Prospects of the Visegrad cooperation in changing economic, political and social conditions
Identifying converging and diverging factors

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Visegrad at 25: The future of the Central European regional cooperation
Budapest, May 12, 2016
Visegrad cooperation exists and visible
Cohesion vs. disintegration

• Hypothesis:
  1. similarities vs. dissimilarities in the term of economic, social and political issues determine the strength of the cohesion/cooperation

  2. strong or weak members in economic and political term

• **economic issues**: achieving sustainable development, questions of the competitiveness, trends of the post-crisis period, consolidation of the public finances;

• **political issues**: extrapolating current EU governance trends, in the ”crossfire” of the global players (US, Russia), identifying the interests and positions, elaborating recommendations for decision-makers;

• **social issues**: general demographic overview, economic impacts of the population trends.
Economic issues

• How can Visegrad countries reach a sustainable development, and increase their competitiveness given the current external circumstances?
• Is there a change as regards the basis for further economic development in the post-crisis period?
• Have public finances been stabilised in a sustainable manner or will further pressures come to the surface?
Real GDP growth rate (%)
Political fields for the future cooperation among V4 countries

• How can the V4 represent and enforce its interests vis-à-vis the general developments of the European Union (e.g. two-speed Europe, future of the common EU budget, etc.)?

• What is the potential for the Visegrad group to represent national and common regional interests in the EU’s decision-making processes?
Social challenges facing the V4

• Sufficient quantity and quality of labour – FDI and economic development external challenges from China but Turkey as well;

• Ageing society are among the major challenges for the whole Europe. Adequate social development is one of the key prerequisite of sustainable economic development and public finances (taxes, social insurance etc.);

• How can sustainable social structures be built up and enhance overall competitiveness in the Visegrad countries?
**Factors that strengthen / weaken the V4 cooperation**

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- almost harmonious post-crisis growth trends
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- openness of the four economies
- deepening integration into global value chains
- representation of some common interests at the EU level (e.g. cohesion policy, energy issues)
- potential to coordinate parts of the 135 billion euro EU assistance flowing into the region between 2014-2020
Diverging (weakening) factors

- non-adherence to the euro area by PL, CZ, HU
- different approaches/attitudes vis-à-vis EU governance changes
- different interests/attitudes vis-à-vis Russia
- different levels of exposure to external markets
- insufficient interconnectedness of infrastructure networks
- lack of mechanisms for harmonising positions on key EU issues
- lack of platforms for regularly exchanging best practices on public finance consolidation or EU funds absorption, etc.