

Think
Visegrad
V4 Think-Tank Platform

NEWSLETTER

2018 May-June

Think Visegrad in Brussels

Editorial



Dear colleagues,

In the third newsletter of the “Think Visegrad in Brussels”, you will find a summary of our events from May and June 2018 – check out the reports from our discussions on transatlanticism in Central Europe and assessment of the EU-Western Balkans summit!

We would also like to bring to your attention a new Think Visegrad policy paper by Edit Inotai (IFAT), which looks closely on the role of Germany within the EU and towards the V4 countries. As usual, we are also picking for you the most relevant current public consultations by the European Commission – have your voice heard in the decision-making process!

Autumn will bring many new topics and interesting debates – in this newsletter, you'll find a sneak peak of the topics we are preparing for you, with more details coming up in September edition.

I wish you all a great summer and we are looking forward to meeting you again in September!

Kind Regards
Zuzana Stuchlíková
Head of Brussels Office. EUROPEUM

 **EUROPEUM**
Brussels Office

In this Issue:

- Upcoming public events
- Past events
- Publications
- From our members
- Public consultations by the European Commission
- Think Visegrad platform
- What is the 'Think Visegrad in Brussels' project?

Upcoming public events:

We will inform you about our events planned for autumn in the summer newsletter at the beginning of September! You can look forward to discussions on Asian investments in the EU, role of regional cooperation in the EU, path of Central European countries to adopting EURO and other discussions!

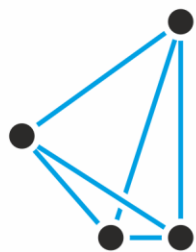
Past events:

Echoes of the EU – Western Balkans summit: New beginning?

When: **23 May 2018, 14:00-16:00**

Where: **European parliament, 60 rue Wiertz / Wiertzstraat 60**

About: The announced year of possible EU membership of Serbia and Montenegro in 2025, as well as plan to open the accession talks with Albania and FYROM, has changed the substance of EU-Western Balkans relations significantly. What kind of substantial change did the Sofia Summit bring? What should be next steps in follow up of the summit? How the EU should facilitate the substantial challenges that Western Balkan countries face? Those are the key questions we tried to tackle. You can find the report from the event and a gallery [here](#).



Think
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NEWSLETTER

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Think Visegrad in Brussels

New transatlanticism in Central Europe: the V4 and NATO in question

When: **7 June 2018, 17:00 – 19:00**

Where: **German Marshall Fund, Residence Palace, Rue de la Loi 155**

About: The Visegrad Four countries have, at the occasion of the 2018 NATO Summit, celebrated between 15 and 20 years of NATO membership. This represents a good opportunity to understand what the Atlantic Alliance has brought to these countries and how it continues to be perceived today. NATO remains the cornerstone of the four countries' security, but different perceptions of American leadership in the last few years, and also security perceptions that have diverged in view of Russian activism mean that these countries have not only different expectations from NATO, but also from the European Union as a security provider.

This event explored the expectations of Central European countries from the next NATO Summit but also from the Alliance beyond July. V4 countries of course remain committed to long-term deterrence measures towards Russia but seem to be at a loss to contributing significantly given their lackluster levels of defence spending, and also other commitments in other frameworks – the EU, for example. You can find the report from the event and a gallery [here](#).

Publications:

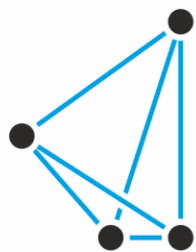
Is Germany too much for us?

Edit Inotai, as part of the project Think Visegrad, published a policy brief on the role of Germany within the EU and towards the V4 countries.

“Too big for Europe and too small for the world” – the words attributed to Henry Kissinger about Germany haunt the latest debates about the future of the EU. Following the eurocrisis and the challenges of the refugee influx, allegations about a growing German dominance in Europe strengthened. A resistance to a Berlin-governed Europe grew, especially in Southern and Central Eastern Europe.

On one hand, the reasons of such allegations lie mostly in internal politics (finding a scapegoat or an adversary), although undoubtedly there has been an appreciation of bigger member states at the expense of the European institutions in the last five years. On the other hand, the key to a successful transformation of the EU into a real global actor lies in its member states' ability to unify their voice in global affairs. This level of unity will require further compromise by all sides, and inevitably, a stronger leadership by bigger member states.

The current German political crisis hits Europe in the most unfavourable moment. The alternative to unity is more fragmentation and loss of global power for all European countries. This cannot be in the interest of Central European countries, which all



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V4 Think-Tank Platform

NEWSLETTER

2018 May-June

Think Visegrad in Brussels

depend heavily on exports and free trade and benefit from the protecting shield of the EU and NATO.

From our members:

EUROPEUM Institute for European Policy

Publications:

- [A Game of Thrones: Italian parliamentary elections](#)

Alexandr Lagazzi explores the power games behind Italy's parliamentary elections and the process of forming a new government. On March 4, Italy held its general elections, which resulted in a tri-polar electorate and a political deadlock. After more than 10 weeks of negotiations, the Five Star Movement and the Northern League agreed upon a common agenda to form a governing coalition. On May 18 the final draft of the coalition pact was published. This paper summarizes the 2018 parliamentary elections by commenting on the outcome with regards to the rounds of (in)formal negotiations, pin-pointing the most surprising outcomes, and reacting to the most recent developments in order to compile an overview of the parliamentary power games.

- [What Role for the Czech Republic in EU Military Missions?](#)

Ondřej Ditrych explores, in his latest policy paper, the role of the Czech Republic in EU military missions, seeking to capture how recent strategic trends play out for the Czech Republic.

This paper seeks to capture how recent strategic trends and Russia's assertive revisionism in the Eastern approaches – a manifestation of a more general transition of the international system to a less multilateral and more multipolar one, combined with uncertainty about the future role of the U.S. in European security in particular play out in the case of the Czech Republic's future role in EU military operations in the near-to medium term.

Following a survey of where Prague currently stands on CSDP, key structural determinants and variables of possible future participation in EU military operations are identified. The key recommendations drawn from this analysis are that to be serious about more defence integration and participation in CSDP, the Czech Republic must meet declarations by deeds, which should include defining scenarios of possible future engagement; revamping of the acquisition and recruitment process; and engaging in more international cooperation to develop practical capacities that it can contribute toward meeting EU's new level of ambition.

Public consultations by the European Commission:

Consultation on the Future of Europe

EU leaders are committed to a Europe that brings real results in issues that matter most to people. See how you can get involved in helping to shape the future of the European Union. Ahead of a dedicated EU Summit in Sibiu, Romania, and the European elections in 2019, national leaders agreed on a Leaders' Agenda on pressing issues and challenges where solutions are needed. You can contribute to the online consultation drafted by citizens themselves, read and react to the White Paper on the Future of Europe, attend Citizens' Dialogues organised by the European Commission or participate in other debates organised in your country.

Public consultation on the stocktaking of the Commission's 'better regulation' approach

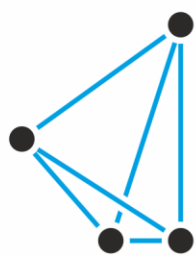
Consultation period: 17 July 2018 - 23 October 2018
Topics: Institutional affairs
About: The consultation aims to assess how well the various better regulation tools used by the Commission work in practice and contribute to achieving the objectives of its better regulation policy. These tools include evaluation of existing policies and programmes, impact assessment, and stakeholder consultation.

Public Consultation on summertime arrangements

Consultation period: 4 July 2018 - 16 August 2018
Topics: Transport
About: Following a number of requests from citizens, from the European Parliament, and from certain EU Member States, the Commission has decided to investigate the functioning of the current EU summertime arrangements and to assess whether or not they should be changed. In this context, the Commission is interested in gathering the views of European citizens, stakeholders and Member States on the current EU summertime arrangements and on any potential change to those arrangements.

Public consultation on the Evaluation of EU support for Rule of Law in neighbourhood countries and candidates and potential candidates of enlargement (2010-2017)

Consultation period: 11 June 2018 - 17 September 2018
Topics: European neighbourhood policy, EU enlargement
About: The purpose of this public consultation is to seek comments from the general public, that is citizens of the EU and citizens



Think
Visegrad
V4 Think-Tank Platform

NEWSLETTER

2018 May-June

Think Visegrad in Brussels

of countries eligible for support from European Neighbourhood Instrument and of beneficiaries of Instrument for Pre-accession Assistance on the Evaluation of EU support for Rule of Law in neighbourhood countries and candidates and potential candidates of enlargement (2010-2017)

Public consultation on a new online platform for public access to documents held by the Commission

Consultation period: 29 June 2018 - 21 September 2018

Topics: Institutional affairs

About: The Commission is preparing a new online platform for requests by the public to access documents held by the Commission (in line with Regulation 1049/2001). This consultation is seeking opinions on the design and features of the new platform.

Public consultation on the Evaluation of the 7th Environment Action Programme

Consultation period: 3 May 2018 - 26 July 2018

Topics: Environment, Climate action

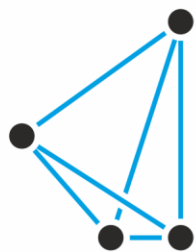
About: In line with the decision adopting the 7th EAP, we are evaluating this Environment Action Programme to see what worked well, and how it could have been better. The evaluation focuses on the structure and strategic role played by the 7th EAP and asks how it helped us deliver a better environment in practice. In line with the European Commission's guidelines for evaluations, it will assess the 7th EAP in terms of its effectiveness, efficiency, relevance, coherence and added value.

Public consultation on integration of long-term unemployed into the labour market

Consultation period: 2 May 2018 - 31 July 2018

Topic: Employment and social affairs

About: The aim of this consultation is to gather views on the measures proposed in the Council Recommendation on the integration of the long-term unemployed into the labour market (2016/C 67/01), and on their implementation, as well as to shed light on future possible action to support the long-term unemployed. Addressing long-term unemployment - unemployment lasting more than 12 months - is a key political priority of the Commission's jobs and growth strategy. On 15 February 2016, the Council adopted the Recommendation.



Think
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NEWSLETTER

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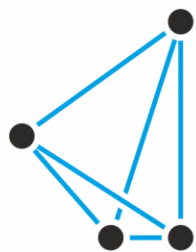
Think Visegrad platform

Think Visegrad – V4 Think Tank Platform is a **network for structured dialog** on issues of strategic regional importance. The network analyses key issues for the Visegrad Group (V4), and provides recommendations to the governments of V4 countries, the annual presidencies of the group, and the International Visegrad Fund. Think Visegrad covers thematic priorities of V4 including V4's internal cohesion, EU institutions and politics, the Western Balkans, relations with Eastern Partnership countries, development assistance, migration, security, energy security, environmental protection, energy security etc.

The formation of the network of V4 think-tanks was one of the priorities of the [Czech Presidency](#) in the Visegrad Group of 2011–2012. This idea reflected the long-term interest and willingness of Central European think tanks to enhance their cooperation within the Visegrad Group and to deepen its cohesion. Think Visegrad was established in 2012 by eight V4 research centers and institutes, and is funded by the [International Visegrad Fund](#).

The project brings together all the members of the Think Visegrad network, namely:

- Research Center of the Slovak Foreign Policy Association (RC SFPa), Bratislava (main coordinator)
- Central European Policy Institute (CEPI), Bratislava
- Centre for Eastern Studies (OSW), Warsaw
- Polish Institute of International Affairs (PISM), Warsaw
- Institute for Foreign Affairs and Trade (IFAT), Budapest
- Centre for Euro-Atlantic Integration and Democracy (CEID), Budapest
- EUROPEUM Institute for European Policy, Prague
- Institute of International Relations (IIR), Prague



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NEWSLETTER

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Think Visegrad in Brussels

What is the 'Think Visegrad in Brussels' project?

In the first half of 2016, the Think Visegrad platform members agreed on the idea proposed by the EUROPEUM Institute for European Policy, to create a common representation office in Brussels. The main motivation for it is the need to encourage debate on issues of common interest to the EU and the V4 and explain the positions of the V4 to a wide audience. We would like to project an image of constructive partners, to explain the dynamics of the debates within our regions and to highlight our active contributions to EU policy-making. With this view and with the aim to boost discussions specifically on the Czech Republic and the EU, EUROPEUM has opened its Brussels office in January 2016.

The pilot project run in the second half of 2016 and consisted of many interesting and successful events. The second part of the project was approved in June 2017 and continued until the end of the year. Third phase of the project will be realized throughout 2018.



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