



Meeting of the Speakers of the Visegrád Group Parliaments

Budapest, 27-28 February 2014

JOINT STATEMENT

Jan Hamáček, Speaker of the Chamber of Deputies of the Czech Republic, Milan Štěch, President of the Senate of the Czech Republic, László Kövér, Speaker of the Hungarian National Assembly, Ewa Kopacz, Marshal of the Sejm of the Republic of Poland, Bogdan Borusewicz, Marshal of the Senate of the Republic of Poland and Renáta Zmajkovičová, Deputy Speaker of National Council of the Slovak Republic held consultations in Budapest about the new framework of the parliamentary dimension of the Visegrád Group (hereinafter: V4), about the parliamentary possibilities of the joint representation of interests within the EU, and also about the role of the V4 parliaments' cooperation in the support of the Eastern Partnership.

The Speakers, in connection with the development of a new framework for parliamentary cooperation in the V4,

- based on over 20 years of development of the V4 cooperation,
- considering its role in the stability and prosperity of the region,
- building on the common historical heritage,
- and recognizing the significance of joint action and representation of interests, and of an integrated Central European region in both Europe and the world,

came to the following conclusions:

- They find that the proposal brought up by the Hungarian presidency of the Visegrád Group concerning the fostering of cooperation between the parliaments of the V4 Member States and the necessity of strengthening the parliamentary dimension of the V4 is substantiated.
- They welcome and accept as a starting point the proposal developed by the foreign affairs committees on 30 January 2014 in Visegrád concerning the renewal of the parliamentary dimension of the V4.

- As a new framework of the parliamentary cooperation, supplementing the regular meeting of the Speakers of the Parliaments held annually in the country of the rotating V4 presidency if decided so by the presiding country, a joint plenary session composed of the representatives of committees appropriate to the agenda of the meeting of the Speakers will be held the day before the meeting. The delegation of each country will consist of a maximum total of 10 members.
- The chairperson of the respective committee of the host country will inform the participants of the Speakers of Parliaments conference about the results of the above mentioned meeting .
- The rotational V4 presidency will ensure advance preparation of the substantive aspects of the V4 parliamentary dimension meeting.
- The technical operating details of the V4 cooperation under the new parliamentary dimension will be discussed by the competent administrative offices of the parliaments on the basis of the Memorandum of Understanding adopted by the V4 foreign affairs committees in Visegrád on 30 January 2014.

The Speakers of the V4 parliaments, in connection with the joint representation of interests within the EU:

- Emphasize that in addition to the cooperation within the framework of monitoring of the principle of subsidiarity, the key elements of inter-parliamentary cooperation within the EU are the annual Conference of Speakers of the European Union Parliaments, the Conference of Parliamentary Committees for Union Affairs of Parliaments of the European Union (COSAC), the Interparliamentary Conference on Economic and Financial Governance of the European Union, and the Interparliamentary Conference for the Common Foreign and Security Policy and the Common Security and Defence Policy.
- Deem important the joint sessions organised by the European Parliament's specialized standing committees attended by respective members of national parliaments.
- Will focus their attention on the further development of cooperation between the Visegrád Group countries, the strengthening of democratic legitimacy while respecting EU and national competences as defined in the Founding Treaties amended in Lisbon, increasing the level of transparency in decision-making and the promotion of the joint representation of interests.
- Agree that - at the initiative of the head of the parliamentary delegation of the country holding the V4 presidency - the delegations attending the aforementioned EU inter-parliamentary conferences will hold consultations to agree a common position in connection to the points on the conference agenda. The head of the delegation of the country holding the V4 presidency will present the common position at the given conference. The delegations reserve themselves the right to present their own position independently.

In connection with the role assumed by the cooperation of the V4 parliaments in supporting the Eastern Partnership, the Speakers:

- Welcome the fact that the Association Agreements with Georgia and Moldova and the Deep and Comprehensive Free Trade Agreements forming part of the Association Agreements were initialled at the Third Eastern Partnership Summit in November 2013, and give their support to the signing thereof as soon as possible.
- Express hope that the domestic political crisis in Ukraine will be resolved peacefully and necessary reforms will be swiftly re-launched. They emphasize the significant role of Ukraine in the community of European nations and express hope for swift signing of the Association Agreement, including Deep and Comprehensive Free Trade Agreement with Ukraine.
- Confirm that the Visegrád Group countries in their capacity as EU Member States are interested in and actively support the success of the Eastern Partnership, including by further activities strengthening this policy, and stress that it is therefore vital to focus on supporting the Eastern Partnership policy within the V4 framework.
- Declare that in addition to the current efforts made at governmental level, e.g. the meeting of the V4 and Eastern Partnership Foreign Ministers scheduled to be held in April within the framework of the Hungarian V4 presidency as well as the Visegrad 4 Eastern Partnership Programme, a joint action by the Visegrád Group parliaments is also needed.
- Will examine the possibility of requesting the observer status for a joint delegation of V4 countries (representing all the members of the Visegrád Group) in EuroNest, the parliamentary dimension of the Eastern Partnership.
- Recommend that a conference should be organised for the European affairs committees of the Ukrainian, Georgian and Moldovan parliaments under the title “The experiences of the association process”, at which experience relative to the implementation of the respective Association Agreements could be shared.
- Recommend that appropriate bodies of V4 national parliaments will get in touch with relevant bodies of Parliaments of Armenia and Azerbaijan to support their activities in Eastern Partnership.
- Recommend that in the interest of the development of Ukraine’s Transcarpatia province (Zakarpattia Oblast), which borders on three V4 countries, the committees for regional development should invite local representatives of the province to share their specific experience. They encourage the strengthening of personal relationships among members of parliaments in the border regions, as stated in the Joint Statement of the Committees on Public Administration and Regional Policy signed on 5 February.
- In coordination with the other V4 parliaments, the Speakers will support their own parliaments to offer to the staff of the Eastern partners’ parliaments a possibility to exchange experience on certain specific topics.

The Speakers will inform their own parliaments about this Joint Statement and they will call upon the relevant parliamentary committees to implement the contents hereof. They will also pass information to their own governments in order to ensure consistency between the governmental and parliamentary dimensions of the V4 cooperation.

The Speakers request the Speaker of the Hungarian National Assembly to inform the leaders of the relevant EU institutions about the contents of this Joint Statement on behalf of the V4 presidency.

This document has been drafted in English in 6 original copies.

Budapest, 28 February 2014

Signatories:

Jan HAMÁČEK
Speaker of the Chamber of Deputies
of the Parliament of the Czech Republic

Milan ŠTĚCH
President of the Senate
of the Parliament of the Czech Republic

KÖVÉR László
Speaker of the Hungarian
National Assembly

Ewa KOPACZ
Marshal of the Sejm
of the Republic of Poland

Bogdan BORUSEWICZ
Marshal of the Senate
of the Republic of Poland

Renáta ZMAJKOVIČOVÁ
Deputy Speaker of the National Council
of the Slovak Republic