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V4+

Defence Cooperation of the V4+



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Model V4+

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1 Introduction

After the fall of the communist totalitarian regimes in the Central Europe, a Visegrad Group (V3) was created by the president of the Czech and Slovak Federal Republic, Václav Havel, prime minister of Hungary, József Antall, and the president of Poland, Lech Wałęsa, in the city of Visegrad in Hungary on the 15th February 1991. Only later, after the formation of two separate countries in 1993, the Czech Republic and the Slovak Republic, the name of the group was changed to V4.¹

One of the aims of the formation of the Visegrad Group was to *"successfully accomplish social transformation and join in the European integration process."*² However, the members of the Visegrad Group did not overlook the topic of the military and defence cooperation either. Even though the initiatives of the cooperation in this field were not significantly successful in the past, the financial crisis after 2008 and austerity cuts in the defence budgets reinvigorated the V4 interest in defence cooperation and *"currently all countries seem to be much more serious about deepening their defence ties."*³

2 History of the V4 Defence Cooperation

Security has always been an important topic for the post-communist countries of the Central Europe– the primary concern was to prevent the emergence of a security vacuum in the region, a lesson learned from the interwar period. Not long after the formation of the V4, the member countries tried to develop defence cooperation since the armament of the Visegrad armies was almost identical given their former membership in the Warsaw pact. The discussions concentrated on each of the countries' armament, which was supposed to be modernized. There were talks about a joint development of a 3D radar, about cooperation in modernization of T-72 tanks and development of ammunition.⁴

Nevertheless, the interaction between the states in the military and defence sphere did not fully utilize the potential as the planned projects failed and each country focused mainly on the European integration and membership in the North Atlantic Treaty Organization (NATO).⁵

¹ Historie V4. *Visegrad Group*. [online]. [cit.9. 9. 2015]. Available at: <http://www.visegradgroup.eu/historie>.

² History of the Visegrad Group. *Visegrad Group*. [online]. [cit.9.9.2015] Available at: <http://www.visegradgroup.eu/about/history>.

³ MADEJ, Marek. Visegrad Group defense cooperation: what added value for the European capabilities? *Institute of International Relations, University of Warsaw* [online]. Published červen 2013.p.2., [cit. 16.10. 2015].

⁴ ZETOCHA, Karel. Spolupráce Visegrádské čtyřky v oblasti vyzbrojování, *Ústav mezinárodních vztahů. Praha* [online]. Published 23.3.2011. [cit.7.12 2015]. Available at: <http://www.iir.cz/article/spoluprace-visegradske-ctyrky-v-oblasti-vyzbrojovani>.

⁵ Visegrad Group Defence Cooperation.



By trying to search for opportunities that would strengthen ties with the West individually, the more developed countries from the V4 structure were leaving the less developed ones behind. The entire cooperation was therefore at that time based mainly on the political consultations.⁶ Only after the invitation of the Czech Republic, Hungary and Poland to the structures of NATO in 1997 did the V4 military and defence cooperation revive. "*The willingness to accelerate the Slovak integration led to more effective consultations on defence and security issues among the Visegrad countries.*"⁷ After the accession of Slovakia to NATO in 2004 the V4 military and defence cooperation decreased once again and returned to be focused on political consultations.⁸

When the economic crisis hit Europe in 2009 and defence budgets in Central Europe were significantly slashed, defence cooperation was again viewed in Prague, Bratislava and Budapest as a logical and necessary tool how to offset the austerity cuts (whereas in Warsaw it was seen as a means⁹ how to incentivize its regional partners to enhance their lacking defence capabilities). The financial crisis also led to a creation of new formats of cooperation in the defence area. The NATO smart defence and EU **Pooling and Sharing**¹⁰ were both launched in 2010 and further stimulated the V4 countries to deepen their defence ties again.¹¹ The Visegrad Group supported the idea of strengthening the bond between Central Europe and Euro-Atlantic structures from the very beginning¹² and in 2012, before the NATO Chicago summit, committed to "*promote regional and Euro-Atlantic security by strengthening their political commitment and enhancing defence capabilities*" in the declaration called Responsibility for a Strong NATO.¹³

As a result of these developments began the work on strategic documents that would give the V4 cooperation stronger foundations and much needed structure. First of these was a document called **"Long Term Vision of the Visegrad Countries on Deepening their**

⁶ MADEJ, Marek, p.2

⁷ Visegrad Group Defence Cooperation.

⁸ Visegrad Group Defence Cooperation.

⁹ KUFČÁK, Jakub, The V4 Countries and the Impacts of the Austerity Cuts on their Defence Spending and Armed Forces. *Obrana a Strategie*. [online]. Published 16. 12. 2014. [cit. 10. 3. 2016]. Available at: <http://www.obranaastrategie.cz/en/archive/volume-2014/2-2014/articles/the-v4-countries-and-the-impacts-of-the-austerity-cuts-on-their-defence-spending-and-armed-forces.html#.VuHMaISQa9k>

¹⁰ The concept refers to initiatives and projects to pool and share more military capabilities among EU Member States. More info at: <http://www.eda.europa.eu/what-we-do/eda-priorities/pooling-and-sharing>

¹¹ Pooling and Sharing, *European Defence Agency*, [online]. [cit. 9.9.2015]. Available at: <http://www.eda.europa.eu/what-we-do/eda-priorities/pooling-and-sharing>.

¹² Ibid.

¹³ Visegrad Group Declaration; Responsibility for Strong NATO, *Embassy of the Czech Republic in Ankara*, [online]. Published 18.4.2012. [cit. 9.9.2015]. Available at: http://www.mzv.cz/ankara/en/general_information_about_the_czech/index_2.html, 9 Sep, 2015



Defence Cooperation” signed in 2014 during the Hungarian V4 presidency in which V4 agreed on a vision to secure:

- 1) capabilities of development, procurement and defence industry;
- 2) establishment of multinational units and run cross border activities;
- 3) education, training and exercises.¹⁴

Similarly an **Action Plan of the V4 Defence Cooperation**¹⁵ was signed and specified prospective areas of defence and security cooperation:

- Joint V4 EU Battlegroup
- Defence Planning Cooperation
- Joint Training and Exercises
- Joint Procurement and Defence Industry
- Military Education
- Joint Airspace Protection
- Coordination of Positions
- Communication Strategy

Some of the areas of the Action Plan of the V4 Defence Cooperation are analysed further in section 3.

3 Action Plan of the V4 Defence Cooperation

3.1 Joint V4 EU Battlegroup

The V4 countries decided to create a Joint V4 EU Battlegroup in 2011 and agreed to form it by the year 2016. This battlegroup should be able to deploy within 10 days and within a radius of 6000 km from Brussels.¹⁶

When in 2004 the European Security and Defence Policy (ESDP), today known as **Common Security and Defence Policy (CSDP)**, introduced “a new tool of rapid reaction - the EU

¹⁴ Ibid.

¹⁵ Long Term Vision of the Visegrad Countries on Deepening their Defence Cooperation:
<http://www.visegradgroup.eu/about/cooperation/defence>

¹⁶ PULECH, Michal; URBANOVSKÁ, Jana. Visegrad Four EU Battlegroup: Meaning and Progress, *Obrana a Strategie*, [online]. Published 16.10. 2014. [cit. 17.9.2015]. Available at:
<http://www.obranaastrategie.cz/cs/archiv/rocnik-2014/2-2014/clanky/visegrad-four-eu-battlegroup-meaning-and-progress.html#.VfqKUrSWWgQ>.



Battlegroups (EU BG)¹⁷ that are based on the six months rotation principle,¹⁸ the new members of EU (the Czech Republic, Hungary, Poland and Slovakia) were not experienced in creation of Battlegroups. For that reason their first formations of Battlegroups were established with the already experienced EU members individually. The first member of the V4 who formed such Battlegroup was Hungary in cooperation with Slovenia and Italy in 2007.¹⁹ Another example was the formation of joint Battlegroup of Polish – German – Slovak – Latvian – Lithuanian EU BG in 2010.²⁰ Only later after gaining experience, did the countries of the V4 agreed on creation of their own V4 EU Battlegroup.

Great importance for V4 members as well as for all other EU countries was to enhance the interoperability of the respective armies and their equipment in order to be able to cooperate without significant difficulties. The term **"interoperability"** means the ability of individual countries to *"act together coherently, effectively and efficiently to achieve tactical, operational and strategic objectives."*²¹ It does not necessarily mean that the armies need to have the same equipment; however, they need to be able to share common facilities and data. They need to communicate and interact. This can only be achieved through *"the effective employment of standardization, training, exercises, lessons learned, demonstrations, tests and trials."*²²

The interoperability was to be done according to the NATO norms.²³ It is due to the fact that all the equipment used in EU BG is the same as the one used for NATO. To explain further, neither NATO nor EU BG has its own equipment. The equipment is always provided by the member countries that, however, due to historical and economical differences do not dispose of the same quantity, quality as well as of the same type of armament. In some cases the international observers did not believe that some of the BG created within EU would actually be interoperable. For example the Czech-Slovak BG was suspected to be *"only political"*

¹⁷ ibid

¹⁸ QUILLÉ, Gerrard, The EU Battlegroups. *European Parliament*, [online] p. 6. Published 12.9. 2006. [cit. 10.11.2015]. Available at: http://www.europarl.europa.eu/meetdocs/2009_2014/documents/sede/dv/sede030909notebattlegroups/_sede030909notebattlegroups_en.pdf.

¹⁹ PULECH, Michal; URBANOVSKÁ, Jana. Visegrad Four EU Battlegroup: Meaning and Progress

²⁰ Ibid.

²¹ Interoperability: Connecting NATO Forces. *North Atlantic Treaty Organization*. [online]. Published 11.5.2012. [cit. 10.10. 2015]. Available at: May 11, 2012, accessed Oct 10, 2015, http://www.nato.int/cps/en/natohq/topics_84112.htm.

²² Ibid.

²³ ŠUPLATA, Milan DAV4 II Expert Group Report on Visegrad Defence Collaboration: From Battlegroup to Permanent Structures. *Central European Policy Institute*. [online].p.7. Published 15.11. 2013. [cit.18.11. 2015]. Available at: http://www.cepolicy.org/sites/cepolicy.org/files/attachments/dav4_2013_web.pdf.



statements of commitment to the CSDP."²⁴ The issue was the fact that lack of operational experience from the side of the V4 countries made it difficult to evaluate any kind of past effectiveness or interoperability.²⁵

While building the V4 Battlegroup, all the four member states of the Visegrad Group became aware of the need to continue in modernization of their military forces even after the termination of the ISAF operation in Afghanistan that was the main reason for improving interoperability between armed forces of the NATO members in the first place.²⁶ "*The V4 see the Battlegroup as an opportunity to modernize and deepen collaboration among them, as a tool to overcome negative effects of the crisis on their militaries, and as a way to support the Alliance's smart defence initiative.*"²⁷

In May 2012 the ministers of defence of the V4 met in the Czech town Litoměřice and created a final communiqué which determined the number of the military staff of the V4 EU BG to approximately 3000 people. The communiqué also highlights the importance of the joint V4 Battlegroup which will be a tool for increasing capabilities of the V4 states.²⁸

According to the data available, the number of personnel of the V4 Battlegroup would be 3280 soldiers of whom 1450 will be provided by Poland, 670 by Hungary, 600 by the Czech Republic and 560 by Slovakia.²⁹ Each country also has responsibility for different sector of the Battlegroup. The V4 Battlegroup consists of eight modules and those are assigned to each of V4 countries which are supposed to lead the cooperation in that sector. The leading country of the V4 EU BG is Poland and therefore it also has the widest range of responsibilities and those are "*planning, preparation, training and certification of the whole unit*" as well as communication and responsibility for information systems.³⁰ Czechs lead the logistics, Slovaks concentrate on protection from CBRN weapons and Hungarians are responsible for engineering.³¹

²⁴ PULECH, Michal; URBANOVSKÁ, Jana. Visegrad Four EU Battlegroup: Meaning and Progress

²⁵ Ibid.

²⁶ Ibid.

²⁷ ŠUPLATA, Milan. Visegrad Battlegroup: A Vehicle for Regional Defence Co-operation. *Central European Policy Institute*. [online]. Published 29.1. 2013. [cit. 4.10. 2015]. Available at:

http://www.cepolicy.org/sites/cepolicy.org/files/attachments/viseco_workshop_report.pdf

²⁸ Joint Communiqué of the Ministers of Defence of the Visegrad Group. Visegrad Group. *Visegrad Group*. [online]. Published 4.5. 2012. [cit. 4.10. 2015]. Available at: <http://www.visegradgroup.eu/calendar/2012/joint-communication-of-the>.

²⁹ GAWRON-TABOR, Karolina. Nová kvalita obranné spolupráce visegrádské skupiny v letech 2010-2014. *Obrana a Strategie*. [online]. Published 15.6. 2015. [cit. 12.12. 2015]. Available at:

<http://www.obranaastrategie.cz/cs/archiv/rocnik-2015/1-2015/clanky/nova-kvalita-obranne-spoluprace-visegradske-skupiny-v-letech-2010-2014.html#.VnCBHISQYZI>.

³⁰ Ibid.

³¹ GAWRON-TABOR, Karolina Nová kvalita obranné spolupráce visegrádské skupiny v letech 2010-2014.



3.2 Defence Planning Cooperation

For the defence planning cooperation a **V4 Planning Group (PG)** was established. The V4 PG searches possible areas of cooperation in capability development. *"The V4 PG meets at least twice during every presidency year, and utilizes the margins of related EU, NATO, or other international events if possible."* The chairman of the planning group is chosen accordingly to which state holds the presidency at the moment. The accompanied expenses are, however, covered by the principle *"costs lie where they fall"*.³² It means that the country pays for what it provides and the more the country gives, the more it pays.

It is, however, according to the ministers also important for the V4 countries to cooperate even outside the V4 structure and that Visegrad countries *"should also be involved in bilateral and trilateral cooperation forms."*³³

3.3 Joint Training and Exercises

Since the Joint Training and Exercises is one of the subareas of the **"Long Term Vision of the Visegrad Countries on Deepening their Defence Cooperation"** that was signed in 2014, many exercises were not held so far but are planned for the future.

As a one of the joint trainings could be considered the Ground Pepper Training Exercise, which was held in the Slovak Republic in 2014. The aim was to prepare the V4 countries together with the U.S. army for joint defence and other operations according to the Article 5 of the Washington Treaty. The tactical unit was tested on its reactions and ability to solve problems in different scenarios.³⁴ This exercise was made up of *"1300 personnel, with 72 pieces of equipment, and approximately 630 weapons systems and small arms."*³⁵

3.4 The V4 Training and Exercise Strategy

During the Slovak presidency a long-term strategy of common training and exercise of the V4 militaries was worked out. It was endorsed in order to increase interoperability of the V4 states. This strategy would help to the Visegrad group to have its armed forces "visibly

³² Terms of Reference of the V4 Planning Group. *Visegrad Group*. [online]. Published 3.6. 2014. [cit. 12.11. 2015]. <http://www.visegradgroup.eu/documents/official-statements/terms-of-reference-of-140826>.

³³ Ibid.

³⁴ Ground Pepper 2014: Cooperation, Unity and Cohesion. Ministry of Defence and Armed Forces of the Czech Republic. *Army.cz*. [online]. Published 20.10. 2015. [cit. 20.11. 2015]. Available at: <http://www.army.cz/en/ministry-of-defence/newsroom/news/ground-pepper-2014:-cooperation--unity-and-cohesion-103598/>.

³⁵ Ground Pepper 2014: Cooperation, Unity and Cohesion.



contributing to NATO's robust exercise program."³⁶ The V4 planners have to prepare exercise plans every four years and the first period starts from 2016 to 2020. Also, to ensure the implementation of the Strategy, the Chiefs of Defence have to prepare the 2016-2020 Midterm Plan of Training Opportunities.³⁷

The Defence Ministers also committed to "organize annual V4 military exercises starting from 2015 focused also on collective defence according to Article 5 of the North Atlantic Treaty. These exercises will be essential for our armed forces to remain interoperable."³⁸

3.5 Military Education

The V4 countries decided to form the Visegrad Group Military Educational Platform (VIGMILEP) which would, among other things, help to improve the military education and secure the best level of training of the officers and experts in the field that concentrates on the security and defence. This education and training will be executed "according to EU/NATO standards."³⁹

3.6 Joint Airspace Protection

The V4 members agreed upon the importance of closer cooperation in protecting their airspace. The "Common Sky" project is another step to protect the common airspace. The defence ministers of the Czech Republic and Slovakia already made an agreement on the protection of their airspace⁴⁰ but the involvement of Hungary and Poland would strengthen the airspace protection in the region even further.

The aviation training should enable the V4 countries to enhance their interoperability⁴¹ and for that reason V4 countries will expand mutual cooperation in this area.

³⁶ Joint Communiqué of the Visegrad Group Ministers of Defence. *Visegrad Group*. [online]. [cit. 11.3. 2016]. Available at: <http://www.visegradgroup.eu/calendar/2015/joint-communique-of-the>

³⁷ Joint Communiqué of the Visegrad Group Ministers of Defence. *Visegrad Group*. [online]. [cit. 11.3. 2016]. Available at: <http://www.visegradgroup.eu/calendar/2015/joint-communique-of-the>

³⁸ Visegrad Group. Visegrad Countries May Turn EU Battlegroup into Permanent V4 Rapid Reaction Force. Atlantic Council. [online]. Published 3.7. 2014. [cit. 11.3. 2013]. Available at: <http://www.atlanticcouncil.org/blogs/natosource/visegrad-countries-may-turn-eu-battlegroup-into-permanent-v4-rapid-reaction-force>

³⁹ Joint Communiqué of the Visegrad Group Ministers of Defence. *Visegrad Group*. [online]. [cit. 14.9. 2015]. <http://www.visegradgroup.eu/calendar/2015/joint-communique-of-the>

⁴⁰ FRAŇKOVÁ, Ruth. V4 defence ministers agree on protection of common airspace. *Rozhlas.cz*. [online]. Published 23.4. 2015. [cit. 28.10. 2015]. Available at: <http://www.radio.cz/en/section/news/v4-defence-ministers-agree-on-protection-of-common-airspace>

⁴¹ Joint Statement of the V4 ministers of defence. *Visegrad Group*. [online]. Published 4.6. 2013. [cit. 21.2. 2016]. Available at: <http://www.visegradgroup.eu/documents/official-statements/joint-statement-of-the>



3.7 Communication Strategy

One of the long-term visions of the Visegrad countries on deepening their defence cooperation is the communication strategy. The communication strategy includes the information and intelligence exchange that was agreed to be improved in order to fight terrorism within Europe more effectively.⁴² For the same reason, fighting the terrorism, the intelligence is also shared within the structures of NATO. There are many canals through which the intelligence can be shared. It is not only V4 or NATO, but after the Paris attacks in 2015, the EU also consults the necessity to improve the intelligence and information sharing among the member countries.⁴³ However, the intelligence sharing within all the countries of EU is so far proving to be a struggle. Not all the countries are trusted equally which causes a reluctance to share the information.⁴⁴

The V4 members should harmonize their positions on defence policy regularly as it is an important element of the cooperation framework among the countries of the Visegrad Group.⁴⁵ This topic shall stay in the political agenda as a priority. It is also important to "*raise the V4 profile*" both within V4 members and "*in the eyes of the international partners*."⁴⁶ The aim to efficiently form public diplomacy is not left out neither.

4 Military Cooperation within European and NATO Structures

The development of the security in Europe in the past years weakened the ability of many states to make an extensive military mobilization.⁴⁷ This is due to the fact that new threats are quickly evolving and the security situation is developing accordingly. However, the militaries experience difficulties in keeping up with this quick change. The equipment as well as training of the militaries became a complex process that requires time and long-term

⁴² V4 Countries Adopt Joint Declaration Regarding European Council Issues, British Premier Cameron Attends the Talks. *Permanent Representation of the Czech Republic to the European Union*. [online]. [cit. 24.2. 2016]. Available at:

http://www.mzv.cz/representation_brussels/en/news_and_media/v4_countries_adopt_joint_declaration.html.

⁴³ TOMKIWI, Lydia. After Paris Terror Attacks, EU Intelligence Sharing Must Improve, Security Experts Say. *IBT*. [online]. [cit. 19.11. 2015]. <http://www.ibtimes.com/after-paris-terror-attacks-eu-intelligence-sharing-must-improve-security-experts-say-2191709>.

⁴⁴ CORERA, Gordon. Why intelligence sharing still has a long way to go. *BBC*. [online]. Published 1.1. 2016. [cit. 22.2. 2016]. Available at: <http://www.bbc.com/news/world-europe-35154640>.

⁴⁵ Long Term Vision of the Visegrad Countries on Deepening Their Defence Cooperation. *Visegrad Group*. [online]. Published 12.3. 2014. [cit. 30.9.2015]. http://www.mocr.army.cz/assets/informacni-servis/zpravodajstvi/140314-v4-long-term-vision-final_1.doc.

⁴⁶ Long Term Vision of the Visegrad Countries on Deepening Their Defence Cooperation.

⁴⁷ ZETOCHA, Karel. Spolupráce Visegrádské čtyřky v oblasti vyzbrojování.



professional preparation.⁴⁸ The increase of new threats in the region on the other hand requires development of new weaponry which, at the same time, is costly and therefore unaffordable for many European states.⁴⁹ The training of the country's military as well as its armament is highly complicated and it only became apparent that the extensive mobilization of armies became a historical phenomenon of the 20th century.⁵⁰ With the limited resources and new threats that evolve every day and faster than ever before, it is crucial to be able to "do better with less."⁵¹ Currently, in Europe the separate countries are able to cooperate in order to become stronger in case of dealing with a threat. The states can cooperate in structures of NATO Alliance or EU and its EU Battlegroups. To be able to better understand how the cooperation within these structures works, the basic information about defence within EU and NATO is provided in the subsection 4.1 and 4.2.

4.1 EU

"The idea of a European army goes back to the failed project of a European Defence Community (EDC rejected by the French National Assembly in 1954)"⁵² The EDC was supposed to work in the same Framework as NATO but would have replaced the national armed forces.⁵³ A new effort to create EU security and defence came in 2009 with the Common Security and Defence Policy (CSDP) that was set out in the Lisbon Treaty.⁵⁴

The development of the Common Security and Defence Policy (CSDP) allows the EU members to share their capabilities and resources in order to become stronger, faster and more effective.⁵⁵ The CSDP enables the EU to have a leading role in operations such as peace-keeping, conflict prevention and also in strengthening the international security.⁵⁶ For CSDP the concept of EU Battlegroup is an instrument for rapid crisis responses with the military.⁵⁷

⁴⁸ Ibid.

⁴⁹ Ibid.

⁵⁰ Ibid.

⁵¹ About CSDP. *European Union External Action*. [online]. [cit. 15.12. 2015]. Available at <http://www.eeas.europa.eu/csdp/>.

⁵² European defence cooperation State of play and thoughts on an EU army. *European Parliament*. [online]. Published březen 2015. [cit. 10.3. 2016]. Available at: [http://www.europarl.europa.eu/RegData/etudes/BRIE/2015/551346/EPRS_BRI\(2015\)551346_EN.pdf](http://www.europarl.europa.eu/RegData/etudes/BRIE/2015/551346/EPRS_BRI(2015)551346_EN.pdf)

⁵³ Ibid.

⁵⁴ Ibid.

⁵⁵ Ibid.

⁵⁶ Ibid.

⁵⁷ LEGRAND, Jérôme. Common Security and Defence Policy. *European Parliament*. [online]. Published listopad, 2015. [cit. 10.3. 2016]. Available at: http://www.europarl.europa.eu/atyourservice/en/displayFtu.html?ftuId=FTU_6.1.2.html



As for the V4 and EU, one of the Battlegroups, the V4 EU Battlegroup will be prepared from January 2016. Nevertheless, this Battlegroup should be maintained even after June 2016 and „serve as a modular force in order to contribute to NATO and EU Rapid Reaction Forces as well as to crisis management operations⁵⁸

4.2 NATO

The North Atlantic Treaty Organization (NATO) is a defence military organization whose main goal is „to safeguard the freedom and security of its members through political and military means.”⁵⁹ The cooperation of the countries is based on the **Washington Treaty** and mainly on the **Article 5**, which states that an attack against one member state is considered as an attack against them all.⁶⁰ The NATO member countries are mainly European; however, not all NATO members are members of the European Union and vice-versa. Currently, NATO has 28 members.

NATO, the same way as EU, understands the crucial ability to respond to the new security challenges of today's world. A **NATO Readiness Action Plan (RAP)**⁶¹ was agreed at the 2014 Wales Summit in order to address the risks and threats that NATO is tackling. The RAP consists of Assurance and Adaptation Measures. The Assurance Measures comprise of activities held on land as well as it does air and sea operations on and around the NATO's eastern borders. These activities are exercises that concentrate on defence and crisis management.⁶² The Adaptation Measures are long-term changes of NATO forces which would allow the Alliance to react better and faster on any possible crisis that might emerge. Such adaptation includes creation of NATO Response Force (NRF) and „*Very High Readiness Joint Task Force (VJTF) that is able to deploy at very short notice, and enhancing the Standing Naval Forces.*”⁶³ The NATO forces are created by national militaries and depend on the decision of each one of them how the capabilities of this organization will look like in the future. There is no equipment and no personnel that would belong exclusively to NATO; they are always the capabilities of the member countries. For this reason the interoperability of the

⁵⁸ V4 Trust – the Czech Presidency of the Visegrad Group. [online]. [11.2. 2016]. Available at: <http://www.europeum.org/data/articles/think-visegrad-midterm-review.pdf>

⁵⁹ What is NATO?. *North Atlantic Treaty Organization*. [cit. 15.12. 2015]. <http://www.nato.int/nato-welcome/index.html>.

⁶⁰ North Atlantic Treaty. *North Atlantic Treaty Organization*. [online]. [cit. 15.12. 2015]. Available at: http://www.nato.int/cps/en/natolive/official_texts_17120.htm

⁶¹ Readiness Action Plan. *NATO*. [online]. [cit. 10.3. 2016]. Available at: http://www.nato.int/cps/en/natohq/topics_119353.htm

⁶² Readiness Action Plan. *North Atlantic Treaty Organization*. [online]. [cit. 15.12. 2015]. Available at: http://www.nato.int/cps/en/natohq/topics_119353.htm.

⁶³ Ibid.



militaries is crucial for NATO as it would struggle to work efficiently without having personnel and equipment that could not cooperate with one another.

As for the V4 and NATO, the V4 is determined to further support the Alliance by maintaining the V4 Battlegroup as a modular force. Its continuity and development of logistics support and joint training program would enable this force to support NATO's actions in the future.⁶⁴ As the Defence Ministers said the V4 modular force would be "contribution to NATO's Connected Forces Initiative and also supports the implementation of reassurance measures to enhance our collective defence and deterrence."⁶⁵

5 The V4 Presidency

The V4 presidency works on a year-long rotational basis. The very first presidency was held by Czechoslovakia in 1991-1992, followed by Poland and Hungary. After the separation of Czechoslovakia, another presidency was assigned to Slovakia and one year later to the Czech Republic. The last and current presidency will be swiftly introduced.

5.1 Slovak presidency 2014/2015

During the Slovak presidency, one of the priority areas was also the defence cooperation. The V4 Battlegroup preparation was supervised during the Slovak presidency as well as long-term strategic cooperation between V4 countries. The defence cooperation received a huge impulse during the Hungarian V4 presidency as the "Long Term Vision of the Visegrad Countries on Deepening Their Defence Cooperation" was signed.⁶⁶

During its presidency the Slovak Republic committed itself to "*focus on the successful completion of processes involved in the creation of a joint EU battlegroup.*"⁶⁷

The Visegrad Group also confirmed its readiness to share responsibility "*for maintaining a coherent and effective NATO*"⁶⁸ and to promote Euro-Atlantic security by strengthening and

⁶⁴ aerospace.com/articles-view/release/3/169267/v4-countries-want-to-regularly-contribute-to-nato,-eu-combat-formations.html

⁶⁵ Visegrad Group. Visegrad Countries May Turn EU Battlegroup into Permanent V4 Rapid Reaction Force. Atlantic Council. [online]. Pulikováno 3.7. 2014. [cit.11.3. 2013]. Available at: <http://www.atlanticcouncil.org/blogs/natosource/visegrad-countries-may-turn-eu-battlegroup-into-permanent-v4-rapid-reaction-force>

⁶⁶ Presidency Programs. *Visegrad Group*. [online]. [cit. 20.10. 2015]. Dostupné z: <http://www.visegradgroup.eu/documents/presidency-programs>.

⁶⁷ Dynamic Visegrad for Europe and Beyond—Program of the Slovak Presidency in the Visegrad Group (July 2014–June 2015). *Visegrad Group*. [online]. [cit.25.11. 2015]. Available at: http://www.visegradgroup.eu/documents/presidency-programs/20142015-slovak#_4.%20DEFENCE%20AND%20SECURITY,%20JUSTICE%20AND%20HOME%20AFFAIRS.

⁶⁸ Ibid.



enhancing their defence capabilities.⁶⁹

The Slovak presidency was rated rather neutrally as Slovaks were able to accept only one strategic document; the common training strategy of the V4 countries.⁷⁰ Slovaks also by the very end of their presidency revived the “common sky” project.⁷¹

From the V4 commitment for the year 2014/2015 it is clear how linked the Visegrad Group is with the EU and NATO.

5.2 Czech presidency 2015/2016

The Czech Republic decided to lead its presidency in the spirit of trust as its motto „V4 Trust“ indicates.⁷²

During the Czech presidency, the V4 will continue with building the “*permanent V4 military structure*”⁷³ in accordance to the Long Term Vision. The harmonization of the national defence with NATO and the rest of EU are also planned. Series of consultations about defence will take place, especially before the Warsaw Summit in 2016.⁷⁴ During the Czech Presidency the first V4 EU Battlegroup will come to stand-by. This Battlegroup will the same way as other Battlegroups be „*available for rapid deployment within ten days and within a radius of six thousand kilometres from Brussels.*”⁷⁵

Emphasis will be put on planning of some other possible areas of cooperation which could be developed in the future such as joint airspace protection.

Special attention will be paid to the V4 within the NATO structures and how it will continue to

⁶⁹ Ibid.

⁷⁰ KUFČÁK, Jakub. Hrozby z východu a jihu jako katalyzátory obranné a bezpečnostní spolupráce V4. *Vojenský rozhledy*. [online]. 2015. [cit. 11.3. 2015]. Available at: <http://www.vojenskerozhledy.cz/kategorie/hrozby-z-vychodu-a-jihu-jako-katalyzatory-obranne-a-bezpecnostni-spoluprace-v4>

⁷¹ KUFČÁK, Jakub. Hrozby z východu a jihu jako katalyzátory obranné a bezpečnostní spolupráce V4. *Vojenský rozhledy*. [online]. 2015. [cit. 11.3. 2015]. Available at: <http://www.vojenskerozhledy.cz/kategorie/hrozby-z-vychodu-a-jihu-jako-katalyzatory-obranne-a-bezpecnostni-spoluprace-v4>

⁷² Ibid.

⁷³ Program for the Czech Presidency in the Visegrad Group (2015-2016). *mzv.cz*. [online]. Published 19.6. 2015. [cit. 5.12. 2015]. Available at: http://www.mzv.cz/jnp/en/foreign_relations/visegrad_group/documents/program_ceskeho_predsednictvi_ve.html

⁷⁴ Ibid.

⁷⁵ PAULECH, Michal; URBANOVSKÁ, Jana, Visegrad Four EU Battlegroup: Meaning and Progress. *Obrana a strategie*. [online]. [cit. 20.2. 2016]. Available at: <http://www.obranaastrategie.cz/cs/archiv/rocnik-2014/2-2014/clanky/visegrad-four-eu-battlegroup-meaning-and-progress.html#.Vs1RLISQYdk>



implement the Readiness Action Plan (RAP).⁷⁶

The ambition is to be able to deploy troops both under EU and NATO and in that sense also continue in the preparation of the V4 EU BG for readiness in 2019.⁷⁷ The Czech presidency will also aspire for permanent regional modular force of V4 and for the harmonization of national defence plans.

One of the aims of Czech presidency is to deepen the defence cooperation in form of V4+, mainly with the USA and Germany.

Czech presidency will also support the strengthening of ties between the V4 and NORDEFCO.⁷⁸

On December 2015, the Ministers of Defence met in Prague to discuss the protection of Schengen Area and expressed their willingness to play role in protection of borders as well as crisis management.⁷⁹ It was also agreed it is crucial for the security of the Central Europe to have stable Balkan countries. The Visegrad countries therefore decided to cooperate with Macedonia and provide it a security and military support in case of the migration wave increase in spring.⁸⁰

6 The Visegrad Plus (V4 +)

The V4+ format was brought in order to cooperate with other regional countries such as Ukraine, Austria or Slovenia. However, talks are done also with countries like Germany or Republic of Korea.⁸¹

⁷⁶ RAP is a plan which was agreed at the Wales Summit in 2014. It is supposed to ensure that the Alliance will be ready and able to respond quickly to new threats and security challenges. More information at: http://www.nato.int/cps/en/natohq/topics_119353.htm

⁷⁷ Program for the Czech Presidency in the Visegrad Group (2015-2016); V4 Trust – Společná důvěra. *Ministry of Foreign Affairs of the Czech Republic*. [online]. p.10. [cit. 10.12. 2016]. Available at: http://www.mzv.cz/public/93/bd/c9/1534795_1336641_program_V4_e_brozura_A4_CZ.pdf.

⁷⁸ „The main aim and purpose of the Nordic defence Cooperation is to strengthen the participating nations’ national defence, explore common synergies and facilitate efficient common solutions.” More information about NORDEFCO Available at: <http://www.nordefco.org/The-basics-about-NORDEFCO>
The basics about NORDEFCO. *Nordic Defence Cooperation*. [online]. [cit.14.12. 2016]. Dostupné z: <http://www.nordefco.org/The-basics-about-NORDEFCO>.

⁷⁹ V4 Countries Progress in Defence Cooperation. *Ministry of Defence*. [online]. [cit. 14.2. 2016]. Available at: <http://www.army.cz/en/ministry-of-defence/newsroom/news/v4-countries-progress-in-defence-cooperation-118019/>.

⁸⁰ Ibid.

⁸¹ V4+ Rep. of Korea Joint Statement. *Visegrad Group*. [online]. Published 3.12. 2015. [cit. 11.12. 2015]. Dostupné z: <http://www.visegradgroup.eu/article-title-151207>.



6.1 V4 and Austria

Currently the V4 and Austria cooperate mainly on the basis of regional partnership or V4+ programme.⁸² Even though in history, after the revived Visegrad cooperation, there were talks about Austrian and Slovenian accession to V4, the consensus was never made. For this reason the V4+ format is used for cooperation with other countries.⁸³

In 2014 the high representatives of V4 countries as well as Austrian and Slovenian representatives met in Prague in 2014 in order to "*discuss cooperation in various fields of mutual interest*."⁸⁴ One of the topics concentrated on the security threats. They commented about "*effort of the Global Coalition to Counter the Islamic State of Iraq*."⁸⁵

Concerning the military cooperation of Austria and V4 countries there are more canals. One of the ways for cooperation has been the EU Battlegroup of Germany, Austria and the Czech Republic in 2012.⁸⁶ Another possible cooperation of Austria and a V4 country within EU Battlegroup should be in the second half of 2016. The Battlegroup should consist of German, Austrian and Czech troops again.⁸⁷

The other possibility for cooperation became NATO, or precisely, the Partnership for Peace (PfP) programme with Austria. PfP is a program of bilateral basis where NATO cooperates with Euro-Atlantic partner countries.⁸⁸ Purpose of the Partnership for Peace is to increase stability, diminish threats to peace and build strengthened security relationships between individual Euro-Atlantic partners and NATO, as well as among partner countries.⁸⁹ Austria is not a member of the North Atlantic Treaty Organization; however, it has been in the PfP since 1995 and proved to be a valuable partner for NATO.⁹⁰ After the accession of Poland, Hungary,

⁸² Structural Funds – The Presidency of the Czech Republic - CZ V4 PRES. *V4 and Germany*. [online]. [cit. 14.2. 2016]. Available at: <http://www.strukturalni-fondy.cz/en/Microsites/V4/Predsednictvi-CR-V4>.

⁸³ The Visegrad Group: The Czech Republic, Hungary, Poland and Slovakia | Whither V4? EU Entry as a Turning Point in Visegrad Cooperation." *Křt, Webra International*. [online]. [cit. 3.7. 2007]. Available at: <http://www.visegradgroup.eu/students-section/whither-v4-eu-entry-as>.

⁸⁴ The Visegrad Group: The Czech Republic, Hungary, Poland and Slovakia | Joint Press Statement of Presidents of the Visegrad Group and Austria and Slovenia." *Křt, Webra International*. [online]. [cit. 12.12. 2014]. Available at: Text, December 12, 2014. <http://www.visegradgroup.eu/calendar/2014/joint-press-statement-of>.

⁸⁵ Ibid.

⁸⁶ EU Battlegroup. [online]. [cit. 14.2. 2016]. Available at: <http://www.globalsecurity.org/military/world/europe/eu-battlegroups.htm>.

⁸⁷ Ibid.

⁸⁸ The Partnership for Peace Programme. NATO. [online]. [cit. 10.3.2016]. Available at: http://www.nato.int/cps/en/natolive/topics_50349.htm

⁸⁹ The Partnership for Peace Programme. NATO. [online]. [cit. 10.3.2016]. Available at: http://www.nato.int/cps/en/natolive/topics_50349.htm

⁹⁰ NATO - Topic: Relations with Austria. *NATO*. [online]. [cit. 14.2. 2016]. http://www.nato.int/cps/en/natohq/topics_48901.htm.



Czech Republic and later Slovakia to NATO, Austria has automatically become their partner as well.⁹¹

6.2 V4 and Germany

The cooperation of the V4 with Germany occurs mainly in the EU structures, namely in the CSDP, and within NATO. Closer cooperation was formed within the EU Battlegroups such as the military and defence cooperation with Germany that was established in June 2010 by the Polish, Germans, Slovaks, Latvians and Lithuanians. This was very important for the V4 members in order to gain experience with combats and their planning.⁹²

Another example of the BG cooperation where a V4 country as well as Germany was included was the Weimar Battlegroup in 2013.⁹³

In the same year (2013) a V4 summit was held and presented an important milestone for the formation of the V4 Battlegroup, as the Visegrad countries as well as Germany and France pledged to *"boost the European defence cooperation and provide particular support to the pillars of European security."*⁹⁴ Germany supported the idea of Visegrad countries to develop a V4 EU Battlegroup and also hoped that *"closer defence cooperation will help to make the "NATO 2020"⁹⁵ vision a reality."*⁹⁶ Germany perceived the interoperability to be essential in the future and wished to strive ways of more effective cooperation.

7 Conclusion

The V4 defence and security cooperation is one of the important topics of the V4 countries. For that reason they decided to strengthen their defence and security cooperation and created an Action Plan of the V4 Defence Cooperation which includes many subareas on which the member countries would concentrate in the future. The areas include the creation of the V4 EU Battlegroup that would be able to deploy from 2016 as well as they include the Defence Planning Cooperation, Joint Training Exercises and Military Education cooperation. This all is, however, closely connected to NATO and EU through which the military tasks are performed. It is therefore a goal for the V4 to further cooperate in strengthening the NATO in its efforts

⁹¹ Ibid.

⁹² GAWRON-TABOR, Karolina, Nová kvalita obranné spolupráce visegrádské skupiny v letech 2010-2014..

⁹³ Ibid.

⁹⁴ PAULECH, Michal; URBANOVSKÁ. Jana, Visegrad Four EU Battlegroup: Meaning and Progress.

⁹⁵ "Capabilities for NATO 2020 and Beyond. While the Strategic Concept focusses on what NATO will do in the next decade, this is an enabling goal to help define what NATO should look like from a capabilities perspective."

⁹⁶ PAULECH, Michal; URBANOVSKÁ. Jana, Visegrad Four EU Battlegroup: Meaning and Progress.



to „meet the challenges of modern era“⁹⁷ and increase the contribution of V4 countries to the EU Common Security and Defence Policy (CSDP). Even though the capabilities that are being developed and provided to NATO and EU still depend on national responsibility, the V4 is willing to make a commitment to both NATO and EU. The military defence cooperation of V4 countries is important as it enables the Visegrad Group to be perceived more seriously in the international arena.

Key Terms

Washington Treaty—the founding treaty of NATO, laid down on 4th April 1949, more info at: http://www.nato.int/cps/en/natolive/topics_67656.htm

NATO smart defence —encourages the members of the alliance to work together, harmonise requirements and pooling and sharing capabilities. **More info at:** http://www.nato.int/cps/en/natohq/topics_84268.htm

Pooling and Sharing—“The concept refers to initiatives and projects to pool and share more military capabilities among EU Member States.”⁹⁸ More info at: <http://www.eda.europa.eu/what-we-do/eda-priorities/pooling-and-sharing>

NATO Readiness Action Plan (RAP)—plan to “ensure the Alliance is ready to respond swiftly and firmly to new security challenges. “The RAP addresses risks and threats from the east and the south.”⁹⁹ More info at: http://www.nato.int/cps/en/natohq/topics_119353.htm

Partnership for Peace (PfP) – “programme of practical bilateral cooperation between individual Euro-Atlantic partner countries and NATO. It allows partners to build up an individual relationship with NATO, choosing their own priorities for cooperation.”¹⁰⁰ More info at: http://www.nato.int/cps/en/natolive/topics_50349.htm

⁹⁷ Joint Statement of the V4 ministers of defence. *Visegrad Group*. [online]. Published 4.6. 2013. [cit. 9.12. 2015]. Available at: <http://www.visegradgroup.eu/documents/official-statements/joint-statement-of-the>.

⁹⁸ Pooling and Sharing. *European Defence Agency*. [online]. [cit. 11.3.2016]. Available at: <http://www.eda.europa.eu/what-we-do/eda-priorities/pooling-and-sharing>

⁹⁹ ReadinessActionPlan. *NATO*. [online]. [cit. 10.3. 2016]. Available at: http://www.nato.int/cps/en/natohq/topics_119353.htm

¹⁰⁰ ThePartnershipforPeace Program. *NATO*. [online]. [cit. 9.3. 2016]. Available at: http://www.nato.int/cps/en/natolive/topics_50349.htm



Common Security and Defence Policy (CSDP)—allows members to share their capabilities and resources in order to become stronger, faster and more effective.¹⁰¹ The CSDP enables the EU to have a leading role in operations such as peace-keeping, conflict prevention and also in strengthening the international security.¹⁰² More info at: [http://www.europarl.europa.eu/RegData/etudes/BRIE/2015/551346/EPRS_BRI\(2015\)551346_EN.pdf](http://www.europarl.europa.eu/RegData/etudes/BRIE/2015/551346/EPRS_BRI(2015)551346_EN.pdf)

CBRN weapons—“CBRN are weaponized or non-weaponized **C**hemical, **B**iological, **R**adiological and **N**uclear materials that can cause great harm and pose significant threats in the hands of terrorists.”¹⁰³ More info at: <http://www.ceep.ca/education/CBRNintrosheet.pdf>

NORDEFCO— Nordic Defence Cooperation, “official forum for the defence cooperation between Denmark, Finland, Iceland, Norway and Sweden established in 2009.”¹⁰⁴ More info at: <http://www.fmn.dk/videnom/Documents/Nordefco%20faktaark.pdf>

Helpful Sources

About Visegrad Group

<http://www.visegradgroup.eu/about>

About NATO

<http://www.nato.int>

About CSDP

http://eeas.europa.eu/csdp/about-csdp/index_en.htm

About EU Battlegroups

<http://www.military.ie/overseas/eu-battle-group/>

V4 Defence Cooperation

<http://www.visegradgroup.eu/about/cooperation/defence>

NATO – Readiness Action Plan

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¹⁰¹ EuropeandefencecooperationStateof play and thoughts on an EU army. *EuropeanParliament*. [online]. Published březen 2015. [cit. 10.3. 2016]. Available at: [http://www.europarl.europa.eu/RegData/etudes/BRIE/2015/551346/EPRS_BRI\(2015\)551346_EN.pdf](http://www.europarl.europa.eu/RegData/etudes/BRIE/2015/551346/EPRS_BRI(2015)551346_EN.pdf)

¹⁰² Ibid.

¹⁰³ What is CBRN?. *The Centre for Excellence in Emergency Preparedness*. [online]. [cit. 10.3. 2016]. Available at: <http://www.ceep.ca/education/CBRNintrosheet.pdf>

¹⁰⁴ NORDEFCO, Nordic Defence Cooperation. [online]. [cit. 10.3. 2016]. Available at: <http://www.fmn.dk/videnom/Documents/Nordefco%20faktaark.pdf>



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Top partneři

Generální partner
Pražského studentského summitu



Hlavní partner
Modelu OSN



Hlavní partner Modelu NATO



Ministerstvo zahraničních věcí
České republiky

Univerzitní partner



Hlavní partner Modelu EU



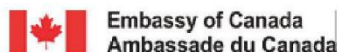
Partner jednání



Partner zahájení



Partneři Modelů



Mediální partneři

Hlavní mediální partner



Hlavní mediální partner



Mediální partner



Partner Chronicle



Za podpory





**Asociace
pro mezinárodní
otázky**
Association
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Affairs

Pražský studentský summit
projekt Asociace pro mezinárodní otázky