

## CONCLUSIONS

of the Meeting of the European Affairs Committees of the V4 Parliaments + Serbia

Bratislava, 16 – 18 June 2019

Representatives of the European Affairs Committees of the V4 Parliaments + Serbia:

### **With regard to the Enlargement of the European Union**

- 1) support the enlargement of the EU to the Western Balkans, while respecting the principles of conditionality, credibility and own merits;
- 2) recognise the effort of Serbia to implement necessary reforms; and express their hope that based on the overall results achieved in the reform process, the positive dynamic of Serbia's accession talks will be maintained and reflected in the opening and closing of chapters in increasing numbers; and also pointed out that effective parliamentary dialogue as well as cooperation between the government and civil society remains vital for successful integration into the EU;
- 3) emphasize that the candidate countries and potential candidates from the region deserve a fair approach - a visible membership perspective if they meet the predetermined criteria. Progress in European integration needs to be fairly recognized and not hindered for political reasons (e. g. artificially limiting the opening or pre-closure of chapters);
- 4) note that the lack of a European perspective strengthens the region's anti-European mood and opens the door for other geopolitical players;
- 5) are convinced that EU enlargement is not precluded by internal EU reform and therefore can run in parallel, and if we allow the region to wait too long, it begins to look for its own solutions to problems that might not comply with EU values and standards;
- 6) advocate for EU enlargement to be among the priorities of the new Commission;
- 7) consider the recently published European Commission assessment (29 May 2019) of the individual candidates as objective and note that they will base the next EU enlargement process on it;
- 8) support the opening of accession negotiations with North Macedonia and Albania, in line with the European Commission's recommendation, this year;
- 9) note that reaching agreement between North Macedonia and Greece was a significant step forward and an example for the whole region;
- 10) emphasize that Albania has made significant progress in the required judicial reform;
- 11) support the early resumption of the "EU facilitated dialogue for the normalisation of relations between Belgrade and Pristina" with a view to reaching a legally binding agreement;



12) condemn the introduction of 100% custom by Pristina on imports of goods from central Serbia and Bosnia and Herzegovina in November 2018, as this measure undermines trust and cooperation in the region and runs counter to CEFTA<sup>1</sup>, the MAP REA<sup>2</sup> and the spirit of SAA<sup>3</sup>; express regret and concern about the transformation of the so-called Kosovo security forces into an army; and note that the decision to create an army can only be made within the legal framework of Kosovo<sup>4</sup> in an inclusive and transparent process;

13) welcome V4 Foreign Ministers' Joint Statement from the annual meeting of the Ministers of Foreign Affairs of the Visegrad Group and the Western Balkans that took place on 28 May, 2019 in Bratislava under the Slovak Presidency of the V4;

### **On Exchange of views for the Plenary meeting of the LXI COSAC, 23-25 June, 2019 in Bucharest**

14) support and value the common action, unprecedented coherence, constructive attitude and the unity in the EU27 and, in this context, an agreement on the withdrawal from the European Union and the European Atomic Energy Community of the United Kingdom of Great Britain and Northern Ireland, which is the optimal way to end its membership in the European Union and therefore cannot be re-negotiated;

15) take note that the EU leaders agreed at an Special European Council on 10 April 2019 to extend the period under Art. 50 of the Treaty on European Union by the end of October 2019;

16) emphasize that all Visegrad countries are thoroughly prepared for every possible scenario of development as well as the possibility of Brexit without an agreement, although they consider this scenario to be undesirable and the least advantageous of all available options;

17) express support for multilateralism and rules-based, sustainable development-oriented trade, keeping in mind the importance of maintaining the social and environmental standards of the European Union; advocate for the substantial reform of the WTO, in which the European Union has to continually play a leading role; highlight the importance of unity of the European Union at a time of increasing trade tensions, while acknowledging the importance of national parliaments and the European Parliament in overseeing these processes;

18) consider it important that Member States continue to think about a common vision of European Education Area so that the education provided to our citizens become relevant to the life in a democratic society as well as to the needs of the economy and the labour market.

19) welcome the debate on the economy based on innovation, technological progress and the debate on the social impact on the European Union and social inclusion; thanks the Romanian presidency for including such an important topic in the agenda for the upcoming LXI Plenary COSAC meeting;

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<sup>1</sup> Central European Free Trade Agreement

<sup>2</sup> Multiannual Action Plan for a Regional Economic Area

<sup>3</sup> Stabilisation and Association Agreement

<sup>4</sup> This designation is without prejudice to positions on status, and is in line with UNSCR 1244/1999 and the ICJ Opinion on the Kosovo declaration of independence.



## **On the Future of the EU in terms of the election to the European parliament**

20) take note of the results of the European Parliament elections held in the Member States of the European Union; and appreciate the higher electoral participation compared to the previous period, which gives the elected MEPs greater legitimacy;

21) underline that the key document reflecting the future of the European Union remains the Rome Declaration signed by the European Union leaders in Rome in March 2017 to celebrate the 60th anniversary of the signing of the Rome Treaties, which concluded the political reflection process launched in Bratislava in September 2016 following the announcement of the results of the UK referendum of June 2016; and in this context note that the commitment of the European Union leaders to work towards the objective of (1) a secure Europe, (2) a prosperous and sustainable Europe, (3) a social Europe that fights unemployment, discrimination, social exclusion and poverty; and (4.) a stronger Europe on the global stage remains in force after the elections to the European Parliament;

22) note that the European Union must remain open to new members;

23) express their support for building a single internal market, social cohesion, regional convergence and fostering technological modernization, including energy measures and combating climate change;

24) underline that the European Union must immediately stop irregular migration and fully restore Schengen;

25) note that the European Union should have a greater budget than it used to with regard to greater responsibility for achieving socio-economic convergence;

26) note that the strategic priorities defined at the Informal meeting of heads of state or government in Sibiu, Romania on 9 May 2019, must also be included into the Strategic Agenda for the Union, which the European Council should endorse on 20 and 21 June 2019; and in this context, support the implementation of these priorities to the real lives of European Union citizens;

### **Regarding the V4 Rapid Reaction Group:**

27) note the setting up of the V4 Rapid Reaction Group established by Joint statement of the official meeting of Speakers/Presidents of the Visegrád Group Parliaments from 2 March in Budapest and the closer cooperation of the V4 countries within regular consultations at the level of Permanent Representatives of National Parliaments to the European Parliament;

28) positively perceive the *ad hoc* meetings of the V4 Rapid Reaction Group when needed and meetings in the margins of the Meeting of the European Affairs Committees of the V4 Parliaments and COSAC, if necessary.



NATIONAL COUNCIL  
OF THE SLOVAK REPUBLIC

DYNAMIC  
VISEGRAD  
FOR EUROPE

SLOVAK PRESIDENCY 2018/2019 OF THE VISEGRAD GROUP

Signed in Bratislava, on 17 June 2019

**Luboš BLAHA**

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