

European Politics from the Visegrád Perspective

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1. Visegrad cooperation: what is it and does it matter?
2. V4 cooperation and the Euroscepticism
3. V4 between East and West
4. The future of V4 cooperation: has Visegrád common politics in EU affairs?

Structure of the lecture

- Visegrád cooperation (also called V4) was established in 1991
- Members: Czechoslovakia (after 1993 Czechia and Slovakia), Poland and Hungary
- The biggest aim was to prepare the V4 countries for EU membership
- Cooperation in cultural policy, energy policy, defence policy, EU policy...
- Bittersweet evaluation of V4 activities



1. Visegrad cooperation: what is it and does it matter?

- Joint Statement of the Prime Ministers of the Visegrad Group, 9 July, 2021...30th anniversary of the cooperation
- Many statements, strong support for EU enlargement, but often just empty words...
- „Given the volatile migration situation, they emphasized that the protection of borders of Member States and third countries located along the relevant routes is an effective way to combat illegal migration.(...)“
- „The Visegrad Group Prime Ministers restated their conviction that the main goal of the reform of the Common European Asylum System is to set up the framework in a comprehensive, sustainable, efficient, safe, and crisis-resilient form in order to stem illegal migration on all existing and emerging routes.“
- „The V4 leaders recalled that the reform of the EU asylum policy has to be based on a consensus among all Member States and has to be adopted as a package, ensuring proper balance between responsibility and solidarity.“
- „The V4 leaders reiterated their unequivocal support for the accession of the Western Balkans and their firm belief that the future of the region lies in the EU. Reunification of Europe cannot be complete without the region joining the European Union.“

Current stand of V4 cooperation in EU affairs

- Euroscepticism in Visegrád countries: why does it matter?
- Central European Euroscepticism: how does the situation look like in Slovakia, Poland, Hungary and Czechia?
- Is there difference between public and party Euroscepticism in the Visegrád countries?
- How is Visegrád perceived from abroad?



Some questions on this field...

- Research (2018-2019):

- a/ ca 18 interviews in permanent representations of EU member states in Brussels (Coreper I)

- b/ ca 20 interviews with officials of foreign ministries and prime minister offices in V4 countries

Questions:

- a/ How is the V4 perceived in general?

- b/ Who does it support more and who less?

- c/ Who is our next ally in Europe? Which state?

- d/ Who is the leader of V4?

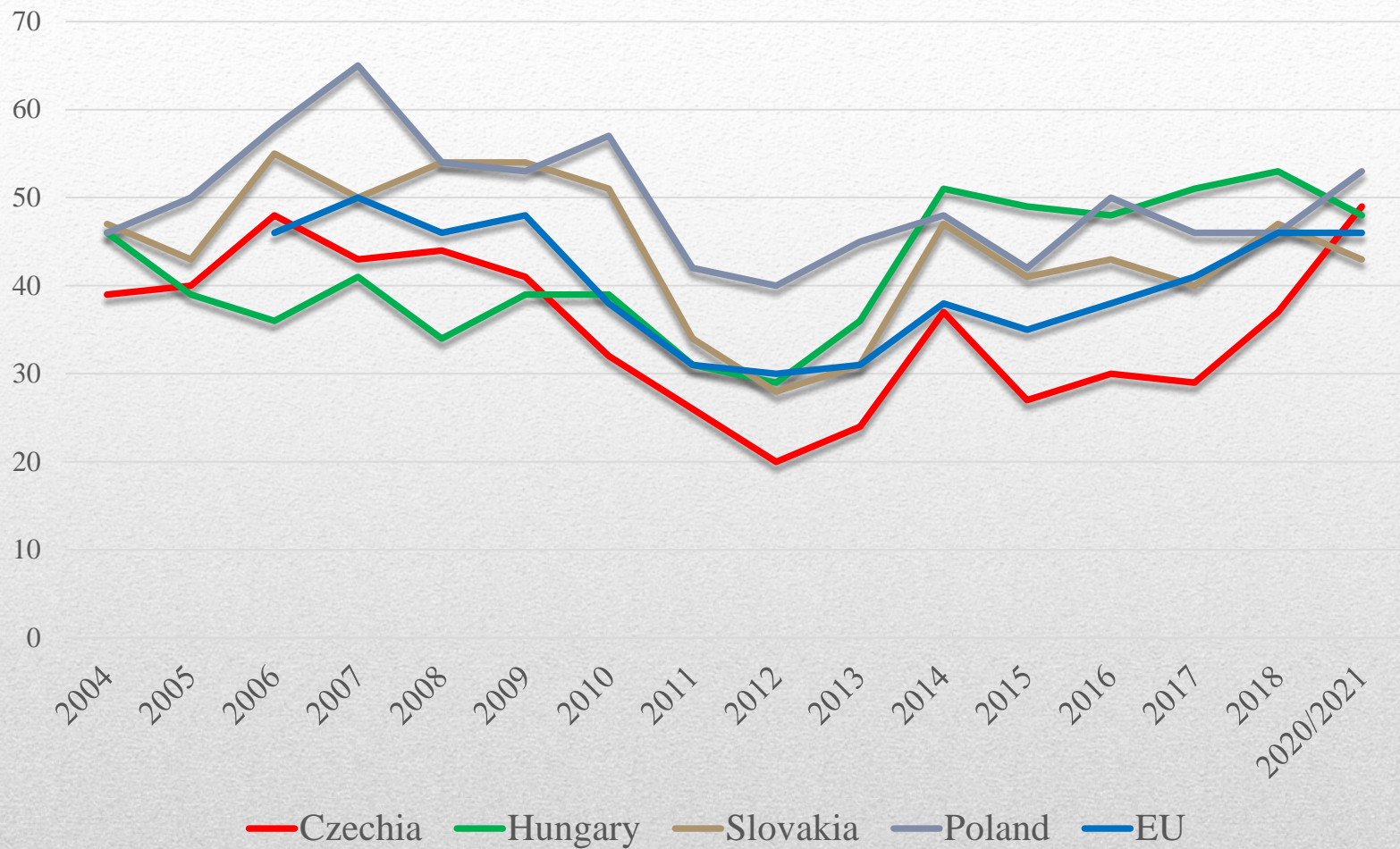
- e/ In case of critique...why is V4 being criticized?

Visegrád as a topics for researchers (Masaryk University, 2018-2020)

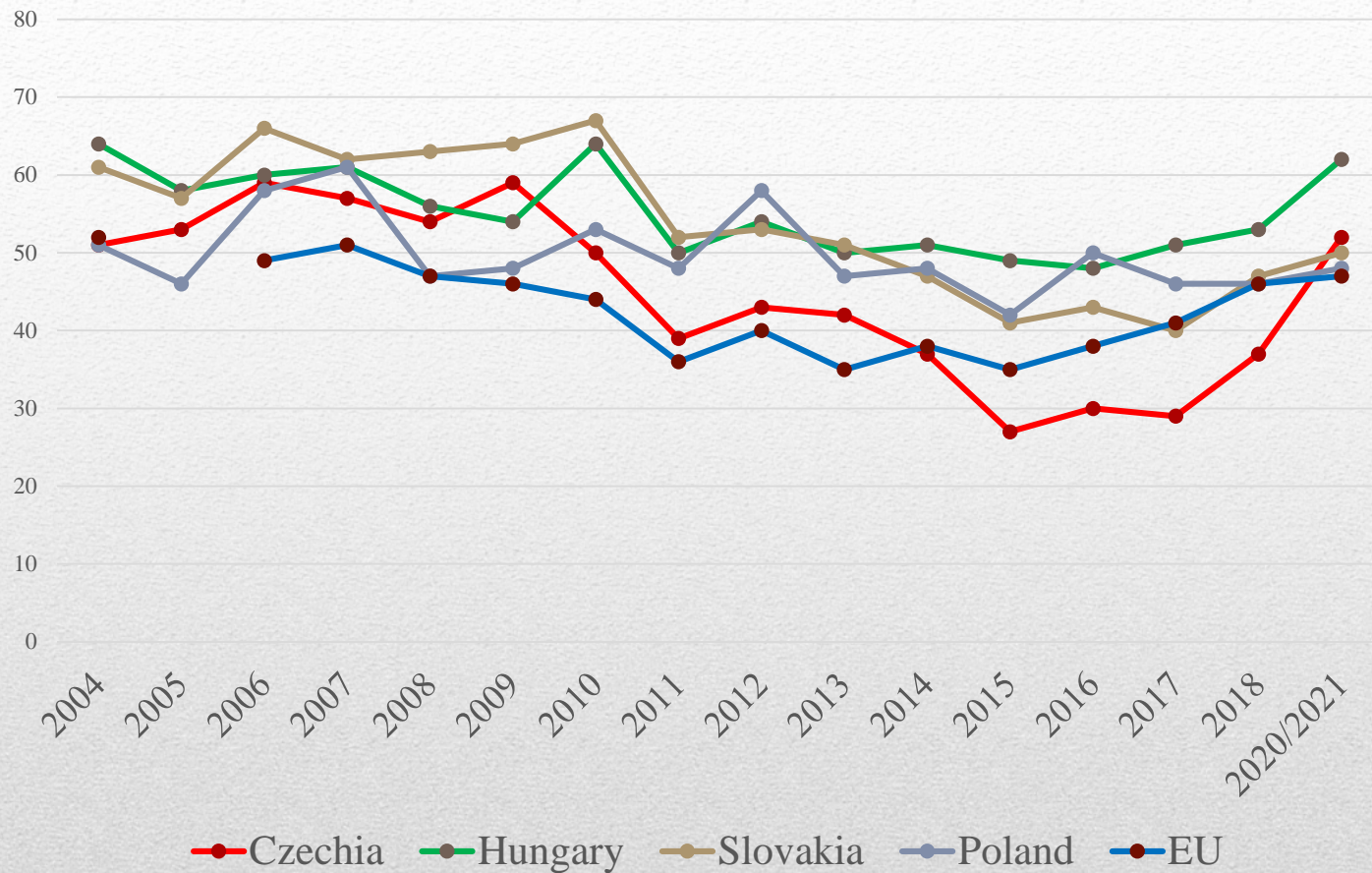
- V4 states were often seen (mainly during the migration crisis after 2015) as „trouble-makers“ of the EU
- Label of „Eurosceptics“
- In how far is this true?
- We must distinguish between public and party Euroscepticism...



2. V4 cooperation and the Euroscepticism



Eurobarometer results: In general, does the European Union conjure up for you a very positive, fairly positive, neutral, fairly negative or very negative image?



Eurobarometer results: Trust in European Commission



3. V4 between East and West



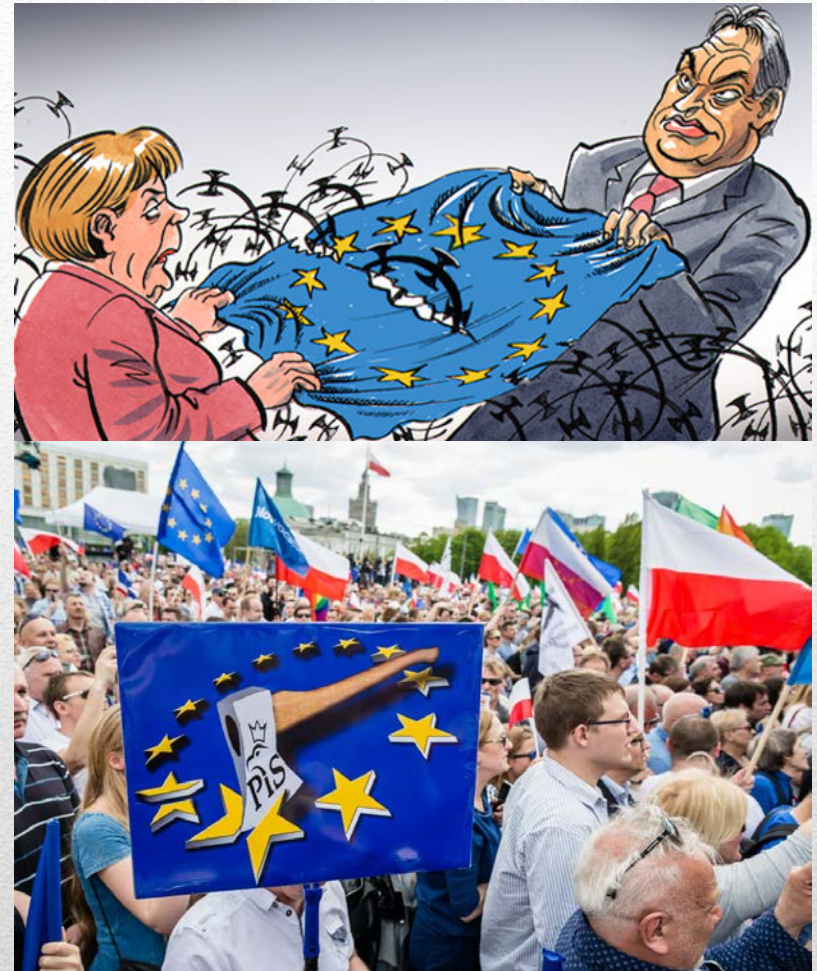
- The Czech Republic is the only Nato ally whose president denied the Russian military presence in Ukraine.
- Czech President is labelled as „their man“
- Czech President is often mentioned on official Russian TV broadcasting

Example: Czech politicians and pro Russian attitudes

- Financial Times: Czech president Miloš Zeman in war of words over Russia stance
- Euobserver: Czech president is Russia's Trojan Horse
- The Washington Post: Russia's new kind of friends (article about Czech presidents Klaus, Zeman etc.)
- Radio Free Europe: Czech President Breaks Ranks With Moscow Visit

Media reflection...

- A common V4 approach towards EU politics is not very probable
- V4 does not seem to share the same priorities for EU development
- Slovakia is definitely much more in favour of deepening the EU integration



4. The future of V4 cooperation: has
Visegrád common politics in EU affairs?
