000
	The North-South Gas Corridor and the V4 Energy Security (PL)	8,500
	Strengthening humanitarian response system cooperation in Central Europe (SK)	10,000
	Moving towards V4 Road Safety Strategy (HU)	6,000
	Detailed aerial mapping and flood impact monitoring in the V4 region (SK)	30,000
2011	Avalanche prevention in the Ukrainian Carpathians - monitoring of the current situation (CZ)	5,000
	V4 Cooperation in ensuring cyber security – analysis and recommendations (PL)	4,978
	Panorama of global security environment (SK)	9,000
	Harmonization of determining the radiation dose of the population originating from radon in V4 count (HU)	16,000
	Visegrad Youth Forum 2011 on Common Foreign and Security Policy SK	5,000
2009	Fire Engineering (SK)	
	Creating a Sphere of Security in the Wider Central Europe (PL)	45,000
2008	GLOBSEC Security and the Visegrad Countries – Proposals for Effective Cooperation (SK)	4,000
2007	International Conference on Fire Protection, Budapest (HU)	4,000
2006	International training and preparation of the firemen – rescue workers from the water level (opened water areas SK)	938
	Flood protection (SK)	15,000
2005	Chemical, Biological, Radioactive and Nuclear (CBRN) Terrorism – The Determination of a Common Procedure of the V4, in Accordance with the European Security Research Program Concept (CZ)	13,000
2004	Publication for the general public: "Hazards of Human infection in Central Europe - Prevention and Control of Trichinellosis and Echinococcosis "	8,000
	The Communist Security Apparatus in East Central Europe 1944-45 to 1989" International Scientific Conference	20,000
	"Cross border security relationships from the perspective of Central European space"[V4 SUMMER UNIVERSITY OF FRIENDSHIP N. 8] (SK)	3,800
	"Security in a global world "The Visegrad Group in the New European-Transatlantic Framework (HU)	
2003	Increasing security on communal level (SK)	8,000

Generally, the IVF is very small, and has marginal significance in terms of civil security. Its main role is to enhance cooperation through meetings and information exchange. As such it does not contribute to reaching substantial outcomes in the area of civil security. Thus, efficiency can hardly be assessed.

The cooperation within defence is more firm, as one of the aims of the V4 is to work out and maintain a common defence system. However, apart from Poland, in all other countries there is a lack of

<sup>103</sup> List of all IVF founded projects available at:  
[http://visegradfund.org/grants/approved\\_grants/](http://visegradfund.org/grants/approved_grants/)

finances in the defence sector (Marton 2012).<sup>104</sup> Cooperation among the V4 countries on some fields of defence, especially border control and antiterrorism could be more cost efficient than organizing these activities by the member states alone.<sup>105</sup> Yet, little is done in practice.

### 3.3 Legitimacy

During the annual meetings of the V4 countries' disaster management directors there are discussions on cooperation, coordination and common lobbying within the EU and towards other ROs. Yet, the head of the international department of NDGDM Hungary has stated that the disaster management activities within the V4 cooperation have become less important in recent years.<sup>106</sup> In case of crisis, international cooperation among the countries is mostly within the framework of bilateral agreements, or via the EU Civil Protection Mechanism. V4 cooperation is mentioned on the website of the NDGDM, among international relations issues. This is in accordance with the annual reports of the V4 presidential countries, where the security issues are present only as far as energy supply security, certain aspects of fire protection and defense strategy are concerned.<sup>107</sup>

V4 cooperation is linked to other EU policies where safety issues can appear, like the CBRN safety Action Plan, or the 7<sup>th</sup> Environmental Action Plan (flood, drought or natural disaster prevention or response).<sup>108</sup>

There is no controversy about the V4 in general and in civil security issues undertaken within the V4 agenda. There is general consensus on the importance of the V4 for the member countries; however, the group remains low profile, both in terms of budget and impact.

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<sup>104</sup> Marton P. Hungary's post 2001 ratification challenges, lessons concerning the V4 –NATO relationships. CEJSS 2/2012 195-126

<sup>105</sup> Statement from ministerial meeting of defense ministers in the Czech Republic 04.03.2013, available at: <http://www.kormany.hu/hu/honvedelmi-miniszterium/masodik-allamtitkarsag/hirek/vedelmi-egyuttmukodesi-lehetosegekrol-egyeztettek-a-v4-es-orszagok>

<sup>106</sup> Email correspondence from NDGDM.

<sup>107</sup> Annual Implementation Report of the Program of the Presidency of the Slovak Republic in the Visegrad Group (1 July 2010 – 30 June 2011) available at: <http://www.visegradgroup.eu/documents/annual-reports>

<sup>108</sup> Ibidem

## 4. Conclusion

The Visegrad Group is mainly a consultative framework, designated for high level officials meetings. It was established as a platform for countries of similar situation and similar economic, social and security problems. Security (rather in the defense sense) has been an important part of the group since the very beginning. As the member countries gained membership to NATO and the EU, the role of the group in this respect has weakened. Civil security became a V4 interest in 2001. There are regular meetings of the heads of the civil security bodies and documents on common views are signed. They have little significance, however, since the real practical cooperation (e.g. equipment sharing or operational cooperation) is missing. The future development of the civil security area within V4 activities is uncertain. A stronger functional role of the V4 could be related to the similarity in terms of common problems.<sup>109</sup> For instance, implementation of the EU Floods Directive (as well as in case of the Water Framework Directive etc.) faces difficulties. A similar level of institutional capacity and available resources (much lower compared with many of the Old Europe countries) might open the space for cooperation. Whether the V4 platform could be used for such cooperation is difficult to judge. Another area of potential development is in humanitarian aid. Coordination in this respect was discussed in 2012, but further development in this area is ambiguous, too.

The financial tool of the Visegrad agreement is useful, as many security-related projects have obtained support. However, these projects are small and of marginal importance in a truly international sense. Compared with the activities of the Council of the Baltic Sea States or the Salzburg Forum, the Visegrad group has a smaller footprint in the field of civil security. This is partially due to the fact that after EU accession, EU structures have provided coordination in case of a regional emergency. At the same time, bilateral coordination is well-tested and is sufficient in most cases. This leaves little space for the group. Meetings of civil security officials offer a chance for establishing personal contacts and networks, but mostly these are duplications of the contacts already established otherwise. As there is little chance for securing more resources for the group, the practical significance of the Visegrad Group in the area of civil security will likely remain small.

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<sup>109</sup> Rusnák, U. (undated): Is there any future for Visegrad cooperation within EU? Online. Available at: [http://www.europeum.org/doc/arch\\_eur/EPF\\_future\\_of\\_Visegrad.pdf](http://www.europeum.org/doc/arch_eur/EPF_future_of_Visegrad.pdf)

## Annex 1: Coded Data



### ANVIL PROJECT MAPPING PROTOCOL - WP3





2.1	CULTURAL AND HISTORICAL ASPECTS OF RO DEALING WITH CIVIL SECURITY	YES/NOT	DEGREE High/Medium/Low	SOURCE
2.1.1	<b>The establishment of the RO</b>			
	Is the formation of the RO related to the EU or other RO?	yes	High	<a href="http://www.visegradgroup.eu/about/cooperation">http://www.visegradgroup.eu/about/cooperation</a>
2.1.2	<b>The evolution of the RO eventual membership enlargement and current membership</b>			
	Does the RO have observers/associate members with a different status with respect to (founding) pMS?	not		<a href="http://visegradfund.org">http://visegradfund.org</a>
2.1.3	<b>The member characteristics of the RO</b>			
	Are RO's pMS also EU members?	yes	high	<a href="http://www.visegradgroup.eu/about/cooperation">http://www.visegradgroup.eu/about/cooperation</a>
2.1.4	<b>The cultural milieu of the RO</b>			
	Recall the scores of each pMS with regard to the World Value Survey parameter on industrial/post industrial attitude:			<a href="http://www.worldvaluessurvey.org/wvs/articles/folder_published/article_base_111">http://www.worldvaluessurvey.org/wvs/articles/folder_published/article_base_111</a>
	There is a dominant attitude among pMS?	no		<a href="http://www.worldvaluessurvey.org/wvs/articles/folder_published/article_base_111">http://www.worldvaluessurvey.org/wvs/articles/folder_published/article_base_111</a>
	There is a great variance among pMS?	yes	medium	<a href="http://www.worldvaluessurvey.org/wvs/articles/folder_published/article_base_112">http://www.worldvaluessurvey.org/wvs/articles/folder_published/article_base_112</a>

	Has any cultural feature of the region influenced in a substantial way the RO characters and activities? It may relate to language, religion, history, as well as deep-rooted crisis experience(s) which impacted the whole region.	yes	medium	<a href="http://visegradfund.org">http://visegradfund.org</a>
<b>2.2</b>	<b>LEGAL AND INSTITUTIONAL ASPECTS OF RO DEALING WITH CIVIL SECURITY</b>	<b>YES/NOT</b>	<b>DEGREE High/Medium/Low</b>	<b>SOURCE</b>
<b>2.2.1</b>	<b>The current legal basis of the RO</b>			
	Have any major changes in the legal basis framework occurred since the 1990s?	not		<a href="http://www.visegradgroup.eu/about/cooperation">http://www.visegradgroup.eu/about/cooperation</a>
	Does the statutory basis rely on a single law?	yes	medium	<a href="http://www.visegradgroup.eu/about/cooperation">http://www.visegradgroup.eu/about/cooperation</a>
	Does the statutory basis rely on fragmented statutory provisions?	not		Visegrad Declaration 2004
	Have there been any major changes, occurring over time, in the legal framework regulating crisis management?	not		Jagodzinski (2010)
	Are there any major changes foreseen in the future?	not		Rusnák (undated)
<b>2.2.2</b>	<b>The current RO institutional framework</b>			
	Are there ad hoc ruling bodies (i.e. RO presidency, secretariat, councils/assembly of member states representatives, etc)?	not		<a href="http://www.visegradgroup.eu/about/cooperation">http://www.visegradgroup.eu/about/cooperation</a>
	Are there permanent ruling bodies inside the RO?	yes	low	<a href="http://www.visegradgroup.eu/about/cooperation">http://www.visegradgroup.eu/about/cooperation</a>
	Does the representation mechanism involve all pMS?	yes	High	Visegrad Declaration 2004

	Do the observers/associate members support the RO by financing it?	NA		
	Do the observers/associate members support the RO by providing crisis management assets?	NA		
	Do the RO agencies have a degree of autonomy?	yes	High	<a href="http://visegradfund.org/about/basic-facts/">http://visegradfund.org/about/basic-facts/</a>
	Is there a division of responsibility?	not		<a href="http://www.visegradgroup.eu/about/cooperation">http://www.visegradgroup.eu/about/cooperation</a>
	Are there specific agreements, programme, budgets devoted to civil security?	not		Senior Polish official, interviewed in March 2013, in Warsaw.
	Have there been any major changes, occurring over time, in the legal/institutional framework?	not		Jagodzinski (2010)
	Are there accountability arrangements?	not		Senior Polish official, interviewed in March 2013, in Warsaw.
<b>2.2.3</b>	<b>Decision making process</b>			
	Is unanimous agreement required from all partners?	yes		Šuplata (2013)
	Is there an agreement required by national parliaments through a formal legislative procedure?	yes		Polish Official from a ministry, interviewed in March 2013, in Warsaw.
	Is the decision making prevalently intergovernmental?	yes		Rusnák (undated)
	Is the decision making prevalently supranational?	not		Rusnák (undated)
<b>2.2.4</b>	<b>Activities related to civil security</b>			

	Is there a kind of prioritization among threats considered by RO?	not		Senior Polish official, interviewed in March 2013, in Warsaw.
	Are there activities related to prevention?	yes	low	General Directorate of the Czech Fire Brigades (2012)
	Are there activities related to preparedness (regular exercises, exchange activities, research projects/funding, efforts in terms of standardisation, joint procurement, joint planning and common risk mapping, formation of experts networks)?	yes	low	Polish Official from a ministry, interviewed in March 2013, in Warsaw.
	Are there activities related to response?	yes	low	<a href="http://www.visegradgroup.eu/documents/annual-reports/v4-annual-report-2010">http://www.visegradgroup.eu/documents/annual-reports/v4-annual-report-2010</a>
	Does the RO operate at operative level and manage executive activities?	not		Senior Polish official, interviewed in March 2013, in Warsaw.
	Does the RO operate at political level and conduct consultation activities?	yes	high	Senior Polish official, interviewed in March 2013, in Warsaw.
	Is there a different approach with regards to prevention, preparedness and response?	not		<a href="http://www.visegradgroup.eu/documents/annual-reports/v4-annual-report-2010">http://www.visegradgroup.eu/documents/annual-reports/v4-annual-report-2010</a>
<b>2.2.5</b>	<b>The crisis management approach</b>			
	Does the RO use members' civilian/military assets for responding to a crisis?	not		<a href="http://www.visegradgroup.eu/about/cooperation">http://www.visegradgroup.eu/about/cooperation</a>
	Does the RO use its own assets?	not		Polish Official from a ministry, interviewed in March 2013, in Warsaw.
	Is there a coordination mechanism of these assets?	not		Polish Official from a ministry, interviewed in March 2013, in Warsaw.
	Does the RO develop a lessons-learned process or best-practices?	yes	low	Jagodzinski (2010)
<b>2.3</b>	<b>THE RELATIONS BETWEEN RO AND pMS CITIZENS, GOVERNMENTS AND STAKEHOLDERS</b>	<b>YES/NOT</b>	<b>DEGREE High/Medium/Low</b>	<b>SOURCE</b>

2.3.1 Citizens			
Do citizens somehow know of the existence of this regional cooperation?	yes	low	Zenkner, Wartuschová (2011); Jagodzinski (2010)
Does the RO enjoy support?	yes	medium	Zenkner, Wartuschová (2011); Wach (2010)
Does the RO somehow communicate to/inform citizens of the countries involved?	yes	medium	Zenkner, Wartuschová (2011); Jagodzinski (2010)
Is there a main method used by the RO across the region for informing the public on an emerging/unfolding crisis?	not		Senior Polish official, interviewed in March 2013, in Warsaw.
Is there cooperation on common crisis communication systems?	not		Senior Polish official, interviewed in March 2013, in Warsaw.
Are there central reliable website/social media or mobile application to update citizens on relevant crisis issue/security information?	not		Polish Official from a ministry, interviewed in March 2013, in Warsaw.
2.3.2 Relations between RO and pMS governments			
Are governments committed to the RO (i.e. by commitment resources, by participation of high-level policy makers to related fora, by the frequency of meetings, by the declaration issue by governments regarding the RO)?	yes	low	Visegrad Declaration (2004); Jagodzinski (2010)
Do governments provide strategic and policy guidelines to the RO with respect to civil security?	not		Visegrad Declaration 2004
Do governments supervise RO activities?	yes		Visegrad Declaration 2004
Are governments influenced by RO regulations/strategy/activities (i.e. documents/strategies/policies make explicit reference to RO frameworks/activities)?	not		<a href="http://www.visegradgroup.eu/about/cooperation">http://www.visegradgroup.eu/about/cooperation</a> ; Polish Official from a ministry, interviewed in March 2013, in Warsaw.
Do national parliaments play a particular role?	not		Polish Official from a ministry, interviewed in March 2013, in Warsaw.
Have governments used RO mechanisms for civil security (i.e. transnational disaster, major disaster beyond the capacity of the country, etc.)?	not		Senior Polish official, interviewed in March 2013, in Warsaw.

	Do governments delegate specific functions to the RO?	not		Rusnák (undated); Senior Polish official, interviewed in March 2013, in Warsaw.
	Does the RO contribute to the information sharing/awareness of in the pMS with respect to civil security?	not		Senior Polish official, interviewed in March 2013, in Warsaw.
<b>2.3.3</b>	<b>Relations between RO and stakeholders</b>			
	Does the RO have direct relations with stakeholders?	not		Senior Polish official, interviewed in March 2013, in Warsaw.
	Does the RO have relations with regional/provincial/local stakeholders?	not		Senior Polish official, interviewed in March 2013, in Warsaw.
	Do stakeholders have expectations toward the RO's role on civil security?	not		Rusnák (undated); Senior Polish official, interviewed in March 2013, in Warsaw.
	Does the RO contribute to the education/information sharing/awareness/training of stakeholders?	yes	low	<a href="http://www.visegradgroup.eu/about/cooperation">http://www.visegradgroup.eu/about/cooperation</a>
<b>2.4</b>	<b>THE ROLE OF PRIVATE SECTOR IN MAINTAINING CIVIL SECURITY</b>	<b>YES/NOT</b>	<b>DEGREE High/Medium/Low</b>	<b>SOURCE</b>
	Does the RO cooperate with profit-oriented and non-profit organizations in the private sector?	yes	low	<a href="http://www.visegradgroup.eu/about/cooperation">http://www.visegradgroup.eu/about/cooperation</a>
	Are there any conventions or agreements existing on cooperation with private sector organizations with regard to prevention, preparedness and response to crisis?	not		Senior Polish official, interviewed in March 2013, in Warsaw.
<b>2.5</b>	<b>THE RELATIONS WITH THE EU, UN AND OTHER RO</b>	<b>YES/NOT</b>	<b>DEGREE High/Medium/Low</b>	<b>SOURCE</b>
	Does the RO have relations with the EU and/or related institutions (i.e. European Commission)	yes	medium	Jagodzinski (2010)
	Does the RO have representatives/officers in EU institutions?	not		Jagodzinski (2010)

	Are there funding or coordination mechanisms between the RO and EU institutions?	not		Jagodzinski (2010)
	Does the RO, formally or de facto, act as a means to harmonise national legislation with the EU acquis?	not		<a href="http://www.visegradgroup.eu/about/cooperation">http://www.visegradgroup.eu/about/cooperation</a>
	Does the RO, formally or de facto, act as a means to implement EU regulations/strategies/policies?	yes	low	<a href="http://www.visegradgroup.eu/about/cooperation">http://www.visegradgroup.eu/about/cooperation</a>
	Is there any relation with the UN with regards to civil security issues?	not		Polish Official from a ministry, interviewed in March 2013, in Warsaw.
	Is there any relation with NATO with regards to civil security issues?	yes	low	Friedman 2011
	Are there relations with other ROs studied by WP3?	yes	low	Senior Polish official, interviewed in March 2013, in Warsaw.
<b>3</b>	<b>THE QUALITY ISSUE</b>	<b>YES/NOT</b>	<b>DEGREE High/Medium/Low</b>	<b>SOURCE</b>
<b>3.1</b>	<b>Effectiveness</b>			
	Has there been any review/evaluation/scrutiny of the RO by pMS and/or EU?	yes		Goevernment of Czech Republic 2012
	Has there been any professional/political inquiry over crisis having RO involvement?	not		
<b>3.2</b>	<b>Efficiency</b>			
	Have there been any changes in the budget's amount?	yes	low	<a href="http://visegradfund.org">http://visegradfund.org</a>
	Are budget details publicly available?	yes	low	<a href="http://visegradfund.org">http://visegradfund.org</a>

	Is the budget for regional cooperation generally uncontested?	yes	low	Senior Polish official, interviewed in March 2013, in Warsaw.
	Is there a source of controversy among and within pMS regarding the budget?	not		Senior Polish official, interviewed in March 2013, in Warsaw.
	Is the pMS' contribution to the budget proportionate to their benefits of the cooperation?	yes	low	Senior Polish official, interviewed in March 2013, in Warsaw.
	Is there a permanent budget for "cold phase" cooperation (preparation, prevention)?	not		Senior Polish official, interviewed in March 2013, in Warsaw.
	Is there asset sharing and/or asset procurement through the RO which may be related to efficiency?	not		Senior Polish official, interviewed in March 2013, in Warsaw.
	Does the RO have the goal to enhance efficiency of national civil security systems (i.e. by improving standardization and/or interoperability of assets)?	yes	low	Senior Polish official, interviewed in March 2013, in Warsaw.
<b>3.3</b>	<b>Legitimacy</b>			
	Do countries use the regional cooperation mechanism in place when crises occur?	not		Katasztrofavedele m.hu
	Do countries by-pass the formal mechanisms and contact each other bilaterally or informally?	yes	low	Senior Polish official, interviewed in March 2013, in Warsaw.
	Do countries by-pass the regional organization in favor of more overarching ones, such as the EU?	yes	low	Senior Polish official, interviewed in March 2013, in Warsaw.
	Are there cases where RO involvement in crisis management has strained political relations between pMS or undermined the legitimacy of a national government?	not		Polish Official from a ministry, interviewed in March 2013, in Warsaw.



## Annex II: Resources

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