

Budapest Joint Statement

of the Visegrad Group Heads of Government

On Strengthening the V4 Security and Defence Cooperation

October 14, 2013.

We, the Prime Ministers of the Czech Republic, Hungary, Poland and Slovakia, reconfirm our commitment and determination to strengthening security and defence cooperation among our countries in order to contribute to the improvement of the ability of NATO and the EU to respond to security challenges. Based on the efficient work done by the previous Visegrád Presidencies and the long-sustained efforts of the Heads of Government in this field, we declare our will to deepen and concretise our security and defence cooperation. We will continue to closely coordinate our positions regarding major security policy issues in the run-up to the upcoming debate of the December European Council on the EU's Common Security and Defence Policy, during the expected follow-up debates on EU strategic outlook and in preparation of the next year's NATO Summit.

We highly appreciate the dialogue between the V4 and partner countries also on defence related issues, which we commit to take forward.

We strongly believe that regional initiatives and projects offer an effective way to mitigate capability shortfalls efficiently and to avoid overlaps. Therefore, we will seek to further improve practical cooperation among our armed forces and defence industries.

This process is rooted in the achievements made so far by our countries' cooperation, and aims to increase synergy among the Visegrád countries.

The joint Visegrád EU Battlegroup to be on stand-by in the first half of 2016 is our most specific contribution to further enhance the EU's rapid reaction capacities. At the same time, the Visegrád EU Battlegroup is an asset that will not only contribute to the EU's role in the field of crisis management but will also serve as a driver of our capability development efforts and increased cooperation. It will provide ample opportunity to increase cooperation with regard to training, joint exercises and the development of capabilities of our defence forces which could be used either by the EU or NATO.

Furthermore, we, the Prime Ministers of the Visegrád countries task our Defence Ministers to enhance our defence cooperation to:

- Draft a long-term vision for our defence cooperation strategy, that would also streamline our common capability development efforts
- Strengthen cooperation in the field of training and exercises of the armed forces in the V4 format. We envision that joint V4 military exercises are organised on an annual basis, harmonized with NATO, EU and national exercises, as they will provide an excellent tool to increase the interoperability of our armed forces
- Explore the possibility to create a framework for an enhanced defence planning cooperation on the V4 level in order to identify new promising areas of defence cooperation among our countries.

We, the Prime Ministers of the Visegrád countries, task our defence ministers to report back to us at the end of the Hungarian presidency about the progress achieved in these areas.