

Maurício da Costa Carvalho Bernardes¹

Chapter 5

Visegrád Countries: A Brazilian Perspective²

‘Can we agree that we do not wish to place obstacles in each other’s way,
or even envy each other, but on the contrary,
that we want to assist each other?’

Vaclav Havel

5.1 Introduction

One hundred and sixty five years before the arrival of the Portuguese into Brazilian territory, King Charles of Hungary, King John I of Bohemia, his son Charles (later Emperor Charles IV) and King Casimir III of Poland met in Visegrád, on the banks of the Danube’s longest curve, in Hungarian territory, to discuss many topics of common interest. At this unusual meeting, probably the largest Central European summit in the fourteenth century, the leaders of Hungary, Bohemia and Poland discussed for almost a month territorial disputes, military alliances, marriages, trade facilitation and greater cooperation between the three kingdoms.

The Visegrád countries have gone through a thousand years of history between periods of cooperation and conflict, prosperity and difficulties. Milan Kundera well remembers the “essence of the identity” of those countries, firmly based on tradition and on the history of Western Europe and Roman Christianity. They were, however, stigmatized by their European counterparts, as symbols of ‘a mysterious region, with impenetrable languages, unpronounceable names and confusing history’.

During the territorial fragmentation of the Middle Ages, the fight against the Ottoman Empire, the Renaissance, the Reformation, the Vienna Congress, the two

¹ Disclaimer: The views and opinions expressed in this article are those of the author and do not necessarily reflect the official policy and position of the Brazilian Ministry of Foreign Affairs.

² Translated by Secretary João Henrique Nascimento Dias, FUNAG.

World Wars, the Cold War and the fall of the “Iron Curtain”, the destinies of the Visegrád countries remained intertwined and inextricably linked to the European history. So strong is the connection between these countries that Timothy Garton Ash, when asked if Central Europe indeed exists, chose the Visegrád four as the group that best defines the concept.

On the highest point of the Cold War, in one of the most difficult moments of the history of the Visegrád countries, the spirit of cooperation once again prevailed. Intellectuals and activists, in exile or not, established direct and indirect contacts, sometimes even clandestine conversations, to exchange experiences and ideas about the best way for those countries to return to democracy. After the end of communism, protagonists of the “Charter 77” and of the labour union “Solidarity” became political leaders, congressmen and ambassadors. Those people carried within themselves the positive experience of dialogue among peers of neighbouring countries. Such exchange was a ferment for democratisation.

With the fall of the Berlin Wall, all the efforts of the Visegrád countries were concentrated on the full integration into the Euro-Atlantic structures, seen as a way to secure the nascent democracies, to provide economic prosperity and to guarantee their safety.

The meeting between Vaclav Havel, Lech Walesa and József Antall, on 15 February 1991, in the emblematic city of Visegrád, a symbol of union, was a milestone in the effort to reach democracy. The goal was to create a consulting group in order to ensure the total restitution of independence, democracy and freedom; to eliminate the totalitarian system; to build a parliamentary democracy based on the rule of law; to develop a market economy; and to work for the full integration into the Euro-Atlantic structures.

The founding document of the Visegrád Group goes beyond all these and reintroduces the concept of Central Europe, underscoring the common “cultural and spiritual” heritage, the common roots of religious tradition and the fundamental values related to the achievements of European thought. Furthermore, it also highlights the right of each country to express its identity.

With the exception of the period between the years of 1993 and 1996, following the independence of Slovakia, when cooperation was replaced by competition, common efforts and positive results were the paradigm.

In 1991, Hungary, Poland and Czechoslovakia jointly signed an association agreement with the European Community, aiming to open the accession negotiations. In 1994, the Visegrád countries decided to participate in NATO’s “Partnership for Peace”. In 1999, Poland, the Czech Republic and Hungary

joined the Northern Atlantic Alliance (Slovakia did so, in 2004). All of them became members of the OECD, in the year 2000.

In 2004, after complex negotiations, the Visegrád countries finally achieved their main goal: to join the European Union (EU) and become part of the Schengen area.

New goals were established and new areas of cooperation and dialogue were designated. The declaration of the Prime Ministers from the Czech Republic, Hungary, Poland and Slovakia, on 12 May 2004 – also known as the Kromeriz Declaration – was announced right after the achievement of European Union membership and it set up principles and an action plan that, in general aspects, is still effective when it comes to identifying priorities for cooperation and coordination between the V4 countries, within the European Union and also externally.

The Visegrád countries often envisaged the European Union as a club of partners, given their ethnic, economic and cultural links. However, in face of the hardships of the accession negotiations, they decided to organise themselves and make their needs and priorities heard. The credentials for being actual protagonists in and out of Europe came after the V4 showed greater economic dynamism and active participation in regional security mechanisms and multilateral forums, especially after the 2008 financial crisis, in comparison to other members of the EU who faced more difficulties to overcome it.

“The emerging countries of Europe” felt confident and ready to have a greater voice and presence in the international arena. The political and economic need to diversify partnerships became evident for the Visegrád countries.

Brazilian diplomacy did not remain unaware of this new reality. Being an emerging economy, traditionally drawn to diversifying its partners, to dialogue and to the search of common interests in the multilateral arena, Brazil made sure that cooperation with each of the V4 could grow and become an important element of the European policy of Itamaraty.

Without ignoring the many differences among the V4 countries, this article will focus on the similarities and on the points of political and economic cohesion between these countries. The goal is to present an overview capable of showing the Visegrád countries’ coordinated action in the international sphere. The second part will display aspects of the Brazilian relationship with V4 countries and the potential positive outcomes that can be obtained from cooperating with the group, something that has not yet been well researched by the academia, but is gradually being analysed by the Brazilian diplomacy. The possibilities of cooperation presented in this article certainly are not exhaustive.

5.2 Foreign policy priorities of the Visegrád countries

During the last 30 years, the political dialogue between the Visegrád countries went from an exchange of experiences, aimed at the accession to Euro-Atlantic organisations, to a pragmatic platform of coordination and defence of common interests. There are several coordination mechanisms, many of them still unknown by the general public. Together they facilitate the debate on different topics of the cooperation agenda among the V4, foster cooperation within the EU and address regional, global and multilateral political issues.

The foreign policy priority of the Visegrád countries remains and will always be the European Union and their regional surroundings. Although press coverage often tries to highlight divergences between the V4 and their main European partners, they neither are nor consider themselves an opposition voice against the Western countries of the bloc or against the idea of a united and cohesive Europe.

Throughout the last couple of years, V4 countries have been more active when defending their interests in Europe. They see as legitimate the expression of the different opinions within the bloc and they believe that controversy is an intrinsic feature of a Europe based on democracy and on the spirit of union within diversity. Consequently they reject the idea of being considered the periphery or second class partners, and not the “core” of the European Union. Furthermore, they oppose the imposition of a concept of Europe that determines patterns but neglects differences and particularities.

The document that guides the Visegrád countries after their accession to the European Union and NATO is the Kromeriz Declaration of 2004. There they underscore that their presence on those mechanisms is a “significant step towards the reunification of Europe and a milestone on the path to its democratic transformation”. They manifest their determination to contribute to the goals of the European Union and to the successful continuation of the integration process. The document also expresses their profound conviction that more cooperation between the V4 countries enriches the European community of nations and contributes to the construction of a united, democratic and prosperous Europe.

The action plan established in Kromeriz by the Visegrád countries is noteworthy. Fifteen years later, one can still see its influence on the action plans devised by the pro-tempore presidency of the Visegrád Group. Although all the members try to imprint their own views as well as prioritize certain topics on the program, there is a clear convergence between the last presidency programs.

In the context of the European Union, the V4 countries defend the preservation of the institutional balance and the importance of preserving the competences of national parliaments. They reject the idea of a two-speed Europe, something they perceive as a way to diminish the importance of the V4 countries in the European decision making process. They assert their readiness to debate the “Future of Europe”, based on the consensus to strengthen unity and to prevent the fragmentation of the European Union. Poland managed to change the language regarding the multi speed approach to the bloc, mainly defended by Germany, and reassured that there would be unity of purpose within the framework provided by the existing treaties and that the more developed countries would make sure the other members could achieve their level of prosperity. The Visegrád Group, similarly to Bulgaria and Romania, see some kind of discrimination in the discussions about the future of the continent.

The V4 countries coordinate among themselves for the continuity of the Common Agricultural Policy (CAP) and for the inclusion of their priorities in the Multiannual Financial Framework. They also defend the EU’s structural funds as an essential element for the development of their countries and, thus, for their capacity to reach the living standards of Western Europe. The V4 had a fundamental role on the permanence of the structural funds on high levels at the EU program 2014–2020. They also actively debate the future of those policies after 2020, coordinating themselves with Slovenia, Croatia, Romania and Bulgaria.

The topic of energy security is particularly important for the V4 and their economic competitiveness, given the fact that they still depend excessively on Russian gas. For that reason, they pushed for the inclusion, in the European energy program, of the financing of the North–South pipeline, which will cross the territories of the Czech Republic, Hungary and Croatia. The V4 also works for the integration of the Trans Adriatic Pipeline with the Visegrád region, something that would allow access to the gas reserves of the Caspian Sea. They defend the integration of the electric transmission system and the implementation of the European single energy market as a key tool to enhance the competitiveness of the bloc. The V4 is definitely against the construction of the North Stream 2 pipeline (duplication of the pipeline that connects the Russian coast at the Baltic Sea to Germany), for they perceive it as a way to weaken the bargaining power of Ukraine in relation to the European Union and Russia. Furthermore, they consider that the pipeline would divide the EU and enhance the dependence on Russian gas. It is important to mention

that around 15 per cent of the Russian gas that reaches Europe goes through Ukraine, Slovakia and the Czech Republic, via the “Brotherhood” pipeline (Urengoy–Pomary–Uzhgorod), which currently works below its capacity.

Another relevant geopolitical subject for the V4 is the full implementation of the “EU Global Strategy on Foreign and Security Policy”. They support the strengthening of the Common Security and Defence Policy as a complementary effort to NATO and they also defend the idea that the EU needs its own tools to deal with the military crises in the neighbourhood. The Visegrád countries had an important role in the construction of the Permanent Structured Cooperation (PESCO), which they consider a historical step towards European cooperation in the area of defence, due to the binding commitments of the initiative.

In 2014 and 2016, respectively, the V4 established and put into operation the Visegrád Battlegroup, which became the nineteenth battlegroup of the EU, besides the Nordic, Balkans, Franco–German and EUFOR battlegroups, among others. On that occasion, the battlegroup gathered 3,700 men and women in Poland. Over six months, the four countries did joint military exercises, tested their capacities and simulated situations of conflict. In 2019, another drill of the battlegroup took place.

The V4 responds for 13 per cent of NATO troops placed in Kosovo (KFOR) and for 22 per cent of the military missions of the EU. They defend deepening the cooperation between the group and the European Union in areas such as hybrid warfare, cybersecurity and operational cooperation in the Mediterranean, in order to prevent illegal migration.

Regarding NATO, the V4 sponsors more troops in the Baltic countries, the strengthening of the multinational corps East–West in Szczecin and the establishment of a North–East division in Elbląg. They support the construction of the antimissile shield in Redzikowo (north of Poland) and the “Readiness Initiative” of NATO (a set of initiatives aimed at dissuasion capacity and defence measures). On different occasions, the V4 countries reaffirmed their commitment to expanding defence expenditure to 2 per cent by 2024 (Poland has already reached this goal). It is also important to mention the coordination among the V4 countries during the preparatory work for the 2016 NATO Summit in Warsaw.

The Visegrád Group supports the EU enlargement process and does contribute with aspiring countries, offering their negotiating expertise regarding the membership process. They consider the Southeast and East European countries priority partners, natural candidates to accession and part of their near zone of influence. The V4 believes that the presence of these new countries in the EU

would increase its voice and influence in the European decision-making process. The Visegrád countries annually organise, with the support of the pro tempore presidency of the group, a high level summit in the format of V4 + Western Balkan states and V4 + Eastern Partnership.

In this effort, priority is given to the Western Balkan states (Albania, Bosnia and Herzegovina, Macedonia, Montenegro and Serbia). The V4 countries actively work to influence the European strategies and policies for the region, and they support, technically and politically, their accession process. Entering the EU is considered a fundamental tool in order to ensure security, stability and prosperity in these countries. Therefore, they encourage the European institutions to keep a proactive stance regarding the institutional modernisation agenda of these countries, so as to narrow the distance to the European standards. They advocate for the allocation of European funds in improving the infrastructure and the connectivity within the bloc and for projects related to the social and economic development of the Balkan countries. They also use resources of the Visegrád International Fund for these goals.

The V4 group equally supports the accession of the Western Balkan states to NATO, given that they consider that security and stability in the region are inseparable from European security. They provide assistance to fight organised crime, drug trafficking and corruption. The Visegrád countries consider coordination with the Balkans a vital element for keeping the migratory movements under control in Europe, since they constitute a passage corridor for migrating groups.

Strengthening the “Eastern Partnership” – a Polish–Swedish initiative aimed at intensifying the political dialogue and the economic integration with Armenia, Azerbaijan, Belarus, Georgia, Moldova and Ukraine – is a priority for the V4. The partnership is considered a strategic dimension of the European Neighbourhood Policy, a key factor for the stability, security and economic progress of Eastern Europe, especially as a counterweight to Russian influence in those countries. Obviously referring to Russia, the V4 defends the need to react strategically to the “challenging geopolitical context of the present”.

The V4 countries defend the position that the funds provided on the multiannual post-2020 budget supporting partnership projects should be maintained. They also argue in favour of real possibilities of accession for those countries and of an ambitious agenda for the Neighbourhood Partnership states in the long term. For instance, the V4 stood behind the signing of the visa free agreement with Georgia, Moldova and Ukraine, regarding the Schengen area. They also hold that the arrangement should be extended to Armenia

and Azerbaijan, the latter being considered an important actor for the energy security of the Visegrád Group. The free trade area established between the EU and Ukraine, Moldova and Georgia came into force largely because of the decisive role of the group. The V4 lends support to enhancing connectivity between the “Eastern Partnership” and the EU, given the possible synergy with the EU–China platform.

The Visegrád Group strongly defends Ukrainian territorial integrity and the non-recognition of the annexation of Crimea by Russia. Accordingly, they support the ceasefire in the Donbass region, calling on people to avoid actions that could lead to instability, and they sponsor the implementation of the Minsk Accords. Technical assistance regarding administration reform is also provided by the group, by means of the Visegrád Fund (Ukraine is the biggest external receiver of resources from the fund), via bilateral support and through initiatives such as the “V4 Roadshow in Ukraine”, an event that gathers specialists from different areas (public policy, energy, business, among others) willing to qualify Ukrainian public officers.

The Visegrád countries vehemently oppose the package presented by the EU to deal with the migratory flux to the continent. The mandatory quota system did not work as planned, due to continued political resistance: boycotts from the Czech Republic, Poland and Hungary, as well as inquiries from the latter and Slovakia to the Court of Justice of the European Union against the mandatory reallocation of refugee applicants. The European Commission announced the beginning of infraction procedures against Poland, Hungary and the Czech Republic, because of their refusal to receive asylum seekers. In opposition to the quotas, the V4 countries defend the protection of borders, an efficient policy for the return of migrants, reforming the Dublin Convention and financial support to the sending countries in order to reduce the flux of immigrants. None of the V4 will be part of the United Nations Global Compact for Safe, Orderly and Regular Migration (GCM).

When analysing the calendar of activities from the last pro tempore presidencies of the Visegrád Group, one notices the growing number of coordination meetings prior to large multilateral events, such as the United Nations General Assembly and the Conference on Climate Change.

Throughout the last five years, the number of meetings in the format “V4 Plus” (with other countries and regional blocs) has increased. With the goal of strengthening and spreading the V4 brand – as a symbol of economic success and growing political importance –, consolidating a common identity, diffusing

the “Think Visegrád” platform and bolstering their external visibility, the group organised high level diplomatic summits with the “Nordic–Baltic 8”, the Baltic countries, the Eastern Partnership, the Western Balkans, the Benelux, the Pacific Alliance, the African Union, Bulgaria–Romania, Croatia–Slovenia, Central Asia (Kazakhstan, Kyrgyzstan, Tajikistan, Uzbekistan and Turkmenistan), Austria, Germany, Brazil, Canada, China, South Korea, Egypt, the United States, France, Israel, Japan, Switzerland, Turkey and Ukraine.

The only permanent structure of the Visegrád Group is the International Visegrád Fund (IVF), an organisation created in the year 2000, with its headquarters in Bratislava. It is a tool for the development of cooperation projects. With around € 8 million per year, the fund’s goal is to finance projects involving the V4, and to also sponsor initiatives between them and third countries. It provides 70 per cent of the total cost of projects in the areas of 1) culture, science and education; 2) student exchange programs; 3) tourism promotion; and 4) academic mobility. Citizens, private companies, institutions, local and regional governments, and organisations from civil society, all of them can apply for the fund’s support with scholarships, residence for artists and writers, among other types of assistance. The fund also receives contributions from third countries and it has already sponsored more than five thousand initiatives.

The growing role of Visegrád countries in the European and the international arena has opened doors for its leaders to occupy high posts in international organisations. The election of Polish ex-Prime Minister Donald Tusk for the presidency of the European Council is an evident recognition of the importance of Poland and of the V4 within the European Union. In this context, it is worth mentioning the excellent campaign of Miroslav Lajcak, the Slovak foreign minister, for the UN General Secretary post. As a recognition, he was appointed as the 72nd General Assembly president.

5.3 Economic aspects of the Visegrád countries

Together, the Visegrád countries constitute the 15th economy in the world (according to the purchasing power parity criterion). Its GDP accounts for US\$ 1.933 trillion, right after South Korea and above Saudi Arabia and Spain.³ Taking

³ World Bank, *Doing Business 2018*.

the Brexit into account, the V4 is the fourth economy within the EU, behind Germany, France and Italy.

The V4 gathers a market of 64 million consumers, with largely opened economies. Together, they are the world's eighth exporter of goods, services and primary income (behind the Netherlands and above South Korea) and also the eighth importer (once again behind the Dutch, but better than Canada and Italy). As a comparison, while the Brazilian trade of goods, services and primary income amounts to US\$ 539 billion, the V4 amounts to US\$ 1.4 trillion.⁴

The V4 economies have important elements in common. They had to promote severe reforms in order to transform the centralised and planned production structure, inherited from the communist regime, into free market economies. The path chosen was radical liberalisation and integration in global value chains, mainly in the industrial structure of Germany, their main trade and investment partner.

European structural funds had a prominent role in the development process of the V4 economies. Before their accession to the EU, they represented 1 per cent of their GDP; in 2015, this value share reached 4 per cent. The 2014–2020 EU budget is generous, with provisions that reach around 3 per cent of the average V4 GDP. Besides the improvement in infrastructure, urban rehabilitation and industrial reconversion, the structural funds had a relevant impact in minimising the recessive effects of the 2008–2009 financial crisis, due to low credit and fiscal limitations at that moment.

The openness of the V4 economies is remarkable. Adding imports plus exports in relation to the GDP, the openness of Poland, the Czech Republic, Hungary and Slovakia is, respectively, 102 per cent, 151 per cent, 172 per cent and 189 per cent (while in France, Italy and Brazil this index is, respectively, 62 per cent, 59 per cent and 24 per cent). Certainly, this deliberate policy to integrate the European value chains contributed to the influx of foreign direct investment, mainly multinational companies taking advantage of the V4 lower labour costs, industrial tradition, central location and attractive fiscal packages. It is important to highlight the growing imports of intermediate goods used to export manufactured goods with greater aggregate value (even though the intermediate goods export to other countries is also relevant), notably in the industry of automobiles, processed foods, steel industry and chemicals. This structure creates opportunities, but also

⁴ World Bank, *Doing Business 2018*.

vulnerabilities, since there is a need for constant foreign capital and technology in order to generate growth, income and jobs.

The V4 countries are well ranked in the Competitiveness Report of the World Economic Forum 2018. The document is based on twelve criteria, such as evaluation of local institutions, infrastructure, openness degree and macroeconomic analysis. There is little differentiation between the Visegrád countries. The Czech Republic takes the 29th position, followed by Poland (37th), Slovakia (41st) and Hungary (48th). Brazil is ranked 72nd.

The V4 countries are also well placed on the World Bank “Doing Business” index, responsible for evaluating regulatory environments in 190 countries. Poland is the best ranked economy in the group (33rd), followed by the Czech Republic (35th), Slovakia (42nd) and Hungary (53rd). Brazil is ranked 109th.

The good business environment was not, however, capable of producing giant companies with its headquarters in the V4 countries. This fact is compensated by the presence of some of the biggest global multinationals and, additionally, by the integration of small and medium local businesses into the European chains of production. Some analysts attribute this feature to the late entry of the V4 in the market economy, to the small size of their domestic markets (with the exception of Poland) and to the liberalisation of their economies. According to the Global 2000 ranking from Forbes magazine, which lists the biggest 2000 companies in the world, only nine of those have their headquarters in the Visegrád Group: six in Poland, two in Hungary and one in the Czech Republic (Brazil has nineteen).

The economic model of the V4, especially after the accession to the EU, resulted in great dynamism and growth. One could speculate that their economic bases were smaller than that of the EU15 and also that the convergence funds had an important role on their development. Nevertheless, it would be a mistake to downplay their achievements and it is important to stress that they currently represent the most dynamic region of the European economy.

While the GDP by purchasing power parity of the EU grew 51 per cent between 2005 and 2017 (excluding the V4), the Visegrád countries grew 90 per cent in the same period. They were responsible for 7.43 per cent of the EU’s GDP in 2005, and today this number has reached 9.16 per cent. With the Brexit, their economic weight in the bloc will grow even more.

Only Slovakia has adopted the euro; the other three countries have kept their own currencies. Poland, the Czech Republic and Hungary refuse to give away some monetary policy flexibility in a context of crisis. Many economists attribute their quick recovery from the 2008–2009 financial crisis to the existence of

a national currency. Although communitarian regulations do curb their ability to freely conduct economic policies, the possibility of devaluating the exchange rate kept their exports on high levels, making their economic recovery faster.

Since 2013, unemployment has diminished and, currently, it has reached historical low levels. All Visegrád countries practically show full employment conditions (2.9 per cent in the Czech Republic and below 5 per cent in Poland and Hungary). Wages and productivity have also grown, but they are still under the EU average.

The V4 economies are still in the process of catching up to the main economies within the EU. There are financial stability, positive macroeconomic results and a favourable business environment for investment and consumption. However, despite the inflow of structural funds until 2020, the path to sustainable economic growth is not exempt from medium term challenges.

Even if there is political coordination, the V4 themselves do not expect to sustain the current levels of support from the convergence funds after 2020. They must find new sources to finance their investments, mainly in infrastructure, an area that is still lagging behind when compared to other European partners.

Another challenge for the V4 is attracting investment in innovation and in the sector of creative economy. Gradually, new topics – such as cybersecurity, industry 4.0, e-commerce, e-government, startups and smart cities – are being included in the agenda of the group. New economic topics, too have gradually entered the debates, even though these have been usually placed as secondary issues.

The economic opening process and, consequently, the dependence on the European market – the biggest destination of exports from the V4 – left their economies vulnerable to crises in the EU, as the 2008 financial crisis showed. It is worth mentioning that Poland was the only country in the bloc that kept showing positive numbers between 2008 and 2012. In this context, low European growth limits the performance of the V4. The Visegrád countries need to diversify their economic associations in order to ease the potential damage caused by the weak performance of their traditional partners. The international activism of the group, especially in relation to emerging countries (Brazil included) is seen as a result of this diagnostic.

Greater economic cooperation among the Visegrád countries is still something to be explored. The main coordination efforts are made in the political field and only secondarily in the economic area. A strong competition between themselves can be noticed regarding the attraction of foreign direct investments.

Despite the obstacles, the Visegrád countries are particularly dynamic, open and strong, features that have granted them the epithet “emerging markets of Europe”, drawing much attention from relevant international actors. They found themselves as an economic and political group that deserves to have a louder voice in the European and international arenas. Their foreign policies have been recently directed to reach these goals.

5.4 Relations between the Visegrád countries and Brazil

5.4.1 Migration

The relations between Brazil and the Visegrád countries are mainly grounded on the interconnections of our people. Even before becoming an independent country, Brazil had already received Jesuit migrants from the V4. Right after Brazilian independence, engineers, artists, geologists, geographers, researches and merchants arrived. In 1831, Jan Nepomuk Kubíček, one of the great grandfathers of Brazil's future president Juscelino Kubitschek, set up in Diamantina.

The first large migratory wave coming from the Visegrád countries to Brazil took place in the second half of the nineteenth century, when the Empire of Brazil was making efforts to populate the Southern region of the country. The Eusébio de Queirós Law, from 1850, prohibited slave traffic in Brazil, and the promulgation of the land law, also in 1850, gave a normative incentive to the arrival of European migrants. The intense diplomatic connections (Brazilian Emperor Pedro II was the son of Empress Maria Leopoldina, the daughter of Francis I, Emperor of Austria) and the growing economic ties between Brazil and the Austrian Empire (later the Austro–Hungarian Empire) prevented Brazil from being completely unknown in the eyes of the citizens of this European Empire, although it was still an exotic destiny.

After undergoing a strong economic crisis, and with the easing of the migratory policy of the Austro–Hungarian Empire, in the 1867 Constitution, some of the Empire's citizens decided to look for new places. Brazil was chosen by many of them.

A new migratory wave took place after the Trianon Treaty, when borders were redefined at the end of the First World War. Poverty and insecurity were brought by the economic crisis and the changed territorial arrangements in Europe.

After the end of the Second World War and the beginning of communist regimes, there was a new outflow of migrants coming from the Visegrád countries to Brazil.

The large majority of migrants coming from the V4 set up in the Southern region of Brazil. In the state of São Paulo, there is an important Hungarian community. In the Brazilian Central region, the Czech migration is strong.

The number of migrants and descendants from the Visegrád countries in Brazil can only be estimated, although it is often exaggerated, due to feelings of belonging related to European ancestors. It is believed that around 3 million have Polish origins; 500 thousand have Czech and Slovak origins; and 100 thousand, Hungarian. Adding them up, these numbers correspond to approximately 5 per cent of the current population of the V4.

The integration of these migrants and their descendants into the Brazilian society, the liberty to both maintain their traditions, identities and promote their culture in Brazil are facts widely recognised and valued by the V4 countries.

5.4.2 Diplomatic relations and high level visits

With the end of the First World War and the consolidation of Wilson's Doctrine, the Visegrád countries had their Independence re-established and Brazil was active to assure its links with the newly independent countries. Brazil was the first Latin American country to recognise the Polish independence, in 1918. In reality, the recognition came even before, when Brazil supported Poland's independence, while the country was occupied. This same cause was defended by Ruy Barbosa, in 1907, during the Hague Convention of 1907. In 1918, Brazil was also the first country of Latin America to recognise the shared state between Slovaks and Czechs. In 1927, diplomatic relations between Hungary and Brazil were established.

After World War II, during the years of communism, Brazil and the V4 naturally grew apart.

The fall of the Berlin Wall, which coincided with the return of direct presidential elections in Brazil, brought new opportunities for cooperation. Supporting the political process taking place in the V4, and as a sign of rapprochement, Brazilian President, Fernando Collor, visited Prague in 1994.

Brazil was the first country in Latin America to recognise the Independence of the Czech Republic and Slovakia, soon after the Velvet Divorce, in 1993.

In the following year, Fernando Henrique Cardoso, elected President, visited Prague and Budapest, and the Czech Prime Minister Vaclav Klaus visited Brazil. In 1995, Lech Walesa, the President of Poland, visited Rio de Janeiro, Curitiba and Foz do Iguaçu. In 1996, the Czech President, Václav Havel, paid an official visit to Brazil. He went to Rio de Janeiro, Brasília and Manaus.

After the accession of the Visegrád countries to the EU and to NATO, and especially after the 2008–2009 crisis, there was new impetus to Brazil–V4 bilateral relations. Looking to diversify partnerships, showing great economic dynamism, enjoying the role of an emerging voice within the EU and seeking a more prominent role in and out of the block, the Visegrád countries found a natural partner in Brazil.

The last two decades were marked by high level meetings and visits favoured by major events organised by Brazil. In 2006, Czech Prime Minister, Jiri Paroubek, travelled to Brazil. The visit was reciprocated in 2008, by Luiz Inácio Lula da Silva. In 2009, Czech President, Václav Klaus, visited Brazil. In 2012, it was the Hungarian President, János Áder, who travelled to Brazil on the occasion of the Rio + 20. In the following year, Brazilian Vice President, Michel Temer, paid an official visit to Budapest and, in 2015, to Warsaw. Hungary's President, János Áder, and Prime Minister Viktor Orbán, both participated at the opening and closing ceremonies of the Olympic Games in Rio de Janeiro. Slovak President, Andrej Kiska, was in Brazil for the same event.

In 2019, Viktor Orbán, Hungary's Prime Minister, joined the inauguration ceremony of President Jair Bolsonaro. An official visit of the Brazilian head of state to Poland and Hungary is expected in the first semester of 2020.

After 2009, despite the evident increase in the number of visits by ministers and high officials, there was no modernisation or enlargement of the legal framework between Brazil and the V4. The Brazilian delay in ratifying the agreements already signed was a limiting factor. The fact that the Visegrád countries delegate the negotiation and competence of many topics of common interest to the European Union, with which Brazil maintains a “strategic partnership”, also reduced the commitment to signing new documents. The multiple and promising areas of relationship between Brazil and the V4 deserve, however, an effort to broaden its legal framework.

Brazil is the only South American country to maintain and host resident embassies in and from all the Visegrád countries.

Table 1: List of missions of the Federative Republic of Brazil in the Visegrád countries in 2020

Embassy	Representative office	Ambassador
Embassy of Brazil to Hungary	Budapest	José Luiz Machado e Costa
Embassy of Brazil to the Slovak Republic	Bratislava	Eduardo Gradilone
Embassy of Brazil to the Czech Republic	Prague	Márcio Florêncio Nunes Cambraia
Embassy of Brazil to the Republic of Poland	Warsaw	Hadil da Rocha Vianna

Source: Compiled by the author based on the data of the Itamaraty.

5.4.3 Trade and investments

The economic area is one of the most promising aspects of Brazil's relationship with the V4. Brazil and the Visegrád countries have strong, dynamic economies with great potential for growth. They also have important consumption markets and their main industries are notably complementary, with the exception of the agroindustry.

In 2017,⁵ Brazil exported US\$ 866 million to the V4 countries and imported US\$ 1.479 billion, with a deficit on the Brazilian side of US\$ 613 million. If analysed together, the V4 would be the 24th Brazilian provider, in front of neighbouring countries such as Colombia and Bolivia and just behind Peru; and the 40th destination of Brazilian exports, just ahead of Ecuador. It is noteworthy that foreign trade data with the V4 are affected by the “Rotterdam effect”, since a significant part of the trade uses that port and it is often recorded as a transaction with the Netherlands. Eurostat figures show significantly higher trade between Brazil and the V4 countries.

The Brazilian export agenda is mainly comprised of primary products, such as iron, soy, copper and leather. Some industrialised products have significant weight, such as airplanes to Poland (Lot is one of the main European buyers of Embraer aircraft), pumps and compressors for Slovakia, auto parts for Hungary and the Czech Republic. The V4 exports mainly manufactured products to Brazil, with emphasis on auto parts, something that indicates there is integration between the automotive chain and the automakers installed in the V4 and in Brazil.

⁵ ‘Comex Vis Visualizações de Comércio Exterior’, 2018.

The companies with headquarters in the Visegrád countries are mostly small and medium-sized ones. They often focus on their internationalisation process, as one would suspect, prioritising the European Union and its regional environment. The large industry and service companies based in V4 countries are, to a great extent, multinationals seeking tax advantages, excellent local labour at lower costs and closer proximity to consumers in the most dynamic region of the EU. This scenario makes it difficult to attract investments to Brazil from companies based in the V4 countries. Ideally, the V4 companies, if operating in Brazil, could access the local market more easily and use the country as a platform for exporting to South America, perhaps in joint ventures with Brazilian companies.

In the same way, there is a lack of knowledge among Brazilian entrepreneurs regarding the potentialities and advantages offered by the V4 countries when it comes to attracting investments. The internationalisation of Brazilian companies in Europe is still concentrated in countries with which Brazil has had a long trade and cultural history, such as Portugal, Spain, Italy, France and Germany.

The main Brazilian investment in the region, placed in Slovakia since 1999, with several reinvestments later, is Embraco, a company of compressors and assembly of refrigeration systems based in Santa Catarina, and its Brazilian suppliers (CWR, Microjuntas and Rudolph Machined). Embraco generates more than 2,500 jobs in an area where there is a high level of unemployment, which qualifies it as an example of foreign investments in Slovakia. Besides the industrial plant, it has a research and development centre with more than 100 employees, working in the development of commercial compressors and of natural refrigerants such as propane and isobutane, environmentally friendly and more efficient than synthetic fluids. The operation was so successful that Embraco decided to transfer a branch of its operations from Italy to Slovakia. Recently, Embraco was sold to the Japanese company Nidec.

In Poland, the main Brazilian investment is “IT Stefanini”. It started its activities in 2012 in the city of Krakow, and later settled in Warsaw, in the service desk and corporate software management sectors. The company expanded its regional operations, opening an office in Budapest. In the Czech Republic, investments from one side to another are scarce. One of the rare examples is the purchase of the Czech company Sellier & Bellor by the Brazilian Cartridge Company.

The main investor of the V4 in Brazil is Poland. It has made significant direct investments in Brazil in recent years. It is worth noting the acquisition of the company Mettalic do Nordeste, located in the metropolitan region of Fortaleza,

by Can-Pack, a Krakow company of the metallurgical sector, which also built a factory in Itumbiara (Goiás) in 2018, with investments estimated at US\$ 300 million. The Polish company Selena has a polyurethane foam factory in Ponta Grossa, Paraná; Maflow, which sells air conditioning systems, was acquired by the Polish company Boryszew in 2010; eSky owns one of the most important tourist sites in Brazil, “eDestinos.com.br”. Investments were also made by LUG, the manufacturer of lighting products; Komandor, a manufacturer of components for modular wardrobes and sliding systems for doors and drawers; and Medcom, a traction network provider for the São Paulo subway.

An important real estate investment was announced by a Polish investment fund in the municipality of Baía Formosa, Rio Grande do Norte. They will build two resorts and a village of high standard houses, with estimated investments of \$ 400 million.

In December 2016, the Hungarian subsidiary of the Swiss holding company EcoSolifer signed a protocol with Santa Catarina to install a photovoltaic solar panel plant in that state. In 2017, a technology transfer agreement between the Hungarian company Innomed Medical Zrt. and the Brazilian Prolife Medical Equipment Eireli was signed, for the production of defibrillators and for cooperation in the fabrication of digital computed tomography equipment. In 2019, the Czech company Tatra Trucks announced the construction of its first international plant in Ponta Grossa, with investments estimated at US\$ 150 million.

Brazil has established, through bilateral agreements, economic mechanisms with the four V4 countries to identify business opportunities. The Brazil–Hungary Joint Economic Commission was created by the Brazil–Hungary Economic Cooperation Agreement of 2006, in force since 2009, and was recently upgraded to the level of Foreign Ministers. The joint economic–trade cooperation committee between Brazil and the Czech Republic, established in an agreement signed in 2008, met for the first time in Prague in May 2010. The working group on trade and investment promotion, concluded between the Brazilian Ministry of Development, Industry and Foreign Trade and the Slovak Ministry of Economy in 2009 never met. The economic cooperation agreement with Poland dates back to the 1980s. Both countries tried to negotiate an update of the economic agreement, to be signed during Michel Temer’s visit to Poland, in 2015, but they did not succeed.

Brazil, on different occasions, has taken an interest in holding an economic meeting in the V4 + Brazil format. It did not prosper. The Brazilian side considers that a meeting with these characteristics could attract more interest from Brazilian

businessmen and government agencies than if it were carried out individually with each of the countries.

One positive step in this direction was the organisation of a workshop between representatives of trade promotion and investment agencies from Visegrád countries and Latin American countries at the III Hungary – Latin America Forum in November 2017, in Budapest. On the occasion, the agencies activities were displayed. It was followed by business roundtables to identify investment opportunities.

An important factor to boost economic, commercial and business ties, and also increase the integration of productive chains between Brazil and the V4 countries would be the prompt ratification of the Mercosur – European Union free trade agreement and the Brazilian accession to the OECD.

5.4.4 Cooperation in defence

The area of defence is a particularly promising field for cooperation. Brazil has bilateral agreements with Poland and the Czech Republic. The Brazilian side has already expressed an interest in subscribing to the same document with Hungary and Slovakia.

A cooperation milestone in the area of defence was the visit of the Brazilian Defence Minister, Nelson Jobim, to the Czech Republic and Poland, reciprocating the visit of his Polish counterpart, Bogdan Klich, in 2009. On that visit, he visited the Aero Vodochody, one of the most important aeronautical industries in Central Europe. On 13 April 2011, Embraer and Aero Vodochody signed an agreement to enable the Czech company to participate in the KC-390 military freighter project. The company was in charge of the production of the rear fuselage, doors, the cargo ramp and the slats of the aircraft.

Another emblematic moment was the visit of former Defence Minister Ambassador Celso Amorim to his V4 counterparts in Bratislava in 2013, where multiple possibilities of cooperation were identified. In addition to meetings with each of the countries, it was the first time a ministerial meeting in the V4 + 1 format with Brazil took place.

Brazil has shown interest in cooperation in areas such as cyber defence, cryptography and open code systems, special units and joint training. Participants also identified opportunities for cooperation in defence material, citing the example of Embraer.

The V4 + 1 meeting format (or “V4 plus” as it is also called) was replicated in the defence area on another occasions, during the LAAD Defence & Security fair in Rio de Janeiro in 2015.

The Brazilian Air Force’s choice of Saab’s Gripen NG under the FX-2 Program offers opportunities for cooperation with the Czech Republic and Hungary, since both countries’ air forces use JAS-39 Gripen fighters. The Czech side offered Brazil the possibility of cooperating to train pilots and to use their simulators.

Since 2017, the Brazilian Air Force (FAB) participates in meetings of the “Gripen Users Group”, which has the Czech Republic and Hungary as members. The first Brazilian participation took place in Prague. In 2018, Brazil received the group for the first time. On that occasion, information and operational discussions of maintenance and logistics related to fighter aircraft were shared. The meetings are held every six months and are valuable opportunities for the exchange of experience.

Brazil, the Czech Republic and Poland share the use of the EADS Casa C-295 transport aircraft. This could open a new front for cooperation and exchange of experience.

Particularly encouraging is the possibility of V4 countries acquiring the KC-390 military freighter. Such an acquisition would entail considerable opportunities for cooperation in defence and between the aeronautical industries of all countries, something that already occurs with the Czech Republic, which, as was mentioned above, participates in the aircraft project.

5.4.5 Educational and scientific cooperation

Brazil has bilateral agreements in the educational, scientific and technological areas with all the Visegrád countries. This is a promising aspect of cooperation with the V4, due to their strong university tradition and the existence of recognised centres of excellence in exact sciences. As a reference, the Visegrád countries have won 32 Nobel Prizes, most of them in areas such as chemistry, physics and medicine. The openness and willingness of all V4 countries to receive Brazilian students must also be underscored.

Brazil and Hungary have signed an agreement that allowed the inclusion of Hungarian universities in the Science without Borders program, which, during its period (2013–2016), attracted more than two thousand Brazilian students to that country. Since 2017, when the program was ceased, the Hungarian Government,

after signing a Memorandum of Understanding between the Hungarian Ministry of Human Capacities and the Ministry of Education of Brazil, offers 250 scholarships per year for Brazilians, under the Stipendium Hungaricum program.

The Brazilian Association of State and Municipal University Presidents (ABRUEM) completed an international mission in Hungary in 2018. The program included technical visits to 14 universities in the country. The Coimbra Group of Brazilian Universities – an association that currently comprises 83 presidents of higher education institutions (57 federal, 20 state and 6 community) – held its 11th General Assembly and its 10th International Seminar in Budapest in September of 2018.

With the support of the Hungarian Academy of Sciences, Rio de Janeiro hosted the VI World Science Forum in 2013, the first time that forum was not held in Budapest. The final declaration of the event recognised the decisive Hungarian role for the event to be organised in Brazil.

With Poland, in 2015, 2016 and 2017, editions of the “Polish–Brazilian Conference on Science and Technology” were held, an initiative led by the University of Brasília (UnB) and the Polish Aviation Institute, focused mainly on the aerospace industry. Within this mechanism, a group of students of Aerospace Engineering of UnB participated on an exchange program at the Aviation Institute of Poland.

Cooperation in the academic and educational areas between Poland and Brazil has taken place mostly within the framework of specific understandings between Universities of both countries, not relying on bilateral legal frameworks or systematic monitoring by governments. The University of São Paulo (USP), for example, has academic agreements in force with eight Polish universities. About 30 Brazilian students were received by Polish universities, under the auspices of the Science without Borders program.

Brazil has also found support from the V4 countries to organise a meeting between principals from Brazilian and V4 Universities, in order to identify areas of common interest and to explore possibilities for academic cooperation.

Another possible source of cooperation, also suggested by the Brazilian side and welcomed by the V4 countries, would be the development of joint research projects, using shared funding from the Visegrád Fund and the National Council for Scientific and Technological Development (CNPq).

5.4.6 Political dialogue

Brazil has signed bilateral agreements with all V4 countries for regular diplomatic consultations. Itamaraty has held political consultation meetings with each of the countries of the Visegrád Group, normally biannually and at the level of undersecretaries or political directors. The goal is to review the main items on the international agenda, bilateral relations, regional issues, topics of mutual interest in multilateral forums and exchanges of candidacies.

The meetings have been of special interest to the Brazilian side. It is an opportunity to get a better understanding of important regional issues, such as the impact of migrations on the European continent, the “Brexit” impact, the Mercosur–European Union agreement, the future of the European Union, the relations with Russia, among others. Likewise, the Visegrád countries are interested in knowing Brazil’s opinion on Latin American issues, such as the situation of specific countries in the region, the state of regional cooperation mechanisms, and regional political and economic trends.

Political consultations with V4 countries also provide an excellent opportunity to review the current state of the bilateral agenda, identify priorities, clarify difficulties, identify and advance concrete cooperation projects.

The participation of senior officials in events focused on regional topics, promoted by think tanks or governments, is also an area for interesting opportunities. Brazil has participated on the annual Forum Globsec event, held in Bratislava with a main focus on security and global trends; and on the Latin America – Hungary Forum, a space of debate aimed at exploring opportunities for cooperation between Hungary and Latin American countries. It is believed that there is room for Brazilian think tanks to establish contacts with the Think Visegrád platform, which is partly funded by the Visegrád International Fund and brings together the main international relations centres of the V4 countries.

Without detracting from the importance of bilateral political meetings, the holding of consultation talks in the V4 + Brazil format has special political significance. It demonstrates the relevance attributed by the Visegrád countries to the relationship with Brazil, which is included in a select group with consultations in the “V4 plus” format.

The first meeting was held in Brasilia in 2015, shortly after the United Nations General Assembly, with the political directors of the V4 countries and the Brazilian Secretary General of Foreign Affairs, Sérgio Danese. At that time, the V4 delegation was led by the Political Director of the Ministry of Foreign

Affairs of the Czech Republic (occupying the presidency of the group), Ivan Jestráb. Among the topics discussed at the meeting were: the Brazilian context, the structure and priorities of the Visegrád Group, the migratory crisis, the Mercosur–European Union agreement, prospects for cooperation between Brazil and V4, Latin America and its integration processes, the situation in the Middle East and European regional issues.

The second meeting took place in Budapest, in 2017, in the context of the Latin America – Hungary Forum. The Brazilian delegation was headed by the Undersecretary General of International Cooperation, Commercial Promotion and Cultural Issues of Itamaraty, Santiago Mourão. The Visegrád Group delegation was led by Szilveszter Bus, Secretary for the “Opening to the South” of the Ministry of Foreign Affairs and Foreign Trade of Hungary, occupying the pro-tempore presidency of V4. The consultations, at that time, were divided into four blocks: politics and security; culture, education and science; economics and trade promotion; investment and tourism.

The meetings show that, although there is no unanimity in the treatment of some issues, there is clear coordination among V4 countries on several topics of the international agenda. In addition, there is an open, mature and frank debate in the search for common solutions to sensitive issues for the Visegrád countries. It is an exercise of great interest on the Brazilian side that could be replicated regularly in the future.

Bibliography

Official documents and declarations

Programs of the Presidency Pro-Tempore of the Visegrád Group

Available at www.visegradgroup.eu/documents/presidency-programs

2009–2010 – Hungarian Presidency

2010–2011 – Slovak Presidency

2011–2012 – Czech Presidency

2012–2013 – Polish Presidency

2013–2014 – Hungarian Presidency

2014–2015 – Slovak Presidency

2015–2016 – Czech Presidency

2016–2017 – Polish Presidency

2017–2018 – Hungarian Presidency

2018–2019 – Slovak Presidency

Reports from the Presidency Pro-Tempore of the Visegrád Group

Available at www.visegradgroup.eu/documents/annual-reports

2009–2010 – Hungarian Presidency

2010–2011 – Slovak Presidency

2011–2012 – Czech Presidency

2012–2013 – Polish Presidency

2013–2014 – Hungarian Presidency

2014–2015 – Slovak Presidency

2015–2016 – Czech Presidency

2016–2017 – Polish Presidency

2017–2018 – Hungarian Presidency

Declarations by the Visegrád Group

Available at www.visegradgroup.eu/documents/visegrad-declarations

Visegrád Declaration of 1991

Visegrád Declaration of 2004 – Declaration of Kromeriz

Bratislava Declaration of 2011

Statements by the Visegrád Group

Statement of the V4 Prime Ministers on Ukraine; March 2014

Joint Statement on the Deepening of V4 Defence Cooperation; Bratislava, December 2014

Joint Statement on the Deepening of V4 Defence Cooperation; Bratislava, December 2014

Joint Statement of the Foreign Ministers of the Visegrád Group and Ukraine; Kyiv, December 2014

Joint Statement of the Visegrád Group Prime Ministers; Bratislava, June 2015

“We Offer You Our Helping Hand on the EU Path” – Joint letter of the V4 Foreign Ministers published in Western Balkan dailies; Prague, November 2015

Joint Statement of the V4 Prime Ministers; Prague, December 2015

Joint Statement of the V4 Prime Ministers on the 25th Anniversary of the Visegrád Group; Prague, February 2016

Joint Statement of the V4 Prime Ministers on Migration; Prague, February 2016

- Towards Union of Trust and Action-Joint V4 Prime Ministers' Statement; Brussels, June 2016
- Communiqué of the V4 Prime Ministers (following a meeting with the Prime Minister of Ukraine); Krynica, September 2016
- Joint Statement on the Migration Crisis Response Mechanism (V4 Interior Ministers); Warsaw, November 2016
- Joint Statement of the Heads of Governments of the V4 Countries (V4 Prime Ministers); Brussels, December 2016
- Joint Declaration on Migration; Budapest, July 2017
- Joint Statement of the V4 Foreign Ministers following V4 + EaP Ministerial Meeting; Budapest, August 2017
- Joint Declaration of the V4 Foreign Ministers on the Western Balkans; Budapest, October 2017
- V4 Statement on the Future of Europe (V4 Heads of Government); Budapest, January 2018
- Joint Declaration of the Ministers of Economic Affairs of the Visegrád Group Countries in the Future of Economic Cooperation; Budapest, April 2018
- Stronger Together – Joint Statement of the Prime Ministers of the Visegrád Group; Budapest, June 2018

Books and articles

- Ash, T G, *History of the Present: Essays, Sketches and Dispatches from Europe in the 1990s*. New York: Vintage Books, 2009.
- Ash, T G, *The Magic Lantern: The Revolution of '89 Witnessed in Warsaw, Budapest, Berlin, and Prague*. New York: Vintage Books, 1993.
- Bátorová, K, *A Emigração Tcheca para o Brasil desde o Início até o Século XX*. Olomouc, 2013.
- Borish, M S, *Private Sector Development During Transition: The Visegrad Countries*. Washington, D.C.: The World Bank, 1996.
- Brenová, L, M Necadová and J Soukup, *Impact of the New Economy on the Competitiveness of the Visegrad Group Countries (with emphasis on the Czech Republic)*. Slaný: Melandrium, 2012.
- 'Comex Vis [Visualizações de Comércio Exterior](http://bit.ly/2YmIx9x)', 2018. <http://bit.ly/2YmIx9x> (accessed 15 December 2018).

- Farkas, B, *Visegrád Countries: Could They Be the Pioneers of the Change of the Central and Eastern Model of Capitalism?* 45th Annual UACES Conference, Bilbao: University of Deusto Bilbao, 2013.
- Forbes, *Global 2000: The World's Largest Public Companies 2018*.
- Grodzicki, M J, *Global Value Chain and Competitiveness of V4 Economies in International Competitiveness in Visegrad Countries: Macro and Micro Perspectives*. Graz: Doris Kiendl-Wendner Krzysztof Wach Editors, 2014.
- Havel, V et al. *The Power of the Powerless: Citizens Against the State in Central Eastern Europe*. London and New York: Routledge, 2015.
- Jagodzinski, A (ed.), *The Visegrad Group – A Central European Constellation*. Bratislava: International Visegrad Fund, 2006.
- Kaposzta, J and H Nagy, *Status Report about the Progress of the Visegrad Countries in Relation to Europe 2020 Targets*. Lodz: De Gruyter Open, 2015.
- Kijek, A, *Spectral Analysis of Business Cycles in the Visegrad Group Countries. Comparative Economic Research*. Berlin: De Gruyter Open, 2017.
- Kundera, M, *The Tragedy of Central Europe*. New York: The New York Review of Books (pre-1986), 1984.
- Michnik, A, *In Search of the Lost Meaning: The New Eastern Europe*. Los Angeles: University of California Press, 2011.
- Rácz, Gy, (ed.), *Visegrád 1335*. Bratislava: International Visegrad Fund, 2009.
- Schwab, K, *The Global Competitiveness Report 2017–2018*. Geneva: World Economic Forum, 2018.
- Tulmets, E, *East Central European Foreign Policy Identity in Perspective: Back to Europe and the EU's Neighbourhood*. Palgrave Macmillan, 2014.
- Weber, R and R Zaleski Trindade, 'Imigrantes Poloneses no Brasil no Contexto da Dominação Austriaca', *Revista do CESLA*, no 19 (2016).
- World Bank, *Doing Business 2018*.