

**DECLARATION BY THE PRESIDENTS OF STATES OF THE VISEGRÁD
GROUP
(PSZCZYNA, POLAND, 19 JANUARY 2001)**

We, the Presidents of the Czech Republic, the Republic Of Hungary, the Republic Of Poland, the Slovak Republic, met in Pszczyna, Poland, on 19 January 2001, on the eve of the 10th anniversary of the adoption in Visegrád of the declaration on co-operation between the Central European nations that we represent. Not only has this document retained its validity but has even extended it, in the face of changes sweeping the uniting Europe of today.

We give a positive assessment of the ten years' achievements of the Visegrád co-operation. We pledge our readiness to continue and to deepen this cooperation. With great satisfaction we take note of the progress made last year in this area. We warmly welcome the intensified dialogue on the level of Prime ministers, Ministers from various departments, and chief negotiators who are responsible for the accession talks of our countries with the European Union. What we consider particularly valuable and beneficial is the strengthening of contacts in the field of culture, education, science, youth exchanges and cross-border co-operation, whose progress will be increasingly assisted by the International Visegrád Fund established in the previous year.

We regard the accession of our four countries to the European Union as a matter of utmost priority. A swift entry to the EU, based on favourable and equitable conditions, will be more than a way to fulfil our national aspirations: It will also help to generate more momentum in the process of unification of Europe. Close Visegrád co-operation on the EU issues, whose significance is growing in the course of our pre-accession, will retain its worthiness also after this strategic goal has been achieved.

The time span from the entry of the Czech Republic, Hungary and Poland to the North Atlantic Alliance has proven the rightfulness of the decision about the NATO enlargement. We unanimously advocate the alliance's continued „open door“ policy, which contributes to the strengthening of security and stability in Central and Eastern Europe. We express our hope that Slovakia will soon become a NATO member. At the same time, the Visegrád states confirm their unfailing support to the development of the common European security and defence policy, while also retaining lasting transatlantic bonds, beneficial to the whole continent. We welcome the decision of the North Atlantic Council of 15 December 2000 to organize the next NATO summit in Prague, the capital of the Czech Republic.

Given that the strategic goals of the Visegrád states are convergent, and the ways chosen to attain them are also similar, we see a number of common challenges ahead of us. The answer to these challenges should allow the citizens of our states to enjoy more economic freedom, higher standards of living and improved internal and external security. The dynamically developing Central Europe becomes a part and parcel of the globalisation process, which affords new opportunities to all our fellow citizens, and in particular to young generations, who will shape our common destiny in the new century.

The success of the Visegrád co-operation, originating in our break-away from the totalitarian system in Central Europe, is founded on the solid ground of observation of democratic rules, market economy, rule of law, and on respect for human and minority rights and civil freedoms. This provides a model for many other states from central and

eastern europe. We pledge our readiness and willingness to develop broad contacts between the Visegrád Group that we represent, and other states and subregional groupings. This will contribute to the building of good-neighbourly relations between nations, will help to overcome divisions from the past which linger on the continent, and will pave the way to a secure, stable and prospering Europe.

[Quelle: <http://www.Visegrád.org/events.php?kdy=19january2001>]