

Innovative Visegrad

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Programme of the Czech Presidency of the Visegrad Group 2011–2012

The Czech Presidency of the Visegrad Group 2011–2012 starts in a year in which we commemorate the 20th anniversary of the launch of Visegrad cooperation and at a moment when Hungary is passing on the Presidency of the Council of the European Union to Poland. We view this as the symbolic realization of the vision held by the Visegrad countries to make a contribution to the formation of a united Europe, which was the motivation for the creation of the Visegrad Group 20 years ago, and as an exceptional opportunity for an even greater interaction and better efficiency of Visegrad activities, a chance to raise the profile of the region within Europe and the wider international community, and a prospect of strengthening the internal cohesion of Central Europe.

The Czech Presidency will constantly tap into the vision that the cooperation among the V4 countries should be guided towards a Visegrad:

- **Respected and competitive** as a community of countries acting as a reliable, innovative and effective partner not only within European and Euro-Atlantic structures, but also in relation to third countries, other regional groupings and international organizations;
- Which is **concrete and practical**, not just in its pursuit of foreign policy goals, but especially in relation to the actual needs of our countries' citizens;
- **Outreaching and inclusive**, where citizens' cooperation is based on the involvement of NGOs and their common projects are to be supported from the International Visegrad Fund;
- **Visible and understandable** inside and outside the region, an objective best achieved by actively and consistently striving towards the three above mentioned aims.

Foreign Policy Priorities

The Czech Presidency will concentrate on the ongoing core issue of the **European Agenda**, with a particular focus on support of the Polish Presidency in the second half of 2011 and its priorities. It will also coordinate and promote common V4 positions and opinions within the Council and its working bodies, encourage the sharing of experiences in the implementation of EU legislation, and organize meetings on major issues of common interest ahead of sectoral Council sessions. The V4 will continue to hold personal meetings or teleconferences at the relevant levels before sessions of the European Council, the General Affairs Council (GAC) and the Foreign Affairs Council (FAC) as this is an efficient, proven form of cooperation. An important element of these activities will be close cooperation between the V4 countries' Permanent Representations to the EU in Brussels. In addition, the Czech Presidency wants to intensify operative coordination (on selected themes) between the Ministries of Foreign Affairs and Permanent Representations of the V4 countries in Brussels ahead of the relevant meetings of EU Council bodies, so that the V4 countries could present common proposals more often, thus adding weight to their views. To this end, the V4 countries should jointly analyze the presented legislative and non-legislative proposals, seek to identify their common interests and promote them through a concerted effort. For this purpose the Czech Presidency will initiate the creation of a list of contact persons in charge of each proposal discussed in EU Council bodies, and will foster a more vigorous and regular operative communication between such experts.

A pivotal EU theme on which the Czech Presidency will focus is the **multiannual financial framework for the period after 2013**, with particular reference to the future of the cohesion and the common agricultural policy. Debates will continue, at seminars and consultations, on developments in the staffing of the **EEAS**, with a view to an equitable representation of all EU Member States, on a common approach to be taken by V4 countries, and on a **mutual support of candidates** to EU bodies and institutions with an eye to ensuring an effective representation of the V4 countries. The V4 will aim to increase synergy between the EEAS and national diplomatic services. We are interested in initiating a V4 debate on cooperation in the field of Common Security and Defence Policy and identification of common interests (e.g. the staffing of the EDA)—as well as a debate on enhanced engagement of Eastern Partners. Other important areas include the implementation of measures arising from the White Paper on the Future of European Transport Policy to 2050, cooperation in the formulation of common positions on the revision of the Trans-European Network - Transport policy, opportunities to build and develop shared inland waterways, and cooperation on climate change issues, including the implementation of the climate and energy package: regulations, along with the formulation of a joint strategy on current developments in international negotiations on a new global climate pact agreement and preparations for the situation after 2012.

A major Visegrad theme is **energy**, coordination of common positions towards EU, especially the joint approach to the promotion of a common European external energy policy, cooperation in sustainable energy, the support of projects of common interest in the debate on the new energy infrastructure package and the diversification of existing resources (including the potential of unconventional resources and LNG) and routes (e.g. an emphasis on a regional connection within V4 and to other countries). The Presidency will promote project coordination and joint action within the EU, namely as regards the new alternative oil supply scheme for Central Europe in relation to the future of the Druzhba oil pipeline. As regards gas, the Czech Presidency will revive the discussion on the Southern Corridor projects (**including Nabucco pipeline**) at the European level and, in the context of this project, put greater emphasis on the use of Caspian area resources. In general, the Czech Republic will support further development of the North-South connections and will take an active part in the High Level Group in V4+EC+BG+RO format. It will continue its intensive involvement in the V4 High Level Energy Expert Group and its working subgroups as well.

Strengthening Trans-Atlantic relations (including EU-US relations) through intensive cooperation between the United States and the Visegrad as well as the NATO Summit in the USA will be important foreign policy priorities of the V4.

The Czech Presidency will support an increase of V4 activities within the **Eastern Partnership** in accordance with the joint statement on the Eastern Partnership adopted by Visegrad countries with Germany at their Ministerial meeting in March 2011 in Bratislava and with the aim to have a successful Eastern Partnership Summit during the Polish EU Presidency. This subject should be cropping up in consultations with partner countries, in support for the momentum of the Eastern Partnership (EaP) within the EU, and in joint projects for these countries. In addition to exchanges of information on national EaP support plans and the proposal for their synergy, we believe it is important to provide an adequate financing of the EU policy towards the Eastern partners, with regard to the ongoing review of the ENP and the anticipated debate on the new financial framework for the period after 2013. The Visegrad countries should also work with each other on the drafting and implementation of projects to strengthen and streamline the existing capacities of EaP partner countries for the disbursement of ENPI funding. In line with the operations of the International Visegrad Fund,

joint follow-up projects need to be identified in selected spheres of EaP influence (e.g. interpersonal contact—mobility, university cooperation and education) and incorporated into project cycles in the implementation of the EaP's multilateral dimension. The Presidency also intends to initiate a discussion on a possible extension of the International Visegrad Fund's grant schemes in this field. Upon the successive last ten years of the Fund, it is worth exploring the possibility of instigating the formation of a similar institution in the region (as well as in the Western Balkans). In addition, the Czech Presidency intends to hold expert consultations with some non-V4 countries, such as Moldova, Georgia, Azerbaijan and Ukraine. One concrete move forward in underscoring the importance of the Eastern Partnership and its countries should be the opening of the Visegrad House in Ukraine, if possible in Crimea.

The European and Euro-Atlantic perspective for the **Western Balkans** is one of the long-term common interests shared by the Visegrad Group countries. The Czech Presidency will continue to support the steps taken by Balkan countries towards EU and NATO integration, and will attempt to identify a particular niche for the Visegrad Group. As the aim is to ensure effective cooperation between the V4 and countries in the region, we envisage consultations on the use of European funds within the V4, followed by pilot consultations on the same subject in a selected country in the region. The output should identify specific V4 opportunities and the specific interests of a respective country in the region, with their gradual incorporation into projects financed from European funds. The Presidency will continue to support development of the International Visegrad Fund's capacity to grant scholarships for students from the region who are applying to study in V4 countries, along with advancements in the flexible development project scheme in the region. The possibility of introducing International Visegrad Fund trustees into the various countries of the region to disseminate information about what the Fund can offer should be considered. The specific involvement of the V4 countries in the Western Balkans, as well as the International Visegrad Fund's operations here, will be on the agenda of the meeting between the V4 and Western Balkan foreign ministers in autumn 2011.

V4 countries have a common interest in ensuring that the potential of new Member States and their **transition experience is recognized in the EU's development cooperation**. Attention, therefore, will focus on the greater coordination of development cooperation issues and on joint action so that our comparative advantage arising from our knowledge of transition processes is properly reflected in the new programming documents and budgets. We also recognize the importance of improving cooperation between diplomatic missions in the promotion of democracy by exchanges of information on their projects and activities, along with better training on the subjects of the promotion of democracy and collaboration with civil society for diplomats as they take on new postings. The practical upside of this could be a brief guide on best practices and prospects for mission staff. Furthermore, in the field of international development cooperation, V4 countries are striving for more efficient donor coordination among themselves.

The unfolding events in North Africa and Middle East call for more visible **activities of the V4 in the EU Southern Neighbourhood**. The Czech Presidency will seek to transfer unique V4 experience and knowledge of democracy building (civic society), transformation (infrastructure building, energy, research and education) and reform processes to these countries in supporting the EU concept of the Partnership for democracy and shared prosperity.

The Czech Presidency will continue the **V4+** cooperation with third countries and other regional groupings wherever such collaboration will deliver practical and tangible benefits to both to the given country and the V4 countries and can be furthered by specific projects. Extending the ad hoc cooperation with further third countries should be based on: the official request of the foreign ministry of the respective third country; concrete substance in any sector; definition in advance of the timeframe of such cooperation and a common document where all these factors are stipulated.

The Presidency has also set its sights on the further strengthening of **stability and cohesion in Central Europe**, compounded by targeted cooperation between citizens, NGOs, businesses and many other players from the Visegrad countries. Our broadest goal is to develop and deepen our reciprocity and, above all, to make efforts to ensure that it is reflected in practical, visible steps that are beneficial to our countries' citizens. In this regard, besides foreign policy, we will also place an emphasis on extending cooperation in sectoral policies. Our ongoing efforts to share V4 diplomatic missions, establish Visegrad Houses, place/receive diplomats/consular officers and strengthen cooperation in the provision of consular protection to citizens of other countries beyond the scope of EU standards and representation in the granting of Schengen visas send out a clear signal to civil society. Not least, we will encourage the sharing of experiences related to the application of the Visa Code and collaborate with the Visa Working Party.

The International Visegrad Fund plays an irreplaceable role in maintaining and strengthening ties between the Visegrad countries by promoting interpersonal contact, supporting cultural and scientific cooperation and transferring our experience to other countries. The Czech Republic would like to work with the Fund on the formation of a network of Visegrad think-tanks to address long-term conceptual activities and to analyse and establish positions on current situations and issues. We also expect the Fund to continue its support in current fields while expanding its horizons to encompass subjects, social groups and areas of activity that have been neglected until now.

The Czech Republic also supports in this context the foundation of the Platform of European Memory and Conscience, an initiative led by the Institute for the Study of Totalitarian Regimes, as a priority of the V4 Presidency. The Platform, bringing together institutions and organisations active in the field of coming to terms with the totalitarian past, will facilitate the sharing of experience attained in the V4 countries with other states in a united Europe.

Sector-by-sector priorities

Ministry for Regional Development

Coordination of activities within the EU cohesion policy

- Ongoing cooperation and coordination of meetings at all levels in the implementation and preparation of the future financial framework of EU and in light of the starting negotiation on the Cohesion Policy regulation package;
- Continue to promote mutual cooperation by setting-out common positions in the process of preparing of implementation mechanism of EU Cohesion policy after 2013;
- Ongoing cooperation and coordination of meetings at all levels in the process of preparing of strategic approach of future EU Cohesion policy.

Spatial development

- Continuation of activities related to the Common Spatial Development Document—the search for various levels where cohesion is lacking in order to identify proposals for development axes and transport networks, with a view to formulating a common spatial development strategy for the V4+2 countries in a European context.

Tourism

- The continued intensive joint promotion of tourism in the V4 region on distant markets, and an analysis and actions on traditional (Russia, USA, China, Japan) and new prospective destinations (e.g. India, Brazil, the Gulf Countries, Australia, Taiwan);
- V4 marketing campaign—promotion of the V4 brand “European Quartet”, brand building, and promotion of the slogan “European Quartet – One Melody” on common tourism events executed in target markets;
- Introduction of uniform marketing tools for focused and intensive cooperation with experts and the media—European Quartet products (advertising spot, brochures, promotional items, joint website, flash and PowerPoint presentations); closer cooperation with private entities in the promotion of speciality products and the attractions of V4 countries;
- Greater cooperation with V4 missions in target markets, coordination of the activities of national tourism headquarters and missions in order to increase the effectiveness of campaigns.

Ministry of Transport

Revision of TEN-T Policy (due to be released in July 2011)

- Further coordination of the position of V4 to the new TEN-T guidelines, based on the Joint statement of the position of V4, which was presented to the vice-president of the European Commission S. Kallas and officially approved during the meeting of the V4 transport ministers on 26th October 2010 in Vysoké Tatry, Slovakia;
- Enforcing the common interests during the negotiations of the new TEN-T guidelines in the Council of the EU concerning mainly the new financing model of the network and keeping the principles of the cohesion policy, while supporting the modernization, as well as the capacity and network density improvement of North-South and West-East road and railway connections among V4 countries;
- Invitation of other Member States for the common cooperation (V4+) and interconnection of TEN-T to the third countries, in general and to the countries of the Eastern partnership and the West Balkans, in particular.

WHITE PAPER—Roadmap to a Single European Transport Area

- Discussion about the new EU strategic document and further exchange of views on implementing the main targets of the document set up by the Commission.

Space Policy

- Development and exchange of knowledge gained in the Space policy with the aim to support other V4 states on their efforts to join the European Space Agency;
- Endeavour to establish the Central-European cluster in the field of satellite navigation in order to create the user-friendly background for Galileo programme.

Ministry of Defence

Capacity building

- Development of air force capacities and enhancing cost-effectiveness of their effective use (through multinational solutions (logistic support for helicopters and aircraft, contracting of strategic transportation, common training);
- Regional use of the capacities offered by Centres of Excellence—JCBRN, Military Police, EOD, Military Medicine (in order to increase their potential for NATO and EU purposes);
- Promotion of the Multinational Logistics Coordination Centre to the status of an international organization within NATO;
- Greater interoperability of V4 countries through common mechanisms, standardization and quality assurance;
- Development of capacities employable in framework of Comprehensive Approach to operations;
- Joint development of non-military defence capabilities (HNS, repairs, maintenance, utilization of reserves);
- Improving defence planning (exploring the best practices in strategic planning, use of analytical tools for determining capability requirements; streamlining the processes).

Experience of operations, joint operations during missions

- The sharing of experiences in deployment of forces, and the equipment of the armed forces capability acquisitions of the V4 countries in missions run by the international community, in particular the ISAF;
- Establishment of the V4 EU Battle Group (preparation for the formation of V4 EU BG in the first half of 2016);
- Examination of possibilities of joint participation in NATO and other international operations.

Research and development

- Reconciliation of V4 positions in the award of new EDA projects;
- Cooperation in protection against weapons of mass destruction (WMD), protection against improvised explosive devices (C-IED) and joint tactical air control (JTAC);
- Joint scientific research projects and teams;
- Cooperation and collaboration in the scientific research activities of military schools and educational establishments.

Training and education

- Joint bio-protection training and education, aviation personnel training and language training. Joint exercises of units and staffs assigned to NATO and the EU, training in C-IED, JTAC (both with the participation of Ukraine and Western Balkan countries), training in combined capabilities;
- ERASMUS and cooperation aimed at exchanges of young officers from EU Member States (“Military ERASMUS”), lifelong education, specialized courses, training for senior officers, harmonization of the educational framework (provision of an International Security And Defence Course);
- Joint use of training facilities, including airspace.

Armaments

- Improvements in current cooperation under the V4 Memorandum of Understanding, with a focus on NBC, air defence, 21st Century Soldier, strategic and tactical transportation, and offset policy.

Development of partnerships

- Regular meetings of the personnel management of the armed forces of the V4 countries in order to unify procedures and exchange experience;
- Assistance to third countries seeking to integrate into NATO and the EU (the Western Balkans, Eastern Europe);
- Explore possibilities and interest of Eastern Partners on cooperation on CSDP.

Ministry of the Interior

V4 cooperation within the EU

- Negotiations and coordination in the implementation of the Multi-annual programme 2010–2014 regarding the area of freedom, security and justice (the Stockholm Programme) and the Internal Security Strategy;
- Coordination of activities to promote V4 candidates to various EU agencies;
- Support for the enlargement of the Schengen area to include Bulgaria and Romania;
- The strengthening of solidarity in visa reciprocity;
- The coordination of V4 activities with the activities of the Salzburg Forum.

Law enforcement

- Surveillance on methods of entry and routes used by illegal immigrants, and on methods for the attempted legalization of their stay in V4 countries and crime connected with the illegal migration;
- Common definition of high-risk countries, cooperation with these countries and exploitation of best practice in the work of immigration police officers in high-risk countries as well as in the framework of police cooperation, including police intelligence exchange, regional threat assessments and police actions;
- Identification of high-risk groups of foreigners residing in V4 countries;
- Greater cooperation between border guard institutions at the international airports of V4 countries;
- Practical cooperation in cross-border surveillance and hot pursuit (the organization of joint exercises, the creation of standard forms);
- The coordination and standardization of joint police cooperation centres at the border;
- Cooperation in the use of the SIS and cooperation between SIRENE bureaux—nurturing of the tradition of a Central European conference of SIRENE operators, a common approach to the SIS II project, the sharing of experience in the implementation of new SIS II functions, cooperation in the search, in particular for missing children, and in target search, practical cooperation in further developing of international cooperation among European Network Fugitive Active Search Teams.

Asylum and migration

- Continued implementation of the Joint Declaration on Building Migration Partnerships and the promotion of cooperation with Eastern and South-Eastern partner countries involved in the Prague Process;
- Support of the Polish EU Presidency in the preparation of the second Prague Process Ministerial Conference in Poznan (3–4 November 2011);

- Close coordination ahead of the Schengen evaluation in 2012–2013.

Security policy

- Closer cooperation in combating extremism within the V4/Austrian Working Group on Combating Extremism, and the involvement of other Central European countries;
- Initiation of the possibility of including, on the agenda of the Polish EU Presidency, the issue of extremist websites maintained by European extremists in third countries, and the initiation of talks on this matter with foreign partners.

Disaster Management

- Increasing our efficiency in the prevention of and response to natural disasters; in particular floods.

Public administration

- The preparation of a study comparing the codes of ethics in the public administrations of the V4 countries, a workshop on working with the code and on ethics in the present time;
- Lecture and round table discussion on employee motivation in times of economic crisis;
- The preparation of a study on the measures taken in public administration in response to the economic crisis, round table discussion concerning impact of the crisis on the both central and local and regional government, crisis as a reform and transform opportunity;
- Discussion on the disbursement of resources from Structural Funds for public administration projects and introducing best practices.

Civil protection

- Arrangements for a common V4 approach to consultations on the revised EU Civil Protection Mechanism and the review of the Council Directive on the identification and designation of European Critical Infrastructures by the Council's Working Group on Civil Protection (PROCIV).

Fire protection

- Cooperation by V4 countries in the field of fire protection, civil protection and civil emergency planning at national, regional and local level.

Ministry of Finance

EU budget

- Consultation on the EU's next multiannual financial framework starting from 2014. Apart from the EU budget expenditure policies the consultation will be also focused on own resources, flexibility, utilisation of financial instruments and possible scope for project bonds.

Fiscal rules

- Consultation on the national fiscal rules in connection with the impact of the global crisis and modification of the Stability and Growth Pact.

Tax and customs duties

- Regular High level coordination meetings to discuss matters of common interest such as EU legislation proposals, cooperation in enforcement of excise duties and customs

legislation, general matters of excise duties and customs, common measures and cooperation at the EU external border;

- The development of V4 cooperation in preventing, detecting and combating violations of customs and tax legislation—particularly with regard to excisable goods, especially in the area of monitoring of movement of mineral oils, and textiles; the development of cooperation between customs administrations in the protection of intellectual property rights. More effective V4 cooperation within the EU in the fight against VAT evasion through administrative cooperation;
- Support the possibility of exchange of information about the goods moving through the eastern external border of the EU to ensure safety and security, trade facilitation and proper application of the customs legislation.

Ministry of Culture

Support for the implementation of specific projects agreed in the framework of cooperation among the culture ministries of the V4 countries:

- Colloquium of V4 library and information workers;
- Working group on cultural heritage;
- Summer School of UNESCO Heritage Conservation and Management;
- Coordination in the process of preparing for the future programming period after 2013;
- Continued exchanges of information and experience in the use of Structural Funds;
- Discussion of political and social changes in 1989 and their influence on theatre in the V4 countries;
- Support for the establishment of a European digitization registry in order to reduce duplication in the creation of digital documents;
- Support for the preservation, promotion and presentation of traditional folk culture, support of the awareness of regional identity in V4 countries;
- Initiation of a debate on the opportunities for joint presentations of Visegrad Group countries at major international events (book fairs, film and theatre festivals, etc.).

Ministry of Industry and Trade

Energy

- Further the interconnection of electricity markets between the Czech Republic and Slovakia, promote the introduction of market coupling in other profiles of V4 Member States and strengthen connections between V4 Member States in relation to neighbouring countries (in particular, all ENTSO-E countries);
- Development of gas interconnections, searching for possible alternatives to supply from the Druzhba pipeline in the oil sector;
- Coordination at the level of Council working parties (particularly WP H7 - Energy) and European Commission committees, the High Level Group on Energy (especially when dealing with infrastructure projects), Energy Council meetings and the High Level Group on North-South Interconnections.

Economic and trade relations

- Closer bilateral and joint economic and trade cooperation, the promotion of trade and investment at joint multilateral and regional levels; of experience in economic and trade policy and in the implementation of the Europe 2020 strategy;
- Workshops for the staff of SOLVIT centres and Product Contact Points.

Reducing administrative burdens

- The provision of information to partners on the pilot project to reduce administrative burdens—seminar and panel discussion, exchange of experience.

Clusters

- Continuation and full support of the ClusterCOOP project, initiated on the basis of the Memorandum (signed on 26 November 2009) on cooperation of V4 countries in the field of clusters, led by the Hungarian Ministry of National Economy in the framework of the EU's Central Europe Programme.

Ministry of Justice

- Implementation of a Memorandum on Cooperation in information technology, the creation of a joint working party to address collaboration between the IT experts of different ministries;
- The provision of legal aid in cross-border disputes (the implementation of Council Directive 2002/8/EC of 27 January 2002);
- Cooperation in the field of judicial training, developing joint training modules, sharing information, organising exchange programs;
- Intense cooperation and possibly coordination of positions concerning EU legislative proposals negotiated within the field of civil and criminal law and judicial cooperation;
- Closer cooperation between the V4 and countries in the Western Balkans—invitations to ministers from Western Balkan countries to attend some meetings of V4 justice ministers.

Ministry of Healthcare

- Regular consultations on the positions of V4 countries regarding the legislative proposals currently discussed in EU bodies;
- Preparations for the implementation of the Directive of the European Parliament and of the Council on the application of patients' rights in cross-border healthcare;
- Continued deepening of cooperation between public health protection and support authorities, with a particular focus on the exchange of information regarding the epidemiological situation in the border regions of V4 countries.

Ministry of Labour and Social Affairs

Future ESF (2014-2020)

Closer cooperation and coordination of national positions in process of negotiations of the EU legislative proposals for 2014+ programming period, in particular the role of the ESF in implementing the Europe 2020 strategy and in the EU's future cohesion policy, with special focus on:

- Promotion of the employment of older workers, promotion of learning new skills for new jobs (including exchange of information and experience on the European regulation of professions in the field of professional qualifications for the introduction of European professional cards);
- Promotion of the employment of parents (the reconciliation of work and family life, functioning and development of child care institutions and alternative forms, spreading of family-friendly employment—including exchange of information and experience and

considering possible follow-up of the HU PRES and PL PRES in family policy and demographic issues and potentials of a possible 2014—European Year of of Families);

- Promotion of employment, education and training of persons with disabilities (incl. development of V4 cooperation and coordination of national positions towards the European Disability Strategy 2010–2020).
- Supporting alternatives of modern attitudes towards foster care and de-institutionalisation of children's homes (including exchange of information and experience).

Ministry of Education, Youth and Sports

Education

- A ministerial/senior officials meeting on education issues reflecting the priority areas of the Czech V4 Presidency;
- Enhancing close cooperation within the EU structures reflecting common regional challenges and priorities especially with respect to the agenda of the Polish Presidency of the EU Council;
- Increase in the number of high-school exchange visits by assisting in the search for partner schools abroad, e.g. cooperation with educational associations and Czech missions;
- Exchanges of experience between teachers in the field of entrepreneurship education, by means of professional training programmes for teachers at foreign schools and, where appropriate, companies.

Higher education, science and research

- The shared use of existing infrastructures, the creation of a database of technological innovations;
- The preparation of common positions on the Eighth Framework Programme and the Innovation Union; cooperation in the spending of European funds from the current Seventh Framework Programme, with a possible emphasis on cooperation with Eastern Partnership countries;
- Closer cooperation with Western Balkan countries on the transfer of knowledge and assistance in research and development;
- Enhancement of the cooperation between research and academic centers of V4 countries in the area of the most sophisticated Technologies and research: information technology, biotechnology, nanotechnology, alternative energy sources and fuel systems;
- Coordination of inter-university language learning projects.

Youth

- Meeting of V4 countries' experts on youth issues, follow-up on the conclusions from the meeting during Slovak Presidency;
- Support for young volunteers in the European Year of Volunteering 2011, including a special focus on countries on Eastern Partnership countries during the PL PRES;
- Establishment of supporting structures for national delegates of V4 countries for preparations of common positions for negotiations in Youth Working Party, Youth in Action, Programme Committee and European Steering Committee for Youth of the Council of Europe.

Sport

- 18th meeting of the V4 Steering Committee of the “Olympic Hopes” sports competitions (experts/representatives of the V4 ministries in charge of sports issues) in the Czech Republic.

Ministry of the Environment

- Discussion on the preparation for the EU’s Seventh Environment Action Programme and its priorities;
- Environmental dimension of the Europe 2020 Strategy and National Reform Programmes;
- Discussion on the EU’s 2014–2020 budgetary framework and its environmental aspects;
- Configuration of the future cohesion policy for the environment after 2013 (water, waste, soil, air, climate change, protection against flooding and droughts), with a particular focus on climate and energy policy in relation to the future of the Environment Operational Programme;
- Discussion on air quality measures;
- The Czech Republic will seek to coordinate V4 countries’ positions in the preparation of the UN Conference on Sustainable Development in Rio de Janeiro to mark the 20th anniversary of the Earth Summit and to exchange V4 countries’ positions/views in the preparation of the UN Conference on climate change in Durban, South Africa.

Ministry of Agriculture

In agriculture, the Czech Presidency will focus mainly on the core issue of the future of the Common Agricultural Policy (CAP), as the Commission is expected to publish legislative proposals on the future shape of the CAP and on other priority issues related to food quality and safety and renewable energy sources during the Czech Presidency of the V4.

Common Agricultural Policy

- Joint promotion of fair conditions under the CAP after 2013 for farmers in all EU Member States;
- Discussion on the topic of “active farmer”;
- Coordination of risk and crisis management, which, according to a current Commission proposal, should be incorporated into the second pillar (the efficiency of the new tool proposed by the Commission and compatibility between the first and second pillars);
- Discussion on the potential impacts of greening as a mandatory component of direct payments, the optimal cohesion between the first and second pillars, and the elimination of overlapping measures under the pillars;
- Discussion on the state-of-play of LFA;
- Discussion on other current CAP topics following the publication of legislative proposals on the future CAP.

Food quality and safety

- Coordination in a discussion on the proposal for a regulation of the EP and of the Council on the provision of food information to consumers.
- Coordination in the field of quality policy—a discussion on the proposal for a regulation of the EP and of the Council on agricultural product quality schemes and on

the proposal for a regulation of the EP and of the Council amending Council Regulation (EC) No 1234/2007 as regards marketing standards.

Other key topics

- Joint approach in **aquaculture**, the common promotion of the interests of inland fishermen;
- Discussion on the draft legislative measures for the dairy sector—the “**Milk Package**”;
- Discussion on a possible legally binding **agreement on forests** in the pan-European region and a discussion on the potential impact that new EU legislation to combat illegal timber will have on the V4+2 countries;
- Discussion on the situation of the monogastric animal breeding sector, particularly pigs and poultry, whose regulation in the CAP is very liberal despite of dramatic structural changes as well in the V4 countries—searching of the possibility of finding a joint position.