

JOINT STATEMENT OF THE HEADS OF GOVERNMENT OF THE VISEGRÁD GROUP MEMBER COUNTRIES (KRAKOW, 1 JUNE 2001)

1. We, the Prime Ministers of the Czech Republic, the Republic of Hungary, the Republic of Poland and the Slovak Republic, have resolved to meet in Cracow to review the results and to discuss further prospects of the Visegrád co-operation during the year following our last meeting at the summit in Prague. We take a positive note of the 'Annual Report on the Activities of the Visegrád Group', which sums up the developments that have taken place during the Polish chairmanship. In the year when we commemorate the 10th anniversary of the signing of the Visegrád Declaration, we would like to express our high appreciation of this co-operation. We also declare a will to further develop the political, economic and cultural collaboration among our countries at all levels. In particular our attention will be focused on various infrastructural projects.

2. The security and prosperity of our nations remain inseparably linked to the enlargement of the Euro-Atlantic Community and the process of European integration. The governments of our countries will continue to vigorously pursue their foreign policy goals on the basis of our present and future membership in NATO and the European Union. In the process, they will be guided by their determination to widen and strengthen the zone of stability and co-operation in Europe. Our solidarity in that respect will continue to underpin the Visegrád co-operation.

3. We are confident that NATO's commitment to and consistency in pursuing its 'open door' policy will result in concrete decisions at the next summit meeting of the Alliance in Prague that would meet our expectations with regard to the enlargement. In the context of Visegrád co-operation we pledge our continuous support for Slovakia's accession to NATO.

The states of the Visegrád Group will continue their efforts to deepen co-operation in the security field.

4. The European Council in Nice has brought about a significant change in the enlargement process of the European Union. We welcome the fact that by concluding the intergovernmental conference on institutional reforms and signing the Treaty of Nice, the EU has fulfilled the last prerequisite on her part to enlarge in accordance with the decision of the European Council reached at Helsinki. We also welcome the fact that the road map adopted in Nice has scheduled the accession talks for the period of the following 18 months. We support the principles, reconfirmed in Nice, which give individual treatment to each candidate country based on its own merits. At the same time, we continue our co-operation to support one other in our nations' preparations for the accession to the EU. We believe that the European Council in Göteborg in June 2001 will evaluate the progress in the accession negotiations and reconfirm the road map so that negotiations with those of the candidate countries, that are prepared, could be closed in 2002. Their conclusion would make it possible for the first new members to participate in the election to the European Parliament in 2004, as full-fledged members.

5. We give considerable attention to the developments in South-Eastern Europe. We welcome the positive changes that have taken place in those countries in the past year. We would particularly like to welcome the Federal Republic of Yugoslavia to the group of

countries embracing democratic ideals. We appreciate its efforts aimed at improving relations with its neighbour, as well as its co-operation towards the full implementation of the General framework Agreement for Peace in Bosnia and Herzegovina and the UN Resolution 1244. The Prime Ministers of the Visegrád Group support a peaceful solution to any problems that might arise in the Balkans, a solution which would recognise the existing borders and international agreements and ensure peaceful co-existence of all the ethnic groups in the region. While we appreciate the general progress made in Kosovo on the roads towards stabilisation, we continue to support efforts that would lead to lasting solutions for Kosovo to the benefit of all its ethnic communities. In the context of the latest events in Banja Luka, Trebinje and Mostar, we call upon all the political leaders in Bosnia and Hercegovina to consolidate their efforts for strengthening peace and democracy in the country. We also express our concern about the situation in the Former Yugoslav Republic of Macedonia. We support efforts aimed at bringing an end to violence in a manner consistent with the rule of law and adequate to the threats. We call on all the political leaders in the region to condemn all acts of violence and terrorist activities of the Albanian militant groups, to isolate extremism and to use their influence to secure stability. We call on the Macedonian Government to continue dialogue with and find peaceful solution to the issues raised by legitimately elected political representatives of the Albanian community.

6. The Stability Pact for South East Europe has always been highly appreciated by the Visegrád Group countries and perceived as a valuable instrument in the international effort to bring about stability and development in the Balkans. The governments of our countries share the belief that the differentiation of the participation status in the Stability Pact should not depend solely on meeting the financial criteria, such as the volume of contributions to the aid funds. Participation should be rather judged upon its political engagement and readiness to implement the objectives of the Pact. Given our active involvement in the work of the Stability Pact, we hope that the June 28th meeting of the Regional Table will take a proper account of the status in the Pact of the Czech Republic, the Republic of Poland and the Slovak Republic.

7. We do believe that regional co-operation will remain an important feature of the relations between and among our countries also after the entry into the EU. The Visegrád Group continues to be a helpful tool of strengthening historical and contemporary ties among our nations. Equally, we attached great importance to co-operation with other countries interested in developing relations and projects with the Visegrád Group, and in fostering European integration.

8. We believe that co-operation between the Visegrád Group and the Benelux will bring new impetus for our region.

9. We appreciate the positive value of the 'Knowledge Based Economy' initiative and look forward to co-operation in this field.

10. We consider the civil society aspect and the human dimension of our co-operation to be of particular importance. Therefore, we pledge our further support for the work of the International Visegrád Fund which has proved successful in bringing our peoples together. That is why we decided to double the annual contributions to the Found as early as from the very beginning of the year 2002. Similarly, we shall support youth initiatives within the Visegrád Group, such as creation of the Youth Parliament, thus contributing to regional and European integration.

[Quelle: <http://www.Visegrád.org/events.php?kdy=31may2001>]