

Annex 2: **Information on the Visegrad Group.**

The Visegrad Group (V4) is one of the main formats of cooperation between Central European countries. Its members include the Czech Republic, Slovakia, Hungary, and Poland. The V4 was established in 1991 and its initial aim was for the member states to support each other in their efforts to join the European Union and the North Atlantic Treaty Organisation (NATO).

At present, cooperation within the V4 takes place on many fronts. **Collaboration between V4 member states remains of key importance.** It is underpinned, above all, by intergovernmental relations, including frequent meetings and consultations between the four member states' prime ministers and individual ministers. Relations at the level of heads of state as well as parliamentary representatives also play an important role. Another crucial aspect of cooperation is **the development of contacts between V4 societies.** To enhance this process, the **International Visegrad Fund (IVF)** was established, which helps to finance the implementation of joint projects as well as scholarship, cultural and artistic programmes (<https://www.visegradfund.org/>).

However, V4 cooperation extends beyond internal relations. **V4 countries are active at the EU forum as well as with other international organisations. At present, issues related to the EU are at the centre of cooperation on the external front.** The key areas include the Multiannual Financial Framework, cohesion policy, the common agricultural policy, institutional issues, climate change, environmental protection, energy policy, single market/the EU digital market, infrastructure as well as neighbourhood and enlargement policy. Moreover, **V4 states are engaged in cooperation with third countries,** including Eastern Partnership and Western Balkan countries. Regular meetings are also held with Baltic and Nordic states as well as with non-European countries (including Japan, the Republic of Korea and Israel).

The current cooperation within the V4 is determined by the annual rotating presidencies of individual member states. The country that is holding the presidency sets out, in consultation with other V4 members, current priorities for the group's activities as well as the calendar of internal meetings and meetings with external partners. **Currently Poland holds the presidency of the Visegrad Group (July 2020 – June 2021).** The priority objectives of Poland's presidency are:

- 1. Strong V4 in a strong Europe** (objective related to the coordination of V4 countries' activities within the EU);
- 2. Return to normality** (objective related to the fight against the COVID-19 pandemic and its consequences);
- 3. People-to-people contacts** (objective related to strengthening the integration and cohesion within the V4, among V4 countries/societies);
- 4. Digital V4** (objective related to the development of V4 cooperation in the digital sector).

The symbolic **motto of Poland's presidency of the V4 is: "Back on track"**; <https://www.gov.pl/web/V4prezydencja>;
<http://www.visegradgroup.eu/>

During the Polish presidency, we will celebrate the 30th anniversary of establishing the Visegrad Group (the V4 was formed in the Hungarian town of Visegrád on 15 February 1991). A number of actions are planned to mark this anniversary.