

MIKLÓS ZRÍNYI NATIONAL DEFENCE UNIVERSITY

Doctoral Committee

Orsolya Pacsay Tomassich

**Visegrad cooperation and regional security – defence policy cooperation
of the Visegrad countries from the change of regime to date**

Author's summary of thesis and official deliberations

I. SUMMARY OF RESEARCH TASK AND OBJECTIVES

Today, European security identity needs to face urgent tasks. These are mainly practical issues that have highlighted the limitations to the actions of the European Union and have made it obvious that in the absence of its own security capabilities and an own defence policy the EU may only be a non-significant player in international political relations.

With the enlargement in 2004 of the European Union there emerged the need to examine how the ten new accession countries could make a contribution to Europe's defence capabilities, both militarily and industrially. While the contribution of the acceding countries to one of the pillars of the EU, i.e. the common foreign and security policy (CFSP) and to the European security and defence policy, has always been a matter of examination, the number of comprehensive analyses focusing on the military or armaments stocks dimensions of the accession of the said countries is still very limited.

This explains why I have considered it justified to produce a comprehensive study to analyse, explore and assess the defence market situation and defence industrial capacities of four of the ten countries having acceded in 2004 with the most powerful industrial potentials.

Justification of conducting scientific research

Due to their common historical, regional and geopolitical situation the four countries have common heritage, reflexes and other conditions that **justify** – in addition to considering the agreements of the Visegrad countries concluded so far – the examination of their actions taken so far and the future prospects of their cooperation.

Similarly to the European Union integration policies of these countries, their defence policies also belong to those fields where in order to analyse, expand and enrich the currently existing cooperation policies **it is worth undertaking a scientific task.**

The outcome of such a scientific examination is expected to be utilised by the formulation of Hungary's regional policy with regard to the common foreign and defence policy – at least at the level of the two portfolios concerned.

NATO's decision taken in Istanbul contributed to the consolidation of democratic processes undergoing in the former member countries of the Warsaw Treaty Organisation, injected new energies into the alliance and enhanced the importance of security as the precondition of development and prosperity. With NATO membership – first in the case of Poland, the Czech Republic and Hungary, then that of Slovakia – one of the main objectives of the Visegrad countries materialised.

However, being admitted to the alliance has brought a number of new and difficult tasks for these countries. Due to the demands of modernisation inherent in NATO membership but also a must independent from that membership the countries of the region had to subject themselves to a defence-related review process. These countries embarked on new and significant defence related research - the message of which was as follows: in line with all recommendations the military budget needs to be modestly increased, the number of the

members of their defence forces needs to be decreased and efforts need to be taken to replace their defence forces based on the general conscription obligation with an exclusively volunteer service. The main objective of the military reform as well as of the tasks called for by the results of the defence review is that these countries have such defence forces whose capabilities are useful for and operable by both NATO and the EU, thereby positively influencing their chances of playing a purposeful role.

Simultaneously with military reform a serious procurement-related dispute emerged in these countries during which the possibility of the option of common regional solutions assumed a greater role. The success of such an option required more efficient coordination, which did in fact take place but did not always prove successful. Besides cooperation, specialization became also important in which cost-cutting was a dominating factor. Common procurement, multinational forces and specialization – the expansion of these collective development principles proved a difficult task however because they were opposed to domestic opinions claiming that in order to be ready to counter the worst possible scenario the broadest possible circle of military capabilities were to be maintained. The fact that even within each of the four countries it was difficult to reach consensus regarding the areas concerned, and that all four countries naturally insisted on defending their interests impeded the closer cooperation of the Visegrad countries even after the euphoria over “being the first to reach the target”.

In my thesis, **through an analysis** of to what extent and in what quality the conditions of the reintegration or closer cooperation of the defence industries of the countries in this region exist and of the chances of the reinvigoration of the defence industry ties with each other as well as those of the mutually beneficial cooperation with the defence industry factors of NATO countries, **I prove** that in the region there are unutilised reserves in the defence development cooperation of the countries (the Visegrad group) concerned. I intend to do so while being aware that the developments in the cooperation of the Visegrad countries since the change of regime in the region rather point to moving away from each other than getting closer.

Objectives of the thesis

- To expose the key motives and obstacles of the cooperation of the four countries;
- To study and analyse the emergence and historical background of the cooperation of the Visegrad countries;
- To examine the development of the national and regional policies as well as that of the regional partnership cooperation of the Visegrad Four (mainly of Hungary) because the emergence of the Visegrad cooperation is closely related to the process of the change of regimes in the region and is closely linked to the formation of their regional policies first in the period of the change of regime, then in the conditions of their EU membership;
- To map up the defence capacities and capabilities of the Visegrad countries;
- To draw conclusions regarding the four countries’ readiness for cooperation, and the possible future military industrial and military policy directions that could also characterise their cooperation;
- To identify the potentially fruitful areas of cooperation;
- To provide guidelines for further possibilities of their coordinated actions within the Euro-Atlantic organisations.

In order to achieve the scientific objectives set in my Ph.D. thesis I have applied the following methods:

I have sought to meet my objectives by studying, analysing and synthesising the related domestic and international professional literature and other documents using the methods of induction and deduction.

In the course of my research I have relied on the documented pronouncements and assessments of the political and professional leaders of the Ministry of Defence and the Foreign Ministry made at in-house negotiations as well as at negotiations carried within the Visegrad framework, and on my consultations with experts of the subject of my thesis using the method of interviewing and comparing.

I have focused my research on the truthful description of the issue, the uncovering of the existing problems and on providing novel solutions to the questions concerned. In doing so I have widely relied on my own professional experience as well.

II. BRIEF OUTLINE OF RESEARCH DONE AND CONCLUSIONS DRAWN

My thesis is broken down into four main chapters:

In the first chapter (*Antecedents of security policy cooperation of the Visegrad countries in the bipolar era*) concerning the countries functioning according to the Soviet model in the period of the Warsaw Treaty Organisation **I expose**

- the various forms of government;
- the role of the armed forces;
- economic contradictions of the defence industry within the Soviet model.

Afterwards, in analysing the transitional period **I outline** the efforts made to establish democratic civil control of the defence sector, and to reorganise the civil-military connections.

In respect of the period of the changes of regime **I follow** the process of the redefinition of security policy principles and structures, of the change of attitude and orientation as well as the defence policy reform processes.

With regard to the army and the defence industry **I outline**

- expectations and realities in the region,
- government measures aimed at the transformation of the defence-industrial structure, and
- initiatives taken at regional level.

Afterwards, I describe the process in respect of which the Visegrad countries were faced with the fact that the undertaking of the following tasks were not only imperative due to internal obligation but also due to an external one (because of their aspirations for NATO accession):

- modernisation of the armed forces, and

- introduction of the most advanced technologies in the field of defence industry capacities facilitating the production of modern products.

In this chapter **I conclude** that in respect of the Visegrad countries the change of attitude allowing for the start of modernisation processes took place at various paces and proportions – a fact which caused the coordination of the implementation of the otherwise similar objectives and the realisation of cooperation to be rather sluggish. In spite of this serious propositions were made as to how a series of actions aimed at coordinating the modernisations projects, the defence industry market philosophies, the industrial policy priorities as well as the defence industry interests of the countries in the region should be started.

In the second chapter (*Visegrad cooperation and regional partnership*) **I prove** that in order to be able to deal with the mapping up of the defence capacities and capabilities of the Visegrad countries as well as to examine on this basis their cooperation in the field of defence industry we need to be aware of the key motivations of and obstacles to the cooperation of the four countries, which requires a review of the emergence and history of their cooperation. Since the development of the Visegrad cooperation is related to the process of the changes of regime in the region and thus it is closely linked to the development of the national and regional policies of these countries the analysis in this chapter is carried out in the context of regional policies.

In this chapter **I state** that the political and economic polarisation typical of the region has made it difficult to create and operate long-lasting and effective structures within the region.

I present my arguments as to why it is necessary for Hungary to consider and build alliances in its natural environment, i.e. the Central and East European region and why it is principally in this region where the mechanisms of first-circle consultations and interest coordination are worth maintaining.

I outline the international conditions determining the new development trends of the region as well as the new features and possible directions of Hungary's regional policies in these conditions.

I prove that Hungary's endeavours within the European integration organisations and its regional endeavours are not contradictory but they mutually strengthen each other.

Furthermore, **I give a detailed analysis** of the cooperation of the Visegrad countries

- first up to 2003/2004,
- then in 2003/2004 – preparations for coordinated participation in the activities of the Intergovernmental Conference, and the setting of the directions for the V4 group (in the form of a new Visegrad Declaration),
- and finally I describe the year under the Hungarian presidency in 2005/2006.

In outlining the possible framework for regional cooperation under the conditions of EU membership **I argue for** the *raison d'être* of the Visegrad cooperation while **stating** that in many cases coalitions forming along geometries changing in an ad hoc manner as well as parallel bilateral agreements will be the most purposeful solutions. (In this context I make reference to Austria and Slovenia, the countries in respect of which this identity of interests is expected to arise most frequently.)

The third chapter covers two main topics – cooperation in the defence force development of the Visegrad countries on the one hand, and their cooperation in defence industries.

In this chapter **I analyse**

- the economic situation in which the Visegrad countries need to embark on reforming their defence forces,
- the delicate issue of the relationship between their economic and financial situation and their military budgets arising in each one of the Visegrad countries,
- developments in the field of defence procurements,
- the privatisation and transformation of the defence industries of the Visegrad countries.

I highlight the regrettable fact that despite the fact that the deficiencies of the defence capabilities of the Visegrad countries are very similar or are frequently identical there has been no marked political intention on their side to formulate similar needs and despite several efforts no common procurement or renewal operations have taken place.

I consider it their failure that

- on the one hand, following the change of regime these countries have not been able to coordinate their remaining comparative advantages having developed due to the production specialisation typical in the Warsaw treaty era. Had they done so, together with coupling them with modern technologies they would have been more successful in selling their products in NATO markets, and that
- on the other hand they did nothing to prevent their existing capacities from being annihilated (the large industrial conglomerates disintegrated – the manufacturing companies were wound up or became parts of state holdings). Instead, through more reasonable procurement policies and by adapting their existing capacities to the new requirements and conditions and by production diversification and cooperation between them they could have changed over to a mixed profile (civil+military) production or to the production of the so-called partial/niche capabilities (not necessarily military capabilities, e.g. transport, water purification, etc.) and thereby they could have remained competitive, and not only in NATO markets.

I state that what still offers a possibility for these states to increase their defence industry compatibility is on the one hand the initiative of the European Commission on legislation in the field of defence research and defence procurement, and the setting up of the European Defence Agency (EDA) on the other.

In describing the defence industry cooperation **I outline** and analyse the main features of the division of work and specialisation existing in the Warsaw Treaty era as well as those of the functioning of the system which are still well reflected in the current conditions of their armaments production.

I expose the situation following the disintegration of the Warsaw Treaty Organisation: the decline in production, the main features of military budgets and the related reduction of the armed forces, then those of the modernisation and investment processes.

Within the above **I analyse** the loss of balance of the structure of defence budgets typical since the 80s, which later – in addition to the economic difficulties – largely contributed to the decision of the new power elite that the prioritisation of the maintenance of the personnel against modernisation, investments and research and development should be continued.

Also, the current structure of the defence industry is discussed and there is a **detailed analysis** of the modernisation and investment policies of the Visegrad countries as well as the **following** of the current practice of international cooperation, the in-flow of capital and the regime of offsets frequently applied in agreements concluded by the Visegrad countries.

I describe the defence policy stages of the Visegrad countries and follow the defence forces development and defence industry cooperation in the region concerned.

At the same time **I prove** that despite unused opportunities there is a possibility of improvement of the cooperation of the Visegrad countries in the field of defence forces development and defence industry cooperation. On the one hand, there still exist unused development reserves, and the political intention to maintain coordination mechanisms and to research new areas of enhanced cooperation also exists on the other.

In the fourth chapter (*Transatlantic system of relationships – Visegrad countries searching new paths*) first **I outline** the differences of approach between the United States and Europe and the ensuing differences of opinion that have become visible due to conflicts in the past period.

Afterwards, **I follow** the developments concerning the conflicts having dominated the EU-US relationship in the past ten years, and uncover the division of labour in the course of crisis management.

I point out that in the said division of labour the role of the Visegrad countries has not been significant (up to the Iraqi conflict) as these countries have acted as reliable allies with a rather slight weight.

In analysing the implications of the Iraqi crisis for the division of labour in the transatlantic conflict management on the one hand **I show** the reactions of the Visegrad countries to a new situation as well as their different role-taking in respect of their differing affinity with the USA and the assessment, mainly by Washington, of their behaviour on the other.

While analysing the Washington-related positions of the Visegrad countries **I prove** the assumption that in the three areas (political support for military actions, assistance in peacekeeping, financial contribution to reconstruction) where Washington needs the support of its allies in its fight against terrorism – mainly due to the Iraqi conflict – the Visegrad countries have not been able to be on par with West Europe in offering an alternative of equal value.

I point out that the Visegrad countries can not count on becoming (in this area) a long term strategic ally of the USA.

Then **I juxtapose various views of whether** there exist areas where in the long run the USA still counts on support provided by central east Europe and on the strategic partnership of the countries in the region.

In the subchapter on the latest NATO development tendencies **I outline** the changes in the role and weight of the organisation having taken place in the period following the cold war, especially in the light of the changed division of labour between the USA and Europe, of the

dominant conflicts in the past decade, and in that of Istanbul and Prague as well as the enlargement waves.

I point out that in accordance with NATO's requirements, in the periods of the launch of the defence reforms, compliance with the 3 collective development principles (common procurement, multinational forces, specialisation) on the part of the Visegrad countries – due to the lack of domestic political consensus – did not materialise.

Summary of conclusions

With the accession to the EU of the four countries the Visegrad cooperation assumed a new dimension – a fact which, often caused by the imperative of performing similar tasks – could give a new impetus to their common activities.

In order to achieve full “political” integration the Visegrad countries need to meet several criteria and simultaneously they have the opportunity to exert their interests when the new structures and projects are taking shape. Obviously, if they could coordinate their modernisation policies – mainly their streamlining and procurement policies – and they could cooperate in developing their special capabilities that provide them with extraordinary opportunities in Europe, i.e. by further tightening their regional cooperation, they could increase their competitiveness and could move forward somewhat sooner in the sphere of interest exertion mechanisms typical of interest exertion mechanisms of the Euro-Atlantic organisations.

In drawing my final conclusion I state that with stronger positions in defence policies and defence industries the Visegrad countries could not only increase their weight within the transatlantic integration forms but by more forcefully contributing to the EU's own defence capabilities they could improve the EU's competitiveness and the efficiency of its armaments policy which at the same time is the precondition to the EU properly responding to the newly emerging security challenges.

III. SUMMARY OF SCIENTIFIC ACHIEVEMENTS, RECOMMENDATIONS

In my thesis I prove that in the defence development cooperation of the countries in the region examined (Visegrad Group) there exist unused reserves. I pinpoint two main areas in connection with which I see enhanced cooperation not only as an option but also as a necessity:

1. In the EU's New Neighbourhood Policy, furthermore in it's policy towards its neighbours on the east and southeast, the Visegrad Four need to act in concert: the states situated along the eastern borders of the Union should acquire and ensure the necessary political attention and financial sources, and they should also involve nongovernmental players (NGOs, municipalities, key business players)
2. Coordinated participation in the work of the European Defence Agency. Through their cooperation carried out on the basis of their coordinated interests the Visegrad countries could
 - on the one hand improve their competitiveness in developing their special capabilities that provide them with extraordinary opportunities in Europe, and could get forward

sooner and further in the sphere of interest exertion mechanisms typical of interest exertion mechanisms of the Euro-Atlantic organisations, and

- on the other hand they could organically contribute to the maintenance the international competitiveness of the European defence industrial base.

New scientific achievements

1. In respect of the Visegrad countries I have uncovered the historical roots of the dominant opinions and motivations determining the defence policy cooperation, as well as the stages of this cooperation, and I have examined the tendencies of defence forces development and defence industrial cooperation on the basis of which I have proved the future necessity of the Visegrad cooperation.
2. I have justified that in the defence forces development and defence industrial cooperation of the Visegrad countries there are still unutilised possibilities, and have stressed the existence of further inherent reserves in the New Neighbourhood Policy of the EU, furthermore in it's policy towards its neighbours on the east and southeast, as well as of those in establishing EDA (European Defence Agency).
3. I have proved the usefulness of cooperation and that of the emergence of particular interests and their changes in the course of the reinvigoration of the cooperation as well as of its being placed on new foundations.

Recommendations

Prior to the writing of this thesis I prepared several studies dealing with the theme of regional political cooperation in Central and Eastern Europe, mainly the questions of the cooperation of the Visegrad countries and regional partnership initiatives, which have served as guidelines for Hungarian foreign policy, particularly in our bilateral parliamentary connections. It is a new scientific achievement of this thesis examining the defence policy aspect of regional cooperation forms that in respect of regional policies I am the first to summarise the developments in this regard and draw conclusions which – should there exist the necessary political will – **the governments concerned can use** in shaping their defence policies and the realisation of their objectives in order to enhance the fruitful and mutually beneficial Visegrad cooperation.

I also recommend the use of this thesis in university graduate education by students dealing with security policy **in the course of their studies**.

IV. LIST OF OWN PUBLICATIONS

Excerpt from a book titled „Redefining European Security – National, Transnational and Institutional Challenges at the End of the Century”. (Editor: Carl Cavanagh Hodge, Garland Publishing, Inc. NY and London, 1999.)

EBVP: The new neighbourhood policy of the European Union – a wider concept of Europe (Publication of the Hungarian Parliament: European analyses, 2004)

Directions of development in Hungary’s regional policy – Visegrad cooperation and regional partnership (Publication of the Hungarian Parliament: concept background study, 2004)

Article in Asbury Park Press newspaper (July 2000, New Jersey USA). Topic: Hungary as stabilising factor in the region.

Presentation: Strategic partnerships in Central and Eastern Europe: the future of the Visegrad Group. Publication of the conference titled “Britain, Hungary and Slovakia – Partners in Europe”, organised by the British Council Hungary, Casta Papiernicka, Slovakia, March 4-6 2004.

Government report: The summit meeting of the prime ministers of the Visegrad countries held in Kromeriz, Slovakia on May 16 2004. The report prepared by the author of this thesis. The main issue at the summit was the participation of the Visegrad countries in the EU’s common foreign and security policy.

Conferences, seminars, other events

Participation in the Hungarian delegation drawing up the new Visegrad Declaration, approved by the prime ministers of Hungary, the Czech Republic, Poland and Slovakia (2204)

Presentation titled “Hungary, a NATO ally –Hungary’s security and defence policy being renewed”, given to the security experts participating in the Central Europe Initiative conference in Budapest in 1999.

Participation in and professional preparation on the Hungarian side for the summit meeting of the heads of state and prime ministers of the Visegrad countries held in the Czech Republic in 2004. The main issue at summit was the participation of the Visegrad countries in the EU’s common foreign and security policy.

Participation in and professional preparation on the Hungarian side for the summit meeting of the heads of state of the Visegrad countries held in Budapest in 2003. The main issue at summit was the joint strategic action by the Visegrad countries aimed at preserving stability in respect of neighbouring countries excluded from the 2004 round of EU enlargement, and to help them in catching up.

Preparation on the Hungarian side for the summit meeting of the heads of state of the Visegrad countries held in Bratislava in 2004.

Professional preparation for and participation in consultation of the political directors of the foreign ministries of the Visegrad countries where the main issues were, among others, the participation of the Visegrad countries in the EU’s common foreign and security policy and as well as the Group’s transatlantic ties, 2003-2004.

European security and defence policy: the opening conference of the “Nyíregyháza Process”, Nyíregyháza 2003.

UN ECOSOC session in New York, 2002, 2003. Main issue: Global security policy issue, the economic consequences of terrorism.

Session of the UN General Assembly in New York in 2000 (participating as member of the Hungarian delegation led by the President of Hungary), 2001 and 2002. In the past two sessions the priority issue was: terrorism (security policy problems in the aftermath of the 9/11/2001 attack), combating terrorism. Participation and preparation of background paper and government report.

Participation in the professional preparation on the Hungarian side for the UNFFD conference in Mexico in 2002. The Hungarian side (as a new donor country) argues for the possibility that the eastern neighbours of Central and Eastern Europe could become target countries in respect of development aid thus creating the preconditions for security policy stability.

Session of the Executive Council of the UN Development Program held in New York in 2002. (Representing Hungary’s interests in line with our policy at the UNFFD)

Session of the Committee on Development Policy of ECOSOC held in New York in 2002. (Representing Hungary’s interests in line with our policy at the UNFFD)

Extraordinary high level session of the UN ECOSOC and Bretton Woods organisations held in New York in 2002. (Representing Hungary’s interests in line with our policy at the UNFFD)

Participation in the professional preparation on the Hungarian side for the UN Conference on Sustainable Development held in South Africa in 2002. (Representing Hungary’s interests in line with our policy at the UNFFD)

Session of the German Foreign Affairs Society held in Munich, Germany in 2000 (the Hungarian foreign minister was honorary guest at the session – I was participating as member of the foreign minister’s cabinet). Topic: Stability in the Balkans – Stability Pact.

Security policy seminar at NATO’s study centre in Oberammergau, NATO SCHOOL (SHAPE), Germany, 2000.

NATO seminar and study visit to NATO’s headquarters in Brussels, organised by the Budapest Embassy of USA, held in Belgium in 1999.

V. CURRICULUM VITAE

Personal details

Name: Orsolya Pacsay Tomassich
 Maiden name: Orsolya Szenthe
 Marital status: Married with one son
 Place/date of birth: Budapest, 1973

Work experience

2006 Member of staff of Foreign Ministry – on child care allowance
 2005 Foreign Ministry: I. EU Bilateral Department
 Responsibilities: Hungarian-Dutch bilateral relations
 2003-2005 Foreign Ministry: Regional Cooperation Department: I. EU Bilateral
 Department
 Responsibilities: **Visegrad cooperation**
 2001-2003 Foreign Ministry: foreign service in New York (Hungarian Permanent
 Mission to the United Nations)
 2000-2001 Foreign Ministry: member of the cabinet of the foreign minister
 1999-2000 Foreign Ministry: personal assistant to Dr. Rudolf Joó, deputy state
 secretary responsible for multilateral diplomacy
 1997-1999 Foreign Ministry: International Organisations Department – desk
 officer

Qualifications

1992-1997 University of Economics of Budapest, faculty of international relations
 degree earned summa cum laude
 Supplementary studies: communications and marketing communication

Other professional experience

2005 Foreign Ministry: foreign minister's appraisal (for my activities in the
 field of the Visegrad Cooperation)
 1999-2001 Preparation of large number of professional background papers, part of
 publications, speeches, presentations, addresses, official letters,
 proposals, mainly in security policy topics in capacity of personal
 assistant to Dr. Rudolf Joó, deputy state secretary responsible for
 multilateral diplomacy, later as member of the foreign minister's
 cabinet. As member of the cabinet I was mainly dealing with
 multilateral issues, including security policy issues as my field of
 specialisation.
 1997 Head of the Hungarian delegation participating in a UN simulation
 exercise organised by Harvard University
 1996 Course at the Academy of Diplomacy, Vienna. Topic: Austria and the
 EU
 1992-1994 AIESEC (International Association of Economics Students) –
 organisation and implementation of professional projects

Languages

English: fluent; German: intermediate; French: intermediate;
 Italian: intermediate (vocational)