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February 2025

NEWSLETTER

Think Visegrad in Brussels

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Welcome to the **February edition** of the newsletter of Think Visegrad in Brussels. This issue traditionally presents activities and publications of the **Think Visegrad** in Brussels projects, the individual members of the **Think Visegrad** platform and informs about the upcoming events.

For more, follow us on [Facebook!](#)



Europe 2025: Security, Stability & Integration

"Europe has to change to thrive in this new reality"

Ursula von der Leyen - 14.02.25

MUNICH SECURITY CONFERENCE, 14.02 - 16.02

World leaders, policymakers, and defense officials in Munich to tackle rising geopolitical tensions and shifting security dynamics in an increasingly multipolar world.

Key Takeaways:

- **Transatlantic Uncertainty:** As a new U.S. administration takes shape, Europe grapples with its geopolitical role amid shifting alliances with America and Ukraine.
- **High-Stakes Diplomacy:** JD Vance's sharp critique of Europe, Zelenskyy's call for unity, and von der Leyen's push for a stronger EU set the stage for crucial decisions.
- **EU's Global Strategy:** Von der Leyen warns against trade wars, stresses the need for a resilient Europe, and highlights the impact of U.S.-China competition on global stability.

NEWS FROM THE V4:

Polish Presidency of EU Council entered its third month, advancing a security policy focus, tackling political disunity and hoping to build a coalition of support for Ukraine. On **Friday 14.02** the Polish Presidency presented a letter presenting the conditions for the opening of the **fundamentals cluster of negotiations** for Ukraine's EU accession. Due to an unresolved issue over Ukraine's minority protection plan, the **Hungarian Delegation** opposed the letter, hinting at potential procedural blocks to **talks in April**.

The **Czech Republic** has developed a document with proposals to enhance the integration of Ukraine and Moldova into the EU, focusing on sectors such as energy, agriculture, and telecommunications. The proposal is gaining support from other EU member states and could lead to legislative measures at European level that could gradually align these countries' economies with the EU. On **20.02** NATO chief **Mark Rutte** met with **Slovak leaders**, reaffirming Slovakia's steadfast place as a NATO and EU member and emphasising the need for increased defence spending beyond **the current 2%**.

THE EUROPEAN PARLIAMENT – Key Debates

"Continuing unwavering support for Ukraine", 11.02

- MEPs evaluate three years of war, and Russia's suppression of dissent after Alexei Navalny's murder
- The Parliament urges tougher sanctions on Russian media spreading disinformation justifying the war of aggression
- Ukraine pushes for accelerated EU accession talks, eyeing progress under Poland's EU Presidency.

"Preparedness for a new era – multilateral cooperation or tariffs," 11.02

- With fresh tariff threats from the Trump administration, MEPs debate the future of transatlantic trade.
- MEPs affirm the EU's commitment to open, rules-based trade while trade defence tools are on standby to protect European industries.
- EU-Mercosur agreement gains traction as third countries seek stability
- EU to accelerate trade relations with emerging economies to diversify partnerships and reduce dependency on the US market.

In this **February edition**, and throughout the year, we will bring you analyses, insights, and expertise from top experts within the **Think Visegrad platform**, offering a Central European perspective on what lies ahead for the EU—from security and defence to economic shifts and digital transformation.

Stay with us and stay ahead of the key developments **shaping Europe in 2025!**

From our members: selected publications



Munich and what next?: the prospect of a reduced US presence in Europe

Krzysztof Niecypor

Trump-Zelensky: an escalation of rhetoric

Marcin Jędrysiak



Baltic States Synchronise Electricity Grids with the EU

Kinga Dudzinska

Georgian Dream Grabs All the Power

Wojciech Wojtasiewicz

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**More Continuity Than Change:
Poland's Foreign Policy
between Sovereignism and
Pro-Europeanism**

**Daniel Sitera & Katarzyna
Kochlöffel**

**Israel's Relations with the
European Far Right:
Implications for Czechia and
the EU**

Azriel Bermant

**Once Taboos are Broken, Do
the walls come down too?
The political gains made by
AfD and FPO**

**Casba Stefan & Szabolcs
Helmeci**

**Why Greenland and Canada
became the New
Geopolitical Players**

Ramachandra Byrappa

From our members: future events

SAVE THE DATE

**BOOK LAUNCH: Strategic Dynamics
Changing Course In Open Societies**

20 March 2025 | Prague, Czech Republic

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[Learn more](#)

The Institute of International Relations invites you to the launch and discussion of **Matúš Halás's** new book, "**Strategic Dynamics: Changing Course in Open Societies.**" The event will explore the provocative question: can autocracies outperform democracies ?

The discussion will centre Halás's core message: **open societies are well-equipped to adapt effectively to adverse circumstances** and will out perform autocracies in the long run.

If you would like to learn more, or simply need a dose of optimism don't hesitate to **register!**

Matúš Halás is a Senior Researcher at IIR and and a member of the Centre for European Politics since 2018.

Our members on social media

[Centre for Euro-Atlantic Integration and Democracy](#)



[EUROPEUM Institute for European Policy](#)



[Center for Eastern Studies \(OSW\)](#)



[GLOBSEC Policy Institute](#)



[Hungarian Institute of International Affairs \(HIIA\)](#)



[Institute of International Relations Prague \(IIR\)](#)



[Slovak Foreign Policy Association \(SFPA\)](#)



[The Polish Institute of International Affairs \(PISM\)](#)



What is the ‘Think Visegrad in Brussels’ project?

In the first half of 2016, the Think Visegrad platform members agreed on the idea proposed by the EUROPEUM Institute for European Policy, to create a common representation office in Brussels. The main motivation for it is the need to encourage debate on issues of common interest to the EU and the V4 and explain the positions of the V4 to a wide audience. We would like to project an image of constructive partners, to explain the dynamics of the debates within our regions and to highlight our active contributions to EU policy-making. With this view and with the aim to boost discussions specifically on the Czech Republic and the EU, EUROPEUM has opened its Brussels office in January 2016.

The project run in the second half of 2016 and consisted of many interesting and successful events. The second part of the project was approved in June 2017 and continued until the end of the year. Project has been continuously running since 2018.



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