

**JOINT STATEMENT
OF THE VISEGRAD GROUP PRIME MINISTERS**

(Warsaw, 5 November 2008)

The Prime Ministers of the Czech Republic, the Republic of Hungary, the Republic of Poland and the Republic of Slovakia gathered in Warsaw, on 5th November 2008,

tightening good cooperation between their countries,
bearing in mind the challenges which the European Union is going to face in next months,
declaring their readiness to look for common position on crucial issues,
wishing to give voice of full commitment and responsibility for the European Union's
development

have agreed as follows:

I

1. The current financial crisis exposed deficiencies of the global financial system. The Prime Ministers welcome efforts aiming at redefining the financial architecture in order to make it more effective and transparent.
2. The Prime Ministers support dialogue within the European Union and on the international level concerning the initiatives aimed at enhancing financial stability. At the same time the Prime Ministers are concerned with the risks which may potentially undermine the consistency of multilateral dialogue in this respect and which concentrate policy decisions in a limited circle of countries. The Prime Ministers expect that initiatives aiming to reform the international financial system will be first of all carefully discussed and prepared within the EU.
3. The recent turbulences in the financial markets make it indispensable to strengthen the supervision of the European financial sector. The Hungarian proposal first presented in February this year was a good starting point for discussion. The Prime Ministers eagerly await the outcome of the EU's High Level Group work in this field.
4. An efficient supervision of cross border groups should not have adverse effect on effectiveness of national financial supervisors, including the need to have balanced competences and responsibilities between home and host supervisors. It is also

necessary to ensure that the sufficient capital is kept locally by each financial institution in order to ensure both the local and cross-border financial stability.

5. The financial crisis showed clearly that there is a need for further intensification of the structural reforms indispensable for the attainment of the Lisbon Strategy and Stability and Growth Pact targets. The Prime Ministers share the opinion that an economic slowdown cannot be an excuse for a more relaxed fiscal policy.
6. Acknowledging the need for speedy and flexible action by the EU in tackling the crisis, the Prime Ministers reiterate their support for the Commission's implementation of the rules on competition policy, particularly State aids, while continuing to apply the principles of the single market and the system of State aids.
7. The Prime Ministers will consider the proposal of the Slovak Republic to establish Visegrad Development Bank to stimulate the regional cooperation in strategic projects financing (i.e. in energy sector).

II

1. The Prime Ministers fully support the EU's objective to reduce CO2 emissions, however they underline that that ambitious reduction aims, set at the European Council in March 2007, have to be pursuing – especially in the face of financial crisis - in the way which minimize their negative influence on the society and the economy. All accepted solutions should be suitable for all European economy sectors and for all Member States.
2. The Prime Ministers take a position that specific situation of Member States, including the level of economic development, should be taken into account. It should be recognized in the final compromise that the Czech Republic, Hungary, Slovakia and Poland have already reduced significantly greenhouse gas emission in accordance with the Kyoto Protocol obligations.
3. The Prime Ministers share the position that complex character of the climate – energy package requires consensus decision about its final shape.

III

1. The Prime Ministers consider important that the particular energy supply security situation of the Central and Eastern European Member States should be reflected within the second Energy Strategy Review as well as in the second Energy Policy Action Plan.
2. The Prime Ministers hope that the proposal of the European Commission will be held on

the basis of conviction that a resilient internal market policy as well as the climate and energy package will not be enough if the European Union wants to address efficiently its external dependence on oil and gas.

3. The Prime Ministers emphasise that the European Commission should pave the way for diversifying energy sources and routes of its supply to the European Union. Moreover, the proposal of the European Commission should significantly contribute to development of efficient solidarity mechanisms at the Community level.

Bearing in mind the lack of sufficient capacities and local supply shortages experienced in the previous years, the Prime Ministers expect that the European Commission will analyze present oil and gas pipelines systems and electricity grids within the EU member states with the suggestion of possible connecting through separate systems.

4. In addition, the Prime Ministers believe that focus should be given to the further development of mutual confidence mechanisms between the European Union and the producer and consumer countries, especially within the scope of the Eastern Partnership which will serve as one of the most important instruments for improving the energy relations.
5. Prime Ministers expect that during the Czech Presidency the European Council will give a clear and strong political signal to reinforce the European security of supply policy. According to that, the Prime Ministers declare their support for the Czech Presidency initiatives aiming at intensifying the relations with the countries of the Caspian Sea region and transit countries.

IV

1. The Prime Ministers unanimously supported the initiative of the Eastern Partnership which had been approved by the European Council in June this year. It will be a significant instrument of political and economic rapprochement of Ukraine, Moldova, Belarus, Georgia, Armenia and Azerbaijan to EU.
2. The Prime Ministers express their belief that EU will accomplish the necessary balance between both – the Eastern and the Southern – dimensions of European Neighborhood Policy. The Prime Ministers expect suitable EU's financial measures, essential for an effective implementation of Eastern Partnership.
- 3 The Prime Ministers support that the Eastern Partnership should offer an enhanced bilateral cooperation, as well as the establishment of a multilateral cooperation between the EU and its Eastern neighbours- in fundamental areas such as: political stabilisation, good governance, internal security, borders, economy, energy, social development and environmental issues.

4. The Prime Ministers express their support for Georgia's territorial integrity and sovereignty. They welcome EU actions with respect to the Georgian – Russian conflict, which have brought deployment of a European observation mission, the inauguration of talks in Geneva and significant assistance for Georgian economic reconstruction. Furthermore the Visegrad Group countries underline the need of further EU and international community actions for an effective conflict's resolution.
5. The Prime Ministers hope that Ukrainian pro-European policy, strengthened by recent conclusions of EU – Ukraine Summit in Paris, will be continued. Ukrainian political elites should elaborate a common position and strong political consensus with regard to a consistent implementation of current and future European integration programmes and the continuation of reform process, which will allow Ukraine to meet European standards in all areas of life.
6. The Prime Ministers believe that Belarussian society should not be a hostage of Belarussian authority's policy of repression and isolation. Bearing this in mind the Prime Ministers support all efforts to simplify EU visa regime for Belarus citizens and reduce the Schengen visa fee from 60 Euro to 35 Euro.

V

The Prime Ministers decided to hand over this Joint Statement to the French Presidency, to the European Commission and to the European Parliament.