

ANNUAL REPORT

**Activities of the Hungarian Presidency of the
Visegrad Group**

July 2009 – June 2010



INTRODUCTION

Between 1 July 2009 and 30 June 2010, Hungary was holding the rotating Presidency of the Visegrad Group. This year proved to be a special period in Europe due to the unpredictable nature of the global economic crisis and the entry into force of the Lisbon Treaty in December 2009.

When formulating the Presidency Program for 2009-2010 (later on supplemented by a detailed Action Plan), Hungary took particular care to bring into line the interests of all Visegrad Group countries and to build on the achievements of the previous Polish Presidency, supporting the main lines of V4 cooperation proved to be successful in the past years. During the Hungarian Presidency, particular attention was paid on five key areas of the several elements included in the Program. The five key areas of the Hungarian Presidency were as follows:

- Euro-Atlantic integration of the Western Balkans;
- Eastern Partnership;
- Energy security;
- Regional and cohesion policy;
- Central European Roma Strategy.

In course of her presidency, Hungary endeavoured to keep the V4 as an efficient framework cooperation of the four countries. Consultations continued on every level in both dimensions of the V4 cooperation: cooperation on foreign and EU policies and sectoral cooperation. New cooperative platforms (e.g. the High Level Groups of Roma Integration etc.) and new branches of the V4 cooperation (e.g. first meeting of Press/PR Departments; EU Economic Policy Departments; coordination among IT and African Departments of the four ministries of foreign affairs etc.) have been established. Several high level meetings were organised during this one-year long period, such as summits of the V4 Presidents, Prime Ministers, as well as meetings of the Foreign Ministers and sectoral ministers. These meetings are as follows (a full list of V4 events in the course of the Hungarian V4 Presidency is enclosed at the end of the report):

Presidents

11-12 September 2009 Summit of Presidents V4+Slovenia, Sopot

Prime Ministers

29 October 2009 Meeting of V4 Prime Ministers on the margin of European Council, Brussels

24 February 2010 V4+ Regional Energy Security Summit of the Prime Ministers, Budapest

20 July 2010 Meeting of V4 Prime Ministers,

Foreign Ministers

6 October 2009 V4+ Foreign Ministerial meeting on the Western Balkans, Budapest

2 March 2010 V4+ Foreign Ministerial meeting on Eastern Partnership, Budapest

Sectoral Ministers

1-2 July 2009 Meeting of Ministers of Regional Development, Sopot

9-10 July 2009 Meeting of Ministers of Environment, Krakow

9-10 September 2009 Meeting of Ministers of Agriculture V4+Bulgaria+Romania, Budapest

8 October 2009 Meeting of Ministers of Defence, Budapest

24 November 2009 Meeting of Ministers of Healthcare, Budapest

26 November 2009 Meeting of Ministers of Economy, Budapest

15 January 2010 Meeting of Ministers of Agriculture V4+Bulgaria+Romania, Berlin

19-20 January V4+France+Portugal+Slovenia conference: Feasibility of integrated development

4-5 February 2010 Meeting of V4 Ministers of Culture and Education, Budapest

24-26 March 2010 Meeting of Ministers of Justice, Prague

29 March 2010 Meeting of Ministers of Regional Development, V4+Bulgaria+Romania, Budapest

28-29 March 2010 Informal meeting of Ministers responsible for Cohesion Policy V4+Slovenia, Budapest

24-25 June 2010 Meeting of Ministers of Agriculture, V4+Bulgaria+Romania+Slovenia, Visegrád

Recognising that the meetings and dialogues in V4+ formats provide greater weight and visibility, as well as new perspectives for the Visegrad Group, the Hungarian V4 Presidency

organised a number of events extended with third partners (such as the V4+ energy security summit or the extended foreign ministerial meetings etc.). On the other hand, the growing number of V4+ events, as well as the newly expressed requests and initiatives from third countries and multilateral cooperation forms are good signs of our improving reputation.

Since three out of the V4 countries hold the rotating 6-month EU Presidency in 36 months (Czech, Hungarian and Polish), a window of opportunity is available for a more visible Visegrad cooperation. In accordance, Hungary is ready to play a bridge role in the course of her EU Presidency and to keep the relevant issues of the Visegrad Group high on the agenda of the EU. The Visegrad Group will celebrate the 20th anniversary of its existence in 2011. This occasion will provide good opportunity for the Slovak V4 Presidency 2010-2011 to enhance the visibility of the cooperation and further strengthen the proximity to citizens.

FOREIGN POLICY

The Hungarian V4 Presidency Program clearly declared that the cooperation on issues related to the Western Balkans and the Eastern Partnership, as well as promoting their Euro-Atlantic alignment is not only a common interest of the Visegrad countries, but at the same time, a responsibility of the Visegrad Group. In this regard, regions of the Western Balkans and Eastern Partnership were interpreted as two equally important pillars of the V4 foreign policy cooperation in the course of the Hungarian Presidency.

Euro-Atlantic Integration of the Western Balkans

A stable and prosperous Western Balkan region, which is fully integrated into the EU is a common interest of the four countries. The V4 countries agreed and declared in the “Action Plan on the Key Areas of the Presidency of the Visegrad Group 2009-2010” that the main instrument of the stabilization of the Western Balkans is to provide the necessary frameworks for its Euro-Atlantic integration process. The Hungarian Presidency intended to support the Stabilization and Association Process and the priorities set out within European partnership goals with the instruments, programs and experiences of the Visegrad Group.

During this period, the Visegrad Group devoted significant efforts to the region in assisting the reform process and Euro(-Atlantic) integration. In the light of this commitment, an extended Foreign Ministerial meeting of the V4 was organised on 6 October 2009, in

Budapest. We reaffirmed the readiness of V4 – both in group format and as future EU Presidencies – to assist the integration process of the Western Balkans. Foreign Ministers of the V4, Belgium and Spain, including the representatives of the Western Balkans discussed the challenges facing the region regarding EU and NATO integration, as well as the ways and means how to further promote the regional cooperation in the Western Balkans.

Among other programs, an International Conference on Bosnia and Herzegovina was organized by the Hungarian Institute of International Affairs on 5-6 November 2009. Senior Bosnian politicians and experts from Hungary, Bosnia and Herzegovina, as well as from other countries participated in the event.

Eastern Partnership

Bearing in mind the tasks for the coming period of the implementation of the Eastern Partnership, the Hungarian Presidency of the Visegrad Group organized an extended meeting of the Foreign Ministers of the Visegrad Group on 2 March 2010. Besides Foreign Ministers of the V4 countries, diplomatic leaders of Armenia, Azerbaijan, Belarus, Georgia, Moldova, Ukraine, as well as Estonia, Latvia and Lithuania attended the meeting. Apart from the ministers, Spain and Belgium, the other two members of the 2010-2011 Trio Presidency of the Council and Stefan Füle Commissioner also took part in the meeting. The main objective was to find effective ways and means to advance the implementation of the Eastern Partnership, and to express the commitment of the Trio Presidency to keep the issue high on the agenda. The meeting provided good opportunity to share views on how to engage more pro-actively hand in hand with the European Commission in order to strengthen the Eastern Partnership. V4 ministers discussed in particular the contribution of the Visegrad Group to the intensification and strengthening of the Eastern Partnership cooperation.

V4+ Cooperation

During the last few years, the Visegrad Group has become a „trademark” internationally known and acknowledged. The growing number of V4+ events, as well as the newly expressed requests and initiatives from third countries (such as Egypt or Germany) and multilateral cooperation forms (such as GUAM) are good signs of our improving reputation. In almost all branches of our sectoral cooperation are regular V4+ meetings. As for the foreign policy cooperation of the four countries, there were a number of V4+ meetings in the

past few years, e.g. with the Baltic States, the Benelux countries, Bulgaria, Israel, Japan, Nordic Council of Ministers, Romania, Slovenia, Sweden, Ukraine or the United States of America.

The Hungarian Presidency intended to involve third partners on ad hoc basis for the better representation of the common interests. In accordance, a number of foreign policy high level meeting was organised in extended formats: Foreign Ministerial meeting on the Western Balkans (October 2009); Foreign Ministerial meeting on the Eastern Partnership (March 2010); V4+ energy security summit of the Prime Ministers (February 2010). These extended meetings contributed to a stronger representation of the common interests and created new perspectives for the whole Visegrad Cooperation.

Besides the aforementioned V4+ meetings of the Prime Ministers and Foreign Ministers, the most significant V4+ events organised in the course of the Hungarian Presidency are as follows:

- 9-10 September Meeting of Ministers of Agriculture V4 + Bulgaria + Romania, Budapest
- 11-12 September Summit of Presidents V4+Slovenia, Sopot
- 6 October V4 + Japan joint presentation on the financial and economic crisis, Budapest
- 8 October Meeting of Ministers of Defence with the representatives of Bosnia and Herzegovina, Macedonia, Montenegro and Serbia.
- 13-16 October „Green Visegrad” V4+Japan+Belarus+Ukraine workshop on environmental protection and climate change , Tokyo
- 19-20 October Meeting of V4+Israel Political Directors, Budapest
- 5-6 November International conference on Bosnia and Herzegovina, Budapest, with the participation of representatives of the V4 countries, Bosnia and Herzegovina, Croatia and Serbia
- 18 November V4 touristic conference, Moscow
- 26 November Meeting of consuls in V4+Belarus format on visa issues, Minsk
- 29-30 November Meeting of Political Directors in V4+Ukraine format, Kiev
- 8 December Meeting of V4 ambassadors with Yasuaki Tanizaki, the Director-General of the European Affairs Bureau of the Ministry of Foreign Affairs of Japan - Tokyo
- 15 January Meeting of Ministers of Agriculture V4+Bulgaria+Romania, Berlin
- 25 January V4+Benelux consultation of Political Directors on the margin of FAC, Brussels

27-28 January	Meeting of Political Directors in V4+Bosnia-Herzegovina format Sarajevo
1 February	Meeting of Political Directors in V4+Japan format, Tokyo
10 February	Workshop on macro regional strategies (V4+Bulgaria+Romania), Budapest
21 March	V4+Benelux consultation of Political Directors on the margin of FAC, Brussels
22 March	Meeting of V4+B3 consuls - Moscow
24-26 March	Meeting of Ministers of Justice with the representative of Spain, Prague
29 March	Meeting of Ministers of Regional Development V4+Bulgaria+Romania, Budapest
28-29 March	Informal meeting of Ministers responsible for Cohesion Policy of the Visegrad Countries and Slovenia with the European Commissioner for Regional Policy, Budapest
12 April	V4+Japan International Development Cooperation Seminar, Budapest
31 May	Meeting of V4+China on V4-China Investment Forum, Beijing
1 June	Meeting of W. Hague British Foreign Minister with V4+Slovenia, Sarajevo
24-25 June	Meeting of V4+BG+RO+SLO Ministers of Agriculture - Visegrád

SECTORAL POLICIES

Energy Security

Countries of the Visegrad Group are facing similar challenges in the energy sector, and are aware of the utmost importance of the issue of energy security. Energy policy concerns could be better dealt with on the basis of regional cooperation, especially in diversifying the natural gas supply of the countries of Central-, East- and South-East-Europe. Due to the lack of adequate interconnections and limited possibilities of reverse flow among the countries of the region, the development of infrastructure of transmission and storage of natural gas, crude oil and electricity is necessary in order to eliminate barriers in the transmission of energy among the counties in this region and to enable solidarity reaction to crises.

During the Hungarian presidency, an important step forward was the creation of the V4 High Level Energy Working Group, which contributed to an enhanced level of cooperation of V4 countries in the field of energy. The first meeting of the High Level Working Group during the Hungarian V4 Presidency was organized on 6 November in Budapest to discuss the

following topics: development of common V4 co-operation in energy issues, construction of missing north-south interconnectors through the region, as well as the establishing of the planned Croatian and Polish Liquefied Natural Gas (LNG) terminals. The working group effectively contributed to the preparation of the V4+ Energy Security Summit, held in Budapest, on 24 February, 2010. The summit was attended by high ranking representatives from countries of Central-, East-, South-East-Europe and important international stakeholders. Following the initiative of the V4 states, the declaration of the Summit was co-signed by several Central-East European countries. In addition to the V4 countries, co-signatories of the declaration were Austria, Bosnia and Herzegovina, Bulgaria, Croatia, Romania, Serbia, and Slovenia as well.

Participants decided to further discuss the ways of improving the energy security situation of our countries and to adopt the necessary measures which may help weaken the impacts of any possible disruption of supply in the future. They expressed their support to strengthen cooperation in further integrating their gas networks, including the Southern Corridor and the Nabucco Project as well as the North-South transportation corridor through the region, the planned Croatian and Polish Liquefied Natural Gas terminals and the NETS project. Participants declared their willingness to provide support for the missing interconnectors, including joint efforts for a higher allocation of EU financial resources to all projects with the potential of increasing the energy security of the region. “Ad hoc” working groups will be set up on expert level on different projects such as the North-South corridor, regional interconnectors, energy supply security policy harmonization, LNG, etc. The main tasks of the working groups should be to prepare concrete proposals for implementation and to better coordinate our cooperation on these fields. Cooperation of energy companies of the region will also be further encouraged. Signatories also agreed to strengthen the region’s energy security with a strong and uniform demand towards the existing EU TEN-E funding on common projects as well as to continue their concerted efforts within the framework of the new EU Energy Security and Infrastructure Instrument.

Regional and Cohesion Policy

In the field of regional development, a common spatial development document of the V4+2 countries (hereinafter common document) has been elaborated as a result of the cooperation of six countries (Bulgaria, the Czech Republic, Hungary, Poland, Romania and Slovakia). The

objective of the document is to contribute to the coordination of spatial development; more precisely, it deals with the solution of no-continuations of so-called development poles and development axes, as well as coherent transport networks.

The preparation of the common document was realised through the steering group, composed of the representatives of the six ministries responsible for spatial development, and further on within the framework of the respective working group. During the elaboration of the Common document, seven meetings of the steering group were held, including the ones organised by Hungary in Budapest (October 2008 and February 2010) and the one in Prague during the Hungarian V4 presidency (December 2009).

The common document, which was adopted by V4+2 ministers responsible for spatial planning at their meeting organised in Budapest on 29 March 2010, is the groundwork for the update of the national spatial development documents but also of regional development and development of transport networks. In the future, the adopted document can be utilized as groundwork for the activities of V4+2 countries on the European level.

However the main goal has been achieved, the adoption of the common document raised new questions and posed additional requirements, such as the need of the withdrawal of barriers in spatial development and its coordination with the goal of strengthening the spatial cohesion of the European territory. In accordance, ministers at their meeting in Budapest in March 2010 agreed that the cooperation needs to be continued and extended in order to strengthen the inner cohesion and to deepen the EU integration of the V4+2 countries. Ministers also agreed that the co-operation may be extended to other neighbouring states in the future.

Social Affairs

The Hungarian Presidency of the Visegrad Group put special emphasis on social affairs and facilitated the cooperation, as well as the exchange of knowledge and experience on different social issues relevant both to the V4 and the EU. Demographic ageing and the enhancement of Roma inclusion are all currently high on the agenda of the European Union. This ensured a special synergy and fostered the strengthened cooperation in these fields among V4 countries.

As regards demographic challenges, the Hungarian Presidency organized two conferences with a view to raise awareness, enhance exchange of good practices and experiences. The International Conference on Ageing Society with almost 500 participants provided an

excellent opportunity to share best practices, including, for example, the Hungarian Awards for the Elderly-Friendly Local Government.

Central-European Roma Strategy

Hungary launched a discussion aiming at creating a Central-European Roma Strategy in the course of her presidency. The primary goal was to improve the mutual learning in the field of Roma issues among the countries concerned. The Central-European Roma Strategy should consider international platforms, as well as their experiences especially the Decade of Roma Inclusion Programme and the EU Roma Platform.

During the first meeting of a new cooperative platform, the High Level V4 Roma Integration Working Group (September 2009), the partners agreed to work jointly on a Central-European Roma Strategy. Based on a draft submitted by Hungary, the partners managed to define the priorities and the main activities related to the integration of Roma. The agreed primary goal was to improve the mutual learning on Roma integration in Central Europe and thus to provide a good example of tackling Roma issues at EU level. Further consultations are expected during the Slovak V4 Presidency.

Health Issues

During the Hungarian Presidency, on 24 November 2009, a V4+Slovenia meeting of the Ministers of Healthcare was organised in Budapest. Participants discussed the situation of that time, the emerging problems, governmental measures and the further possibilities of cooperation on the issue of A(H1N1) influenza pandemic. V4 representatives also reviewed a number of issues being high on the agenda of the European Union (e.g. a directive proposal on the application of patient's rights in cross-border healthcare) and the possibilities of cross-border cooperation among the V4 countries and Slovenia. On the margin of the meeting, ministers were briefly informed on the healthcare priorities of the EU Trio Presidency of Spain, Belgium and Hungary.

A V4 Expert Meeting on Environmental Health was organised by the Hungarian National Institute of Environmental Health in February 2010. Environmental health status, main priorities and problems were discussed paying particular attention to the document endorsed on the 4th European Ministerial Conference on Environment and Health (Budapest, 2004), as

well as to the four regional goals of the Children's Environment and Health Action Plan for Europe (CEHAPE) (such as assessment of drinking and bathing water, assessment of outdoor and indoor air situation, prevention of injuries, reduction of exposure to UV-radiation and lead). As a result of the meeting, recommendations on the most important tasks for the future were made.

Agriculture and Rural Development

On the basis of the previously defined goals, Ministers for Agriculture of the Visegrad Group countries, together with their Bulgarian and Romanian counterparts, held a meeting in Budapest on the 9-10 September 2009 to discuss the problems of the dairy market, the prevention of the abuse of dominant position of the supermarket chains and the future of the post-2013 CAP. The ministers concluded that these problems shall not be solved at member state-level but at European level. On the margin of the meeting, a declaration was adopted emphasising that regarding the future CAP, the Warsaw Agreement (2009) should be taken into account. Since problems of the milk market aggravated in the last period, ministers agreed in Budapest that measures must be taken on European level by the Commission and the Council in order to find an effective solution to the problem. The V4 jointly expressed these views both in the Council meetings and in the High Level Group on Milk. This position was highlighted in a common declaration as well.

During the Hungarian Presidency, the Visegrad countries developed cooperation and jointly expressed their common interest in the Agriculture and Fisheries Council meetings, in the 133. Committee, as well as in the Management Committee meetings in case of:

- negotiations on the Free Trade Agreement proposals between the EU and Ukraine;
- the “Abbatimento” import tariff quota to Spain and Portugal;
- sweet corn quota (PAPS quota Nr3);
- TRQ Apple juice concession.

The European Commission was requested (via a declaration as well) to put forward proposals to solve the existing problems.

Environmental Protection

Regarding environmental issues, Hungary mainly built on the achievements of previous V4 presidencies, while compiling her Presidency Program.

The 16th annual meeting of V4 Environmental Ministers was convened in Cracow on 9-10 July 2009 (however this meeting was scheduled for the period of the Hungarian Presidency, the host was the previous chairmanship). During the meeting the following issues were discussed: EU Directive on Ambient Air Quality and Clean Air for Europe Program; cross-border problems of waste management and illegal waste shipments; proposal for a new EU directive on waste electrical and electronic equipment; status and significance of nature conservation including Natura 2000 sites in the discussion on the future of the Common Agricultural Policy (CAP) after 2013; experiences on municipal waste incineration. Ministers exchanged views on the substantive preparations for the 15th Session of the Conference of the Parties to the United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change and the 5th Meeting of the Parties to the Kyoto Protocol, as well as on the International Environmental Governance processes. During the meeting, the Czech Republic presented a proposal for a joint project between V4 countries and the US Environmental Protection Agency, “Exchange of experience and information on compliance and enforcement – EU and US approach”, under the umbrella of the International Network for Environmental Compliance and Enforcement (INECE) Network. All the V4 countries expressed their intention to financially contribute to and take part in the project, expected to be launched in the second half of 2010.

In the organisation of the Japanese Foreign Ministry, a V4+Japan workshop was held on environmental and climate issues on 13-16 October 2009 in Tokyo. Representatives of Ukraine and Belarus were also invited to the meeting.

In accordance with the original plans indicated in the Hungarian V4 Presidency Programme, an expert level meeting on flood issues was held in Budapest in November 2009. The meeting focused on the implementation experiences of the EU Directive on the Assessment and Management of Flood Risks, ongoing projects and the presentation of the recent research results with particular reference to the flood hazard mapping and flood risk mapping.

On 18-19 February 2010, the Hungarian National Institute of Environmental Health in cooperation with the Ministry of Environment and Water and the Ministry of Health, organised a V4 expert meeting on environmental health. The meeting aimed to discuss the

ways of implementation of the Environmental and Health Information System in the V4 countries.

Economic and Financial Matters

Economic issues

One of the main goals of the Hungarian V4 Presidency regarding sectoral co-operation was to increase cross-border activities of SMEs, to reduce their administrative burdens and to create a framework for better cluster cooperation in the V4 region. The objectives set out in these areas were achieved as a result of the V4 Economic Ministerial Meeting held in Budapest on 26 November 2009. Participants of the meeting signed a Memorandum of Understanding on Cooperation in the field of Cluster Development of the V4 Countries, which gave strong political support for the realisation of joint EU funded cluster development projects. As a result of the Memorandum, a joint application was submitted in the framework of the Central Europe Programme in May 2010, together with V4 countries plus Germany, Italy and Slovenia. Regarding the necessity of reducing administrative burdens of SMEs, participants of the meeting signed a Joint Declaration in which they encouraged cooperation between the competent authorities of V4 countries through exchange of experience on methods for measuring and reducing administrative burdens such as the Standard Cost Model (SCM).

Transportation

In the field of the transportation sector, the Hungarian Presidency focused on maintaining and improving good cooperation of V4 partners in issues of common interest, also promoting the exchange of experiences in technical fields. A continuous exchange of information was maintained between ministries responsible for transport.

V4 transport ministries pursued coordination in order to create a common position on the future development of transport infrastructure in the region, with special attention to the Trans-European Transport Network Policy (TEN-T) review. This issue was also discussed on the meeting of V4 State Secretaries responsible for transport, held in Budapest.

On 2-3 September 2009, the V4 Working Group on Combined Transport held its regular meeting in Budapest. During the meeting, V4 countries informed (statistical data, terminals,

future plans, service charges, state aid) each other on their combined transport activities. The V4 countries agreed on continuing this kind of exchange of information in the future.

Education and Culture

The Hungarian Ministry of Education and Culture put special emphasis on the coming 20th anniversary of the Visegrad Group during the 2009-2010 presidential term. Therefore, in February 2010, V4 Ministers of Culture discussed the issue in Budapest and agreed that a list of programmes will be compiled by late summer 2010.

Regarding both educational and cultural programs, undertakings have been reached during the Hungarian Presidency. The preparation to the EU presidency of two V4 countries added a special aspect to the Hungarian V4 presidential role.

The V4 Ministers of Culture underlined the importance of deepening the cooperation with particular attention to the number of joint projects, as well as the development of cultural infrastructure, protection of cultural heritage and implementation of cultural programmes relating to the utilisation of EU funds in the cultural sector. The need to work out a common strategy of V4 countries was emphasised in order to strengthen the position of culture in the next period of 2014-2020. Ministers agreed that a special strategy is required to provide broad access to culture, which is for the individuals mainly determined by their social and financial status. Ministers also agreed that significant attention should be paid to the civil sector. Emphasis on shared experiences in the ongoing projects of European Capital of Culture was welcomed by all V4 countries.

A special V4 workshop was dedicated to the goals and experiences related to the realisation of the European funds/Structural Funds. As a result of this event, a new project “Follow up V4 Events on EU Funds” was initiated for the term of the Slovak V4 Presidency. Synergy of education and culture through the programme for Life Long Learning, protection of cultural heritage for sustainable development, culture in the convergence regions, as well as sustainability of projects after the end of the funding period were in the focus of the discussions and the analyses.

As part of the strategic goals in the field of education, the Hungarian Presidency focused its activities on different aspects of the lifelong learning programme. Exchange of knowledge and experiences in the field of inclusive education, as well as implementation of national lifelong learning strategies (LLL) in the V4 countries were most welcomed in March 2010.

Justice and Home Affaires

Being a special area, Justice and Home Affairs have a rich structure of international and regional cooperation. In this regard, besides the EU, V4 countries cooperate within other relevant frames, such as the Salzburg Forum or the Budapest Process. V4 has also several extended forms of meetings like the annual V4+Austria workshops on extremism.

Cooperation of V4 countries is not limited to purely political level but practical day to day work of first line officers is also included.

Border management

The Hungarian V4 Presidency organized the annual meeting of heads/experts of border policing units in June 2010 with the aim of reviewing the border policing system from the aspect of operating as a Schengen member state, on the basis of practical experience.

The main topics of the meeting were as follows:

- possible joint activities in third countries;
- international cooperation among the states involved;
- cooperation on controlling and guarding external borders;
- compensatory measures within the country and at the internal borders;
- intensification of the cooperation in EU working groups.

E-justice

The 11th V4 Justice Ministerial Meeting took place on 24-26 March 2010 in Prague. The main topics were criminal liability of legal persons, electronic house arrest, e-justice, and the proposal on European Protection Order. On the margin of this meeting, Hungarian and Polish delegations signed a high level Memorandum of Understanding on justice cooperation with regard to the subsequent EU presidencies of the two countries. On this basis, they will hold expert and high level meetings on presidency priorities and exchange information on the training of experts and on presidency experiences. The Memorandum will provide smooth transition between the two trio presidencies.

Tourism

The cooperation of the V4 countries in tourism under the common logo “*The European Quartet – One Melody*” is successfully developing since 2004. The main aim of the

Hungarian V4 Presidency was to strengthen the tourism cooperation both in the areas of tourism marketing by involving new markets into joint promotion and tourism diplomacy through reinforced cooperation in international organisations and regular exchange of tourism related issues between the member states.

Tourism marketing co-operation

Hungary organized three meetings where the implemented programs for 2009 were reported and evaluated, furthermore, the new marketing plan and budget for 2010 was defined and approved. The V4 countries decided to spend EUR 328,500 in 2010 for joint marketing promotion. During the marketing meetings, representatives of the V4 countries reinforced their commitment to increase tourism flow from the third, especially overseas, countries to the Visegrad Countries, by elaborating joint marketing plans, as well as organizing joint marketing activities on these markets. The Parties agreed to increase the marketing and promotional activities in the People's Republic of China, Japan, the USA and the Asian part of the Russian Federation. Furthermore, they agreed to make initial joint promotional steps on new Asian and South American markets, more specifically, in India and Brazil. The Parties also agreed to carry out intensive work in 2010 to renew the common website (www.european-quartet.com) and its language versions in English, Japanese, Chinese and Russian. The specific actions and budgets in the different markets are detailed in the 2010 marketing plan that was approved by the heads of the National Tourist Offices and was supported by the State Secretaries responsible for tourism.

Tourism diplomacy co-operation

Hungary organised in February 2010 a V4 Tourism State Secretary Meeting which was also attended by the General Directors of the National Tourist Offices of the member countries. The V4 State Secretaries expressed their satisfaction with the intensive tourism cooperation among the Visegrad Countries and supported the joint tourism marketing plan for 2010. They exchanged views on the negative impact of the world economic slowdown on the tourism sector, the recent results of tourism development and the perspectives of tourism recovery in their respective countries. The parties also discussed the experience of their countries as regards the EU tourism sustainability agenda. The state secretaries of the V4 countries agreed to continue to meet regularly in order to exchange information concerning tourism related activities, strengthen their mutual relations, as well as exchanging knowledge about the latest tourism developments. The Parties also agreed to establish expert level cooperation in the

international tourism organisations, like the World Tourism Organization (UNWTO), EU Tourism Advisory Committee and the OECD Tourism Committee. Hungary offered to represent the joint interests of the Parties through its membership in the Executive Council of the UNWTO.

Defence Policy

Based on the Defence Policy priorities set out in the Program of the Hungarian Presidency of the Visegrad Group, the Hungarian Ministry of Defence organised several high and expert level meetings and working groups which led to concrete results on a number of areas.

The meeting of Defence Policy Director in Budapest, on 2 September 2009 provided an opportunity to discuss and harmonize the position of V4 countries on the new NATO Strategic Concept. During the 8 October 2010 meeting of Ministers of Defence, V4+Ukraine cooperation was further discussed, as well as V4+Western-Balkans relations. The Ukrainian, Macedonian, Serbian, Montenegrin, and Bosnian Ministers of Defence were invited to the meeting. NATO and EU integration process of the participating countries, and possible V4 contribution were discussed and examined in detail. The national positions on the new NATO Strategic Concept were also exchanged. It was decided that a Strategic Concept working group was to be set up based on V4 delegations to NATO.

Within the framework of a temporary V4 working group led by Hungary, the possibility of establishing an EU battle group of the V4 countries beyond 2015 was investigated. The feasibility study developed by the working group was discussed by the V4 Chiefs of Defence Staffs at their meeting on 21-22 June 2010, afterwards submitted to the V4 Defence Ministers for their consideration during the forthcoming ministerial meeting during the Slovak V4 Presidency period.

The V4 National Armaments Directors meeting was held on 8th December 2009. Directors agreed on the establishment of several expert level working groups (Chemical Biological Radiological Nuclear – CBRN – Working Group, 21st Century Soldier Working Group, Air Defence Working Group, Strategic Airlift Working Group).

CALENDAR OF THE HUNGARIAN PRESIDENCY OF THE VISEGRAD GROUP
June 2009 – July 2010

1 July	Meeting of experts of regional development - Warsaw
1 July	Meeting of V4 ambassadors: information on the Program of the V4 Presidency – Tallinn
1-2 July	Meeting of Ministers of Regional Development - Sopot
7 July	Meeting of V4 ambassadors: information on the Program of the V4 Presidency – Moscow
8 July	V4 Round Table Conference - Krakow (organized by Warsaw)
9-10 July	Meeting of Ministers of Environment - Krakow
16 July	Meeting of V4 ambassadors: information on the Program of the V4 Presidency – Stockholm
17 July	Meeting of V4 diplomats; topic: foreign policy of USA – the Hague
29 July	Introduction of album: "Architecture V4 – 1989-2008" – Prague
2 September	Meeting of Directors of Defence - Budapest
2 September	Meeting of V4 ambassadors with the foreign policy advisor of the president – Warsaw
2-3 September	Meeting of Combined Transport Working Groups - Budapest
3 September	Meeting of V4 ambassadors: information on the Program of the V4 Presidency – Madrid
4 September	Meeting of V4 diplomats with the president of the Organisation for the Prohibition of Chemical Weapons (OPCW) – the Hague
7 September	Meeting of V4 diplomats with EU-integration Head of Unit of MFA – the Hague
7-17 September	Exhibition "Liberté et Démocratie" – Paris
8 September	Meeting of V4 ambassadors with President Danilo Türk – Ljubljana
9-10 September	Meeting of Ministers of Agriculture V4+Bulgaria+Romania - Budapest
9-10 September	Donor Coordination conference on the possible V4 cooperation in Serbia - Bratislava
10 September	Meeting of V4 Deputy Heads of Mission: information on the Program of the V4 Presidency – Bern
11-12 September	Meeting of V4+Slovenia Presidents – Sopot
13-15 September	Meeting of Heads of Parliamentary Committees on European Affaires - Liptószentmiklós
15 September	Meeting V4 Political Directors (on the margin of GAERC) - Brussels
16 September	Meeting of National Coordination Units of European Network for Rural Development - Budapest
16 September	Meeting of V4 ambassadors: information on the Program of the V4 Presidency – Zagreb
16 September	Concert: "Liszt and his contemporaries" – Prague
17-21 September	First V4 touristic road show - Suzdal, Kostroma, Yaroslavl and Moscow
18 September	Meeting of V4 experts, topic: Western Balkans, preparation of the Foreign Ministerial Meeting held on 6 October - Budapest
21-25 September	CEU-project I. – Belgrade
22 September	Meeting of V4 ambassadors with Deputy Foreign Minister Tomáš Pojár – Prague

23 September	Meeting of V4 Political Directors (on the margin of the UN General Assembly) - New York
23 September	Meeting of V4 Deputy Heads of Mission – Vienna
24 September	Meeting of V4 High Level Group on Roma Integration - Budapest
24 September	Meeting of V4 ambassadors – Vienna, OSCE
25 September	Information session for V4 about NATO’s Strategic Concept – London
27 Sept –30 Nov	Visegrad Days cultural festival – Katowice
28 September	Meeting of V4 ambassadors; topic: European Perspective of Western Balkans – Madrid
28-30 September	International Conference on Aging Society - Budapest
29 September	V4 trade development conference – Teheran
29 September	Meeting of V4 ambassadors; topic: cooperation between zoos – Brasilia city
29 September	Meeting of V4 ambassadors; topic: Western Balkans – Madrid
30 Sept –2 Oct	Meeting of V4 parliamentary libraries - Prague
30 September	Meeting of V4 diplomats with NATO Head of Unit of MFA – the Hague
1 October	Meeting of V4 diplomats with Head of Unit in charge of international finance in the Finance Ministry – the Hague
1 October	Meeting of V4 ambassadors with Foreign Minister Antonio Milosozski – Skopje
1-2 October	EU-Schengen Consulate Conference and meeting of V4 consuls - Budapest
6 October	V4 Foreign Ministerial Meeting extended with the 2010-2011 EU Presidency Trio and Western Balkan Partners – Budapest
5-6 October	Meeting of Parliamentary Committees on parliamentary immunity - Častá Papiernicka (SK)
6 October	V4+Japan joint presentation on the financial and economic crisis - Budapest
6 October	Conference – Brasilia City
7 October	Meeting of V4 OPCW diplomats – the Hague
7 October	Meeting of V4 ambassadors – Stockholm
8 October	Meeting of Ministers of Defence - Budapest
8 October	Meeting of State Secretaries of European Affairs - Budapest
8 October	Meeting of V4 diplomats, topic: EU integration and development – Belgrade
12 October	Meeting of V4 ambassadors – Minsk
12-13 October	Cooperation of V4 Courts of Auditors - Bratislava
13 October	Meeting of V4 diplomats, topic: COWEB - Brussels
13-16 October	„Green Visegrad” V4+Japan+Belarus+Ukraine workshop on environmental protection and climate change - Tokyo
14 October	Information session for V4 Deputy Heads of Mission – Zagreb
14 October	Meeting of V4 consuls – Stockholm
14 October	Meeting of V4 Deputy Heads of Mission – London
15 October	Meeting of V4 OPCW diplomats – the Hague
15 October	Meeting of V4 ambassadors – Stockholm
15 October	Meeting of V4 ambassadors – Madrid
15.-18 October	Central-European Film Festival – Prague
16 October	V4 touristic workshop – Budapest
16 October	Meeting of V4 ambassadors – Sarajevo

19-20 October	Meeting of V4+Israel Political Directors – Budapest
19-20 October	V4+Bulgaria+Romania expert meeting on irregularities related to public procurement
21 October	International Fair – Katowice
22 October	„Visegrad Salon” program – Bratislava
26 October	Meeting of V4 ambassadors – Oslo
26 October	Meeting of EU counsellors – London
27 October	Meeting of experts, topic: regional development and planning – Bratislava
29 October	Meeting of V4 Prime Ministers on the margin of European Council - Brussels
2 November	Meeting of V4 COEST delegations
2 November	Celebration of the 20th anniversary of the fall of the Iron Curtain – London
3-4 November	Meeting of Visegrad Countries Tourism Working Groups – Bükfürdő
4 November	Exhibition of Central-European Cultural Platform in Göteborg – Stockholm
4 November	Meeting of V4 ambassadors with minister of defence Ljubica Jelusic – Ljubljana
5 November	Meeting of V4 Deputy Heads of Mission and consuls – Brasilia City
5-6 November	International conference on Bosnia and Herzegovina – Budapest
5-6 November	Meeting of presidents of Courts of Auditors – Zakopane, Poland
6 November	Meeting of High Level Group on Energy Security – Budapest
9 November	Lectures held by V4+DE ambassadors – Skopje
9 November	Exhibition „Breaking the walls” – Skopje
9 Nov- 4 Dec	Exhibition “Velvet Revolution” – Paris
13 November	Meeting of V4 ambassadors – Ankara
14 November	V4 trade development conference – Teheran
16 November	Meeting of V4 ambassadors with the foreign policy advisor of the president Budimir Loncar – Zagreb
16-17 November	Meeting of State Secretaries of International Development Cooperation – Brussels
16-17 November	Meeting of experts of environmental protection; topic: flood risk – Budapest
17 November	Meeting of V4 ambassadors – Warsaw
17 Nov-22 Dec	International Visegrad Fund: Roma Program – fact finding trip - Hungary
18 November	V4 touristic conference – Moscow
18 November	V4 cultural event – Minsk
18 November	Meeting of V4 ambassadors – Abuja
18-19 November	Meeting of heads of department in charge of fight against organised crime - Bratislava
19 November	Meeting with the Secretary General of the Council of Europe – Strasbourg
19 November	Meeting of V4 Deputy Heads of Mission – Vienna, OSCE
20 November	Meeting of V4 diplomats, topic: OPCW – the Hague
23 November	Meeting of V4 diplomats – Moscow
23 November	Meeting of V4 Deputy Heads of Mission – Vienna
23 November	Meeting of V4 ambassadors – Athens
23-27 November	Meeting against extremism – National Bureau of Investigation – Prague

24 November	Meeting of Ministers of Healthcare – Budapest
24 November	Meeting of V4 ambassadors – the Hague
24 November	Meeting of V4 ambassadors – Stockholm
24 November	Meeting of V4 ambassadors – London
24 November	Meeting of V4 ambassadors – Bucharest
26 November	Meeting of Ministers of Economy – Budapest
26 November	Meeting of cluster businessmen – Ostrava
26 November	Meeting of consuls in V4+Belarus format on visa issues – Minsk
26 November	Meeting of V4 sport leaders – Tata, Hungary
26 November	Meeting of V4 ambassadors – Belgrade
26 November	Meeting of V4 consuls – Abuja
26 November	Meeting of V4 ambassadors – Nicosia
26 November	Meeting of V4 diplomats – London
26-27 November	V4 conference – Paris
27 November	Meeting of V4 ambassadors with the State Secretary – Athens
27 November	Meeting of V4 diplomats with the ambassador at large – the Hague
27 November	Meeting of V4 ambassadors – Copenhagen
29-30 November	Meeting of Political Directors V4+Ukraine - Kiev
2-4 December	V4 Workshop on use of EU cultural funds – Budapest
4 December	V4 cultural event – Moscow
4 December	Meeting of V4 ambassadors – Oslo
4 December	Meeting of V4 ambassadors – Madrid
4 December	Meeting of V4 diplomats – London
7-11 December	“Visegrad Week” events - Rabat
8 December	Meeting of V4 National Armament Directors - Budapest
8 December	Experts meeting in the field of regional planning – Prague
8 December	„Visegrad Salon” events – Bratislava
8 December	Meeting of V4 ambassadors with Yasuaki Tanizaki, the Director-General of the European Affairs Bureau of the Ministry of Foreign Affairs of Japan - Tokyo
8 December	Outreach program - Zrenjanin/Nagybecskerek (Serbia)
8 December	V4 reception – Minsk
9 December	V4 press conference – Belgrade
9 December	CEU-project II. – Belgrade
9 December	Meeting of V4 diplomats – Athens
10 December	Visegrad business meeting – Rabat
15 December	V4 trade development conference – Teheran
16 December	Meeting of V4 ambassadors – Nicosia
17 December	Meeting of V4 Deputy Heads of Mission – Zagreb
17 December	Meeting of V4 consuls – the Hague
22 December	Meeting of V4 Deputy Heads of Mission – Tokyo
11-12 January	Meeting of representatives of V4 marketing organisations – Budapest
14 January	Meeting of V4 Deputy Heads of Mission – Washington
15 January	Meeting of Ministers of Agriculture V4+Bulgaria, Romania – Berlin
18 January	Meeting of V4 ambassadors – London
18 January	Meeting of V4 ambassadors – Warsaw
19-20 January	V4+France+Portugal+Slovenia conference: Feasibility of integrated development

20 January	Meeting of V4 Deputy Heads of Mission – Vienna, OSCE
21 January	Meeting of V4 ambassadors and European Movement – Belgrade
21 January	Meeting of V4 ambassadors – Brasilia City
25 January	V4+Benelux consultation of Political Directors on the margin of FAC meeting, Brussels
25 January	Meeting of V4 ambassadors – Nairobi
25 January	Meeting of V4 ambassadors – Warsaw
26 January	Meeting of V4+Russia OPCW diplomats – the Hague
26-27 January	V4 conference and book presentation – Bratislava
27 January	Meeting of V4 diplomats, topic: Copenhagen Climate Conference 1 – the Hague
27 January	Meeting of V4 diplomats – Rome
27 January	Meeting of V4 ambassadors – Sarajevo
27-28 January	Meeting of V4+Bosnia-Herzegovina Political Directors - Sarajevo
1 February	Meeting of V4+Japan Political Directors - Tokyo
1 February	Meeting of V4 ambassadors – Stockholm
1 February	„V4 regions and capitals” exhibition – Ljubljana
1 February	Meeting of V4 ambassadors – Belgrade
2 February	V4 expert meeting on security policy issues (heads of department) – Budapest
2 February	Meeting of V4 diplomats – Damascus
3 February	Meeting of V4 Deputy Heads of Mission – Zagreb
3 February	V4 High Level Group on Energy Security meeting – Budapest
3 February	V4 charity concert – Ottawa
4 February	Meeting of V4 ambassadors with Political Director of the Austrian MFA – Vienna
4-5 February	Meeting of V4 Ministers of Culture and Education – Budapest
4 February	V4 music program (Erkel and Chopin) - Budapest
5 February	Meeting of V4 ambassadors - Nicosia
8 February	V4 exhibition and book exhibition – Hanoi
9 February	Meeting of V4 ambassadors – Moscow
10 February	Workshop on macro regional strategies (V4+Bulgaria+Romania) – Budapest
10 February	Meeting of V4 diplomats – Brasilia City
15 February	Meeting of V4 ambassadors – Cape Town
16 February	Meeting of V4 ambassadors with President Gjorge Ivanov – Skopje
16 February	Meeting of PSC ambassadors – Brussels
16 February	Meeting of V4 ambassadors – Vatican
17 February	Meeting of V4 Spokespersons/Press Departments and/or Public Diplomacy Departments – Budapest
17-18 February	Meeting of State Secretaries of Tourism and the heads of marketing organisations - Budapest
18-19 February	V4 expert meeting on environmental health information system - Budapest
22-24 February	V4 expert meeting of general military staff
23-24 February	Meeting of Administrative and Regional Development Committees of V4 Parliaments - Krakow
23 February	Meeting of V4 ambassadors with Andreja Jerina, State Secretary at the Government Office for Development and European Affairs – Ljubljana

24 February	V4+ regional energy security summit of the Prime Ministers - Budapest
24 February	Meeting of European Affairs Committees of V4 Parliaments - Budapest
26 February	Meeting of V4 ambassadors – Nicosia
29 February	Meeting of V4 diplomats – the Hague
2 March	V4+ Foreign Ministerial meeting on Eastern Partnership – Budapest
3 March	V4 meeting on Roma Integration Strategy – Geneva
3 March	Meeting of V4 diplomats - the Hague
4 March	Meeting of V4 ambassadors – Bucharest
8 March	Meeting of V4 ambassadors with Jean-Arthur Regibeau political director - Brussels
10-12 March	Interregional workshop – Tbilisi
18 March	Meeting of V4 Permanent Foreign Secretaries – Budapest
18 March	Meeting of V4 Strategic Transport Working Group - Budapest
19 March	Meeting of V4 diplomats - the Hague
21 March	V4+Benelux consultation of Political Directors on the margin of FAC meeting - Brussel
22 March	Meeting of V4+B3 consuls - Moscow
23 March	Meeting of V4 State Secretaries of transport - Budapest
23 March	Meeting of V4 consuls – Stockholm
24-26 March	Meeting of Ministers of Justice - Prague
25 March	Opening of Visegrad House – Cape Town
29 March	Meeting of V4+Bulgaria+Romania Ministers of Regional Development - Budapest,
29 March	Meeting of V4 ambassadors – Riga
28-29 March	Informal meeting of Ministers responsible for Cohesion Policy of the Visegrad Countries and Slovenia with the European Commissioner for Regional Policy - Budapest
29-30 March	V4 experts workshop on education: experiences of inclusive education, Budapest
30 March	Meeting of V4 ambassadors with journalists of „Économie Entreprise” - Rabat
12 April	V4+Japan – International Development Cooperation Seminar – Budapest
13-14 April	V4 meeting of 21 st Century Soldier Working Group – Budapest
13-14 April	V4 meeting of Air Defence Working Group – Budapest
13-14 April	V4 meeting of CBRN Working Group – Budapest
20-21 April	Crimea visit of DHoMs of V4 Embassies in Ukraine
22 April	Meeting of V4 consuls - Madrid
28 April	V4 conference – UNESCO, Paris
29-30 April	V4 High-level meeting on the role of cohesion policy in the member states' economic policies - Budapest
5 May	V4 Out Reach Program - Bor (SRB)
16-18 May	Meeting of Chiefs of Staff
18 May	Meeting of V4 ambassadors with Kouvelisz Deputy Minister of Foreign Affaires – Athens
27 May	Meeting of V4 Head of Consular Departments – Budapest
27 May	Meeting of V4 diplomats - the Hague

31 May	Meeting of V4+China on V4-China Investment Forum – Beijing
31 May	Meeting of V4 diplomats on economic issues- Bucharest
1 June	Meeting of W. Hague British Foreign Minister with V4+Slovenia – Sarajevo
1 June	Meeting of V4 ambassadors with foreign policy editor of Aftenposten – Oslo
1-2 June	V4 expert-level meeting on Financial Management and Audit – Visegrád
3 June	Meeting of V4 +B3 ambassadors + ambassadors of other EU member states neighbouring the Western Balkans – the Hague
7 June	Meeting of V4 ambassadors – Athens
7 June	Meeting of V4 consuls – Athens
11 June	Meeting of V4 ambassadors – Moscow
21 June	Meeting of V4 ambassadors – Berlin
21-22 June	V4 Meeting of Chiefs of Defence Staffs - Budapest
24-25 June	Meeting of V4+BG+RO+SLO Ministers of Agriculture – Visegrád
25 June	Meeting of V4 ambassadors – Belgrade
25 June	Meeting of V4 diplomats, topic: OPCW – the Hague
25 June	V4 Out Reach Program – Zenta (SRB)
29 June	Meeting of V4 National Armaments Directors – Budapest
29 June	V4 expert-level meeting on reducing the administrative burden on enterprises – Budapest
30 June	Meeting of PSC ambassadors – Brussels
30 June-2 July	Meeting of Visegrad Countries Tourism Working Groups - Nagyszombat
20 July	Summit of V4 Prime Ministers