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VISEGRAD GROUP – AFTER 20 YEARS

Abstract: *The year 2011 is referred to as the “Year of the Visegrad Group” – Czech Republic, Hungary, Poland and Slovakia. In this year Hungary and Poland alternate as the European Union Presidential country, and, in parallel, Slovakia and Hungary alternate in the position of the Visegrad Group Presidential country. It is also the year when the Visegrad Group commemorates the 20th anniversary of its foundation. The paper outlines the history of the Visegrad Group from its early beginnings which reach back to the 14th century: The author describes major V-4 documents and strategies and key themes. Subchapters deal with the following topics: V-4 and the European Union, V-4 and the Western Balkans, V-4 and Defence and Security Policy, V-4 and energy, economy, transportation, agriculture, culture and tourism. The Central European grouping, the Visegrad Group, confirmed the justification of its existence, its functioning and of its importance for the future. It is stated in the conclusion that the grouping has proved its potential for facing the actual international and global challenges in international affairs, economy, energy, security and in other important spheres.*

Keywords: *International Visegrad Fund, Visegrad Group, Presidency of the Slovak Republic, Visegrad cooperation*

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A. From the Historical Roots to the Present

The year 2011 is being designated as the “Year of the Visegrad Group” – Czech Republic, Hungary, Poland and Slovakia. In this year Hungary and Poland alternate as the European Union Presidential country, and, in parallel, Slovakia and Hungary alternate in the position of the Visegrad Group Presidential country. It is also the year when the Visegrad Group commemorates the 20th anniversary of its foundation.

In fact, *the historical roots of this grouping* reach back to the 14th century. Three kingdoms were then competing for power in the Central European region: Czech, Polish and Hungarian. Their representatives met in *Trenčín* (presently in Slovakia) in August 1335 looking for an agreement in territorial issues, mainly between the Czech and Polish king¹. Subsequently, the three kings,

¹ MARSINA, R.: *Trenčianska dohoda z augusta 1335 a jej osudy*. Historický zborník, Matica Slovenská, p. 51.