

Think
Visegrad
V4 Think-Tank Platform

NEWSLETTER

2018 September-October

Think Visegrad in Brussels

Editorial



Dear colleagues,

In the fifth newsletter of the “Think Visegrad in Brussels”, you will find a summary of our events from September and October 2018 – check out the reports from our discussions on the impact of the regional cooperation in Europe on the EU decision making or Chinese investments in Europe.

I would also like to bring to your attention two new publications looking in detail on Czech foreign policy - “Czech Foreign Policy in 2017: Analysis” is a comprehensive analysis by the Institute for International Relations in Prague and the latest edition of the EU Monitor series by EUROPEUM Institute for European Policy is looking in detail at Andrej Babis' latest take on the Czech EU Policy. You can find many others in the section “From our members”.

In the following months, Think Visegrad in Brussels will organize two private events, dealing with non-Eurozone countries and euro and digitalization – don't hesitate to get in touch if you were interested in taking part in those discussions!

We are looking forward to meeting you at our events!

Kind Regards
Zuzana Stuchlíková
Head of Brussels Office. EUROPEUM

 **EUROPEUM**
Brussels Office

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Upcoming public events:

Digital transformation and innovation in the new MFF: the role of directly managed programs

About:

Expert working breakfast co-organized with the Slovak Permanent Representation to the EU will discuss the how should the Central European states approach the challenge of competing with older member states within the directly managed programs of the new MFF. For more information, contact us via brussels@europeum.org.

Path to EURO in Central Europe The role of Euro-accession instruments in the new MFF

About:

Expert seminar will look closely on EU's policy instruments designed to simplify the accession to Eurozone for new states, as well as the political reality of the non-Eurozone member states. For more information, contact us via brussels@europeum.org.

Past events:

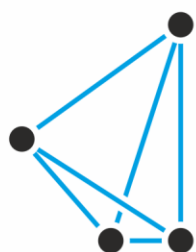
Chinese investments in Europe: Comparing perceptions across Western and Central Europe

When:

3 October 2018, 14:00 – 18:00

Where:

Egmont Palace, Place du Petit Sablon 8, 1000 Bruxelles



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About:

The conference "Chinese investments in Europe: Comparing perceptions across Western and Central Europe" was co-organized by Think Visegrad - V4 Think Tank Platform and EGMONT - The Royal Institute for International Relations.

The event featured Philippe Duponteil (European Commission), Rudolf Furst (Institute for International Relations), Amanda Rohde (Friends of Europe), Weinian Hu (CEPS), Tobias Gehrke (The Egmont Institute) and Justyna Szczudlik (The Polish Institute of International Affairs). Thomas Renard (The Egmont Institute) and Alexandr Lagazzi (EUROPEUM Institute for European Policy) took on the moderation of the two panels.

You can find the report from the event and a gallery [here](#).

Regional cooperation and EU decision-making: impact of the Benelux, Nordic Council and V4

When:

19 October 2018, 12:00 – 15:00

Where:

CEPS, Place du Congrès 1, 1000 Bruxelles

About:

Beneath the European Union's formal structures there exists a layer of (sub-)regional groupings of member states that influence and shape EU-level strategies, policies, decisions and legislation. The Benelux Union, Nordic Council, Baltic cooperation, Visegrad Four, Hansa cooperation and the Three Seas Initiative are just a few of them. Based on shared history, common goals and/or geographical proximity, those groups vary significantly in their membership, level of institutionalisation, scope of activities, funding base and working methods. Nevertheless, they provide a platform for individual member states to forge common positions not only regarding regional topics, but also concerning the decision-making process in the EU. This seminar compared the formats and approaches to regional cooperation of the Benelux, Nordic Council and V4 and discussed their influence on the EU decision-making process.

The event featured Zuzana Stuchlíková (EUROPEUM Institute for European Policy), Steven Blockmans (Senior Research Fellow & Head of EU Foreign Policy, CEPS), Alain de Muyser (Deputy Secretary General of Benelux), Petra Vargová (Deputy Permanent Representative, Permanent Representation of Slovakia to the EU), Jakub Groszkowski (The Centre for Eastern Studies (OSW), Poland), Matilda af Hällström (Adviser of the Nordic Council in Brussels) and Piret Kuusik (Estonian Foreign Policy Institute, Estonia).

You can find the report and pictures from the event [here](#).

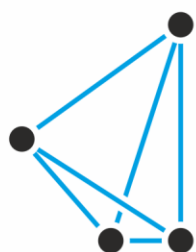
10th International Symposium "Czech Foreign Policy"

When:

19-20 September 2018

Where:

Czernin Palace, Ministry of Foreign Affairs of the Czech Republic



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About:

The Institute of International Relations Prague (IIR) organized the 10th Symposium on the Czech Foreign Policy: Rethinking the Future at the Ministry of Foreign Affairs of the Czech Republic on 19-20 September 2018. The aim of the event was to bring together researchers, former and current practitioners, academics, politicians, students, media and the public to exchange views on key topics related to the Czech foreign policy in the era of uncertainty in the international relations in the European and global arenas. The anniversary symposium is not a simple reflection on the Czech foreign policy over the past ten years; it also provides an opportunity to highlight some constructive solutions for the short to medium-term in various fields of research while taking in consideration the current domestic and international developments. The organizer has expanded the list of speakers geographically by including participants from as far as Australia, Japan, India, the United States, as well as European speakers from Germany, France, Hungary, Slovakia and more.

Think Visegrad was one of the partners of the event.

From our members:

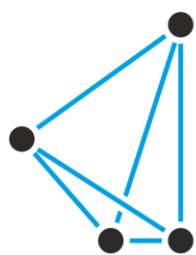
Institute for International Relations, Prague

Publications:

- [Czech Foreign Policy in 2017: Analysis](#)

The IIR and Dr Alica Kizeková, Editor and Programme Chair of the 10th International Symposium, are proud to present the publication "Czech Foreign Policy in 2017: Analysis" which was presented at the 10th International Symposium "Czech Foreign Policy" - Rethinking the Future.

We are proud to present to you the already Eleventh Volume of the Czech Foreign Policy IIR Analysis series, the Czech Foreign Policy in 2017: Analysis, where twenty-seven scholars contribute to the debate about Czech foreign policymaker's efforts within an increasingly unpredictable international environment. This volume consists of eighteen chapters that analyse the important areas of Czech foreign policy throughout the defined period. Concerning the previous year, 2017 was characterised by the end of the era of widespread confidence in the US's willingness to pursue an internationalist foreign policy and provide reassurances for its allies. USA started to pursue so called „America First“ policy, which didn't contribute to the stability in international relations and therefore made less clear what sort of world order this power transition might bring. Regarding Asia, according to President Xi Jinping, China declared a new era in their foreign policy, with specific demand to ultimately respect China's core interests.



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home, 2017 was also the final year of the government of Bohuslav Sobotka, and it was also the year when conflicts surrounding the leader of ANO 2011 and Andrej Babis had major impact on the government's stability. Regarding Czech foreign policy, the authors of this volume consider Czech foreign policy as reactive, which ranged from a complete acceptance of external policy to active resistance to external policy. We also shouldn't forget major problems, which challenged EU (including Czech Republic), namely Brexit talks and the ongoing migration crisis, and also a disunity between political representatives towards Russia, while on the other hand we saw an honest effort of Czech diplomats to stabilise the situation.

News:

- [Veronika Bílková as a new Secretary General of the ESIL](#)

Veronika Bílková, the head of the Centre for International Law, was appointed the new Secretary General of the European Society of International Law (ESIL) during the 14th annual conference of the ESIL, held in Manchester, UK, on 13-15 September 2018. It is the first time that this position is held by a person based in the CEE region. Congratulations!

EUROPEUM Institute for European Policy

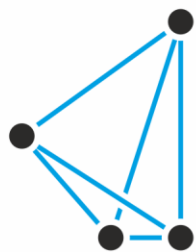
Publications:

- [Eastern Partnership: from the EaP summit to the debate on the new Multiannual Financial Framework](#)

Eastern Monitor is back. This time the topic is EU's project of Eastern Partnership in the light of the next Multiannual Financial Framework (MFF) 2021-2027. The author is Věra Řiháčková Pachta.

We are in the middle of the major battle over the next EU Multiannual Financial Framework (MFF) 2021-2027. Eastern neighbourhood and Eastern Partnership policy is only one of many issues on the table. At the same time, the decisions taken in the next couple of months by the EU Council, European Parliament and in dialogue with the European Commission on the Commission's legislative proposal of the new Neighbourhood, Development, and International Cooperation Instrument (NDICI), will largely shape not only the financial modalities of the policy delivery but also send strong political signals to the partner countries on where EU stands at the moment. And the signals might not be exactly what at least some of the Eastern neighbours are hoping.

- [What EU Policy to Expect from the incumbent Czech Government?](#)



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The latest edition of our EU Monitor series and its author Vít Havelka proposes the possible form of Andrej Babiš' Czech EU Policy.

On the 27th of August 2018, Czech PM Andrej Babiš held a speech on the occasion of the traditional annual coordination meeting of the Czech Ambassadors at the Czech Ministry of Foreign Affairs. The purpose of the consultation was to discuss Czech foreign and European policy at the highest level, and to coordinate further steps.

The paper aims to summarize and comment on the content of the PM's speech, as well as explain Babiš's intentions in the broader context of the foreign and European policy of the incumbent government as defined in its manifesto.

- [The Future of Europe under construction](#)

Piotr Maciej Kaczyński analyzes the first nine speeches of members of the European Council in the framework debate on the Future of Europe in the European Parliament, from January to September 2018.

The ongoing debate on the future of European integration is a rolling stone. It lasts and evolves since the very early stages of the integration process decades ago. In the past, there were various cleavages between member states that were – more or less – useful in understanding the debate.

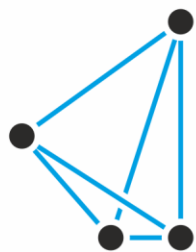
There were the wealthier states and the poorer nations, the net contributors and the cohesion states, the free market economies and socially protective economies. There were the new member states who argued for solidarity and the Scandinavian states who argued for transparency. There were those who argued for deeper integration, and those who were happy with the status quo. There were sound economies and troubled ones. There was important unemployment in some states and shortages of workers elsewhere. All those differentiations were reconsidered with the exit of the United Kingdom from the Union.

- [Why sustainable consumerism is good but not enough](#)

Helena Škrdlíková wrote a policy paper on the topic "Why sustainable consumerism is good but not enough", which served as a background material for the sixth debate from our project Prague Climate Talks. The event took place on September 27th, 2018.

In the last few years, great emphasis in climate change debates has been placed on consumers and their personal contribution to the greenhouse gases emissions. Media, internet and scientific studies provided numerous suggestions on how consumers can, through their choices, either help with mitigating climate change or contribute to making it worse. Not governments, not companies, but everyone who has the power to buy and consume is now responsible. In fact, there have never been more people actively making conscious choices for the sake of the environment.

Although there are many positive aspects of sustainable consumerism and there are areas where the change for the better can be achieved by consumers themselves, relying merely on consumers to solve the global climate change crisis might not be enough.



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- [Commentary: EUCO Meeting in October 2018](#)

Martin Michelot, Vít Havelka, Christian Kvorning Lassen, Alexandr Lagazzi and Kateřina Davidová react to the EUCO Meeting held in October 2018 from the perspective of the future of the EU and the Czech Republic's role in it.

- [Commentary: State of the Union Address 2018](#)

Vladimír Bartovic, Martin Michelot, Zuzana Stuchlíková, Christian Kvorning Lassen, Vít Havelka, Jana Juzová, Alexandr Lagazzi and Kateřina Davidová react to Juncker's State of the Union Address 2018 from the perspective of the future of the EU and the Czech Republic's role in it.

Public consultations by the European Commission:

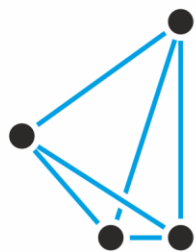
[Consultation on the Future of Europe](#)

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.

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



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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

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. The third phase of the project will be realized throughout 2018.



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