



Ambasada
Rzeczypospolitej Polskiej
w Moskwie

Visegrad 4
Integration
& Cohesion 
Polish Presidency of the Visegrad Group
July 2012 - June 2013

Visegrad Group States and Russia:

Dimensions of Cooperation, Chances and Challenges

Conference papers

*Papers presented at the international conference
organized by the Embassy of the Republic of Poland
Moscow, 17th April 2013*

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East of Centre: Can the Visegrad Group Speak with One Voice on Eastern Policy?²

The Visegrad Group has for a long time been showing ongoing efforts to develop cooperation with the Eastern Partnership countries by advocating for them in the EU and supporting their democratisation and transformation processes. However, even though the V4 as a whole has aspirations to create an active and compatible role in the East, each Visegrad country also pursues its own Eastern policy rooted in a historical and social background, particular economic and geopolitical interests as well as temporary political goals. Thus, there are areas in which the individual member states do not cooperate with one another, but rather act as competitors. By the same token, since Eastern policy is not necessarily a priority in the national foreign policies of each V4 country, there are also activities that are not promoted to the same degree by all of them. This paper analyses the Eastern policies (understood as maintaining relations with the Eastern Partnership countries and Russia) of Poland's Visegrad partners—the Czech Republic, Hungary and Slovakia—and discusses areas in which the V4's efforts may be unified.

Motivational Factors of the Visegrad's Eastern Orientation

V4 engagement in the post-Soviet area is motivated by various reasons. The most crucial is that they are striving for stability in both their near and more distant neighbourhood by gradually extending the Euro-Atlantic sphere. A reliable, predictable and prosperous region across their borders will only

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² The text was originally prepared as a PISM Policy Paper.

increase each member's own security and significantly change the V4's current geopolitical position on the EU's external border. Lessons learnt from the 1990s in the Balkans showed how incalculable a turn developments might take in the EU surroundings and how dangerous it might be to leave them uncontrolled.

The next crucial element is that it helps the V4 build its own political identity as a regional alliance interested in democratic transition and strengthening civil society. It has become a sort of "Central European mission" and a Visegrad flagship motto to share their experiences after the fall of communism with systemic change and the establishment of new institutions. The post-Soviet area, which together with all of the V4 countries used to belong to the so called Eastern Bloc during the Cold War and which later followed different paths towards liberal democracy, is from the V4 member states' perspective an accurate place for sharing this tradition.

There is a third and very pragmatic reason. After joining the EU in 2004, the group's members had to find some sort of niche where they could make a specialised and visible imprint on EU policies. Therefore, because of its geographic proximity, Eastern Europe quickly became the Visegrad's area of specialisation, and as such helps the V4's members to build their own positions within the EU as well as shape its political agenda. For the V4 countries, which as new EU Member States still strive to strengthen their international credentials, the focus on Eastern Europe is thus a good opportunity to increase their influence in the EU.

Finally, Eastern Europe still offers a relatively new and unexplored market for the V4 members. The development of political and social contacts with countries from that region may help shape beneficial conditions for each Visegrad member's investments and external trade. This seems to be especially important, since at the beginning of the new century all of the V4 states have started to pay more attention to countries in the east, which in comparison to the 1990s are nowadays much more significant economic partners.

The Czech Republic: Idealism and Economy

The Czech Republic is the only Visegrad country without a border with the former U.S.S.R. Although a significant number of national minorities from that area live in the country (Table 2), the Czech Republic, unlike Poland or Hungary, does not have to deal with problems of diaspora in the East. In terms of energy security, relations with this part of the world do not have as much importance as they do for Slovakia or Hungary (Table 3). Thus, it seems at first glance that of all the V4 states the Czech Republic has the fewest reasons to be interested in Eastern Europe. However, this is not exactly the truth. Apart from EU accession, which changed the attitude of most of the V4 members, the Czech Republic found it beneficial to use its own dissident traditions and experiences from the First Czechoslovak Republic (1918–1938). During the latter, the country was not only proud of its liberal legislation and protection of minorities and human rights but also was the European centre of Belarusian and Ukrainian independence groups. Therefore, with former dissidents in charge, the idealistic imperative of supporting democracy in the East quickly appeared in Czech foreign policy.

This democratic orientation is, however, limited to only a few countries. In Belarus, for instance, the Czech Republic does not only follow the general EU policy of imposing sanctions on the regime of President Alexander Lukashenko but also has taken many individual actions aimed at boycotting the Belarusian leader and strengthening the opposition in that country.³ Moreover, Czech diplomacy also continues the best traditions of the First Republic, risking a cooling of bilateral relations by granting political asylum to dissidents

³ An example of this is the refusal to give Lukashenko a visa for the summits in Prague of NATO in 2002 and the Eastern Partnership in 2009. Moreover, President Václav Havel in 2004 set up in Prague the international think tank “Občanské Bělorusko” (“Civic Belarus”), which supports democratic initiatives in Belarus. Two years later, it almost led to the freezing of bilateral relations when it turned out that the Czech embassy in Minsk had the UN report on human rights violations in Belarus translated into Belarusian and then had it distributed by Czech diplomats.

persecuted by authorities, including Belarusian presidential candidate Ales Mikhalevic (in March 2011) and those of the opposition movement Razam (in July 2012). For many years, dissident and prominent writer Vasil Bykau lived in Prague, too. The same asylum offer has been extended towards opposition members in Ukraine since former Prime Minister Yulia Tymoshenko's prosecution.⁴

The Czech Republic has similar goals at the EU level. The country is among the Member States most devoted to the Eastern Partnership, a fact that is additionally facilitated by the presence on the European Commission of Czech Štefan Füle, the Commissioner for Enlargement and Neighbourhood Policy. The EaP was actually launched during the Czech presidency of the EU Council, and its first summit took place in Prague in May 2009. Afterwards, the country, along with Poland, has constantly sustained attention on Eastern Europe.⁵ Along with this, the Czechs in 2008 co-founded the European Partnership for Democracy, an independent organisation supporting democratic transformations outside the EU and whose patron was former president, Václav Havel.

It is quite significant, though, that this democratic orientation does not affect economic relations. This is because the Czech Republic in its Eastern policy does its best to separate the imperative of democratisation from pragmatic connections. In December 2011, which was the centre of the greatest crisis in Czech–Ukrainian relations, Prime Minister Mykola Azarov came to Prague encouraging Czech businesses to invest more in Ukraine. In relations with Belarus, the same factor is equally important—the Czech Republic, besides Poland and the Baltic States, is the most significant Central European partner for

⁴ The Czech Republic provided shelter to Bohdan Danylyshyn, a minister of economy in Tymoshenko's government, as well as to the former prime minister's husband, Oleksandr.

⁵ Good examples of this include the common letter of Polish, Czech, British and Swedish ministers of foreign affairs on fostering Ukraine's political association and economic integration with the EU, published in March 2012 in the *New York Times*, or the unofficial paper prepared in January 2013 by Poland, Czech Republic and Germany addressed to EU foreign policy chief Catherine Ashton, presenting joint ideas on how to handle post-Soviet countries.

Belarus in external trade.⁶ The ability to use contacts in the East to do business is even more visible in South Caucasus, an area mostly neglected by the V4. Czechs are regional leaders in terms of foreign trade with all three of the Caucasus states—Armenia, Georgia and especially Azerbaijan⁷

However, this democracy-oriented strategy does not apply to relations with Russia. In fact, except for the second half of the 20th century, the Czech Republic was never for a long stretch of time under the umbrella of Russian political or cultural influences. Anti-Russian moods are nowadays not widely spread among either society or a large part of the political class. Particularly important was the attitude of President Václav Klaus, who during his two tenures (2003–2013) was the patron of the Czech–Russian rapprochement. Klaus did not hide that on many issues, including on the independence of Kosovo, the war in Iraq, climate change or intervention in Georgia, is much closer to Russia’s leader than to any of the EU partners.⁸ During his 10 years in office, Klaus met with Vladimir Putin five times, and recently has started to openly lobby for a Russian–Czech consortium in the tender for the Temelín nuclear power plant .

Czech policy towards Russia is thus different. It is difficult to find here any humanitarian accents. In September 2012, Czech Prime Minister Petr Nečas refused to criticise Moscow for the *Pussy Riot* political trial, although a few months earlier his government openly backed the opposition against both Lukashenko and Yanukovich.⁹ What supports this specific treatment of Russia is the benefits of the country’s economic contacts and dependency on Russia’s

⁶ *Data on foreign trade of the Republic of Belarus with selected countries in 2012*. National Statistical Committee of the Republic of Belarus.

http://belstat.gov.by/homep/en/indicators/foreign_trade_preliminary_data.php

⁷ Although there is a significant difference between Czech and Azeri sources on the amount of common trade relations (in 2011, the Czechs listed it as €1.3 billion, while the Azeris stated it was €237 million), nevertheless the Czech Republic is by far the most important Visegrad economic partner for Azerbaijan. Both numbers are actually still much higher than all the other V4 countries combined.

⁸ P. Kratochvíl, P. Kuchyňková, “Russia in Czech Foreign Policy”, in: M. Kořan (ed), “Czech Foreign Policy in 2007-2009: Analysis”, Ústav mezinárodních vztahů, Prague, 2010, pp. 196-197.

⁹ “Nečas: Podpora Pussy Riot či dalajlamy škodí českému exportu” (“Nečas: Support for Pussy Riot or Dalai Lama damages Czech export”), *Lidovky*, 10 September, 2012, http://byznys.lidovky.cz/necas-podpora-pussy-riot-ci-dalajlamy-skodi-exportu-fys-/firmy-trhy.asp?c=A120910_181740_in_domov_sk

natural resources (Table 3). Although the latter is much smaller than it is for other V4 countries, it is large enough—as demonstrated by the sudden disruption of oil supplies in spring 2012—to threaten the country’s energy security. Another major area of bilateral contacts is the economy, which especially started to bear fruit after the U.S. withdrawal from the missile defence system project in the Czech Republic,—in 2011 the value of trade reached a record level of €9.1 billion (Table 1).

Hungary: Eastern Winds Too Gusty

In Hungary’s foreign policy, Eastern Europe has been treated since the 1990s as a limited priority. At the beginning this was because of different strategic aims (Euro Atlantic integration), difficult developments beyond its borders (the war in Yugoslavia, disputes with Romania and Slovakia) and a lack of significant cultural links with the post-Soviet states with the exception of Ukraine.¹⁰ Besides, historically the country has always been much more interested in the Western Balkans. Only Ukraine enjoyed a special position because of security motives and the issue of Hungarian minorities. One of the three general priorities of Hungary’s foreign policy that was formed at the beginning of the 1990s was to protect Hungarians living abroad, and Ukraine is the only Eastern European country in which ethnic Hungarians live, totalling 150,000 in the Zakarpattya region. Even today, Ukraine seems to be treated differently mainly because of the minority, which in July 2012 were given official status by the Ukrainian parliament and allowed to use the Hungarian language in this region.¹¹

¹⁰ A. Rácz, “A Limited Priority: Hungary and the Eastern Neighbourhood”, *Perspectives*, vol. 19, no. 2, 2011, pp. 146-147.

¹¹ Although, in the government’s rhetoric Ukraine is going to be involved in large strategic projects, such as the Far East–Central European railway corridor. This, though, should be treated as a very long-term plan with not only no concrete details available but also no known reaction from Ukraine.

However, since EU accession, Hungary has tried to intensify its presence and activities in Eastern Europe, mainly by strengthening involvement in pro-European reforms in Moldova, a fact that is indirectly connected to the Hungarian–Romanian minority issue. But, the main post-Soviet partner for Hungary still is Russia. The policy of all of its governments—despite their different ideological backgrounds—for the last decade has been quite similar: to foster bilateral energy, trade and business cooperation, and to keep sensitive issues off the political agenda. Surprisingly, this pragmatism was also maintained by Prime Minister Viktor Orbán’s cabinet, which took power in 2010 and is far from the ideological, knee-jerk Russophobia that one might expect from some of Orbán’s earlier statements. He thus seems to be aware of the asymmetry that characterises the mutual relationship, and has not only avoided anti-Russian declarations but also seeks to lead a policy of pragmatic cooperation with the country. Although in May 2011 his government succeeded in buying back a 21.2% stake in the national oil and gas company, MOL, from Russia’s Surgutneftgaz, this was an example not only of the current government’s policy but also of a long-term strategy of a gradual renationalisation of a primary Hungarian economic sector, introduced by left-wing cabinets that consequently blocked all foreign MOL stakeholder initiatives. At the same time, Budapest is willing to increase Russia’s stake in its nuclear power plant in Paks, which was built in the times of the U.S.S.R. and operates on Soviet technology, as well as join South Stream, the Russian-supported gas corridor. It seems therefore that Hungary still holds a “friendly pragmatist” attitude towards Russia.¹²

The economisation of Eastern contacts is quite risky, though, if taken too far. A good example of this is South Caucasus, which has always enjoyed the rather narrow attention of Hungary. Azerbaijan, with its stable economic and energy

¹² The term appeared in M. Leonard, N. Popescu. “A Power Audit of EU – Russia Relations”, European Council on Foreign Relations, EFCR/02, November 2007, http://ecfr.3cdn.net/456050fa3e8ce10341_9zm6i2293.pdf

situation, has only recently started to be seen as a potentially important partner in trade and investment for Hungary, but due to diplomatic carelessness, attempts to strengthen relations with Azerbaijan have ended up in the breaking of relations with Armenia.¹³ Another example is Georgia. In September 2012, Orbán openly supported President Mikheil Saakashvili before the parliamentary elections, but his party lost to Bidzina Ivanishvili's Georgian Dream party. Orbán's step was thus a tactical mistake, and does not bode well for future Hungarian–Georgian relations, which are already weak.¹⁴

All of these factors, though, do not mean that Hungary is not interested in the East. It is quite the opposite. Since the 2000s, the East has been playing a pivotal role in Hungary but has been generally based on enhancing relations with China and other Far East countries, not with the post-Soviet area. The year 2004 marked the beginning of an increase in trade between Hungary and China, with trade volume tripling compared with the previous year. Since then, economic cooperation has intensified each year, and today China is a much more important partner for Hungary in terms of external trade than all of the Eastern Partnership states put together. In terms of FDI, China's investments in Hungary in 2010 rose to about \$460 million, which was more than half of all Chinese investments in Central Europe. Under Orbán's government, this strategy maintains a firm conceptual footing—the so called “Eastern opening” or “Eastern wind doctrine”.¹⁵

Hungary's contacts with Eastern Europe should thus be seen in this context. Consequently, the country's Eastern policy in the very broad sense

¹³ A natural step in deepening friendly relations seemed to be the agreement on the extradition of Ramil Safarov, a lieutenant in the Azerbaijan army who was charged with the killing of an Armenian soldier, an issue that for six years had been a thorn in the eye for Baku. Orbán's decision of August 2012 to transfer Safarov not only aroused international criticism, including voices accusing Budapest of subordinating foreign-policy responsibilities to short-term economic goals but also to which Armenia responded by immediately severing diplomatic ties with Hungary. See: D. Kačan, “The Crisis in Hungarian–Armenian relations”, *PISM Bulletin*, no. 85 (418), 18 September 2012.

¹⁴ “Hackertámadás, semmis szavazatok—túl korán ünnepel a grúz ellenzék?” (“Hacking attack, invalid votes—too early celebration by the Georgian opposition?”), *HVG*, 2 October 2012.

¹⁵ D. Kačan. “Relationship of Special Significance? The Chinese Direction of Hungary's Foreign Policy under Viktor Orbán (May 2010-May 2012)”, in “Croatian International Relations Review”, summer 2012, vol. XVIII, no. 66-2012, pp. 59-74.

means that—unlike for all the other V4 members—the post-Soviet area is not the most important. Certainly, it still holds general geopolitical importance and focuses Budapest’s responsibilities connected with either EU policy (Eastern Partnership) or its direct neighbourhood (Ukraine), but it seems that the “close” East already has a significantly reduced role in favour of the Far East—Asia.

Slovakia: Towards Eastern Diversification

Of all the V4 countries, Slovakia’s Eastern policy has for a long time been the most Russia-oriented. This, though, might be seen as a quite logical choice given Russian influences in Slovakia’s politics and economy, which are relatively large even when compared with the other V4 countries. Indeed, in all of Central Europe, Russia is a key player in national energy strategies, but Slovakia is almost totally dependent on both Russian gas and oil, which is unique among the V4 (Table 3). Moreover, after the controversial privatisation of the main Slovak companies in the 1990s, they fell into the hands of then Prime Minister Vladimír Mečiar’s supporters and quickly came under the control of powerful groups with Russian capital. Bilateral contacts are crucial for Slovakia’s external trade, too. As recently as 2011, trade volume between the two was about €8.25 billion, which compares favourably with Russia’s trade relations with larger states such as Hungary (€8.1 billion), Bulgaria (€4.67 billion) or Romania (€4.34 billion).

This is this way, though, not only because of an awareness of Russian influence in the country’s main economic sectors that drives Slovak governments but also because of the public’s sentiments towards or general popular sympathy with Russia,¹⁶ with whom Slovakia shares no serious historical problems—an experience quite extraordinary for Poles, Czechs and

¹⁶ This is quite visibly shown in every year’s edition of Transatlantic Trends, where Slovaks are among the nations with the most positive view of Russia (in 2011, it was 58%, and in 2012, 64%). See: <http://trends.gmfus.org/>

Hungarians. In the Slovak intellectual traditions there is still a powerful heritage of slavophilism, visible politically especially during the Mečiar era (1993-1998), when enhanced ties with Moscow became a cornerstone of the government's foreign policy and an alternative to the country's Euro-Atlantic integration.¹⁷ After Slovakia's EU accession, Russia stopped being seen as an alternative to the West, rather became the Union's equivalent complement and with whom Slovakia shared a similar position on Kosovo and the U.S. missile defence system in Central Europe as well as the 2008 war in Georgia and the 2009 gas crisis.

Nevertheless, for some time, Slovakia has been actively and quite successfully searching for diversification in its Eastern policy by increasing its interest in other post-Soviet states. Two crucial factors have contributed to that shift. First was EU accession, which resulted in the formulation of "post-accession" priorities for Slovak foreign policy, among which Ukraine and the Western Balkans appeared. The second was the 2009 Ukraine–Russia gas crisis, which in the long run helped Slovakia to realise both the importance of neighbouring Ukraine and how unpredictable Russia can be. For Slovakia, which became one of the main victims of the sudden reduction in gas supplies, it was a lesson in realism.

Even though it has quite limited resources because of its small economy, Slovakia has started to participate in sharing its transition experience and supporting reform processes in Eastern Europe. The country focuses especially on Ukraine, its only non-EU neighbour, with whom it shares a 98-kilometre-long border. Slovakia thus backs programmes towards Ukraine, mainly in the

¹⁷ After all, it was Ľudovít Štúr, the iconic leader of the Slovak national revival of the mid-19th century and author of the Slovak language standard, who presented numerous theories on Russia's historical destiny as a "hegemon in the whole family of Slavonic nations". Mečiar, who often used Štúr's name in national propaganda, coupled this tradition with his own short-term political goals, cementing a clear "Russia first" policy in the East. This practically ignored all other post-Soviet states, including neighbouring Ukraine. See: A. Duleba. "Slovakia's Relations with Russia and Eastern Neighbours", *East European Studies (EU-Russian Relations and the Eastern Partnership)*, no. 1, 2009, Institute for World Economics of the Hungarian Academy of Sciences, pp. 10-16.

framework of the EU such as the Group of Friends of Ukraine, which held an initial meeting in January 2013 at Slovakia's initiative,¹⁸ as well as bilaterally through new channels of communication among ministries and NGOs. In terms of gas supplies, surprisingly the role has somehow changed recently: in September 2012 Slovakia agreed to start reverse flow to Ukraine in 2014, which will allow its larger neighbour to decrease its dependence on Russia. Also, Moldova—one of the main beneficiaries of Slovak Official Development Assistance—has appeared in the orbit of Slovak policy interests as a place where it is crucial to support a pro-European angle in that country's foreign policy. Other Eastern Partnership states enjoy rather limited attention, a fact that is especially true in terms of South Caucasus—in fact, Slovakia is the only V4 country with no embassy in that region.

Indeed, the “Russia first” policy is no longer very visible, however strategically, Russia is maintained as Slovakia's most important eastern partner in the areas of the economy, trade and energy. Today, the country does not rely as much on Russian gas as it did in 2009 because it now has significant domestic supplies and reverse flow with the Czech Republic, but it still remains the most dependent on Russia of the V4 members. Its value will deteriorate further after the completion of the Nord Stream pipeline, since Slovakia will then lose its position as a transit country for gas to the West. It is thus very likely that its pragmatic economic approach to Russia will be sustained, as will the first “commandment” of Slovak Eastern policy, which is not to alienate the country. As put by President Ivan Gašparovič during President Medvedev's 2010 visit to Bratislava: “No matter what problems we are trying to solve, we need to have good relations”.¹⁹

¹⁸ “‘Friends of Ukraine’ meeting in Brussels initiated by Minister Lajčák”, Ministry of Foreign and European Affairs of the Slovak Republic, 31 January 2013, <http://www.foreign.gov.sk>

¹⁹ “We need to maintain Slavic unity with Russia—Slovak president”, RT.com, 11 May 2010, <http://rt.com/politics/slovakia-president-russia-gasparovic/>

Conclusions: Visegrad Commonalities in Eastern Europe

The Visegrad countries have been attentively following the general EU trend to promote democracy and transition processes in the post-Soviet area as well as support the Eastern Partnership program. However, generally speaking, this region is still hardly present among any of their main foreign policy priorities. This is due either to a lack of tight historical and cultural connections, weak social links, a deliberate intention not to alienate Russia, a focus on different non-EU parts of the continent (such as the Western Balkans), or other short-term political goals. Only the Czechs show above-average activity in raising democracy and human rights issues towards former post-Soviet countries, but this can be explained by their own political heritage and that such a position hardly influences bilateral contacts, which, because of a lack of a common border or social problems, are not very strong.

The interest of the Visegrad states in the region is very selective. Ukraine and Moldova are by far the most important Eastern Partnership countries for all four states. The Visegrad members' maintain quite active diplomatic representation in both countries, but the reason to take a special look at them is different. Moldova, as an Eastern Partnership star because of its policy of opening to the EU, has raised the highest expectations amongst all of the European countries involved in the East, including the V4. Ukraine is important not only as a regional geopolitical and energy player but also because of it is in the direct neighbourhood of three of the Visegrad countries, which is also the reason why such bilateral issues as minority questions, transfer of illegal immigrants, and others have been introduced into the relationship. Belarus in turn is treated almost exclusively as an EU-level problem, while South Caucasus enjoy extremely limited (Slovakia) or precisely economy-directed (Czech Republic and Hungary) attention.

Although all of the Visegrad diplomatic efforts have been consistently concentrated on seeking to diversify the approach to Eastern Europe, they are still dominated by a focus on Russia. High asymmetry, Russia's active energy sector policy, as well as increasing economic cooperation, contribute to these very pragmatic and individualistic strategies, well-proved during the 2008 war in Georgia and the 2009 gas crisis when the V4 was unable to present a common position. This is the intention of Russia, to follow the ancient "divide et impera" rule and to build relations with each country rather than with the Visegrad Group as such. Moreover, in all of the Visegrad countries there is quite a significant part of the political elite that tends to see Russia not only in pragmatic but in fact outright friendly terms. This approach may result in even more separation of the two dimensions—Russia and the Eastern Partnership countries—practically leaving the latter on the margins of the countries' Eastern policies.

Can the Visegrad Group Speak with One Voice on Eastern Policy: Six Major Challenges

Short-term challenge: people-to-people contacts and borders

This is actually what the V4 has been doing best: strengthening networking and building people-to-people contacts between Eastern European nations and EU members from Central Europe through the International Visegrad Fund and the national programmes of individual V4 countries. A new platform established in 2012 called the "Visegrad 4 Eastern Partnership", with a total annual budget of €1.5 billion, also covers the chief area of V4 activity. However, what certainly discourages the development of people-to-people contacts is the EU visa regime. **An agreement reached during the Second Eastern Partnership Summit**, that took place in Warsaw in September 2011,

on a gradual and conditional exit of the visa regime, **should be used as an argument for directing the V4's efforts into pressuring the EU to analyze an easing of visas** within the Schengen Programme. But, what is even more important is **that the V4 treat with more sensitivity and kindness residents of Eastern European countries on their own borders.**

Long-term challenge: big projects

The lack of a proactive agenda of long-term projects that could better integrate the Visegrad area and Eastern Europe is visible. **There is a need for big projects not only to effectively and strategically connect the Visegrad states with the post-Soviet area but also to extend the base of common interests and responsibilities.** Certainly, the V4 has limited economic tools to finance them, however **it can start lobbying the EU to include them in the scope of EU external financial instruments.** Recently, there have been a few more or less advanced projects on the table that involve the two, such as the Far East–Central Europe railway connection, energy interconnectors joining South Caucasus with the EU, and the development of gas connections between Ukraine and Slovakia, Hungary and Poland. There is also a chance to reinforce military cooperation. In 2016, the Visegrad Battlegroup will become fully deployable, hence it is worth considering opening it to Eastern Partnership partners.

Time for greater attention to Moldova and Ukraine

From the Visegrad point of view, keeping Ukraine and Moldova in the same bag with Belarus or Armenia might be seen as quite risky and unfair. The latter two not only have limited interests in Central Europe but also share only moderate attention to integration with the EU as such. The pace of changes in

the systemic transition of Moldova are also incomparable with what has happened at the same time in other Eastern Partnership countries. Ukraine still declares it has pro-EU ambitions and, although the political developments of the last three years have been unambiguously less than beneficial, it is still not a “lost land”. Besides, its geopolitical and geoeconomic potential as well as its being in the direct neighbourhood with three of the V4 members requires special treatment. Especially challenging to the EU as well as the V4 will be the November deadline for the fulfilment of EU terms concerning the signing of an Association Agreement.

The V4 as a group should therefore **continue to strictly follow and strengthen general EU policy towards Belarus and South Caucasus**, which is mostly directed at cooperation on democratic transitions, creating a free trade area between the six states and the EU and, in the case of Georgia, finalizing negotiations on Association Agreements, **but towards Ukraine and Moldova their common efforts should reach further**. In terms of both of them, **the V4 should not only encourage the EU to be more ambitious with its offer**, so that the countries’ aspirations could be reflected in the political declarations of EU officials on future accession, **but also engage them more in Visegrad cooperation**, which for both may become a first step towards approaching the EU. In the long run, **the V4 could in turn become the EU’s *avant-garde* for additional amelioration of the Eastern Partnership** in order to further separate countries that have advanced the most in negotiations with the EU .

Harmonisation of aid and civil support

The Visegrad Four should start to better coordinate their activities directed to Eastern Europe. The facts that Ukraine and Moldova are important countries for all V4 members and that the Visegrad Group has for years been a supporter of the Eastern Partnership program should be sufficient reasons to

prepare a common agenda towards these issues. **Particularly important is to have a common strategy on aid and civil society support**, which is a core Central European goal. Here, the Visegrad Four usually prefers to act individually or in partnership with older EU Member States for reasons of prestige; for instance, the Czechs were among the co-founders of the European Partnership for Democracy, while the Poles and Slovaks recently supported a different agency, the European Endowment for Democracy. From the V4 perspective, the lack of harmonisation here has negatively influenced the Visegrad brand and its international perception. **Modification of the International Visegrad Fund to cover external development aid, or maybe the setting up of a new Visegrad Development Fund to support the sharing of V4 members' transition experiences may be considered in this context.**

Searching for a broader platform in Central Europe

A few other countries from Central Europe have declared their interest in the Eastern Partnership, too. **The Visegrad Four should use this fact to create a broader regional platform directed to the East.** This would not only show the ongoing interest in the Eastern Partnership program of the new EU states but also strengthen the V4's position in both the region and the EU since a broader group could efficiently make concerted diplomatic efforts towards EU institutions and other Member States. **After all, the V4 has the Visegrad Plus format**, which through political meetings and sharing ideas, **offers a fine and not fully utilised platform of cooperation.** A good example of this is the Baltic States, which are particularly interested in closer economic integration of the EaP countries with the EU internal market. Hence, **during the Lithuanian presidency of the EU Council in the second half of 2013, the V4's efforts should be directed at promoting the Eastern Partnership to a broader Central European constellation.** The Third Visegrad Summit, set for Vilnius

in autumn 2013, creates an opportunity for that. Also, as it is in the direct neighbourhood of both Ukraine and Moldova and has been actively assisting these countries in their EU Action Plans, **Romania can help pressure the speeding up of the Eastern Partnership.**

Russia: smart bilateralism

Russia is a moderating factor in the eastern policies of all the Visegrad states. Still to be avoided in their relationship with Moscow are three things: **First, the Visegrad double talk on Russia in EU forums**, since fragmentation of the V4 in the EU power structures does not serve the strategic interests of any of the four countries; second, although realistically contacts with Russia belong more to individual country policies, **there is still a need to counter Russia's "divide et impera" policy in the region**, by, for instance, attempting energy diversification, and the best chance to achieve that is further reinforcing the idea of the North-South Energy Corridors; and third, **not making the mistake of the 1990s, when bilateralism with Russia utterly dominated the Eastern policies of the V4 countries**, and practically with one partner in the East the V4 countries tended to either ignore other post-Soviet states or simply make them subordinate to their dialogues with Russia. **It is thus recommended to try as much as possible to treat as separate relations with Russia and not to allow Russian pressure to influence contacts with other Eastern European countries.**

Annex:**TABLE 1: Value of Trade, 2011, in euros (€)**

	CZECH REP.	HUNGARY	POLAND	SLOVAKIA
ARM.	20.1 mln ¹	12.6 mln	17.2 mln	8.2 mln ¹
AZE.	1.3 bln	48.1 mln	94.6 mln	14.8 mln ²
BEL.	340.1 mln	105.1 mln	2.3 bln	186.2 mln
GEO.	78.4 mln ³	22.8 mln	54.1 mln	11.6 mln ³
MOL.	54.9 mln ⁴	87.9 mln	198.8 mln	22.1 mln ⁴
RUS.	9.1 bln	8.1 bln	24.5 bln	8.3 bln
UKR.	1.9 bln	2.4 bln	5.4 bln	1.1 bln

Source: Author's calculations based on data from the national statistical offices of the V4 countries as well as Armenia (¹), Azerbaijan (²), Georgia (³) and Moldova (⁴).

TABLE 2: Eastern minorities in the V4 countries

	UKRAINIAN	BELARUSIAN	RUSSIAN
CZECH REP	124,300	-	31,800
HUNGARY	16,500	-	3,500
POLAND	37,100	36,100	8,100
SLOVAKIA	7,400 + 33,500*	-	1,900

**who declare themselves Rusyns*

Source: Author's calculations based on data from the national statistical offices of the V4 countries.

TABLE 3. Dependence on Russian Energy Supplies, 2011

	CZECH REP.	HUNGARY	POLAND	SLOVAKIA
GAS	59%	85%	62%	98%
OIL	73%	80%	93%	98%

Source: Author's calculations based on data from Eurostat

TABLE 4: Official Development Assistance (ODA),

2011, in euros (€)

	TOTAL, %GDP	Priorities in the East:
CZECH REP	184 mln 0.13%	MOL., GEO.
HUNGARY	100 mln 0.11%	MOL., UKR.
POLAND	299 mln 0.08%	BEL., GEO., MOL., UKR.
SLOVAKIA	62.6 mln 0.09%	BEL., GEO., MOL., UKR.

Source: Author's calculations based on data from AID Watch, National ODA

Programmes

Tomáš Strážay¹

The Visegrad Group and Russia: in search for common grounds for a non-existing cooperation

After the split of the Soviet Union Russia developed quite intensive bilateral relations with all Visegrad countries – and vice versa. Although the intensity of relationship varies from one country to another, Russia represents an important trade partner for all V4 countries. The most important article of Russia's export to the Czech Republic, Hungary, Poland and Slovakia is gas and oil and though the level of their dependence is different, the energy security of all four would be significantly threatened without Russia's supplies.

When we look on the Visegrad Group level, we see a completely different picture. Relations between the Visegrad Group as such and Russia have remained – with a few exceptions – untouched.² The Visegrad Group was established in 1991, which was the year of the dissolution of the Soviet Union. The developments in Russia and in the Visegrad Group went in opposite directions – while the three Central European countries were looking for common denominators and joint areas of cooperation, Soviet Union was facing disintegration. Even the later split of Czechoslovakia did not change the intention of the four countries to integrate to the European structures and intensify their cooperation. The situation in the former Soviet Union was just opposite - most countries there preferred to weaken their ties with Russia.

There exist several reasons why cooperation between the Visegrad Group and Russia did not develop. The first reason concerns the character of the Visegrad Cooperation. The V4 has maintained its low institutionalisation, which means that besides the International Visegrad Fund there is no other institution

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² See also, for instance, M. Dangerfield, "Visegrad Group Cooperation with Russia", http://euce.org/eusa/2011/papers/9j_dangerfield.pdf.

in the form of secretariat that would coordinate joint activities. Though the role of the V4 Presidency has increased significantly in recent years, it is always the four representatives who participate in meetings with other countries and institutions. In other words, the V4 does not have a single negotiating body. Furthermore, to approach Russia, V4 countries should also agree on joint position that is to be discussed. Despite the fact that the positions of V4 countries are converging in many ways, they can hardly speak in one voice with Russia. Differences in country positions towards the origins of the Russia-Georgia conflict in 2008 might serve as a good example. On the other hand, Russia also prefers to develop dialogue (and agreements) with individual countries, which can be very well demonstrated on the example of its relations with the European Union.

Secondly, historical factors and experience are to be considered. Even in the interwar period the enlightened political leaders and intellectuals used the term Central Europe to distinguish their countries from Germany and Soviet Union/Russia. Also under communism the Czech, Hungarian, Polish and Slovak intellectuals used the term Central Europe in order to draw a dividing line between their countries and Eastern Europe dominated by the Soviet Union. Their concept of Central Europe could have looked as a pure intellectual concept in the 1980s, but after 1989 it provided political leaders in Czechoslovakia, Hungary and Poland with central idea on which the Visegrad cooperation was established.³ It is worth to mention that one of the most important priorities for the Visegrad Group in 1991 was the removal of the Soviet/Russian troops from the territories of V4 countries. Also, V4 countries have always put much more attention to the role of democratic values than Russia and this difference is likely to remain in the future. Though in the past twenty years there appeared ideas to build an exclusive partnership with Russia in some of the V4 countries,

³ Vágner, P., "Russia and Central Europe: Conception and Challenge", interview with Tomáš Strážay. *Russkii Vopros* no. 3/2012, <http://www.russkii.vopros.com/index.php?pag=one&id=475&kat=6&csl=59>.

they were not successful. Even Slovakia – a country that is most often characterised by positive attitudes towards Russia – had rejected any model of deeper integration with Russia and opted for the EU and NATO membership. The so-called gas crisis from 2009 definitely removed ideas of an exclusive partnership with Russia from the political vocabulary of the Visegrad leaders and pushed them to search for more balanced relations.

Thirdly, the Visegrad Group and Russia differ in their views on energy issues, including energy interconnectors. Russia is in the position of producer, while the Visegrad Group countries are consumers of Russian products. While Russia has used V4 countries as transit countries for its gas and oil to the West for decades, currently it prefers to build interconnectors that are bypassing V4 countries. The development of the North Stream and South Stream will decrease the importance of Visegrad countries as transit countries. On the other hand, the Visegrad Group gives the priority to the North-South energy corridor in order to build alternative routes of energy flows and decrease its dependence on Russia. In addition, V4 countries look for alternative sources of gas and oil, including shale gas in the case of Poland. Despite the fact that Russia and V4 countries assign significant importance to nuclear energy, cooperation in this field has not intensified in the recent years – though the status quo might change in the years to come.

Fourthly, the Visegrad Group and Russia occupy different positions towards the issue of collective security. All V4 countries are full NATO members, while Russia has developed its own system of national security. NATO membership can therefore be perceived as an important dividing issue between Russia and the Visegrad Group. The discrepancy between the V4 countries and Russia was very much obvious in the case of the Ballistic Missile Defense plan. While the Czech Republic and Poland strongly supported the deployment of anti-missile systems on their territories, Russia was very much opposing this idea.

Fifthly, Russia and the Visegrad Group have different views on the integration perspectives of the countries of the so-called Eastern neighbourhood. The aim of the Visegrad Group is identical to the one of the EU and focuses on the deepening of cooperation between countries like Ukraine, Georgia, Moldova, Belarus, Armenia or Azerbaijan with the EU and pursuing of necessary reforms. In order to enhance cooperation and partnership between the EU and countries of the Eastern Neighbourhood the Eastern Partnership initiative was launched in 2009 during the Czech EU Presidency. Russia on the other hand would like to maintain former satellite countries in the sphere of its influence. The creation of the Russia-Belarus Union or Russia-Belarus-Kazakhstan customs union can therefore be perceived as alternative integration structures to the one represented by the EU.

Short look on the EU level

The EU has continuously expressed its commitment to develop a close, strategic partnership with Russia. Since the membership has not been an issue – neither on the EU nor on Russia side – both sides could focus on the development of efficient partnership agreements. The problem is that the current Partnership and Cooperation Agreement was signed in 1994 and does not reflect changes that took place both in the EU and Russia in the course of almost twenty years.⁴ Though there exist another partnership agreement between the EU and Russia – Partnership for Modernisation – that focuses on a number of very concrete aspects of “modernisation process“, both parties has realized that there is a need to sign a new framework agreement that would provide legal basis for the intensification of cooperation. Therefore, negotiations on a new

⁴ Ongoing EU-Russia cooperation includes four policy areas: 1) economy and environment, 2) freedom, security and justice, 3) external security, 4) research and education, including cultural aspects. For more details see <http://eeas.europa.eu/russia/>.

partnership agreement started in 2008 and are expected to be concluded in 2014.⁵

The membership in the EU has enabled V4 countries to shape different EU policies, including the one towards Russia and other Eastern neighbours. The drafting of a new EU-Russia partnership agreement could therefore provide them with an opportunity to participate more actively in the development of EU policy towards Russia. Most of the issues discussed at the last EU-Russia summit – energy cooperation, visas and mobility, human rights or Middle East⁶ – are of a high importance to the Visegrad Group as well. The question is why the V4 is so hesitant in launching any type of cooperation, especially in the framework of the V4 + formula. Nevertheless, it is possible to identify a few common denominators that would serve as a basis for development of – hopefully – fruitful cooperation.

Finding common denominators

As already mentioned above, Russia occupies the position of an important trade partner for the EU, as well as for the Visegrad countries. The recent accession of Russia to the WTO is perhaps going to intensify economic dimension of cooperation. However, the Visegrad Group as such is not an entity that would be able to negotiate trade deals on behalf of its members – this is a fact resulting from the very character of the Visegrad cooperation. Economic dimension of cooperation would therefore not become the most important focus of cooperation between the V4 and Russia.

On the other hand, the adoption of the EU-Russia Roadmap for Energy Cooperation until 2050 might open the window of opportunity for the Visegrad

⁵ See, for instance, speech by President Barosso at the Russia-European Union – Potential for partnership conference: “Moving into a Partnership of Choice“, Moscow, 21 March 2013, http://europa.eu/rapid/press-release_SPEECH-13-249_en.htm.

⁶ EU-Russia Summit, Brussels, 20 – 21 December, 2012, http://eeas.europa.eu/russia/summit_en.htm.

Group to initiate cooperation talks with Russia. At least the creation of the regional gas market in Central Europe will strengthen the position of the V4 while negotiating future gas prices with Russia.

The possibilities of joint cooperation between the Visegrad Four and Russia in security issues will depend to a large extent on the ability of the Visegrad Group to intensify cooperation inside the Group, as well as on Russia's ability to coordinate its external policy with the EU and NATO. The plan to develop a joint V4 EU battle group until 2016 looks very promising and if the battle group will come reality, it will prove that the V4 countries are able to coordinate activities in security issues. This would certainly encourage Russia to consider the V4 as a partner for negotiations. It is also worth to mention that the US has reconsidered its plan to build the Ballistic anti-missile defence on the territory of the Czech Republic and Poland, which was considered as an important obstacle for improving V4-Russia relations in security issues.

Culture, education and research certainly remain areas in which the V4 and Russia can continue and further develop mutual cooperation. Already now the Visegrad Fund offers grant opportunities and scholarships available also for Russian applicants. Opportunities for cooperation are, however, still far from being exhausted.

It can be concluded that in order to identify properly common denominators it is worth to consider the development of a detailed feasibility study that could be elaborated by Russian and V4 experts. Such a study would certainly serve as a valuable source of recommendations and might become a good basis for further political action.

Katarzyna Żukrowska¹

Visegrad-4 cooperation with Russia: models, challenges, perspectives

The institutional framework for cooperation with Russia of the countries that are members of the European Union is formed by the Partnership Cooperation Agreement, Concept of four spaces and to some extent by the Neighborhood Policy, namely by the Neighborhood Policy Financial Instrument. It should be mentioned here that all the Visegrad-4 (V-4) states are members of the EU. Despite same institutional framework of cooperation each of the four states cooperates with Russia in different areas, the scope of cooperation differs as well and despite of some common elements that can be seen here, the evident differences of cooperation can be used to form specific cooperation models. The article tries to show common elements and the differences in cooperation between V-4 and Russia what is used to build differentiated models of cooperation between the group of analyzed states.

Framework of cooperation

Institutionally the background of cooperation between V-4 and Russia is formed by Partnership and Cooperation Agreement (PCA²). This Agreement was signed in 1994, went into life in 1997. The initial length of the agreement was 10 years but it included an article enabling prolongation, what was done in due time. Before the membership of V-4 in the EU the countries in question did not have specific agreements on trade cooperation with Russia. After 2004, the date of EU membership of the V-4 the PCA was expanded within the European trade policy on the new member states, with V-4 in that number. The PCA EU-

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² Partnership and Cooperation Agreements (PCAs): Russia, Eastern Europe, the Southern Caucasus and Central Asia.

Russia was signed in 2004 and entered into force after ratification in 1 December 1997 . The agreement (97/800/EC of 30th December 1997). The political and economic framework of cooperation is additionally widened by the Russia's membership in the WTO (22 August 2012¹).

Framework of cooperation between the PCA- cooperating states is additionally shaped by conditions given in official Journal of Laws with further amendments by conditions of membership of all studied states in the WTO, what embraces: scope of liberalization of trade in goods, raw materials, agricultural products, food and beverages, sensitive goods like textiles and cloths, what is followed by services, intellectual property, and further FDI flows. The membership in WTO forms also conditions for states presence in the economy, ie. competition on the market. It also addresses scope of liberalization of the prices. Moreover, it tackles conditions of free trade agreements of the members with other states, which should not be discriminating third countries. This concerns on the one hand solutions, which are applied in the EU within the European trade policy as well as on the other hand it also shapes the foreign trade conditions of Russia. For the first countries this concerns all solutions which decide about mutual trade between the EU and countries who are members of the EU, members of the WTO². Generally this embraces following elements:

- nondiscriminatory treatment of imports of goods and services;
- reducing tariffs and binding tariff levels;
- ensuring transparency when implementing trade measures;
- limiting agriculture subsidies;
- enforcing intellectual property rights (IPR) of foreign holders of such rights;
- forgoing the use of local content requirements and other investment measures that limit imports; and

¹ http://www.wto.org/english/thewto_e/whatis_e/tif_e/org6_e.htm (accessed 12.03.2013).

² Russia enters WTO on favorable conditions – analysts, RIA Novosti. World, 11 November 2011.

- opening government procurement contract opportunities to foreign firms”¹.

It should be also mentioned that policy of access to advanced (also dual use) technologies are coordinated in a wider group of economies than it was in the past. COCOM which was a tool used in the period of “Cold War” as a tool to coordinate transfers of technology to East Central Europe was replaced by Wassenaar Agreement. It is important to say that the list of members of this agreement includes both V-4 and Russia². There are nine areas in which the policy is coordinated. These are following: Category 1 - Special Materials and Related equipment; Category 2 - Materials Processing; Category 3 – Electronics; Category 4 – Computers; Category 5 - Part 1 – Telecommunications; Category 5 - Part 2 - "Information Security"; Category 6 - Sensors and "Lasers"; Category 7 - Navigation and Avionics; Category 8 – Marine; Category 9 - Aerospace and Propulsion.

This short information concerning coordination of advanced technology within a group of the 41 states which include V-4 and Russia show that applied institutional solutions form a wide background for mutual development.

As far as access to the EU market is concerned there are specific solutions which catch attention of a person who analyses the institutional possibilities in this area.

Conditions of access to the European market are additionally designed by conditions which are applied in forming the EU+EFTA conditions of trade, what is additionally shaped by the EU agreement with EFTA. This can play a certain role when the EU member states liberalize less their economy externally and internally with Russia than EFTA-ns with Russia. This is so especially in conditions when the EFTA-ns give easier access to their markets than EU does.

¹ W.H. Cooper, Russia’s Accession to the WTO and Its Implications for the United States, June 2012, Congressional Research Service 7-5700, www.crs.gov R42085 (access 12.04.2013)

² As of January 2012, the 41 participating states are: Argentina, Australia, Austria, Belgium, Bulgaria, Canada, Croatia, **Czech Republic**, Denmark, Estonia, Finland, France, Germany, Greece, **Hungary**, Ireland, Italy, Japan, Latvia, Lithuania, Luxembourg, Malta, Mexico, Netherlands, New Zealand, Norway, **Poland**, Portugal, Republic of Korea, Romania, **Russia Federation**, **Slovakia**, Slovenia, South Africa, Spain, Sweden, Switzerland, Turkey, Ukraine, United Kingdom and United States.

Signing an agreement with EFTA states, countries like Russia have access to the internal market of the EU and EFTA, what includes also relations of Russia with countries that form with Russia customs union as well as free trade agreement, which Russia has signed with the former republics of the SU¹. This is also the case of states which are not members of the Russia-Central European customs union and Russia – remaining CIS free trade agreement (Eurasian Economic Community Free Trade Agreement). The institutional solution among former republics of the SU is in permanent flux, what embraces number of states, scope of liberalization as well as name of the organization)².

The tight and relatively knotted agreements which liberalize trade on the one hand show that such experience helps states and their people to see that free trade is beneficial to their wealth, while on the other hand it makes the global liberalization talks, within the Doha Round of WTO, more complicated and thus prolongs the time bringing them to final compromise.

This is so despite some current fears that being strongly linked with the world economy makes national market more vulnerable to external shocks. The practice proves something opposite. External trade not only starts the multiplier which increases incomes but also in medium and longer run flattens the fluctuations of rate of growth reducing the downturns. This is so as states have limited powers to return to tariff protection which otherwise would deepen and prolong the downturns of rates of growth.

¹ On 12th April 2013 EFTA concluded sixth round of negotiations with Russia, Belarus and Kazakhstan on free trade. Negotiations started on 10th of May 2010.

² EurAsEC (EurAsian Economic Community) established in 1990 embracing Belarus, Russia and Kazakhstan till 2000, when it was renamed into EAEC (10 October 2000) embracing additionally Kyrgyzstan and Tajikistan. In the region we also have Organization of Central Asian Cooperation (OCAC), established in 1991 within the Central Asian Commonwealth what embraces Kazakhstan, Kyrgyzstan, Tajikistan, Turkmenistan and additionally since 2005, Uzbekistan.

PCA

Partnership Cooperation Agreement is an agreement between Russia and the EU, which was tailored especially for the specific conditions of Russia and further the conditions introduced in this agreement were applied for the remaining CIS. Before PCA – countries which have signed agreements with the EU were requested to be members of the GATT/WTO. Institutionalization of external relations of a state is traditionally done in specific consecutiveness, what means that before signing an agreement, which liberalizes trade with the EU is conditioned by membership in the IMF, World Bank and WTO. Moreover, the EU signs first an agreement with a candidate who desires to liberalize trade, which first concentrates on political dialogue. The agreements with the EU are traditionally divided into generations. This means that only higher generation agreements lead to trade liberalization. This was not the case with Russia and the remaining CIS, which followed the similar road in signing agreements with the EC. PCA – following the Polish experience in negotiating the conditions of Europe Agreement in 1991 – embrace an Interim Agreement¹. Interim Agreement concerned on trade and trade related matters, which were gathered in a separate part of the treaty and enabled, according to introduced conditions of the agreement its activation before entrance into force of the whole document, after its ratification. This solution was applied in Europe Agreement of Poland, was not included into remaining agreements of the East Central states, namely the than Czechoslovakia nor Hungary. It was repeated in the PCA documents afterwards. Europe Agreement Poland was signed in December 1991, Interim Agreement went into force in February 1992, while the Europe Agreement started its life in 1994. This makes nearly two years of application of a regulation concerning trade, which plays important role in supplying the market and creating conditions for competition. Competition played important

¹ <http://wits.worldbank.org/GPTAD/PDF/archive/EC-Poland.pdf> (accessed 12.04.2013).

role in overcoming inflation. In first stage of transformation it was demand inflation, which was released by liberalization of prices in the market of shortages, labeled according to Kornai. In second stage the competition put pressure on controlling cost inflation¹.

Common spaces

The idea of common four spaces (CS) was formed in 2003 when EU and Russia were preparing a vision for future agreement between EU and Russia, which could replace the prolonged PCA. Finally the vision was laid out in the document called Building blocks for CES sustainable economic growth (Annex 1), which was included in the Common Spaces Roadmap 2005. The roadmap covers a number of issues which help the Russian market to adjust its enterprises, banking system, production with applied standards, technical requirements, regulations etc. in their way to the mainstream of the world economy. Preparations are multifold and their embrace such areas as:

- Regulatory dialogue on industrial products;
- Standardization, technical regulation and conformity assessment procedure;
- Radio telecommunication equipment;
- ICT, radio, telecommunication equipment;
- Medical devices;
- Automotive industry;
- Textiles;
- Pharmaceuticals;
- Investments;

¹ Poland experienced relatively high inflation at start to transformation reforms in 1989, what was controlled in advanced phases of systemic changes. Lack of inflation in shortage economy can be interpreted as limited market reforms. This is so despite that often it was mistakenly interpreted as sign of stability and result of effectively tailored reforms.

- Enterprise policy and economic dialogue, what includes such sectors as banking services, insurance, financial services, securities, accounting activities, chemical production, aerospace, automotive industry, etc¹.

The CS embrace four areas which aim at converging the: (1) economic issues and environment; (2) Freedom security and justice; (3) external security (including crisis management and nonproliferation); (4) common space of research and education, including cultural aspects. The progress in achieving the goals defined and followed by specification of achieving them are reported by Russia each year in Progress Reports. Until now there are six Progress Reports available, last from March 2013. All show what is achieved from the list of planned goals and what is still do be done in specific areas.

It should be stressed that Russia was included into the financing of research financed by the consecutive framework programs, starting with the 5th FP. Representatives of Russia were here engaged both in area of submitting research proposals and participants of the programs as well as evaluators of the submitted proposals.

The EU as well as individual member states cooperate with Russia in the area of energy, what embraces organization, design of the energy market, effectiveness of energy use, diversification of supply, reducing pollution and environmental degradation, access to the sources, renewable energy sources, etc. This can be clearly seen in the recently approved document Roadmap EU-Russia energy cooperation until 2050 (2013)². A number of initiatives are being accomplished here. Cooperation in this area is being launched with the European Commission as well as with the US. This also is considered as field of close cooperation with the V-4 states. Energy supplies (oil and gas) make the overwhelming share in the Russian deliveries to the EU market and prognoses show that the share will be growing in coming years (2020). This is also the case

¹ http://www.eeas.europa.eu/russia/docs/roadmap_economic_en.pdf (12.04.2013).

² http://ec.europa.eu/energy/international/russia/doc/2013_03_eu_russia_roadmap_2050_signed.pdf 12.04.2013).

with the deliveries to V-4 markets, except the Czech Republic, which is integrated with western markets of energy supplies. The problem of cooperation in this area is a subject of separate presentation, so here it is only mentioned.

European Neighborhood Policy (ENP) and European Neighborhood Instrument (ENPI)

The relations with Russia are shaped within the EU Strategic Partnership, while generally relations with Eastern Neighbor and Southern Neighbors are conducted within European Neighborhood Policy (ENP). ENP was launched in 2003. Since 2007 the ENP was additionally enforced by the European Neighborhood Instrument (ENPI). Programs run with 17 states are financed by the ENPI¹, this includes also Russia. ENPI has replaced the former financial instrument which was used in relation with the CIS, which was called TACIS (Technical Assistance to Commonwealth of Independent States²).

ENPI enables enhanced bilateral, regional and sector cooperation. Around 90% of ENPI funds is used for bilateral actions, i.e. country-specific initiatives and for regional actions involving two or more partner countries. The remaining 10% are reserved for specific new areas of joint activity, namely cross-border co-operation (CBC), and specific initiatives like the Neighborhood Investment Facility (NIF).

There are three innovative elements of the ENPI, which need to be highlighted. The first is the CBC component, which enables the ENPI to finance joint programs, which bring together regions of the MS and partner countries who have common borders. The consecutive one, second, is the introduction of the Governance Facility (GF) which offers resources to the partners who prove that they want to carry reforms concentrated on improving governance. The last, third one, is the Twinning, the TAIEX and the SIGMA instruments. The two

¹ Regulation (EC) No 1638/2006 of the European Parliament and of the Council of 24 October 2006 laying down general provisions establishing a European Neighborhood and Partnership Instrument. (L310/1).

² TACIS functioned in years 1991-2006. (The European Commission TACIS Program 1991-2006). http://ec.europa.eu/europeaid/where/neighbourhood/regional-cooperation/enpi-east/documents/annual_programmes/tacis_success_story_final_en.pdf (12.04.2013).

first ones concern cooperation tool which enable closer cooperation between a public administration of a partner country (PC) and the similar institution in an EU MS. The third one, SIGMA, is launched jointly by the OECD and the EU. All the mentioned instruments are used in the area of reforming and modernizing institutions. They use the experience which was applied in case of the acceding states who have joined the EU in 2004, 2007 and afterwards.

Regarding Nuclear Safety, it must be mentioned that projects in Eastern and Central Europe which were implemented through the former TACIS program are now covered by a new Nuclear Safety Instrument.

Future Agreement

Negotiations of the new, future agreement between the EU and Russia were launched in 2008 during the Khanty-Mansyisk summit. It is stated that the new agreement should:

- offer a wide-ranging framework for EU-Russia relations, reflecting the relation since the early 1990s,
- introduce substantive, legally binding commitments in all areas of the partnership, what includes political dialogue, freedom, security & justice, economic cooperation, research, education & culture, trade, investment and energy.

During the meeting with prime minister Medvediev in March 2013 in his statement opening the summit president Jose Manuel Barroso was insisting on full liberalization of trade and further economic relations between the EU and Russia. He has explained that the EU has supported Russia in the process of WTO accession. Stating this in such way: “As you know the European Union has supported Russia’s accession to the World Trade Organization. This has represented a major achievement in Russia's efforts to diversify its economy. It

can also constitute a potential push in our commercial and investment contacts. But for that to happen it is essential that a full and effective implementation of all commitments taken is made.

Open trade, transparent rules and rejection of protectionism is clearly part of the answer to revive global growth. We support Russia's G20 chairmanship and the priority to concentrate G20's efforts on developing measures to stimulate economic growth and the creation of jobs”¹. Generally one can come with mixed outcome after the lecture of the speeches of the EU representatives addressed to Russia. On one hand they indicate progress in mutual relations and great opportunities, which accompany enhanced cooperation. While on the other hand there is a strong need to review and change a number of actions, what among others can be illustrated by the quotation from the speech of Lady C. Ashton.

During the meeting with Russia’s government summit Barroso has stated: “the European Union and Russia have a particularly impressive story to tell. Trade is really part of the heartbeat of our relationship. The European Union is by far Russia's biggest overall trade partner. And Russia is the European Union's third largest trade partner. In 2012 alone the total volume of trade between the European Union and Russia reached 336 billion euro and around 75 % of foreign direct investment in Russia is of European origin. In 2010 the European Union stock of foreign direct investment in Russia amounted to 120 billion euros. More than China and India combined! And we should not forget either that the European Union is the first customer of the main Russian export: energy. 80% of all Russian oil exports; 70% of all Russian gas exports; 50% of all Russian coal exports go to the European Union. The mutual relations form a strong background for future cooperation. They also indicate the potential which until now is used on a limited scale ². The full use of potential opportunities are

¹ Statement by President Barroso following the meeting between the European Commission and the Russian Government. 22.03.2013. Speech 13/252. (12.04.2013).

² Statement by President Barroso following the meeting between the European Commission and the Russian Government. 22.03.2013. Speech 13/252. (12.04.2013).

possible and are question of choices. Closer cooperation requires some additional decisions funded on a specified sets of decisions¹. The background for which have been established by the EU. Enough to mention some of them: “Today's world is driven by knowledge, innovation and technology. This is why we have declared 2014 as the EU-Russia Year of Science, Technology and Innovation and we have proposed to establish a European Union-Russia Strategic Partnership in Research and Innovation. This will be a very important step forward in the deepening of our relationship because research and innovation is much more than product development. It is about how our societies change and improve. It is about our capacity to adjust together to new economic and social realities and to create the future we aspire to”².

These are the opportunities but they are conditioned by need to follow some very clear guidelines which concern some democratic institutions, which are established to complete the balance within the state institutions. Some illustrations what has to be done can be found in the C. Ashton information about her concern on the activities which concern NGO’s in Russia³.

Visegrad and CEFTA

In September 1992 Czechoslovakia, Hungary and Poland called into life Visegrad Group. Political inspiration was to cooperate in achieving membership in the EU. There is need to explain that Visegrad concentrated mainly on political issues. The most important decision of the first stage of cooperation of the three states was to establish free trade agreement, what was achieved by establishing CEFTA (Central European Free Trade Agreement) in 1992. The founders of CEFTA left the organization in 2004 when they have joined the EU.

¹ Ibidem.

² Ibidem.

³ Statement by EU High Representative Catherine Ashton on the situation of NGOs in the Russian Federation. 26.03.2013. 170/13. (12.04.2013).

Nevertheless, members who have joined the EU after are still in the organization, which they consider as a corridor to the EU.

Brief information on Visegrad and CEFTA

Visegrad has been established in 1992 and has already an 11 year tradition of internal and external cooperation. Visegrad-4 is often considered as an synonym of CEFTA, what is a mistake. As Visegrad initiated CEFTA. This decision was one of the most important for Visegrad but the initiators of CEFTA still continue their political consultations, while they have left CEFTA in the stage of joining the EU, what is a consequence of being included by them into the Common European Trade Policy. CEFTA expanded in two ways. First expansion happened by the division of Czechoslovakia into two separate state Czech Republic and Slovak Republic in 1993. Neither the statute of Visegrad nor CEFTA at the beginning were foreseeing possibilities of enlargement. This is left so as far as Visegrad is concerned. In case of CEFTA the statute of the organization was changed in Brno on 11 September 1995 and after in Bled on 4th July 2003. In effect of the expansion CEFTA was enlarging. Slovenia was the first state to join (1996-2004), what was followed by Romania (1997-2007), Bulgaria (1999-2007). Croatia has joined in 2003 and will leave with the EU membership in July 2013. With Croatia there are altogether 8 members in CEFTA recently. The list embraces currently Macedonia (2006), Albania (2007), Bosnia and Herzegovina (2007), Moldova (2007), Serbia (2007), Monte Negro (2007), Kosovo (2007).

Arguments which supported the vision to establish CEFTA were simple: after first phases of transformation of 1989, most of the Central and Eastern European states have cut their economic ties in the region. There were no institutional conditions which could help establishing such relations. Free trade

among the countries in the region was considered as a solution which was advantageous in number of ways, what included:

- Preparing markets to tougher competition from abroad, which was expected with full liberalization of trade with the EU and followed by the EU membership and Common European Trade Policy;
- Enlarging markets embraced by free trade what increases attractiveness for foreign investors, influencing their decisions concerning location of FDI;
- Starting preparation of the states and their economies to participate in the international division of labor;
- Increasing variety of supply on the market;
- Enhanced competition helping to control the cost inflation;
- Intensified competition which has impact on improving competitiveness.

This organization, initiated by the Visegrad-4 can also be one of the platform of cooperation with the countries, who are recently members. Membership in CEFTA causes liberalization of trade among the member states, bringing them to similar level of liberalization. This helps the states who participate in this initiative to compete with producers from markets, which represent similar level of development. It should be mentioned here that liberalization among CEFTA-economies was symmetric, while liberalization of the initiators of this FTA in Central Europe with the EU was asymmetric¹. Introducing such solutions was founded on specific assumptions. The liberalization between the Central European states and their markets with the EU members represented a process of reducing trade barriers between countries which represented different levels of development. This resulted in application of specific solutions which implied earlier opening of the EU market for exports

¹ Poland here was an exception in this sense that conditions of the agreement were same as with the remaining Visegrad states but Poland has suspended application of majority of the customs tariffs and protection of the national market was accomplished by devalued Polish zloty. Devaluation of zloty was resulted by introduction of convertibility of the currency. Having the two work in a parallel: customs protection and devaluation of currency would result in increased protection not opening of the economy, while opening was important in overcoming the problem of shortage economy (Kornai) and a tool which helped to control inflation.

from Central Europe than the other way round. In case of CEFTA the markets represented more or less similar level of development, at least the development gap was not as vast as with the West, so liberalization here was symmetric.

V-4 and Russia

V-4 cooperate with Russia within the framework which is shaped by institutional solutions and funding available. Despite some similarities the cooperation of V-4 with Russia differs. Using the examples which illustrate the bilateral cooperation between V-4 and Russia can be used to label different models of such relations.

Bilateral agreements

Each of the V-4 states cooperates with Russia but the scope and area of cooperation differ. Illustrating the mutual cooperation schemes can be helpful to design some framework models of such cooperation. All four countries in question are supplied by Russia in oil and gas. None of them has own supplies sufficient to meet the demand. Poland in this group is strongly dependent on coal production and utilization of this source in energy production. This source is considered as strongly polluting. Poland seeks possibilities to increase supply from alternative sources what embraces building nuclear power in Zarnowiec, Gąski or Choczewo¹, as well as exploiting shale gas which is expected to meet a big share of the domestic demand of the market and supply also importers.

The V-4 states are not talking with one voice in their policy towards Russia. This means that despite several common elements which can be found in mutual economic relations of the V-4 with Russia – each country develops mutual

¹ The localization is not decided yet. Poland is one of the countries which did not built up such capacities. Other states include: Austria, Cyprus, Denmark, Estonia, Greece, Lithuania, Latvia, Italy, Ireland, Luxemburg, Portugal, Switzerland.

relations with Russia on its own. The moves are not coordinated but other parties are informed. This means that Russia can pick-up individual areas of cooperation offered by the states in question.

Czech Republic - Russia

Russia-USA and Czech Republic worked together removing uranium from Czech Republic. The US National Nuclear Security Administration, the Czech Republic Nuclear Institute and Russian Federation Atomic Energy Agency, International Energy Agency worked together on the project.

Czech Republic is closely integrated with the Western energy market, applying diversified strategy of supplies, which limit the share of Russian deliveries.

This economy indicates a limited engagement in cooperation with Russia.

Hungary - Russia

Hungary cooperates with Russia in the area of energy deliveries. There are advanced negotiations on Paks nuclear plant which is built in cooperation with Russia. This project is an extension of the contract for energy supply (gas) and construction of the South Stream pipeline. The decision concerning nuclear power plant seems to be natural expansion of the current cooperation in energy sector supplies. Such position was formed during the visit of Prime Minister Victor Orban in Moscow, and his summit with president Vladimir Putin. The meeting took place on 31 January 2013.

Ural attracts foreign investors. Hungary in March was celebrating its 5th anniversary of establishment of consulate in Ekaterinienburg, Ural. During this ceremony the diplomats from Russia and Hungary informed that Sverdlovsk region attracts many European small and medium businesses – France and Germany. Hungarian businessmen also visited Sverdlovsk, what can result in

development of some new businesses. Specific interest was paid to the Ural federal University, which has contacts with the Hungarian counterparts, what embraces Research Institute for Solid-state Physics and Optics of the Hungarian Academy of Sciences. There is also a cooperation agreement with Eötvös Loránd University of Budapest. The contacts are actively established with NANO Research Institute on Nanotechnology at University of Miskolc. This can be considered as new stage of technical military cooperation between Hungary and Russia .

Hungary is engaged in improving the mutual relations between Russia and NATO.

Poland - Russia

Poland cooperates with Russia inviting also third countries into that cooperation. This can be seen in case of projects which are conducted together with Lithuania or Germany. In first case we can find a number of projects (mainly small projects) which deal with health, access to the borders, development of infrastructure, museums, competitiveness, energy efficiency, environment, governance, effectiveness of institutions, etc. The projects with Germany concentrate mainly on technical upgrading of the production potential, research and development, innovativeness. Recently Poland also considers to introduce some cooperation with Russia in the area of energy supply.

There is also close cooperation in the area of advanced technologies. Despite some doubts concerning the issue what Poland can offer in this area to Russia being on far positions in the ranking lists, which measure this specific area, the cooperation here develops. It is worth to explain that limited number of registered licenses by Polish scientific centers does not show the real picture of the area. Most of the licenses which have been worked by the Polish scientists are being licensed within the framework of international teams established and

working on R&D within transnational corporations (TNC). Regularly the Polish scientists meet Russian scientists and they exchange views, discuss newest results of technical cooperation and recent findings.

Poland cooperates in the area of services and most recently in culture. The last area embraces a number of translations, sales of films, cooperation in film making, etc. This can be expanded to new area like organization of the media market (press, radio, TV).

Slovakia - Russia

Slovakia generally has good relations with Russia, what mainly is decided by the current government political orientation. Slovaks cooperate closely with Russia technically and industrially, what is focused on a number of defense deals, which involve licensing production of Russian military equipment in Slovakia. Such solution helped to combine several features: Russian advanced military technologies, Slovak industrial potential and skills of the labor force, as well as the sales links, which were established in the past. Moreover, recently Sberbank of Russia and its subsidiary banks have signed cooperation agreements with Slovakia. On the Slovak side the agreement was signed by Slovak Investment and Trade Development Agency (SARIO). The Agreement was signed on 21th March 2013 and its aim is to identify business opportunities for Slovak companies in Russia concerning mutual trade in goods, services and investments. Such agreements were also signed with Sberbank Kazakhstan, Sberbank Ukraine, Sberbank Serbia. All those agreements are aimed at supporting Slovak exports and production to foreign markets through insurance guarantee and credit products.

Models of cooperation

Most advanced in economic development in the group is Czech Republic which cooperates with Russia in removing the remaining of the nuclear power plant. Next in row is Hungary, if we look at advancement of development, and this country builds a nuclear power plant with help of Russia. Institutes and universities cooperate in new, advanced technologies, industries seek possibilities to cooperate. Poland third in advancement of development cooperates with Russia incorporating third states like Germany and Lithuania. Projects help to build new cooperation capacities which embrace museums, health, infrastructure, environment, effectiveness of energy use, competitiveness, administration etc. Slovaks seek opportunities to promote their production capacities and develop their service system what concentrates on banking system, insurance.

Generally Russia fits all the demands shaped by the four states what shows flexibility in external cooperation. The bilateral models of cooperation seen from the side of the V-4 can be classified by two factors. The first is politics and the second is economic advancement of development and applied concepts of cooperation.

Conclusions

Russia despite historical inheritance has established well shaped and expanded ties with V-4. Models of cooperation here differ widely from very limited cooperation to expansion of production, sales and external support. The determinants of those models are not solely economic. They also embrace some political aspects. Some of the V-4 states establish ties in areas from which others try to withdraw. In general we can say that each of the country from the V-4 can find what he seeks on the Russian market. Prospects of those relations can be seen in a set of scenarios. V-4 offer different options for more and less develop

parts of Russia. Generally Russian economy is well supplied in energy resources, as well as other resources, supply of skilled and educated labor force, potential consumer market for goods and services. Nevertheless, there are vast differences in the spread of this potential over the whole territory of the Russian state. The diversified models of cooperation offered by the V-4 fit into this diversity quite well. Most neglected parts of Russia will go through the phase of developing industrial base, with help of Hungary and Slovakia. Most developed parts of Russia will take advantages of the offer coming from Poland and Czech Republic. In both cases there are possibilities to cooperate in R&D, build-up administration, work-out infrastructure which meets the requirements of an developed economy. Cooperation with the last two states can also bring good results in working on energy saving technologies, environment friendly technologies, development of services in education, health, free time and for seniors. There are vast possibilities as far as cooperation in area of culture is concerned, what embraces literature, film, theatre, radio, tv, press and generally entertainment. Such areas traditionally were considered as fields in which cooperation seemed to be something natural, nevertheless production, especially in areas of advanced technologies was always considered as a much important priority. Now production can be imported from markets where labor costs are lower, while local potential should be concentrated on organizing and supplying goods and services which decide about the quality of life. The choice of proportion between specialized production of goods which decide about quantity of supplies or production of goods which change the quality of life. Both types of goods are needed but the proportion is important. Goods which decide about quantity of supply can be imported from abroad. Goods which decide on quality of life have higher value added. This means that with lower input they result in higher value of output. Such comparison shows two things. Higher effectiveness of use of production factors. It also points out at quicker improvement of life standards, which make people more accepting political decisions as well as

creates in natural way demand for new specializations, businesses, helps people to use their natural entrepreneurial skills in funding businesses managed within small and medium companies.

Scenarios of cooperation can take into account cultivation of a current status quo, which is established upon relations in which Russia supplies raw materials and buys industrial products and services. Terms of trade are improving so prospects of such cooperation are not so bad for the future. Nevertheless they do not guarantee improved standards of living for the whole nation.

Scenario in which Russia actively shapes its economy into a direction which takes into account closer cooperation with the surrounding environment, what implies further steps into the direction of full joining the main stream of the world economy. The first step was done by membership in the WTO. One can ask what steps should follow? Most active structuring of the Russian economy could be achieved by forming two – three free trade areas. First with the EU, second with the US and third with the ASEAN+. Such a solution would result in improvement of supply, lower prices of the offered goods. It would also result in attracting FDI as the three markets would compete in investing in the Russian market, creating jobs for the local people and making space for upgrading of the infrastructure and services.

Scenario in which Russia comes closer only to one of the mentioned three markets, f.i. the Asian one or European. None of the solution would bring a strong kick to the economy, accelerating its growth and development as the second scenario. It has to take into account a situation in which Russia moves towards more internationally cooperative model. Such a solution seems to be the best scenario for Russia as it helps to use competition among other markets who want to gain by investing and being located on future well supplied market, which plans to develop towards more quality oriented model of development. One looks jealously at China and the rates of growth there but do we ask

ourselves question if we (Russia or V-4) would accept conditions of growth and production which lead towards such successes. For me the choice of Russia is obvious. It is quality of life not quantity. This has more added value and enables quick increase in standards of living of people here. This can be done by preparing Russia to cooperate closer with the EU (association, enforcing law and institutions harmonization) and specific arrangements with US and Asia, which would cause race of investors. Russia has to make choices concerning own priorities. This means choosing between long stage of development with medium dynamics and long period of catching up or short stage of development, leading towards fast catch up and high standards of living. Calculation brings quick answer – showing the obvious choices.

Natalia Kulikova¹

Economic Crisis in Visegrad Countries: Conclusions for Russia.

The paper focuses on the features of economic development of the Visegrad countries and on the impact of global crisis and debt crisis in the Euro area on their economies. These issues, it seems, are of great importance for the development of economic relations between V4 and Russia.

Economic Achievements

For more than 20 years of transformation the countries of Visegrad Group have achieved considerable economic success, and by many parameters they have left Russia far behind. GDP in Poland is now twice bigger than it was before the start of democratic reforms, in Slovakia by 1.7 times, in Czech Republic one and a half times, and in Hungary by 25 per cent.

The gap with the advanced European economies has reduced, although it still remains significant: GDP per capita in purchasing power standard in Czech Republic (which is the most developed country in the Visegrad region) is 1.2 times less than in EU15, and that indicator in Poland is almost 3 times lower. The economy structure in all the Visegrad countries has been improved. The share of facilities with medium and high technological level in industry has been essentially extended. The growth was based mainly on increase in labor productivity, and the efficiency of the economy has risen.

The V4' success has been achieved in many aspects due to economic advantages stemmed from EU entry and integration into European market. The main benefits were the possibility of wide attraction of foreign financial

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resources and guaranteed external demand for products of export sectors of the economy that have advanced mainly due to West European direct investment.

Challenges of Global and European Crises

However, the Visegrad countries' economic success in the high extent is based on impressive growth of their economies during the period of sustainable development of the global and European economies. The global financial crisis, and then the Eurozone debt crises have become a severe challenge for the Visegrad Group states. These crises have revealed structural defects of their economies and have struck upon the majority of them a heavier blow than on many other markets including emerging ones.

In 2009 the GDP of the Czech Republic, Slovakia and Hungary significantly decreased, and that resulted in harmful consequences for employment and incomes. The recession was deeper than in Western Europe, and convergence trend changed to the opposite one. Only Polish economy was characterized by positive dynamics, although a weak one.

Following the recovery of the global economy and trade, the Visegrad countries managed to restore growth. However, its rates were low. In 2010 and 2011, the best dynamics was demonstrated by Poland and Slovakia, where the GDP grew by 4 per cent per year in average. Hungary and the Czech Republic have shown some of the poorest performance among emerging markets. As a result, two years were spent in the Czech Republic just to get close to pre-crisis level, and Hungarian economy remained far from it, as could be seen in the chart.

Later, things began to go even worse. The upward trend in the European economy turned out to be short-lived, and in the second half of 2011 and especially in 2012, it became clear that the problem of sovereign debts in the euro area threatens even the sluggish growth in the Visegrad countries. As you can see from quarterly data on GDP dynamics, since the beginning of 2012

Hungary and the Czech Republic went into another recession, and by the end of the year the economy of Poland and Slovakia got close to stagnation.

Causes of High Vulnerability to External Shocks

Why almost all the Visegrad countries are affected by the global and European crises more than many other countries? We see several main causes of high vulnerability of their economies to external shocks.

The first one is strong dependence of the majority of the Visegrad economies on exports. Only in Poland the exports-to-GDP ratio does not exceed 45 per cent, that is corresponds to the EU average level. In the Czech Republic, Hungary and Slovakia it accounts for about 80 to 95 per cent of GDP. In some cases, this feature is combined with poorly diversified export structure (as a rule, with a bias towards production of automotive and electrical industries that are most dependent on the global market fluctuations).

The second cause is a high reliance of economic development on foreign capital in all of its forms. For example, from 2000 to 2008 FDI in Slovakia made up circa 30 per cent, and in other Visegrad countries – from 20 to 25 per cent of the total investment. Foreign ownership in banking system in Poland is almost 70 per cent, in Hungary it is over 85 per cent, while in Slovakia and the Czech Republic it exceeds 90 per cent.

The third cause is macroeconomic imbalances, which were not critically considered by the authorities in the period of rapid economic growth.

The main reason of external imbalances was a low or even negative level of national savings, both private and state ones. Given the shortage of savings the investment growth could be driven only by the current account deficits which were high or relatively high for a long period of time. In pre-crisis 2008 this deficit in Hungary, Slovakia and Poland made up 7 per cent to GDP and only in the Czech Republic – around 2 per cent.

In the period of active privatization the current account deficits were highly covered by FDI inflows. But later financing of deficits to a large extent relied on private borrowing abroad which increase gross external debt. During the eight pre-crises years of rapid economic growth external debt rose by 3.5 times in Poland, 4 times in the Czech Republic, 5 times in Slovakia and 6 times in Hungary. It should be noticed, that in Hungary the debt exceeded GDP.

Loans of private firms and banks predominantly affected the level of short-term indebtedness. As a result, in Hungary in the beginning of the crisis there was evident disparity between the reserves and the needs in foreign currency for current account deficit financing and debt repayments. Besides that, the value of external debt has grown because of forint devaluation. Private investors started to consider risks concerning probable default and, in fact, left the country without external financing. Situation has changed in positive way only due to financial support provided by the EU, IMF and World Bank Group. Permanent general government deficits which from the beginning of the global crisis started to rise drastically were among the internal factors that undermined the stability of the economy. In 2009 and 2010 the levels of deficits were from more than 4 per cent to GDP in Hungary to 8 per cent in Slovakia. Growth of government deficits was followed by an increase in public debts. In Hungary debt-to-GDP ratio exceeded Maastricht criterion and reached 80 per cent.

Last but not the least important cause of the Visegrad economies' vulnerability to external shocks is dependence on the EU market of goods and investments, even higher than in the EU15. The Visegrad countries send to the EU member states from 75 to almost 90 per cent of their exports. West European companies held dominant position among foreign investors presented in the region.

During the global economic boom, the deep involvement in European economic integration provided the benefits mentioned above. However, when

the crisis began, very close trade and financial ties with Western Europe became a weak point of the Visegrad economies.

First of all, reduction of business activity in Western Europe negatively influences demand on the Visegrad Group exports. In the beginning of global crisis it resulted in a drastic decline in industry and GDP contraction. Nowadays, because of another recession in Western Europe the growth of Visegrad countries' exports slows down again, and the situation could be repeated.

Secondly, support of economic growth from West European direct investment weakens or even disappears in crises. In 2009 FDI inflows in the Visegrad countries declined by almost half. Most significantly investors changed their attitude towards Slovakia and Hungary, and next three years they restore their activities in these two countries even slower than in the Eurozone suffering from the debt crisis.

Third, in crises the need of West European banks in cash limits the functioning of 'credit taps'. It negatively affects the financial sector in the countries where banks provide considerable part of credit from external sources of short-term funding. In Slovakia and the Czech Republic this issue is not relevant. But in Hungary the volume of loans is significantly higher than the volume of deposits, and for this reason Hungarian banks are much more vulnerable to their parent banks' policy. When did the debt crisis in the Eurozone, many West European banks burdened by the liabilities of 'problematic' countries started to squeeze their cross-border operations with even greater determination than in the beginning of the global crisis.

It should be recalled that at that time the subsidiaries of West European banks in the Visegrad Four reduced the lending and its growth rates still haven't achieved pre-crisis level. One of the reasons of sluggish lending is low demand on loans because of current economic situation. But there is another reason – it is the tightening of lending conditions by banks because of uncertainty in the solvency of borrowers. The share of nonperforming loans in all the Visegrad

countries has been growing since the beginning of the global crisis. By the loan service discipline they are behind the developed European countries. For example, by the share of nonperforming loans Hungary is comparable to Greece.

The growth of nonperforming loans is caused not only by the problems with borrowers' income, but also by wide spread lending in foreign currencies. Depreciation of national currencies makes loan service more expensive. This happens also in Russia, but here the share of loans in foreign currency is much lower.

Sluggish lending is one of the reasons for the investment contraction which has not yet been overcome in any of the Visegrad countries, except for Poland. At the same time the lack of easy access to credit, in addition to the partial loss of income, forced households in the Czech Republic to stop increasing in consumption, while in Slovakia, and particularly in Hungary, even to cut it. As a result, the weakening of aggregate domestic demand has increased pressure on growth, which was caused by a decline in demand for exports.

Economic Policy Priorities and Growth Prospects

The tension in the public finances didn't let the authorities of the Visegrad countries take anti-crisis measures that were common in Western Europe, USA, Russia and some other states that were able to provide a capital to their banks and firms and stimulate domestic demand. Consolidation of government budgets became a priority and, as we could see on a slide before, there was an evident success in achieving the objectives of this policy.

No doubt, fiscal discipline is an important prerequisite for future sustainable development. But in the current conditions it suppresses domestic demand and, thus, limits growth. The recovery of demand in the Visegrad countries, except for Poland, has not yet started neither in terms of investment component, nor in terms of household consumption.

So, in the foreseeable future growth will continue to depend critically on the demand in Western Europe, external financing and FDI inflows. Each of these factors today inspires less and less optimism. If the effective solution to the problem of sovereign debts in the euro area is not found and the recession in it becomes protracted, the economic prospective for the Visegrad countries could worsen significantly.

Conclusions

We can conclude that the crisis has opened up, as it is paradoxical, new prospects for economic cooperation between Russia and the countries of the Visegrad Group. The limited potential of cooperation with Western Europe as a source of economic progress became, in our view, apparent. According to experts of the World Bank Group, Central and East European countries managed to keep modest economic growth in 2012 (1%) mainly due to an increase in exports outside the EU.

Actualization of new markets searching helps, it seems, to form new and more pragmatic approach to economic relations with Russia. In recent years increase in the Russia's share in foreign trade of the Visegrad Four was outlined. In the context of a general deterioration of the global market, the economic situation in Russia, as in the Visegrad countries is worsening. However, domestic demand has reduced less than in Western Europe, and the opportunity to expand the presence of the Visegrad companies and their products in Russian market still remains.

At the same time, a number of factors continue to hinder the development of economic relations.

- Firstly, the increased interest in boosting economic cooperation with Russia will not change the essence of the Visegrad countries' trade policy which

is defined by the integration within the European market. This fact undermines competitive positions of non-EU countries in the markets of the Visegrad Four.

- Secondly, the commodity structure of trade between Russia and the countries of the Visegrad Group is far from perfect. Russia acts mainly as a supplier of energy resources, and our energy exports remain the determining factor in the dynamics of the whole mutual trade. The volatility in world energy prices is putting it to strong fluctuations.

- Third, there is remarkable growth of interest in the projects of joint ventures with Russian companies in some Visegrad countries, but the attempts of Russian investors in the acquisition of assets do not find support so far. Thus, the position of the Visegrad countries in matters of cooperation is not sufficiently correlated with aspirations of Russia. However, we hope that our country will figure prominently in the Visegrad Four politics of diversification of external economic activities, and the attraction of Russian investors will be one of the important components of success in this process.

Vít Dostál¹

Political-economic Transformation of the Visegrad States as a Testimony of Civilizational Choice Made by the Central Europe

Twenty-five years after the regime change are Poland, Hungary, Slovakia and the Czech Republic stabilized democracies with market economies and members of the EU and NATO. This article focuses first on the incentives which were behind the civilizational change made by the Central Europe. Second, it deals with the implications of their decisions and last but not least it discusses briefly the role of the Visegrad Group after the fulfilment of its main geopolitical and geostrategic goals.

The full involvement of the central Europe into Euro-Atlantic international organizations was not a definite decision in 1989 or 1990. Even Czechoslovak president Václav Havel spoke in early 1990 in the US Congress about the necessity of abandoning both, NATO and Warsaw Pact, and construction of a new security architecture which would cover the area from Vancouver to Vladivostok. Polish foreign minister Skubiszewski introduced a similar proposal in his first speech in Sejm in spring 1990. Thus, there were great expectations in central European capitals that new security system would be based on inclusive cooperation mechanisms and not on exclusive blocs. However, already in early 1990's a new source of instability arose. Yugoslavia broke up and the USSR was torn between proponents of democratization and re-sovietisation. Central European countries met in Visegrad in February 1991 and signed a declaration, which stated that all three countries would strive for full membership in Euro-Atlantic political and economic structures. The civilizational choice was made and a new mechanism for mutual cooperation was founded.

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Historical experience of the 20th century was another incentive which encouraged central European leaders to form a mechanism for long-term cooperation. Similarly, good contacts of new leaders, which were established already before the 1989, made the collaboration easier. Last but not least, we have to take into account the fact that this change was acknowledged by majority of public and there were no serious policy alternatives.

Central European political cooperation did not flourish longer than a few years since the situation changed dramatically in 1993. First, foreign policy orientation of Slovakia was ambiguous until 1998; second, there emerged much competition among the Czech Republic, Hungary and Poland about who chose the best transformation strategy. On the other hand, economic cooperation developed. The Central European Free Trade Agreement (CEFTA) was negotiated in 1992 and gradual process of removal of the tariffs and barriers was launched.

The revival of central European political cooperation started in 1998. The political situation in Slovakia changed and the new government announced that full integration into NATO and the EU is its ultimate goal. Moreover, the Czech Republic decided to support the Visegrad Group. The cooperation flourished. New mechanisms for cooperation were agreed in 1999 and the International Visegrad Fund was established in 2001. Last but not least, all four V4 members entered the European Union in 2004.

There was much ambiguity, whether is the Visegrad cooperation going to survive the full EU membership of all four countries. Nevertheless, after some time of uncertainty, V4 found out how to use the contacts established and habits they learnt during the pre-accession period. Some external impetuses were also important. The Orange Revolution in the Ukraine helped to draw V4 attention towards the East. The energy crisis in 2009 forced the V4 countries to cooperate closely on that issue. Apart from that, the budget of the International Visegrad Fund more than doubled and it has set its own political agenda.

Furthermore, the V4 became active on the European level. The cooperation on sector issues was enhanced and top meetings between V4 and EU officials became a daily business. Thus, the Visegrad Group plays an important role in European policy of all four countries both on the top political as well as on the working level.

Now, more than 20 years after the establishment of the Visegrad cooperation and almost 25 years after the civilizational choice made by Central Europe, we can state, that Visegrad cooperation is internal as well as externally recognized political entity. Moreover, recent development (for example the cooperation in the Multinational Financial Framework negotiations) reminds us that the Visegrad Group will keep its important place in the foreign policies of the Czech Republic, Poland, Hungary and Slovakia.

András Rácz¹

Models of Energy co-operation between V-4 Member States and Russia

When we speak about the energy-related policies of the Visegrad region towards Russia, we need to keep in mind, how different Visegrad countries are regarding the role Russia plays in their energy security. Just to give you a few examples: concerning the national energy mixes, while in Poland coal still plays an important role, in Slovakia and Hungary gas is of crucial importance. While three Visegrad countries have nuclear power plants, namely Hungary, Slovakia and the Czech Republic, Poland does not have one, etc.

Hungary is in a uniquely dependent situation concerning gas imports from the East. We often describe this situation as a 'triple dependence'. The first is the dependence on the source of import. Hungary has currently only one source from where most of its gas needs could be fulfilled: Russia. The second is the dependence on transit. Hungary has only one transit route, through which Russian gas can reach us: this is Ukraine. And the third dependence originates from the lack of a transit position meaning that Hungary has no such bargaining power like other transit countries do.

Not only our energy mixes, but also the structure of our energy import from Russia is different. While in terms of gas consumption Hungary and Slovakia are highly dependent on the gas imported from Russia (some 95% and 80%, respectively), the Czech Republic has a much more diversified import structure, and is much less dependent on gas supplies coming from the East. However, Prague imports the dominant share of its oil consumption still from Russia.

¹ Hungarian Institute of International Affairs. The views presented here are of the authors own, and they no way represent either the official position of Hungary, or of the Hungarian Institute of International Affairs.

It is interesting to note that concerning its share, Russia is much more important as a source of oil import than of gas import. With other words, we are much more dependent on Russian oil than on Russian gas. However, as oil has a world market, this high share of Russian oil in our imports never gets securitized to such an extent as gas may do – and actually did during the 2009 crisis, about which I am going to speak about a bit later.

If we are so different in terms of energy, this may lead us to the question: why to cooperate on energy issues at all?

The answer is two-fold, thus we have two reasons to cooperate: security and pricing.

Before 2009 there was practically no Visegrad cooperation in the energy sector. Though there was an Expert Group set up in the early 2000s, but it did not produce any significant result.

The lack of cooperation had been connected to the generally very low energy consciousness in the whole Visegrad region. Why was energy consciousness so low? Why we did not care? The answer is simple: because the prices were extremely low, and supplies seemed to last forever. Besides, of course, we also have to keep in mind that in the 1990s the broader Visegrad region had much larger and much more burning security issues to cope with: the dissolution of Czechoslovakia, the Yugoslav civil war, the financial crisis in Russia, the 1999 war about Kosovo, etc. Energy prices were low and supplies seemed to last forever, thus not much attention was paid to energy at all.

A good example for this is Hungary. Up to now almost 60% of Hungarian households are heated with gas, though this rate was only 25% in 1990. The subsequent Hungarian governments actively encouraged and supported the population to switch to gas-operated heating systems everywhere. *Gazifikacya* was going on at full speed, as it offered easy political profit for the ruling elites: people were given cheap and very convenient heating systems instead of the bulky, time-consuming wood or coal heat or instead of the dirty, stinking oil

heat. Gas is much easier, more convenient and requires no work: you just switch on the regulator, and your flat is warm. It was just so easy.

Though during this intensive *gazifikacya* the subsequent Hungarian governments did pay some attention to the risks of increasing dependency, as pointed out by Kornél Andzsans-Balogh,² no one can handle the challenge of diversification alone. Thus Hungary, unintentionally manoeuvred itself into such a situation, where we actually increased our critical, strategic dependence on gas – remember the 'triple dependence' mentioned before – for the sake of short-term domestic political benefits.

The shock came with the 2009 gas crisis that had a serious effect on the Visegrad region. After the crisis a strongly securitized decision was taken in the Visegrad region to speed up energy cooperation and increase the supply security of the whole region.

The 2009 crisis gave momentum to the construction of the Central European interconnectors as well. Of course, without generous financing from the European Union no interconnectors could have been built. It was the EU financial support that made the building of interconnectors possible, as pointed out, for example, by Andrej Nosko.³

These will not only enable the Visegrad countries to help each other in case of need. The large gas storage facilities of Hungary – sufficient to store more than 6 billion cubic meters of gas – can play a crucial role in handling supply crises on a regional level. Besides, with the interconnectors the Visegrad countries will get access to the world gas market through the future LNG terminals, which are planned to be built in Poland and Croatia.

² Andzsans-Balogh, Kornél: 'The Road to Hungarian Energy Security.' *Journal of Energy Security*. www.ensec.org. 15 March 2011. Available:

http://www.ensec.org/index.php?view=article&catid=114%3Acontent0211&id=278%3Athe-road-to-hungarian-energy-security&tmpl=component&print=1&page=&option=com_content&Itemid=374 Accessed: 6 May 2013.

³ Nosko, Andrej: Regional Energy Security: Visegrad Finally at Work? In: Majer, Marian – Ondrejcsák, Róbert – Tarasovič, Vladimír – Valášek, Tomas (eds): *Panorama of global security environment 2010*. Bratislava, 2010, Centre for European and North Atlantic Affairs.pp. 67-78.

From our perspective, the interconnectors and the LNG terminal will increase the security of supplies. Our dependence on Russia as a source country and on Ukraine as a transit country will decrease.

However, from the Russian point of view this means exactly the opposite. As a gas producer country, Russia looks for the security of demand. For the Visegrad region gas supply and transit routes diversification means increasing security of supplies – but for Russia this means decreasing security of demand. The whole regions' present critical dependence on Russian natural gas supplies will surely decrease in the long run.

Besides the security argument for Visegrad energy cooperation, there is another one: prices. As Nosko calculates, though the Visegrad countries individually constitute only very small shares in the Russian gas exports to the EU, together they could be the second largest EU customer of Russian gas after Germany!

Currently the V4 states pay higher prices for Russian natural gas than Austria or Germany. However, even the possibility of a coordinated Visegrad gas market – for which the interconnectors will create the necessary infrastructure – would enable the four V4 states to achieve much better gas prices from Russia than the ones they have today.

With other words, a joint, coordinated approach would significantly improve the negotiating positions of the V4 countries with Russia about the gas prices.

However, there are some important methodological problems that prevent one from exactly forecasting the effects of the Visegrad gas supply diversification on the dependence on Russia. Here one could quote Yogi Berra: “It's tough to make predictions, especially about the *future*”. Anyways, we should try.

First, currently it cannot be predicted when exactly the interconnectors – and particularly the LNG terminals – will be finished, and when they will become operational.

Second, another variable is how the gas demands of the V4 countries are going to change due to the crisis and due to domestic market developments.

Third, the share of short-term, spot market gas contracts is increasing everywhere in Europe, thanks to the increasing availability of LNG, thus to a gradual emergence of a world gas market.

Fourth, in the long run, the shale gas exploration projects in Central Europe constitute another factor of unpredictability.

However, one thing is sure, even if we yet cannot calculate it exactly: gas security relations of the V4 and Russia will become increasingly ‘marketized’. The present unilateral, strategic dependence on Russian gas supplies will gradually decrease. It will not disappear, of course – Europe needs and will need Russian natural gas, but the current dependence is going to be gradually transformed into an increasingly market-based relationship.

From the classical realist point of view, this trend could be interpreted as Russia is going to lose an important foreign policy tool, an important political and economic leverage over the region.

However, I prefer another interpretation. The above-mentioned changes will contribute to the increasing competitiveness of the Russian natural gas sector, to its modernization and to its enhanced effectiveness. How and when exactly this change is going to happen, it is not yet sure. However, the change will surely take place.

Anna Czyż¹

Cooperation of Local Authorities in the Context of Building Civil Societies in the V4 States

In 1989 after the fall of communism in Central Europe Czechoslovakia, Hungary and Poland have started the process of political and economic transformation – transition from authoritarian rule to democracy and from centrally planned economy to a market economy. They had to define their domestic and foreign policy priorities – after the period of being a part of Soviet bloc “the three Central European countries opted for integration with the “West” and aimed to become part of European and Transatlantic integration structures as soon as possible. From this point of view the establishment of Visegrad Group can be considered an integral part of the so called European project. (...) From a historical, geopolitical but also a cultural point of view Czechoslovakia, Hungary and Poland were the closest countries and their cooperation only seemed to be a question of time”². They started to cooperate in the framework of Visegrad Triangle on February 15th, 1991 and after the split of Czechoslovakia in 1993 the term Visegrad Group came into force. In 1999 Czech Republic, Hungary and Poland became a member of NATO (Slovakia joined NATO in 2004), in 2004 four Visegrad countries entered EU and by the end of 2007 the V4 countries managed to enter the Schengen system, so they have reached the main goals of foreign policy of Visegrad cooperation but they have decided to continue the good pattern of cooperation and they have determined new goals of further partnership and interaction. The V4 regularly cooperates with other countries in Central Europe with Austria and Slovenia within the so-called

¹ University of Silesia

² T. Strážay, Visegrad – arrival, survival, revival. In: Two decades of Visegrad cooperation, s. 16, www.visegradgroup.eu/.../two-decades-of-visegrad-120628-1 (19.03.2013).

Regional Partnership and with the V4's Eastern neighbors as part of the so-called V4+ concept.

A part of abovementioned political changes in Visegrad countries was to rebuild local government structures – at first at the level of municipality and in Hungary also at the level of county. Creating local communities in 1990 was seen as a step in the direction of building local democracy. After the period of national councils it was important to release people's activity, consciousness of community's needs, interest of community's matters and ability to pursue that goals. By the end of 1990s in Poland and at the beginning of XXI century in the Czech Republic and in Slovakia higher units of local government were created as a part of process of decentralization. At this moment in the Czech Republic, in Slovakia and in Hungary two levels of local government exist (municipality and region) and Poland is the only Visegrad country with three levels' structure of local government (municipality, county and region). At every level of local government decision-making bodies and executive bodies exist and act on their own behalf and own responsibility, on the basis of own budget and under the court protection what makes them independent in action and planning.

As it is said in all Visegrad constitutions and basic laws concerning local government, municipalities, counties and regions have the right to cooperate with other similar units on the territory of the state or with other units in neighbouring countries. Internal cooperation of local government units includes agreements, associations or unions between interested units. International cooperation of local government units can be developed on the basis of bilateral and international agreements in different forms. Cross-border "cooperation is supported through several international agreements and documents. Its development was most substantially influenced by the European Outline Convention on Transfrontier Cooperation between Territorial Communities or Authorities signed in Madrid on May 21st, 1980. Within this document, all activities aimed at strengthening and promoting neighborly relations between

inhabitants of borderlands on both sides of the common state border are considered to be cross-border cooperation. According to the Council of Europe, the given activities make a basis for meeting its main objective – the unification to the greatest degree possible of European countries and their populations”³. Additional Protocol to the Madrid Convention, European Charter of Local Self-Government⁴, European Charter of Regional Self-Government⁵, European Charter for Border and Cross-border Regions⁶ and bilateral agreements between interested countries give the basis for cross-border cooperation. There is also a major value of EU – the principle of subsidiarity, which means that decisions and actions are taken at the level of competency nearest to those that they will impact, at the closest level of competency to those affected. “In the spirit of subsidiarity, the sub-national territorial organizations should be regions, counties and other types of administrative locations or municipalities that have the freedom and competency to participate in international cooperation”⁷.

Cross-border cooperation is promoted by the EU through several programs and initiatives. Important instrument of financial help for Central European countries from the beginning of 1990s was program PHARE and its part – program PHARE CBC for cross-border cooperation. Priority fields of cooperation were cultural exchange, development of local democracy and contacts with civil society organizations such as trade unions, chambers of commerce, different associations. As a part of PHARE CBC Small Project Fund (SPF) was established to support and develop people-to-people bonds and connections. Local and regional authorities and civil society organizations benefited the most by SPF which financed cultural and sport events (concerts,

³ M. Halás, Development of cross-border cooperation and creation of euroregions in the Slovak Republic, s. 24, <http://geography.upol.cz/soubory/lide/halas/clanky/Halas-MGR.pdf> (10.03.2013).

⁴ <http://conventions.coe.int/Treaty/Commun/QueVoulezVous.asp?NT=122&CM=1&CL=ENG> (04.04.2013).

⁵ <https://wcd.coe.int/ViewDoc.jsp?id=40277&Site=COE> (04.04.2013).

⁶ European Charter for Border and Cross-border cooperation from 1981, then changed in 1995, 2004 and in 2011, <http://www.aebr.eu/en/publications/publications.php#> (04.04.2013).

⁷ S. Köles, Sharing the experiences of Visegrad cooperation in the Western Balkans and the Eastern neighborhood countries, Project final study, s. 203, <http://www.icdt.hu/documents/news/Project-Final-Study.pdf>, (12.03.2013).

festivals, exhibitions, competitions, youth exchange, language workshops, trainings, conferences etc.) In the framework of program PHARE two other types of cooperation were created – PHARE CREDO for cooperation between Central Eastern European countries and PHARE TACIS for cooperation between Central Eastern European countries and Commonwealth of Independent States (CIS). In the structural policy framework of the EU programs available for cross-border cooperation existed between 2000 and 2006 were: INTERREG (interregional cooperation)⁸, URBAN (sustainable development of urban areas), LEADER (development of rural areas) and EQUAL (fight against the labour market inequalities). In the current financial period (2007-2013) the abovementioned initiatives do not exist anymore in their traditional form. They have been transformed and for example INTERREG has become one part of the objective named European Territorial Cooperation⁹ and European Neighbourhood and Partnership Instrument (ENPI) as a program targeted for Central and Eastern Europe and the former Soviet Union provide funds for cross-border projects in regions on the EU's external boundaries¹⁰.

There is another financial instrument for V4 cross-border cooperation in addition to the abovementioned EU funds, which is the own endeavor of the Visegrad countries, called the International Visegrad Fund (IVF). The International Visegrad Fund was established in 2000 to encourage closer cooperation among the V4 countries through the support of common projects in the fields of culture, science and research, education, youth exchange, cross-border cooperation and promotion of tourism. “The mission of the International Visegrad Fund is to promote development of closer cooperation among the Visegrad Group (V4) countries—the Czech Republic, Hungary, Poland and

⁸ INTERREG I (1991-1993), INTERREG II (1994-1999), INTERREG III (2000-2006).

⁹ J. Kaposzta, H. Nagy, K. Ritter, Cross-border cooperation to enhance economic development in the Visegrad countries, s. 11, http://www.delhibusinessreview.org/V_11n2/v11n2b.pdf (10.03.2013), http://ec.europa.eu/regional_policy/the_funds/regional/index_en.cfm#3 (07.04.2013).

¹⁰ State of the Art Discussion Report (Deliverable No. 6, WP 1), s. 11, <http://www.euborderregions.eu/files/State%20of%20Art%20border%20studies%20no%201.pdf> (07.04.2013).

Slovakia—and to strengthen the ties among people in the region. (...) Most of the grant recipients are non-governmental organizations, municipalities and local governments, universities, schools and other public institutions and also individual citizens. The Fund also awards individual scholarships and artist residencies”¹¹. "Although almost any type of organization or individual can apply for a grant, most of the recipients are NGOs and foundations in the region"¹². Strengthening of the civil dimension of Visegrad co-operation especially through the support of civil society projects by the IVF remains one of the most important goal of Fund’s activity but also a big challenge of Visegrad cooperation.

The main aim of cross-border cooperation is to overcome natural borders, political and administrative barriers, cultural and ethnic divides between neighboring countries, communities and people, stereotypes of perceiving the neighboring nation through common work for the benefit of the region. “Cross-border cooperation on regional/local level, involving various social partners and segments of the population across international borders, promotes peace, freedom, security and safeguarding of human rights and encourages the protection of ethnic and national minorities”¹³. Cross-border cooperation is an important part of integration process in Europe. Such cooperation can be developed in the fields of economy, transport, infrastructure, know-how and technology transfer, environment, education, tourism, culture and people-to-people contacts. It can involve local and regional stakeholders like businesses, municipalities and civil-society organizations which represent the interest of local communities¹⁴. Cooperation is formalized by agreements signed by the executive bodies of local communities and approved by the decision-making

¹¹ <http://visegradfund.org/about/basic-facts/> (27.03.2013).

¹² <http://www.visegradgroup.eu/about/press-room/the-future-lies-in-cross> (04.04.2013.).

¹³ Draft new version European Charter for border and cross-border regions, s. 3, Association of European Border Regions (AEBR), http://www.aebr.eu/files/publications/110915_Charta_EN_clean.pdf (28.03.2013).

¹⁴ <http://www.icdt.hu/documents/publications/Project-Final-Study.pdf> (03.03.2013).

bodies of these communities¹⁵. Its important feature is durability of mutual relationships.

The added value of cross-border cooperation:

- The development of European integration,
- The implementation of subsidiarity and partnership,
- Getting to know each other and building trust,
- Increased economic and social cohesion and cooperation,
- Improvement of protection of the environment and nature,
- Improving infrastructure,
- Promotion of cultural cooperation,
- Active involvement by the citizens, authorities, political and social groups on both sides of the border,
- Joint drafting, implementation and financing common programs and projects,
- Mobilization and participation of actors from the economic and social sector (chambers of commerce, associations, companies, trade unions, cultural and social institutions, environmental organizations and tourism agencies)¹⁶.

Overall, three basic types of micro-, medium-, and macro-level cooperation beyond borders can be identified:

1. Cross-border cooperation: direct cooperation among transfrontier neighbours in all aspects of life between communities including the participation of all actors, like local and regional authorities (districts, oblasts, counties, etc.) and their institutions, and also non-governmental organizations such as civil society organizations (euroregions).

¹⁵ Practical guide to transfrontier cooperation, s. 12, Council of Europe, www.espaces-transfrontaliers.org/en/studies/practical_guide_en.pdf (07.03.2013).

¹⁶ Draft new version European Charter for border and cross-border regions, Association of European Border Regions (AEBR), http://www.aebr.eu/files/publications/110915_Charta_EN_clean.pdf (28.03.2013).

2. Inter-regional cooperation: primarily sectoral cooperation regarding specific topics such as economical or environmental issues, involving actors mainly from regional and local authorities.

3. Transnational cooperation: cooperation between countries addressing a particular topic related to interconnected large geographical areas¹⁷.

On the basis of EU decree from 2006¹⁸ European Grouping of Territorial Cooperation (EGTC) can be established by local and regional authorities, central governments, associations, bodies governed by public law (universities, cultural institutions). This instrument of cross-border cooperation as a legal entity must have members from at least two member states. “They enable regional and local authorities from different member states to cooperate more effectively, for example by allowing them to directly apply for and manage European funds”¹⁹. The main goals of such a form of cross-border cooperation are:

- Running cross-border transport or health services,
- Managing cross-border or inter-regional sustainable development projects (innovation and technology, environmental protection, etc.),
- Strengthening economic and social cohesion across borders²⁰.

There is an example of Ister-Granum euroregion which changed into EGTC in 2008²¹.

¹⁷Practical guide to cross-border cooperation, http://www.aebr.eu/files/publications/lace_guide.en.pdf

¹⁸ Regulation 1082/2006/EC on European Grouping for Territorial Cooperation adopted by the European Parliament and Council on 5 July 2006, <http://cor.europa.eu/en/activities/networks/Pages/egtc.aspx> (04.04.2013).

¹⁹ <http://cor.europa.eu/en/activities/networks/Pages/egtc.aspx> (04.04.2013).

²⁰ Ibidem.

²¹ http://www.istergranum.hu/tortenet_en.html (04.04.2013).

Table 1. List of EGTC at the territory of V4 states

EGTC	COUNTRIES	Year of establishment
Ister-Granum	H/SK	2008
Karst-Bódva	H/SK	2009
Ung-Tisza-Túr-Sajó ²²	H/SK	2009
Pons Danubi ²³	H/SK	2010
Abaúj-Abújban	H/SK	2010
Rába-Duna-Vág Korlátolt ²⁴	H/SK	2011
Bodrogközi ²⁵	H/SK	2012

Source: http://www.aebr.eu/en/members/list_of_regions.php (07.04.2013), http://portal.cor.europa.eu/egtc/en-US/Documents/EGTC%20list%20may%202012/2012_05_25%20list%20of%20existing%20EGTC_PL.doc (07.04.2013), <https://portal.cor.europa.eu/egtc/en-US/Register/already/Pages/PonsDanubii.aspx> (07.04.2013).

The institutional form of cross-border cooperation is euroregion. This term is not formalized, is not used in official documents but exists in mass-media, literature and practice because it has a long tradition. The first euroregional structures were created in Western Europe in 1950s and at this moment over 180 euroregions function across Europe²⁶. Euroregions do not establish new types of governance at a cross-border level. The tasks, competencies, and powers of each euroregion are determined by those regional and local authorities included in the euroregion. It is seen as a way to improve the communication connections, to promote the region and to increase its attractiveness for tourism and recreation, to jointly proceed in the field of environmental protection. Euroregions can be a platform to build relations from below and driving force for initiatives of citizens.

²² <http://www.fovarositorvenyszek.hu/europai-teruleti-tarsulasok/ung-tisza-tur-sajo-hernad-bodva-szinva-korlatolt-felelosegu-europai> (07.04.2013).

²³ <http://www.ponsdanubii.eu/> (07.04.2013).

²⁴ <http://www.fovarositorvenyszek.hu/europai-teruleti-tarsulasok/raba-duna-vag-korlatolt-felelosegu-europai-teruleti-egyuttmukodesi> (07.04.2013).

²⁵ <http://www.bodrogkoziesek.com/index.php?lang=en> (07.04.2013).

²⁶ http://www.aebr.eu/en/members/list_of_regions.php (09.04.2013).

The form of cross-border cooperation can be direct cooperation of local and regional authorities in the form of twin towns or sister cities based on direct contacts of inhabitants and local government officials.

Cross-border cooperation is regarded with special importance in the V4 countries, all of which have participated in the development of varied types of euroregions with their Visegrad partners, EU members, with applicant countries (the Western Balkan countries) and other neighbouring countries (Ukraine, Belarus, Russia). Cross-border cooperation is mentioned as a crucial aspect of Visegrad cooperation in all documents regarding V4 cooperation. “In 1991 the first enacted V4 declaration states that its signatories shall jointly undertake steps that would encourage the creation of free contact between citizens, institutions, churches, and social organizations, foster economic cooperation, focus on developing the infrastructure of communications, enhance cooperation in ecology, create favorable conditions for the unrestrained flow of information, press, and cultural values and to encourage mutually beneficial cooperation among local government entities while establishing sub-regional contacts²⁷. The so-called Kroměříž Declaration – the second Visegrad declaration – which was adopted following the EU accession of the V4 countries identify cross-border cooperation among the most crucial areas to be developed in the post-accession period²⁸. Cross-border cooperation is expected to remain as a vital field of cooperation among the V4 countries – despite the diminishing significance of borders after these countries accession to the EU and joining the Schengen area – as well as for the countries in the EU neighbourhood.

²⁷ Declaration on Cooperation between the Czech and Slovak Federal Republic, the Republic of Poland and the Republic of Hungary in Striving for European Integration, <http://www.visegradgroup.eu/main.php?folderID=940&articleID=3940&ctag=articlelist&iid=> (27.03.2013).

²⁸ Declaration of Prime Ministers of the Czech Republic, the Republic of Hungary, the Republic of Poland and the Slovak Republic on cooperation of the Visegrad Group countries after their accession to the European Union (12 May 2004), <http://www.visegradgroup.eu/main.php?folderID=940&articleID=3939&ctag=articlelist&iid=1> <http://www.visegradgroup.eu/main.php?folderID=941&articleID=3936&ctag=articlelist&iid=1> (27.03.2013).

Visegrad countries started to create euroregions as a form of cross-border cooperation from the beginning of 1990s. The first such a body was Euroregion Neisse-Nisa-Nysa at the border of the Czech Republic, Poland and Germany. The next one was Carpathian Euroregion. “These endeavours were designed for the dissolution of the inflexible framework of nation-states, anchoring cross-border cooperation in the spirit of democracy and harmony”²⁹. At the beginning the initiative to create euroregions was at the government side. Now the priority is to give the freedom of decision to local governments and non-governmental organizations. Euroregions have their own bodies – parliaments, councils, boards, secretariats, secretaries, working groups, commissions, etc., can work as an association of local government units so as a legal entity. Members are municipalities, counties but also other legal entities or physical entities - civil society organizations and business partners (for example in euroregion White Carpathians three sectors cooperate)³⁰.

Table 2. Euroregions created by Visegrad countries

Euroregion	Partners	Date of establishment
Neisse-Nisa-Nysa ³¹	CZ, PL, DE	1991
Carpathian ³²	H, PL, RO, SK, UA	1993
Tatra ³³	PL, SK	1994
Glacensis ³⁴	CZ, PL	1996
Pradęd - Pradziad ³⁵	CZ, PL	1997
Silesia ³⁶	CZ, PL	1998

²⁹ S. Köles, Sharing the experiences of Visegrad cooperation in the Western Balkans and the Eastern neighbourhood countries, Project final study, s. 207, <http://www.icdt.hu/documents/news/Project-Final-Study.pdf>, (12.03.2013).

³⁰ <http://www.erbbk.sk/main.php?r=4&s=37> (04.04.2013).

³¹ <http://www.neisse-nisa-nysa.org/> (04.04.2013).

³² <http://www.karpacki.pl/> (04.04.2013).

³³ <http://www.euroregion-tatry.pl/> (04.04.2013).

³⁴ <http://www.euroregion-glacensis.ng.pl/index.php/pl/> (04.04.2013).

³⁵ <http://www.europradziad.pl/index2.php> (04.04.2013).

³⁶ <http://www.euroregion-silesia.pl/> (04.04.2013).

Těšínské Slezsko - Śląsk Cieszyński ³⁷	CZ, PL	1998
Weinviertel -Pomoraví - Záhorie ³⁸ Euregio Weinviertel - South Moravia -West Slovakia	A, CZ, SK	1999
Váh–Dunaj–Ipel' ³⁹ (Vagus - Danubius - Ipolia)	H, SK	1999
White Carpathian ⁴⁰ Bílé-Biele Karpaty	CZ, SK	2000
Beskid Mountains ⁴¹	CZ, PL, SK	2000
Neogradiensis ⁴²	H, SK	2000
Ipel' (Ipoly)/ Ipeľský	H, SK	2000
Košice–Miskolc	H, SK	2000
Slaná–Rimava ⁴³	H, SK	2000
Kras Karst/Karszt	H, SK	2001
Triple-Danube Hármas Duna-Vidék/ Podunajského Trojropolku	H, SK	2001
Ister-Granum ⁴⁴	H, SK	2001-2008

³⁷ <http://www.euregio-teschinensis.eu/euroregion-slask-cieszynski/> (04.04.2013).

³⁸ <http://www.euregio-weinviertel.eu/en.html> (04.04.2013).

³⁹ <http://www.euroregion-vdi.sk/> (04.04.2013).

⁴⁰ <http://www.erbbk.sk/main.php?r=4> (04.04.2013).

⁴¹ <http://www.euroregion-beskidy.pl/pl/> (04.04.2013).

⁴² http://neogradiensis.eu/index.php?option=com_content&view=article&id=13&Itemid=79&lang=en (04.04.2013).

⁴³ <http://www.euroregion-slana-rimava.sk/> (04.04.2013).

⁴⁴ http://www.istergranum.hu/index_en.html (04.04.2013).

Zemplén ⁴⁵	H, SK	2004
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Source: M. Halás, Development of cross-border cooperation and creation of euroregions in the Slovak Republic, s. 25, <http://geography.upol.cz/soubory/lide/halas/clanky/Halas-MGR.pdf> (10.03.2013), Euroregiony na granicach Polski 2007, s. 21, http://www.stat.gov.pl/cps/rde/xbcr/wroc/ASSETS_euroregiony_cale.pdf (22.03.2013), <http://www.euregio.nrw.de/links.html> (04.04.2013).

In developing cross-border cooperation participation of non-governmental and social (religious, youth, sport) organizations is significant. Non-governmental organizations, foundations and associations appeared in V4 states at approximately the same time as in the countries of Western Europe but the period of communist domination caused an enormous drop in social activity – the lack of civil society was a part of socialist regime. Civil society underwent a major transformation and is now largely represented by the NGOs (Non-Governmental Organizations). Since 1989 NGOs (foundations, charities, religious and ethnic minority organizations, employer and business associations, trade unions, sport clubs) have enjoyed a renaissance thanks to the reinstatement of freedom of assembly and association. “Some organizations, whose traditions date back to the pre-war period, have been reestablished and have begun their statutory activities. Numerous new foundations and associations have been created to solve the problems and meet the needs of modern society”⁴⁶.

“Non-governmental organizations played a key role in democratization projects and integration campaigns in the Visegrad countries. In many cases, they complemented the work of governments in many areas while those governments faced a range of different, complex tasks. Through the activities of NGOs, the governments of these countries could "outsource" some of their more demanding and detailed tasks since NGOs are more flexible and emerge directly from civil societies while forming, cultivating and changing those societies. Many of their activities come across as more credible to target groups”⁴⁷.

⁴⁵ http://www.zrva.hu/euroregio_eng.html (04.04.2013).

⁴⁶ <http://en.poland.gov.pl/Non-Governmental-Organizations,399.html> (27.03.2013).

⁴⁷ <http://www.visegradgroup.eu/other-articles/helping-hands-from-ngos> (04.04.2013).

European Union's accession of the Visegrad countries has strengthened civil society actors in three distinct ways: "the integration process provided opportunities to civil society organizations to enter EU-supported transnational networks, to tap the significant new resources through the access to EU structural and community funds, and to increase its political role on the local and national level through EU mandated procedures which stipulate the partner role of civil society organizations in many policy arenas"⁴⁸. Those organizations became an important partner for local and regional authorities in different fields for example on the basis of public-private partnership (PPP). In the field of cross-border cooperation NGOs are mostly engaged in the sphere of culture and education organizing cultural or sport events like festivals, competition, training etc.

The experiences of Visegrad countries have proven that cross-border cooperation plays a crucial role in promoting regional cooperation in a number of areas to solve important problems. Local governments actively participate to obtain funding for projects aimed at improving social and economic conditions, cultural relations with neighbouring regions. During the last two decades there has been a consistent growth in the number and variety of civil society organizations in Visegrad countries which became important partner for local authorities inside the countries and taking part in cross-border cooperation. Their participation and commitment in cross-border cooperation is still rising. The experience of cross-border cooperation gives in most cases positive effects but barriers of cross-border cooperation should also be mentioned. Local authorities and civil society organizations mostly point out:

- Complicated procedures of winning, realization and settling accounts of funds,
- Insufficient financial resources,

⁴⁸ G. Ekiert, R. Foa, Civil society weakness in post-communist Europe: a preliminary assessment, s. 21-22, <http://www.carloalberto.org/assets/working-papers/no.198.pdf> (27.03.22013).

- Asymmetry of financial and economic potentials of bordering regions,
- Difficulties in finding suitable partners,
- Differences in law regulations,
- Differences in the field of local authorities' competences,
- Disproportion in territorial and administrative division of state.

Those barriers are seen especially at the Eastern border of European Union with reference to cross-border cooperation with Russian, Belorussian and Ukrainian units which are not so independently in making decisions as Visegrad countries' local government units. Also regarding civil society organizations we can observe huge disproportions in involvement, experience or financial resources between Visegrad and Eastern European countries' NGOs.

European Union is promoting cross-border cooperation as an instrument of deepening integration between the EU and its neighbours. Within the European Neighbourhood Policy strengthening of a 'civil society dimension' is also underlined. "Civil society organizations have a valuable role to play in identifying priorities for action and in promoting and monitoring the implementation of ENP Action Plans'. Strengthening 'civil society' is also seen as a means of spreading western values of 'democracy', 'the rule of law', 'free markets' and 'good governance'. Civil society organizations in all their diversity certainly should be playing a crucial role in policy proposals or in projects aiming to enhance the relations with the EU and its neighbors"⁴⁹ on every level of governance (local, regional, national).

⁴⁹ State of the Art Discussion Report (Deliverable No. 6, WP 1), s. 27, <http://www.euborderregions.eu/files/State%20of%20Art%20border%20studies%20no%201.pdf> (07.04.2013).

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Имидж России в странах Вышеградской группы.

Формирование позитивного имиджа России как государства и русских как народа в странах Вышеградской группы (V4) было и остается важным элементом российской геополитики. В будущем его значение может даже повыситься, благодаря усилению экономической и политической роли вышеградцев в определении путей развития Евросоюза, в т.ч. в отношении России и инициированных ею евразийских интеграционных структур. Немаловажно в этом смысле и вступление в ЕС Хорватии, которая вместе со Словенией сможет теснее сотрудничать с вышеградцами по формуле V4 +2. Реальный потенциал для превращения V4 в ядро регионального экономического и политического сотрудничества в Центральной Европе создают также традиционные связи группы с Болгарией, Румынией и западнобалканскими странами - кандидатами на членство в ЕС.

Этот тренд особенно заметен в торгово-экономической сфере. В 2012 г., несмотря на кризисные явления в мировой и европейской экономике, доли V4 в торговле России со всем миром превысили 7% по экспорту и 6% по импорту. В торговле с ЕС они составили, соответственно, около 14% и почти 15%, при том, что доля V4 в совокупном «евросоюзном» ВВП была менее 6%. Доля Вышеградской группы во внешнеторговом обороте России практически равна доле стран Таможенного союза (Беларуси и Казахстана) и почти в 1,3 раза выше доли Украины. Причем только Польша обеспечивала 3,3% российской внешней торговли, занимая по этому показателю 4 –е место в ЕС (больше, чем Франция или Финляндия и Швеция вместе взятые). Российский импорт из

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Польша по стоимости приблизилась к 40% импорта из Таможенного союза, а общий российский импорт из Словакии и Чехии почти в 1,2 раза превысил импорт из Казахстана /1/.

Вышеградские страны обеспечивают основную часть «большого транзита» российских энергоресурсов в Западную Европу, как по традиционным трубопроводам, так и по новым (ветка «Северного потока» через Чехию) и по запланированным (венгерский, хорватский и словенский участки «Южного потока») или обсуждающимся (проект транзитного газопровода «Ямал - 2» через Польшу в Словакию и Венгрию) системам.

Появляется подобный тренд и в политической области. При доле Вышеградских стран в населении ЕС менее 13% их доля в числе депутатов Европарламента и членов Еврокомиссии составляет почти 15%, в числе голосов в Совете ЕС – 17%. В формате V4+2 или даже +3 (с учетом Австрии, которая по ряду важных вопросов занимает близкие к «четверке» позиции) это усиливает потенциал «политического лобби» вышеградцев в ключевых институтах Евросоюза, в т.ч. при формировании политики в отношении России и ее союзников/2/. Заметную роль играет V4 и в общем военном потенциале ЕС. К началу 2009 г., по некоторым оценкам, доля четверки в суммарном военном бюджете стран ЕС превышала 9% (почти в 1,7 раза выше, чем в совокупном ВВП), а в суммарной сухопутной боевой мощи – 8%/3/. В рамках региональной политики безопасности, тесно увязанной с общей оборонной политикой ЕС, в начале 2016 г. вышеградцы должны создать совместную боевую группу из 3 тыс. военных.

Наглядным подтверждением растущего значения V4 в развитии экономического союза, повышении конкурентоспособности экономики ЕС и укреплении его оборонного потенциала стало участие в мартовском

(2013г.) саммите Вышеградской группы руководителей Германии и Франции – стран экономических и политических «локомотивов» Евросоюза.

В связи с этим нынешнее, а тем более перспективное, восприятие России и русских в V4 очень важно для развития отношений РФ с этой группой стран. Такое восприятие, прежде всего, определяется реальной экономической и политической ситуацией в России, ее ролью в Европе и мире. Тем не менее, на него существенно влияют и факторы внутри стран четверки. Поэтому при большом сходстве восприятия российского государства и народа в Вышеградской группе, оно заметно различается по странам. Эти различия связаны как с историческим опытом взаимоотношений с Россией, отношением к ней различных поколений, политических партий и политиков, так и с менталитетом конкретных народов и присутствием и ролью в их странах русского меньшинства.

Имидж России и русских в странах четверки будет складываться под воздействием как сложившихся, так и новых трендов во взаимоотношениях наших стран и народов, проявившихся в последние 10 и, особенно, в последние 5 лет. Эти относятся ко всем уровням формирования национальных геополитических представлений. Первый уровень – официальное видение мира доминирующей частью политической элиты, второй - представление о мире различных социальных, этнических и региональных групп. Оба уровня тесно взаимосвязаны, формируя национальную (этническую) и политическую (государственную) идентичность стран. Выработка внешнеполитических концепций, доктрин, принятие и реализация конкретизирующих их решений на первом уровне во многом дают ориентиры для развития в обществе различных (в т.ч. конкурирующих) исторически сложившихся представлений о положении страны в мире и ее цивилизационной

идентичности, приоритетных национальных интересах и др. В свою очередь, сформированная на основании исторического опыта общества национальная культура знаний о внешнем мире и взаимодействии на втором уровне, существенно влияет на функционирование первого уровня.

Взаимосвязь между первым и вторым уровнями в значительной мере осуществляет промежуточный уровень, представленный преимущественно экспертным и культурологическим сообществом и средствами массовой информации. Именно они передают сигналы с уровня политической и государственной элиты различным общественным слоям и группам. Они также призваны осуществлять обратную связь между обществом и элитами.

Особую роль здесь играют именно масс-медиа. Даже сейчас в условиях невиданной ранее информационной открытости мира (в т.ч. через такие эффективные инструменты прямого межличностного общения как интернет и социальные сети) и резко возросшей мобильности людей, традиционные СМИ остаются ведущим источником информационно – оценочных сведений о других странах и народах, в т.ч. о близких соседях. Например, проведенное в конце 2012 г. совместное российско-польское социологическое обследование показало, что около 90% поляков никогда не были в России, и общественные представления об этой стране преимущественно формируют польское телевидение и другие СМИ/4/.

К сожалению, СМИ (да и часть экспертного сообщества) по разным причинам нередко неточно передают сигналы с первого уровня на второй и тем более, в обратном направлении. *В результате политэлиты и общество периодически оказываются в «информационной ловушке». СМИ по инерции транслируют обществу уже неактуальные либо неверно понятые сигналы от политэлиты. Политэлита, в свою очередь, оказывается недостаточно или неверно информированной об*

изменившихся настроениях и представлениях национальных общественных групп в отношении различных стран и народов. Поэтому отражение государственной внешнеполитической и внешнеэкономической логики в сознании общества иногда существенно разнится от оценок правящей элиты.

В последние годы в ряде Вышеградских стран появились научные и научно-популярные работы, посвященные прежде всего или полностью, состоянию и перспективам отношений с Россией, как необходимого и жизненно важного элемента национальной геополитики. Однако, основной массив информации и его интерпретации, влияющие на формирование образа России в глазах большинства жителей стран четверки поставляют обычные СМИ, нередко аффилированные с национальными правительствами или политическими партиями и ориентированные на узкопартийные цели или конъюнктурные соображения, а не на стратегические интересы общества и страны.

По отношению к формированию образа России в Вышеградских странах эти СМИ (как и определенную часть экспертного сообщества) можно условно подразделить на 3 группы. Первая полагает, что имидж России в странах V4 (как и в ЕС в целом) зависит не столько от поведения или самооценки российского народа и государства, сколько от самих этих стран, располагающих мощным потенциалом формирования общественного мнения о России. Политики и медиа стран четверки должны заботиться, чтобы критика, например, политической системы РФ (а тем более, СССР) не переросла в русофобию. Эту позицию хорошо отражает известное высказывание видного польского общественного деятеля и публициста А.Михника – «Я – антисоветский русофил!». Вторая группа считает, что улучшение преимущественно негативного пока образа России в V4 зависит, главным образом, от нее, хотя и при условии обеспечения

взвешенного освещения российской действительности в центрально-европейских СМИ. Третья группа призывает и Россию и страны Вышеграда самокритично рассматривать свое прошлое и не использовать его как политический инструмент для настоящего и будущего.

При всех различиях в подходах *улучшение восприятия России зависит, в основном, от позиции и действий политической элиты (прежде всего, правящей), формирующей внешнеполитическую и внешнеэкономическую стратегию Вышеградских стран, а также от интенсивности и объективности освещения истории и действительности во внутреннем развитии России и ее взаимоотношениях с конкретными странами.*

Геостратегические подходы «постсоциалистических» политических элит стран Вышеграда (несмотря на различия в их идеологическом и общественно-политическом «бэкграунде») в отношении России за истекшее двадцатилетие существенно эволюционировали. *Примерно с середины 2000 – х гг. политическая элита стран ЦЕ (во всяком случае ее более «европейская» прагматичная часть) начала менять стратегию на российском направлении, отходя от линии на «цивилизационное отчуждение» от России, по крайней мере, отказываясь от наиболее одиозных «исторических» стереотипов и предрассудков и давая соответствующие сигналы СМИ. Значимость развития торгово - инвестиционных связей с Россией заметно возросла в период кризисного финансово-инвестиционного «оттока» ресурсов «старых» стран ЕС из региона ЦЕ (2008 – 2009 гг.) и сменившего его периода медленного выхода из кризиса (2010 – 2013 гг.).*

Улучшение отношений с Россией давало реальный экономический выигрыш и повышало политическую роль новых стран в системе Евросоюза. *Начавшись в форме политики «благожелательных жестов»,*

эта линия постепенно приобретает все более осязаемое практическое наполнение. Показательный пример - «перезагрузка» отношений российского и польского руководства после посещения В.Путиным мероприятий в Польше, связанных с годовщиной начала Второй мировой войны и, особенно, поведения российских властей сразу после катастрофы самолета польского президента под Смоленском. Начавшись с взаимных жестов, она переросла в определенной мере в отношения доверия. Благодаря этому улучшились двусторонние отношения. Было подписано беспрецедентное по охвату территорий соглашение о малом приграничном движении между Калининградской областью и прибалтийскими воеводствами Польши (2011 г.). Благодаря ему, только за 2012 г. число пересечений границы с каждой стороны достигло 2 млн., покупки россиян в Польше и поляков в России превысили \$ 100 млн., оборот многих польских магазинов в приграничной зоне возрос на 30%, и ряд не охваченных соглашением гмин обратились в польский МИД с просьбой распространить на них его действие/5/. Эти успехи диссонируют с сохраняющимися проблемами допуска российских инвесторов в некоторые отрасли польской экономики. Возможно, это связано и с более устойчивым по сравнению с другими странами V4 положением в польской экономике.

Определенное сближение с Россией объективно способствовало и повышению роли Польши в структурах НАТО и ЕС, упрочению ее позиции как единственного среди стран Вышеградской группы «экономического и политического локомотива» Евросоюза.

«Политика благожелательных жестов» способствовала также улучшению отношений России и Венгрии. После участия венгерского премьера в праздновании 60-летия победы в Великой Отечественной войне в Москве в 2005 г. Венгрии были возвращены книги из Шарошпатакской

библиотеки, были созданы условия для привлечения страны к строительству газопровода «Южный поток» и другим экономически выгодным для нее проектам. Правда, проблемы допуска российских инвесторов в ряд крупных компаний сохранялись и в Венгрии. Однако, в условиях затянувшейся стагнации в экономике ЕС отношение венгерской политэлиты к России заметно смягчилось. Это наглядно проявилось в речи обычно весьма сдержанного в отношении России премьера Венгрии В.Орбана в январе 2013 г.: *«Мы, венгры, не испытываем сомнений относительно того, насколько важен для нас такой партнер, как Россия. Мы отлично понимаем, что такое вес России и ее значение. Однако уважение и признание, которые мы испытываем к России, в первую очередь, не из-за размеров России, но прежде всего из уважения к ее культуре. И именно эта высокая оценка российского культурного наследия дает отличный базис для развития наших экономических отношений. ... Очевидно, что после того, как финансово-экономический кризис завершится, Россия ... получит особую роль. ... Мы хотели бы поддержать инвестиционную активность России в Венгрии.»*(курсив наш – Б.Ф.)/6/

Именно прагматичная политика польских властей (и определенный поворот к такой политике властей Венгрии) позволила активизировать «научную и общественную дипломатию». В рамках российско-польской Группы по трудным вопросам удалось разрешить ряд исторических проблем, для расширения гуманитарных контактов создаются Центры доверия и согласия в обеих странах, Всероссийский центр изучения общественного мнения (ВЦИОМ) и польский Центр изучения общественного мнения (CBOS) провели в конце 2012 г. совместное исследование по взаимному восприятию россиян и поляков, общественной оценке и ресурсам двустороннего сотрудничества и т.п.

В этой связи особо следует выделить "Совместное послание народам России и Польши", подписанное Патриархом Московским и всея Руси Русской Кириллом и Председателем Епископской конференции Польши митрополитом Ю. Михаликом в Варшаве в августе 2012 г. В своем обращении иерархи ведущих религий обеих стран призвали народы России и Польши не медлить в деле примирения и сближения, а также в объединении усилий в борьбе против деморализации общества, за традиционные христианские ценности. В этом документе Россия в лице Русской церкви признаётся равноправной хранительницей общехристианских ценностей в глобализирующемся и морально неустойчивом мире, партнером Польши и католичества в противодействии «разрушению духовного фундамента Европы». Таким образом, польский епископат дал обществу ясный сигнал о необходимости отказа от старой модели и стереотипов восприятия России и русских, бытовавших в польской католической среде, ориентировал поляков на сотрудничество с Россией в защите семейных и иных нравственно-цивилизационных ценностей.

В Венгрии партия В.Орбана - ФИДЕС создала в 2011 г. новое, по сути аффилированное с ней, Общество «За сотрудничество с Россией», конкурирующее с уже действующим Обществом венгеро-российской дружбы, ориентированным на оппозиционную Социалистическую партию, которую ФИДЕС ранее фактически обвиняла в чрезмерных связях с Россией.

В Словакии, несмотря на колебания внутренней политической конъюнктуры и газовый кризис 2009 г., преобладающая часть политэлиты и ее экспертного сообщества устойчиво положительно настроена к России.

В российско-чешских отношениях «прагматичная тактика» в целом преобладает, даже несмотря на некоторые ошибки в «политике

жестов». С одной стороны, чешская политэлита и большая часть общества критикуют авторитарные тренды во внутренней и внешней политике России. Ряд чешских премьер-министров считали американскую «перезагрузку» отношений с Россией «наивной и небезопасной» и, в отличие от польского премьера, не спешили с ней синхронизироваться, хотя к этому фактически призывал «прагматичный евроскептик» тогдашний президент Чехии В.Клаус. С другой стороны, проведенный в 2011 г. с минимальными протокольными процедурами и без символических жестов, но с весомым торгово-финансовым «наполнением», официальный визит тогдашнего президента РФ Д.Медведева в Прагу был позитивно принят в Чехии. Кроме того, Чехия (по крайней мере, на уровне президента и ряда ведущих СМИ) не давала негативных оценок недавним парламентским и президентским выборам в России и довольно скептически оценивала качества «несистемной оппозиции».

Таким образом, находящаяся у власти часть политэлиты стран Вышеградской группы и связанные с нею экспертное сообщество и СМИ занимают достаточно прагматичную позицию в отношении перспектив связей с Россией, стремясь использовать двусторонние связи для поддержки посткризисного роста национальных экономик, усиления своих позиций в ЕС и региональных международных организациях. Позиции опирающейся на прежние негативные «советские» или новые «российские» стереотипы, предрассудки и идеологемы части политэлит этой группы стран постепенно ослабляются как внутри стран, так и на уровне ЕС.

Подобные тенденции, видимо, сохранятся до 2020 г., хотя вполне возможны временные «откаты» в их развитии, связанные как с внешними, так и внутренними факторами, включая защиту групповых интересов этих

стран (например, в рамках Единой энергополитики ЕС, «Восточного партнерства», создания европейской ПРО и др.), реакцию на изменения внутривнутриполитической конъюнктуры (при подготовке избирательных кампаний и др.).

В целом, более прагматическая линия политэлит в отношении России, транслируемая через СМИ, способствует «размыванию» негативного образа российского народа и государства в общественном мнении стран ЦЕ. Этому помогает и расширение непосредственного общения центрально-европейцев с гражданами России, в т.ч. проживающими в данных странах. О существенном улучшении имиджа России и россиян в регионе говорить пока рано, но позитивные тенденции налицо. Показательна в этом отношении динамика результатов социологических опросов традиционно настороженно настроенных к России поляков и скептически относящихся к ней чехов.

Так, опубликованные в феврале 2012 г. результаты многолетних опросов государственного Центра исследований общественного мнения (СВОС) по теме «Отношение поляков к другим народам» показывают позитивную в целом динамику отношения к русским, особенно в сравнении с другими народами-соседями (см. рис. 1,2) /7/.

Рис. 1. Изменения симпатии поляков к соседним народам

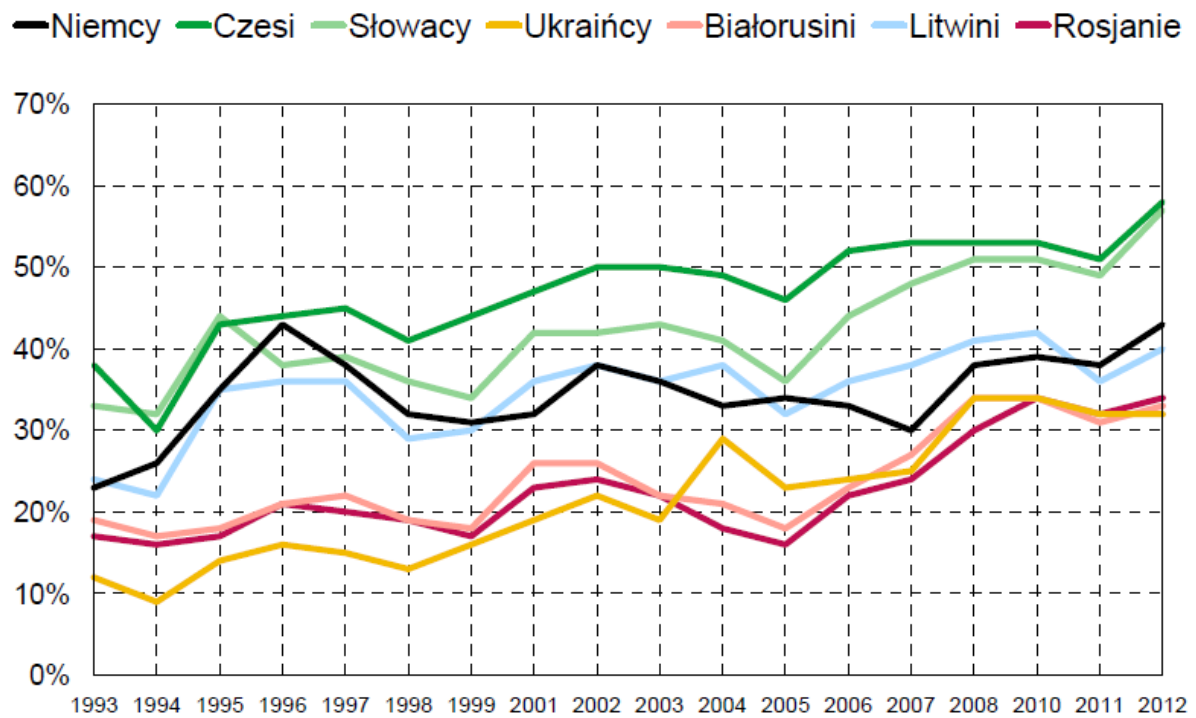
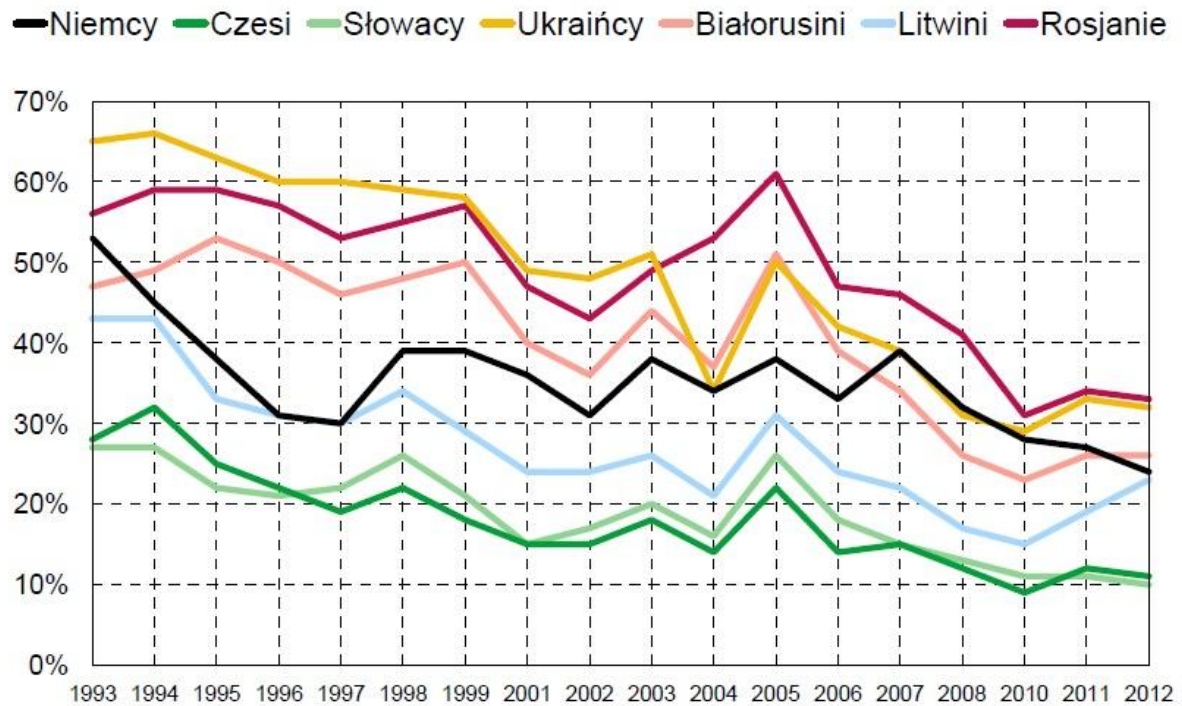


Рис. 2. Изменения антипатии поляков к соседним народам



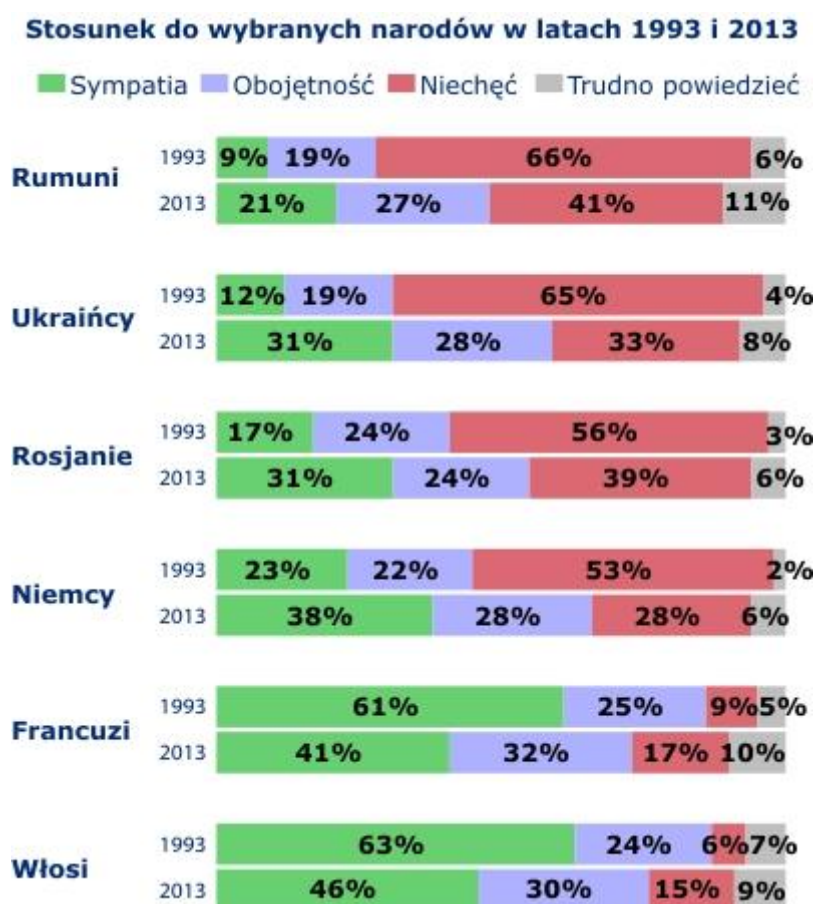
Как видно из рисунков, за истекшие 20 лет доля поляков, выразивших симпатию к русским, росла быстрее (2,6 раза), чем к другим соседним народам (кроме украинцев). В то же время, доля поляков, выразивших антипатию к русским, снижалась медленнее (1,7 раза), чем к другим соседним народам. *Общий позитивный тренд в отношении поляков к русским достаточно заметен и стабилен.* Отношение доли симпатизирующих и не симпатизирующих россиянам респондентов повысилось с 17/56 в 1993 г. до 34/33 в 2012 г. Относительное снижение уровня симпатии к России наблюдалось лишь в 1999 и 2005 гг., соответственно, после падения экспорта в Россию из-за кризиса 1998 г. и эмбарго на польское продовольствие в 2005 г. Даже военный конфликт с Грузией 2008 г. не вызвал такого снижения, а реакция России на катастрофу президентского самолета под Смоленском вызвала даже рост симпатий к русским на 2 процентных пункта в 2010 г. Эти же события вызвали повышение уровня антипатии к русским, кроме 2010 г. когда отмечалось его снижение сразу на 10 процентных пунктов.

При сопоставлении с другими народами позитивные тренды относительно русских еще более заметны. Так, доли поляков, симпатизирующих итальянцам и грекам снизились в 1,1 раза, американцам и французам - в 1,2 раза. Напротив, доли поляков с антипатией к американцам и итальянцам возросли в 1,8 раза, грекам – в 1,6, французам – в 1,5 раза. В 2012 г. в рейтинге симпатий поляков (34%) русские заняли 25 место из 38, вплотную приблизившись (литовцы) или даже опередив (латыши, румыны) ряд народов из стран-членов и кандидатов в члены ЕС (сербов, турок), а также большинства стран СНГ – участниц Восточного партнерства (белорусов, молдаван, украинцев, армян). Если в 1993 г. доля поляков, симпатизировавших американцам и французам была в 3,6 раза выше, чем россиянам (17%), чехам – в 2,2 раза, немцам и литовцам – в 1,4 раза, то в 2012 г. этот разрыв сократился в пользу русских, соответственно,

до 1,6 раза, 1,7 и 1,2 раза. Однако, доля поляков, декларировавших в 2012 г. антипатию (33%) или равнодушие (27%) к русским, остается значительной.

Общий тренд сохранился и в 2013 г., несмотря на некоторое ухудшение соотношения симпатий и антипатий (в процентах - 31/39 против 34/33) поляков к россиянам. Видимо, это связано и с общим изменением настроений поляков к иностранцам, т.к. для ряда других народов это ухудшение еще заметнее. Например (в процентах), для немцев – 38/28 против 23/22, французов - 41/17 против 61/9, не говоря уже о румынах- 21/41 против 9/66 (рис. 3)/8/

Рис.3 Отношение поляков к некоторым народам в 1993 и 2013 гг.



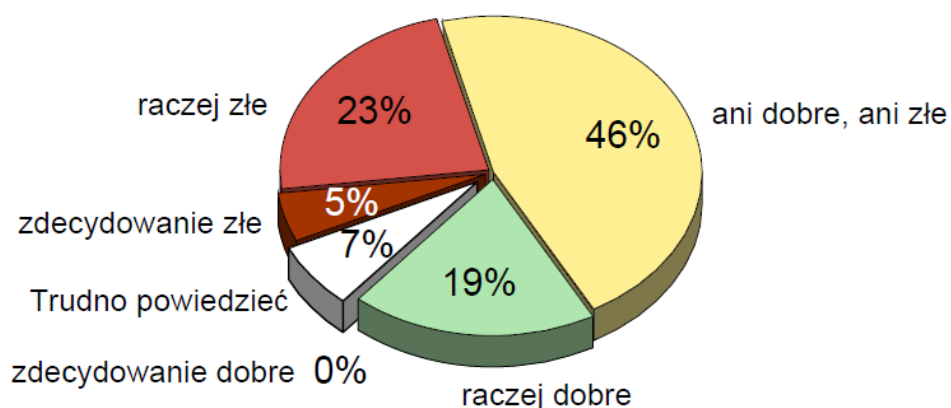
Это, с одной стороны, отражает возросшее ощущение безопасности после присоединения Польши к НАТО и ЕС, а с другой, -

прогрессирующую переориентацию интересов и планов польского общества, особенно, молодежи с Востока на Запад. Такой вывод подтверждает и совместное исследование ВЦИОМ и CBOS (конец 2012 г.), показавшее, что 53% опрошенных поляков считают отношение простых россиян к Польше дружелюбным (в т.ч. 5% – очень дружелюбным) и лишь 34% - недружелюбным. При этом соотношение польских оценок дружелюбия и недружелюбия со стороны россиян (53%/34%) близко к соответствующему показателю для других соседей Польши – белорусов и литовцев (56%/25%)/9/.

Более настороженно, чем к россиянам поляки относятся к российскому государству. Согласно опубликованному осенью 2010 г. опросу CBOS «Польско-российские отношения в общественной оценке» (рис. 4), около одной пятой (19%) опрошенных оценило двусторонние отношения как «скорее хорошие», а 28% как «плохие или «скорее плохие». В то же время почти половина (46%) респондентов считали их средними («ни плохими, ни хорошими»)/10/.

Рис. 4. Оценка поляками польско-российских межгосударственных отношений

RYS. 1. JAK PAN(I) OCENIA OBECNE STOSUNKI POLSKO-ROSYJSKIE. CZY SĄ ONE:



Тем не менее, и здесь тренд явно позитивный. За 2000-2010 гг., согласно опросам, доля поляков, оценивавших польско-российские отношения как хорошие, возросла почти в 10 раз, как плохие – сократилась в 1,4 раза, как средние – почти не изменилась. Соотношение благоприятных и неблагоприятных оценок за этот период улучшилось в 13 раз – с 2/40 до 19 /28.

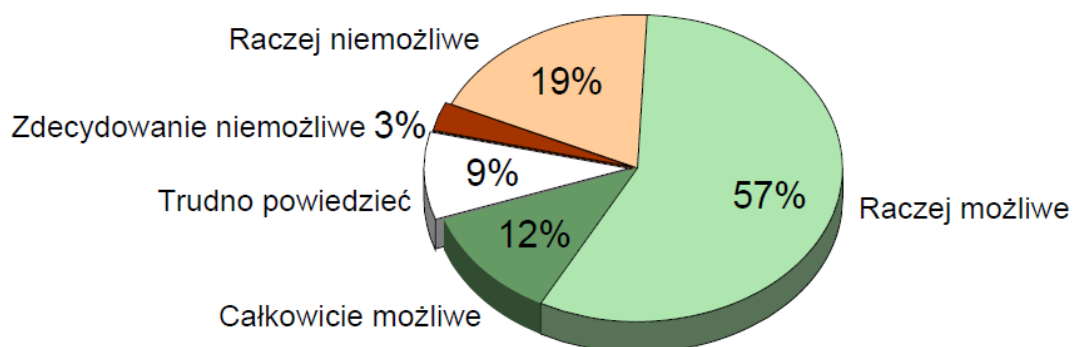
При этом среди польских избирателей, голосующих за прагматичные проевропейские политические партии, доля хорошо оценивающих отношения с Россией заметно выше (Союз левых демократических сил – 33%, Гражданскую платформу – 33%), выше она и среди поляков больше интересующихся политикой (30%).

Опросы отражают и понимание поляками роли в формировании двусторонних отношений и международного положения их страны российских лидеров. В 2002-2010 гг. В. Путин занимал 3-4 место среди иностранных политиков, которые, по опросам, заслуживали бы звания «политик года» (как правило, после президента США и канцлера ФРГ), причем отставание его по рейтингу от президента США сократилось с 7 до 4,5 раз.

Еще более заметен позитивный тренд в оценке возможностей будущего польско-российских отношений (рис .5)

Рис. 5. Оценка поляками возможности дружественных и партнерских отношений с Россией

RYS. 2. CZY MOŻLIWE SĄ, PANA(I) ZDANIEM, PRZYJAZNE I PARTNERSKIE STOSUNKI MIĘDZY POLSKĄ A ROSJĄ?



Как видно из рисунка, в начале 2012 г. больше двух третей (69%) респондентов считали возможными дружеские и партнерские отношения между Польшей и Россией, чуть более одной пятой (22%) имели противоположное мнение и лишь 9% не смогли ответить.

Следует подчеркнуть, что эти благоприятные для отношений с Россией настроения в польском обществе достаточно стабильны. За 2000 – 2010 гг. доля верящих в возможность дружеских и партнерских отношений с Россией не изменилась (69%), повышаясь после событий сентября 2001 г. и авиакатастрофы под Смоленском (2010 г.), а доля не верящих в это – снизилась в 1,4 раза. Более оптимистично и здесь настроены сторонники демократических партий (88% - СЛД, 87% - ГП), однако даже среди сторонников партии «Закон и Справедливость» доля верящих в дружеские и партнерские отношения с Россией достигла 55%. Соотношение благоприятных и неблагоприятных оценок за этот период однозначно улучшилось почти с 69/30 до 69/22.

Эффективность «политики дружественных жестов» полностью подтверждается реакцией в Польше на поведение России после авиакатастрофы под Смоленском. Почти во всех социально-демографических группах польского населения она была положительной. Доля респондентов, считавших, что польско-российские отношения улучшились (31%) в 1,6 раза превысила долю имевших противоположное мнение. Однако действия России по выяснению причин катастрофы (особенно разочаровавшие поляков результаты проведенного расследования ее причин) показали, что «политика жестов» может иметь и неблагоприятные последствия. Согласно совместному опросу ВЦИОМ и CBOS, в конце 2012 г. лишь 21% поляков позитивно оценивали роль российских властей в расследовании смоленской катастрофы /11/.

Во многом сходные тренды общественных настроений в отношении России, русских показывают и опросы чехов, проводившиеся Центром исследований общественного мнения Чешской Академии наук (CVVM)/12/. Согласно опросу в декабре 2010 г., русские по соотношению симпатий и антипатий чехов находились на 15 месте среди 24 народов, охваченных исследованием. Причем за 2003-2007 гг. это соотношение улучшилось с 4,08, до 4,01 (по шкале от 1 «наибольшая симпатия» до 7 «наибольшая антипатия»), а в 2010 г. после конфликта на Кавказе и газового кризиса ухудшилось до 4,18. Несмотря на это, и в 2010 г. россияне были чехам значительно симпатичнее сербов, украинцев, не говоря уже о китайцах, турках и иранцах. Вообще, за данный период отношение чехов улучшилось лишь к 2 из 24 народов (словакам и австрийцам), причем особенно это заметно для народов, государства которых не способствовали экономической и политической стабильности в Европе (греков, венгров, литовцев). В 1,1 раза снизились рейтинги американцев, французов и поляков, незначительно уменьшились рейтинги немцев и англичан, что свидетельствует о стабильно хорошем их имидже в

Чехии (независимо от немецкого евроэнтузиазма и английского евроскептицизма). В результате, соотношение симпатий и антипатий чехов к россиянам в сравнении с соответствующим показателем для большинства других народов улучшилось (в т.ч. для соседей России и Чехии – немцев, поляков, литовцев, украинцев).

Еще более показателен позитивный тренд в отношении россиян, выявленный исследованиями отношения чехов к проживающим в стране национальным общинам. Они отражают чешское восприятие «евророссиян», преимущественно переехавших на жительство в Чехию после распада СССР и знакомых чехам через прямые контакты и совместную работу. Сейчас в Чехии россияне – четвертая по величине некоренная национальная группа – около 7% всех проживающих там иностранцев. За 2005 – 2011 гг. соотношение симпатий и антипатий к проживающим в Чехии русским улучшилось с 4,12 до 3,80. В 2012 г. этот показатель вновь улучшился до 3,11. Русские по позитивному рейтингу занимали 8 место среди 15 наиболее многочисленных национальных диаспор, по степени симпатий находясь примерно на уровне болгар и венгров и существенно опережая сербов, румын, украинцев, вьетнамцев и китайцев/13/.

Соотношение симпатий и антипатий чехов к россиянам улучшилось в сравнении с соответствующим показателем почти для всех национальных общин (кроме немецкой и словацкой). Во многом это связано с высоким социально-профессиональным уровнем русской общины. В 2011 г. она занимала среди всех национальных общин первое место по доле лиц с высшим образованием (27%), второе по зарплате (около 87% от среднемесячной в Чехии) и четвертое по продолжительности рабочей недели (48 часов). Позитивно в целом воспринимаются российские туристы (500 тыс. в 2011г. – второе место

после немцев), регулярно приносящие Чехии многомиллионные долларовые доходы.

К российскому государству чехи относятся более осторожно, хотя и здесь явно видны позитивные сдвиги. По опросам CVVM (ноябрь 2011 г.), за 2008 – 2011 гг. соотношение симпатий и антипатий чехов к России радикально улучшилось с 39/52 до 63/27. Тем не менее, по степени симпатии у чехов Россия пока отстает от США, Германии, Франции, Великобритании и Польши в 1,3 – 1,5 раза/14/. В 2012 г. по соотношению симпатий и антипатий чехов Россия также уступала этим странам, но существенно опережала, например, Украину и Китай. При этом опросы показали довольно высокую степень доверия чехов к политическому руководству России. Так, в ноябре 2012 г. В.Путину доверяли 14% опрошенных чехов – почти как Председателю Еврокомиссии Ж.-М. Баррозу, в 1,4 раза больше, чем Президенту Франции Ф. Олланду, в 2 раза больше, чем Генеральному секретарю НАТО А.Ф. Расмуссену, почти в 3 раза больше, чем Генеральному секретарю ООН Пан Ги Муну, премьеру Италии М. Монти, или Президенту Украины В.Януковичу и в 4 раза больше, чем канцлеру Австрии В. Файманну/15/.

Новая практика взаимоотношений и прагматичный чешский национальный характер способствуют улучшению имиджа и оценки перспектив сотрудничества с Россией по конкретным, даже стратегически важным для безопасности Чехии проектам. Так, несмотря на «прохладную» позицию правительства и многих национальных СМИ, 51% читателей ведущей чешской экономической газеты «E15» в январе 2012 г. высказались за передачу достройки крупнейшей в Чехии АЭС «Темелин» российской компании (в рамках российско-чешского консорциума), 31% - американской и лишь 10% - французской.

В Венгрии настороженные настроения значительной части общества периодически «подогреваются» некоторыми политиками и СМИ. Однако и здесь начался (хотя и медленный) отход от предубеждений и неблагоприятных стереотипов в отношении России и русских. Это видно, например, из сравнения результатов опросов, проведенных социологической организацией “ TÁRKI Zrt.” в сентябре 2006 и 2012 гг. на репрезентативной основе в соответствии с половозрастными и образовательными и расселенческими пропорциями населения Венгрии (табл.1)/16/.

Табл. 1. Мнение населения Венгрии о русских

	2006	2012
Отношение к народам (по пятибалльной шкале, максимум 5 баллов), в т.ч. (баллов) :		
шведам,	3,87	3,57
немцам,	3,40	3,31
американцам,	3,18	3,11
русским,	2,77	2,64
румынам	2,37	2,27
Народы, наиболее неблагоприятно воздействовавшие на венгерскую историю, в т.ч.(%):		
турки,	50	51
русские,	56	47
немцы,	38	38
австрийцы	24	26
Рейтинг популярности иностранных языков, в т.ч. (%):		
английский,	35	34
немецкий,	27	26
французский,	13	10
итальянский,	8	5
испанский,	7	6
русский	5	6
Можно ли расширить изучение русского языка в венгерской школе , в т.ч. (%): хорошо бы, чтобы побольше людей знали русский язык		
	14	22

кто хочет, пусть изучает	46	36
Как следует относиться к венгеро – российским экономическим связям (%):		
- расширять	65	68
- сворачивать	5	5
Как следует относиться к венгеро – российским политическим связям(%):		
- расширять	38	44
- сворачивать	8	10
Как следует относиться к венгеро – российским культурным и научным связям (%):		
- расширять	65	57
- сворачивать	2	5

Как видно из таблицы, за последние 7 лет общее отношение венгров к россиянам практически не изменилось. Однако, очевиден уход от наиболее одиозных оценок. Так, доля респондентов, считающих что русские особенно неблагоприятно воздействовали на венгерскую историю, снизилась в 1,2 раза. На первое место здесь закономерно вышли турки, почти 150 лет оккупировавшие большую часть Венгрии. При этом стабилизировалось или усилилось позитивное отношение к желательности изучения русского языка (рост в 1,6 раза), развитию экономических (рост в 1,1 раза) и политических (рост в 1,2 раза) связей с Россией. Снижение рейтинга научно-культурного сотрудничества, видимо, связано с общим снижением общественной значимости науки и культуры в стране. *Таким образом, идеологизированное, исторически мотивированное восприятие венграми россиян и России постепенно уступает место прагматически-актуальным оценкам состояния и перспектив двусторонних отношений в реальных, важных для Венгрии областях.*

Что касается тяготеющих к вышеградцам Болгарии и Румынии, то здесь тренды в восприятии России и русских заметно различаются. На фоне преимущественно позитивного восприятия российского народа и государства у болгарских граждан и властей, в Румынии имидж россиян и,

особенно, российского государства существенно ниже. Однако, и в Румынии соотношение позитивных и негативных чувств применительно к России лучше, чем к ряду соседних стран. Например, по опросу, проведенному службой INSCOPResearch в марте 2013 г., оно составляло (в %) для России 36/47, против 35/49 для Венгрии и 34/47 для Украины/17/.

В целом можно сделать следующие выводы:

- в истекшее двадцатилетие в странах Вышеградской группы (да и Центральной Европы вообще) наблюдается тренд к более позитивному, менее идеологизированному восприятию россиян и, в меньшей мере, российского государства;
- несмотря на сохранение ряда старых и появление новых негативных стереотипов в отношении к русским как к народу и государству, они все меньше воспринимаются как цивилизационно чуждые и угрожающие национальной безопасности стран V4;
- этот тренд заметно укрепился в последнее пятилетие на фоне некоторого разочарования политэлит и населения стран Вышеградской группы в результатах членства в НАТО и ЕС;
- значительную роль в улучшении имиджа русских и России сыграли правильная политика «дружественных жестов» со стороны российских властей и активизация прямых контактов жителей в рамках экономических и культурно-образовательных связей, расширения российского туризма, появления в странах V4 «евророссиян», приехавших уже из новой России;
- Россия все больше рассматривается политэлитами и обществом стран четверки как важный стратегический партнер в обеспечении благоприятного позиционирования в интегрирующейся Европе и глобализирующемся мире;
- в целом при сохранении, а, тем более усилении, нынешних тенденций к 2020 г. можно с большой долей уверенности ожидать дальнейшего

повышения общественно-политического потенциала партнерских и дружественных отношений Вышеградских стран с Россией;

- реализация этого потенциала, однако, требует последовательных и целенаправленных усилий со стороны России, в т.ч. с привлечением других стран ЕС, особенно Германии, располагающей развитыми экономическими и политическими связями с Вышеградскими странами.

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