

# STRENGTHENING CENTRAL EUROPEAN CONTRIBUTION TO THE EASTERN DIMENSION OF EU'S CFSP

*The European Union has become a major player in the Eastern, Central and South Eastern Europe in the 1990s. After 2004 enlargement, the new EU members have begun to shape EU policies towards the East and the Balkans. The EU has developed variety of policy tools – Cooperation and Partnership Agreements (CPAs) and Action Plans (APs) – and newly European Neighborhood Policy Instruments. In recent years, policies towards Ukraine, Belarus, Georgia and Moldova have been a subject of intensive mutual consultations between the EU and the U.S.*

The aim of the 3-year (2006–2008) project is to bring new impulses to public and expert debates in Visegrád countries (V4) concerning the Eastern dimension of EU policy and to increase and sustain a role of Visegrád countries in shaping the political agenda of the European Council, European Commission, European Parliament, member states and other actors in the area of the Common Foreign and Security Policy and the Eastern dimension of the European Neighbourhood Policy. Basic framework of the project consists of a series of high level annual policy conferences in 2006–2008 (Bratislava, Warsaw and Budapest) and bi-annual policy seminars communicating recommendations to EU institutions, including dissemination of policy papers and policy briefs.

This project provides a platform for think-tanks, NGOs and policymakers to work out common positions, to communicate policy recommendations for both EU and national institutions and to increase awareness among European decision-makers on following issues:

- Eastern Dimension of the EU Neighbourhood Policy
- EU - Russia relations
- Further enlargement perspectives and institutional reform of the EU
- EU Common Energy Policy
- Migration, visa regimes and the enlarged Schengen system

## PROJECT ACTIVITIES

### Annual Visegrád Conferences

The project has been launched at the conference held in Bratislava, November 9–11, 2006, which focused on “Strategic framework of the EU’s relations with Eastern neighbours”, examining the existing strategic framework for the EU’s policy on East European countries (Russia, Ukraine, Belarus and Moldova) and identifying deficits of current EU policy to these East European countries. The conference came up with policy recommendations to enhance the EU’s capabilities in pursuing its foreign policy goals in the region of Eastern Europe and brought new ideas and impulses to be upheld by V4 countries.

The second annual conference entitled “EU’s Eastern Policy – Challenges and Opportunities”, was held on September 24–25, 2007, in Warsaw. The conference presentations and discussions focused on the following topics: strengthening the Eastern Dimension of the EU Neighbourhood Policy, EU – Russia Relations and the contractual framework of these relations and strategies of the EU and USA towards ENP, Black Sea and Central Asia countries. The third annual conference will be held in Budapest in 2008.

## Brussels Seminars

Annual conferences serve as the initial source of motivation for a debate on the topic of the conference. Based on discussions between the participating institutes, a common position of Visegrád think-tanks is drafted and fine-tuned in the form of policy papers that are to be presented to the decision-makers, experts, and practitioners attending the series of seminars in Brussels.

Series of seminars held in Brussels aims at communicating Visegrád impulses to current Presidency and other policy makers. The seminars allow representatives of foreign policy community from Visegrád countries to present their policy recommendations in order to shape upcoming EU Presidencies’ priorities in Eastern and Neighbourhood Policy, particularly in its Eastern Dimension. Representatives of EU institutions as well as Brussels-based think-tanks and media are invited to participate in each seminar.

The two seminars organized so far focused on the following topics: “EU’s Eastern Policy: What Role for Central Europe?” and “EU’s Eastern Policy after German Presidency”. Besides

representatives of the Visegrád organizers both events were attended by prominent keynote speakers – Karel Schwarzenberg, Minister of Foreign Affairs of the Czech Republic, and Mikuláš Dzurinda, Former Prime Minister of Slovakia, respectively.

Moreover, the project aims at communicating the joint recommendations and impulses to policy communities in other European capitals (Berlin, Paris) and also includes dissemination events in Washington, D. C.

## PROJECT PUBLICATIONS

### Policy papers

Policy papers and joint policy briefs for annual conferences and seminars are published in English. Partners of the project make them available in print and electronically on their respective websites. These publications are aiming at the European Commission, the European Parliament, all national governments and parliaments, policymakers, think-tanks and European NGOs as well as to European media. Organizers of the project seek media partnerships in order to attract public attention to conferences and publications.

The project publications focused on “Strategic Framework for the EU’s Eastern Policy” (policy paper and joint policy brief), “Towards a New Eastern Policy of the European Union. Eastern ENP and relations with Russia after the German Presidency” (joint policy brief) and “The European Union and Russia 2004–2007” (policy paper).

## ORGANIZERS

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The German Marshall Fund of the United States, [www.gmfus.org](http://www.gmfus.org)

