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V4 Summit in Gödöllő

After a hiatus of more than two years, the prime ministers of Poland, the Czech Republic, Slovakia, and Hungary met in Gödöllő (Hungary) on 23 June 2026 for a Visegrád Group summit. The resumption of high-level meetings is itself symbolically significant, as it marks the end of a period of political freeze in cooperation resulting from differences over policy towards Russia's full-scale war against Ukraine. At the same time, the course of the summit indicates that the objective is not to restore the V4 in its pre-2022 form, but rather to recalibrate its functions. The Visegrád Group is clearly moving away from the notion of a political project founded on identity-based unity and is instead evolving into a platform for advancing the common interests of Central European states.

A Symbolic End to the Period of Freezing? The summit in Gödöllő – a town near Budapest whose royal palace served, among other functions, as a summer residence of Franz Joseph and Empress Elisabeth – was primarily political and symbolic in nature. Differences over the assessment of Russia's policies, the willingness or unwillingness to sever cooperation with Moscow, and the scale and forms of support for Ukraine had led to an effective suspension of V4 cooperation at the highest political level. Tensions were particularly pronounced between Poland and the Viktor Orbán governed Hungary, whose position was perceived as undermining regional solidarity in the face of Russian aggression. The change of government in Hungary, however, created a new political context. During his first weeks in office, Prime Minister Péter Magyar announced his intention to rebuild relations with Visegrád partners and pursue a more constructive European policy. The organisation of the summit—following P. Magyar's visit to Poland and the declarations made at that time—was intended as another practical step in this direction ([“IEŚ Commentaries”, No. 1622](#)).

At the same time, the meeting was not an attempt to return to the V4's previous operating model. Neither the course of the discussions nor the statements made by the participants indicated an ambition to reconstruct a regional political bloc in its former shape.

From Political Unity to a Community of Interests. The most characteristic feature of the summit was a shift in emphasis. Prime Minister Péter Magyar stressed the need to restore the significance of Central Europe in the European Union's decision-making process and proposed the development of concrete integration projects, including the construction of a high-speed railway connection between Warsaw, Prague, Bratislava, and Budapest. Donald Tusk, meanwhile, emphasised the need for V4 states to coordinate their positions in advance of meetings of the Council of the European Union, so that the region could represent its common interests more effectively in Brussels. Andrej Babiš focused primarily on the economic dimension of Visegrád cooperation. He stressed the importance of a common regional position in negotiations concerning the future EU budget, climate policy, and the competitiveness of the European economy, describing the V4 as a format that should represent Central European interests more effectively at the EU level. Robert Fico, in turn, emphasised the need for greater coordination among member states on energy security, migration, and the EU's multiannual financial framework. In his view, the Visegrád Group should serve as a pragmatic platform for cooperation, enabling the development of common positions in areas where the interests of the countries of the region remain aligned.

Significantly, at the first V4 summit of prime ministers in more than two years, the issues that had previously precipitated the deepest crisis in cooperation – above all, the war in Ukraine and policy towards Russia – did not dominate the discussions. Considerably greater attention was devoted to energy security, the future EU budget, migration policy, economic competitiveness, and infrastructure development. This points to a deliberate



narrowing of the cooperation agenda to areas in which common positions can be developed despite persisting political differences.

A New Logic of Cooperation. The Gödöllő summit can be interpreted as the beginning of a new phase in the functioning of the Visegrád Group. For many years, it was perceived as a political bloc of Central European states capable of jointly defining positions on the region's most important challenges. The crisis that emerged after 2022, however, demonstrated the limitations of such a model. A more flexible form of cooperation is now taking shape, one whose essence lies not in political unity but in effective coordination wherever the interests of the countries of the region converge. This is consistent with the 35-year practice of the platform since its establishment, and particularly with the logic that has guided the V4 since 2004. The countries participating in the format joined the EU at that time, which compelled them to modify their mode of operation. During this period, despite their declared political and identity-based unity, the V4 states cooperated only sporadically and largely through the formation of *ad hoc* coalitions. This was evident, for example, in their common positions on EU cohesion policy and migration policy.

In this context, it should also be noted that the Visegrád Group's position within the architecture of regional cooperation is changing. The V4 is no longer the only format of cooperation operating in Central and Eastern Europe. The Three Seas Initiative and the Bucharest Nine are developing in parallel, while cooperation between Poland and the Baltic and Nordic states is also gaining importance. In this new configuration, the V4 is becoming one of several regional formats, used primarily in areas where it can increase the region's negotiating leverage within the EU. Building unity and developing a common negotiating position within broader formats ahead of Council of the EU meetings is difficult not only for practical reasons but also because the region is highly differentiated across various dimensions of EU policy. In practice, however, V4 states are compelled to seek broader support for their positions among EU member states.

Conclusions. The most important outcome of the Gödöllő summit lies neither in specific decisions nor in announcements of new infrastructure projects. Far more significant is the changing way in which the role of the Visegrád Group is being defined. The meeting demonstrated that the Central European states are not seeking to reconstruct the V4 in its pre-2022 form, but rather to adapt it to new geopolitical and European realities. The ambitions previously expressed by P. Magyar to enlarge the V4 have also been abandoned in favour of cooperation within the V4+ format. This is justified by the fact that other, broader platforms for cooperation already operate in the region in specific policy areas. The emergence of this idea within the Hungarian governing camp should be interpreted in the context of Hungary's expressed scepticism towards the Three Seas Initiative.¹

The V4 summit also demonstrated that close personal relationships and political ties among the governing elites of the respective countries continue to be important for the dynamics of cooperation within the format. The summit took place despite the ambiguous course pursued by R. Fico's government in its relations with Russia, while P. Magyar continues to apply a policy of conditionality in Hungary's approach to Ukraine. Hungary agreed to the opening of the first negotiating cluster in the EU–Ukraine accession talks only after Ukraine committed to expanding the rights of the Hungarian minority in Transcarpathia.

Paradoxically, it may be precisely the limitation of the group's political ambitions – namely, its concentration on the EU's institutional reform agenda and ideological issues – that could increase the durability of Visegrád cooperation. If the V4 focuses on areas in which the interests of its member states genuinely converge, it may have an opportunity to regain significance as a mechanism for coordinating Central European positions within the EU, albeit no longer as a unified political bloc.

¹ This applies both at the political and analytical levels. This conclusion is based on research stays in Hungary and discussions with Hungarian experts.