

WHERE ARE YOU GOING, COUNTRIES OF VISEGRÁD TREATY?**MERRE TOVÁBB, VISEGRÁDI ORSZÁGOK?**

A szélesedő NATO-és EU integráció nem szorította háttérbe a V-4 együttműködés jelentőségét. Az elmúlt húsz év tapasztalatai alapján a négy tagállam helyzete még ma is sok hasonlóságot mutat. Érdekes megvizsgálnunk, hogy a NATO és az EU nemzetközi struktúráján belül milyen irányban fejlődik tovább az együttműködés. A következtetések tudatában érdemes áttekintenünk, hogy a jövőbeli szoros NATO-EU kooperáció miként befolyásolja a V-4 együttműködést. Végül, de nem utolsó sorban nem árt egy kis figyelmet szentelnünk annak, hogy a V-4 országok közti viszony milyen hatással van a NATO és az EU működésére.

The broadening integration among NATO- and EU-countries has not overshadowed the importance of the V-4 treaty. According to the experience of the last twenty years, actualities of the four member states still look very similar. It's worth to overlook the main tendencies of the treaty's development inside the international structures of NATO and EU in a short essay. Being aware of the conclusions, we should have a look on the influence of the NATO-EU cooperation on the V-4 treaty. Last, but not least, we should scrutinize the facts showing how the relationship among V-4 countries effects NATO and EU functionally.

THE FUTURE OF V-4 COOPERATION IN THE INTERNATIONAL STRUCTURES OF NATO AND EU

When the concept of European Integration was envisaged by the governments in the '50s, the main goal was to provide supreme security, freedom and welfare to the nations participating in the challenge of constructing a new Europe. Although the world changed a lot since the beginning of the integration, it is still a rightful pretence from the people of the continent to claim these objectives from their governments. Apparently, the main appliance to achieve these goals is establishing a common foreign and security policy. Furthermore, to unambiguously determine the orientation of these policies, with a strong accordance in its background.

If we want to describe the future of NATO, EU and V-4 countries in these respects, we should detach three levels of cooperation – in tune with the participation in these three organizations. Of course, this kind of seclusion only exists in a theoretical dimension, since functionally the levels of cooperation mentioned above are so highly interlocked, they practically cannot be separated. The following facts confirm this: during determination of main priorities, the most important task is to make sure that they affect the safety of European citizens. No other priority should dominate. But then again, the democracies of Europe (including V-4 countries) and North-America are based on same interests, and their alliance is determinative in providing the safety and development of all European countries, so the cooperation with the North-American allies should have elemental role in the common European foreign and security policy. Also, a strong European Union is definitely a term of a strong NATO, but the strength of the EU on the field of international relations can't be maximalized without proper cooperation among V-4 countries.

The Common Foreign and Security Policy developed a lot since V-4 countries joined the European Union. Today, the countries of the EU have got institutionalized, stable relations with almost every part of the world. Due to these relations, the role of the EU in conflict-solving processions became more and more important, especially in the Balkans, Afghanistan or Africa. The institutional and financial background also developed, but the European Union failed in creating a common, standardized self-assertion in many questions she faced during these years. To make the role in international relations and international security adequate to the economical weight, the EU needs to strengthen the base

of the Common Foreign and Security Policy, not just institutionally but also instrumentally. According to these viewpoints, the following complex, interconnected sub-policies should have emphasized attention: common security and defense policy, neighbourhood policy, energy policy, extension policy, development cooperation policy, aid policy, trade policy and forensic cooperation policy.

The Common Foreign and Security Policy gives a good opportunity to the V-4 countries to have their own national interests realized as part of the European Union's policy. That's why it is beneficial for all V-4 countries to be an active partner in the creating process of the common policies. It also means that these countries have to break with the uncertainty in orientation, which often caused them to align to the opinion of the majority. These countries have to have their own principles and priorities granted by other European countries, but they also need to have solidarity with the national interests of each other and other NATO and EU countries. The key to build up this solidarity is the strong, effective cooperation and international dialogue. In the following years, the Common Foreign and Security Policy – including the foreign and security policies of V-4 countries – should have seven main goals.

First of all, V-4 countries need to establish a broadening structure of cooperation while participating in the global performance of EU and NATO (1st goal). Thus filling a part, they need to make the positions of the European Union stronger on its eastern ends, and in the Balkans, and – possibly – in the whole eastern-Mediterranean region (2nd goal). Pending their acts to reach the two goals mentioned above, they need to facilitate human rights – including ethnic and collective rights, in accordance with the European Union's underlying principles (3rd goal). V-4 countries should also play an important role in calling European energy security to being, and also in protecting it, while creating ideal circumstances for sustainable development (4th goal). It is also an important objective to broaden the cooperation in the fight against terrorism and proliferation of weapons of mass destruction (5th goal). It is also our common interest to help in sustaining stability of global commercialism and financial system (6th goal), just like prevention against illegal migration (7th goal).

On an institutional level, V-4 countries also have to create the properly institutionalized opportunity for the decision-maker forums (side-by-side with the forums of each policy) and optionally the governments to regularly negotiate in every important question in connection with the security of the region (or the whole European Union), thus making these themes gain strategical role in the foreign policy of any V-4 country. It will be an important task in the following years to realize these innovations, in order to reach supreme effectiveness in every field, mentioned above. However, it's also a highlighted task for the European Union to avoid creating parallelity in the new structures. The most important means to realize these goals will be the international panels of multilateral diplomacy.

THE EFFECTS OF FUTURE COOPERATION BETWEEN NATO AND EU

Although the cooperation between the European Union and the North Atlantic Treaty Organization had to face some serious political difficulties, the cooperation in practice was rather good, and was able to show up important achievements. It's not a secret that there are problems in the conveyance of information and generally on an institutional-structural level. The main reason is probably the fundamental dissimilarity of these two organizations. However, there is one main problem, which has been causing the cooperation between NATO and EU to stagnate: the conflict in Cyprus between Greeks and Turks. In the early future, we have to make serious efforts to promote and sub serve negotiations in order to resolve the problem which causes the conflict.

Recently, members of the European Union – including V-4 countries – have realized, that there is a serious need for the European Union to take bigger role in forming international relations, and that these two organizations can successfully help and complement each other, if their activities are based on an innovative strategical partnership. Furthermore, we can't look over the fact that France – the country, which has always been a supporter of the Common Foreign and

Security Policy – has returned to the integrated military structure of the North Atlantic Treaty Organization, which brought new opportunities in broadening the cooperation. Actually, we are at a moment, which can bring a great breakthrough in the history of the Euro-Atlantic community's cooperation. According to these facts, an important task stands in front of the European Union, and every country, which is member of NATO or just supporter of a deeper Euro-Atlantic cooperation. That's the reason why every V-4 country should support every proposal and suggestion, which intent to improve cooperation and broadening interoperability.

There are some main elements, which have great importance in improving further cooperation between NATO and EU. First of all, they need to establish and standardize high level (and not only informal) forums between top-officials in charge of each policy. This would make – beyond the everyday cases – the particular discussion of doctrines and strategies easier, and by the same token it would provide more harmonious planning. The EU-presidency in charge should give plenty of rope to displaying it's plans in NATO, and to share the experience gathered during implementation. This would ameliorate the conveyance of information between the two organizations. In connection with the actual operations, there is a need for a closer conciliation from the beginning of the planning. The interdependence between the two organizations is determinative in this aspect. This element is really important, because the safety of our military and civilian forces depends on it. They need to tighten the cooperation in the sphere of planning and the development of capabilities, in order to avoid unnecessary duplications in the structure of general cooperation. The two organizations need to find a solution to the question of how to build the optimal structure of planning capacities. The European Union needs to develop it's capabilities for planning, but must not forget that the unnecessary duplications mentioned above will only drain the sources away from other important tasks. The interoperability and compatibility of capabilities and the aligned development of capabilities are very important for all V-4 countries, since duplex offerings and duplex consumption of their powers can cause serious problems to them. There is also a great need of a specific „mutual supplementation” in the sphere of the programs for procurements, development of capabilities and investments. The cooperation should develop in a way those results in distinct improvement of rentability. In the early and mid-term future, EU will probably face many exigencies where the requisition of the capacities of NATO will be unavoidable. Today, this kind of cooperation is based on the „Berlin Plus Agreements”. Although these agreements proved themselves to be efficient in practice when necessities occurred, among nowadays' circumstances they aren't appropriate for all goals and tasks of cooperation. There is a general need to give more space to common thinking, and if necessary, make a comprehensive verification of the agreements. The European Union and the North Atlantic Treaty Organization have many new opportunities, based on the experience of their former cooperation. They also need to identify clearly which are going to be the new fields of cooperation. Without doubt, the following topics will have a great importance in doing that: energy security of the Euro-Atlantic community and the fight against global terrorism and organized criminality.

THE INFLUENCE OF RELATIONSHIPS AMONG V-4 STATES ON COMMON PRESENCE IN NATO AND EU

Due to historical and geopolitical facts, relationship among V-4 countries has always been a difficult question, whether we look at their bilateral relations with each other or their common presence in the Euro-Atlantic structures. In order to understand the nature of this question, we have to take a stock of the integration process.

In the times of regime change, Czechoslovakia, Hungary and Poland shared the same democratic underlying principle, which caused them to also share the same system of goals. Their main objective was to start the process of integration into the Euro-Atlantic structure. The criteria were predetermined by the democratic countries, who already were part of the Euro-Atlantic structure. The underlying principles and the system of goals mentioned above can be easily recognized in the short-and mid-term objectives of regional cooperation. After 1990, Czechoslovakia, Hungary and Poland agreed

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that a great need exists for a formation of regional cooperation, which serves the aim of their „return to Europe”. Firstly they met in Bratislava in April 1990 to make a discussion about their views of a „New Europe”. Almost a year later, in February 1991 they met again in Visegrád, and signed the Visegrád Treaty, treaty of cooperation in the integration process. Although it did not contain anything about institutional/structural or military cooperation, the Visegrád Treaty (or V-4-treaty) meant a new, limited form of multilateral cooperation in order to establish inter-ministerial cooperation and to sub serve political harmonization. The orientation of the governments in both Post-Czechoslovakian states remained unchanged after the split of Czechoslovakia in 1993, so the integration continued without suspense.

Now that the integration process has made it's way and far-gone (at least in the most important questions), the countries, who were already part of the Euro-Atlantic community, recognize every V-4 country as „one of them”. This fact gives us the opportunity to presume that – by now – V-4 countries share the same underlying principles and system of goals as the countries that formerly predetermined the criteria of being part of the Euro-Atlantic community. We may call this one of the greatest achievements of the Visegrád Treaty.

After the time of regime change, it seemed that the procession of Euro-Atlantic integration effaced many other questions, which probably were not as important as the integration itself, but later had serious effects on the relations among V-4 countries. While the sustaining of the integration process was the most important question, V-4 countries proved themselves to be more disposed to compromises. After every single one of these countries became a member of the European Union and NATO, these effaced questions gained importance and began to have more serious influence on the bilateral and multilateral cooperation among the signers of Visegrád Treaty than they had before. Which were these questions? Of course, we do not have enough space and time to discuss every single one of them. These questions had/have one thing in common: they were/are exclusively and solely political – in the negative meaning of „political”. A typical example of these questions is about the topic of minority and ethnic rights. Although the members of NATO and EU have traditional underlying principles about minority and ethnic rights, a quarrel around this topic caused two V-4 members of NATO and EU to have different positions on the important question of Kosovo's independence, which made both NATO and the European Union look more divided, thus making their positions in the Balkans look weaker, which is the first step in „making them weaker.”

So – as we can see – questions and quarrels like these do not have positive effect on the common presence in the Euro-Atlantic structures. With this fact, comes a second question: what is needed to be done? First of all, political quarrels like this are always based on mutual distrust and non-confidence. The element of uncertainty created by mutual distrust and non-confidence always has got negative influence on the efficiency of an international structure. But a structure also could have it's own internal systems to neutralize the source of these problems. This is why it's necessary – just like we mentioned it in topic 2 – to create a properly institutionalized opportunity for the decision-maker forums to make regular negotiations on the highest level, optionally side-by-side with inter-ministerial negotiations. By so doing, radical difference between positions on important questions can be avoided, thus the efficiency of the structure can be maximalized. These thoughts worth considering, because in the early future, the Euro-Atlantic community is going to face many challenges, which can only be resolved by guaranteeing the unified and integrated standpoints in order to make the members of the Euro-Atlantic community line up with each other. This could be the most effective way to carry out the point based on common interests. The most important challenges need to be mentioned here: further development of the European Unions „Eastern partnership”; building mutually rationalized relations with the Russian Federation; providing background to the Black Sea Synergy; and last but not least, realizing the goals of the „Open Door Policy” in the Southern-Caucasian.

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