



# Newsletter

## Think Visegrad in Brussels

October 2025



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Welcome to the **October 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 in October 2025 : Elections in Europe | EU Summit: Key Priorities | Hungarian Lens on Enlargement | EU-Uzbekistan Relations**

## EU Elections in Europe

📍 Czech Republic | 3-4 October 2025

📍 The Netherlands | 29 October 2025

### cz Czech Republic

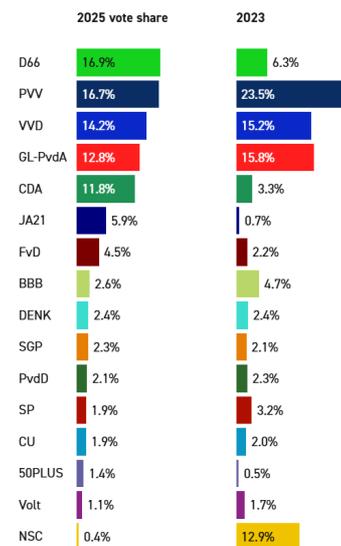
Andrej Babiš's **ANO movement won the parliamentary elections with 35%** 🗳️, forming a coalition with **SPD** and **Motorists for Themselves**, totaling **108 of 200 seats**. More radical parties performed below expectations.

The new government is expected to reassess its approach to support for **Ukraine** and may influence future dynamics within the **Visegrád Group**. At the EU level, the result shifts voting balances in the European Parliament and could shape Czech positions in upcoming Council discussions.

### NL The Netherlands

In the Netherlands, the governing coalition — including PVV and BBB — collapsed after 11 months. Coalition talks are now underway, with two main possibilities: a **broad centrist coalition** or a **right-leaning coalition** that currently lacks a majority.

A comparison of the **2023 and 2025 election results** (📊 see graph) highlights the shifts shaping these negotiations. The next government will face the challenge of restoring **political stability** ⚖️ while addressing key issues such as **migration**, **housing**, and **climate policy** 🌱.



## EU European Council Meets in Brussels: Focus on Ukraine, Defense & More

📍 Brussels | 23 October 2025

EU leaders gathered in Brussels for one of the four-yearly European Council meetings to tackle key issues shaping Europe's future 🏛️.

**UA Ukraine:** The Council discussed an ambitious plan to unlock €185 billion in frozen Russian assets as a "reparations loan" for Ukraine. Belgium, which holds much of the money via Euroclear, raised legal questions and called for all EU members to share any financial risks. The European Commission will now draft a formal legal proposal.

**MD Moldova:** Leaders commended Moldova for ensuring free and fair elections despite Russian hybrid interference and reaffirmed strong EU support for its EU accession path.

🌐 Other topics included defense readiness by 2030, the Middle East, competitiveness, the twin (green and digital) transition, housing, and migration — all vital for Europe's future resilience.

🗣️ As President of the European Council, António Costa stated:

*"Today, the European Council delivered concrete measures on Ukraine, defence, climate, and competitiveness. [...] And we will keep delivering. For our citizens, for our future, and for our place in the world."*

## HU Hungary: No to Ukraine, Yes to the Western Balkans

📍 Budapest | 30 October 2025

Hungary has once again taken a firm stance against **Ukraine's EU membership**, threatening to veto accession talks – but made clear it's **not opposed to EU enlargement overall**. Budapest supports Moldova, Georgia, and especially the **Western Balkans** joining the bloc.

🇺🇦 On Ukraine, Prime Minister Viktor Orbán argues that admitting a country “constantly in danger of war” could drag Europe into conflict and place a heavy **burden on the EU budget**, as Ukraine would benefit from agricultural and cohesion funds. While Hungary provides **humanitarian aid and electricity** to Ukraine, it continues to **reject military and financial support**. Instead, Orbán proposes a **strategic partnership** model for Kyiv – a status that Ukraine has had since 2017.

👉 Hungary stands isolated in the EU as the **only member openly opposing Ukraine's accession** talks. Under current unanimity rules, it can block formal steps 🛑, a **veto** that has frustrated Brussels and prompted debate on bypassing such rules. This lone stance is increasingly viewed as a **challenge to EU unity** and credibility on enlargement.

🌍 In contrast, Hungary strongly backs **Western Balkan enlargement**, saying these countries have met most membership criteria and deserve faster progress. Hungarian Minister for European Affairs János Bóka stressed that expansion in the region would boost stability and growth. 🇮🇹 Hungary also maintains deep business and political ties with the Balkans – especially **Serbia**, with which it cooperates closely in **energy, migration, trade, and defense**.

## EU UZ EU and Uzbekistan Sign Enhanced Cooperation Agreement

📍 Brussels | 24 October 2025

Following the **EU-Central Asia Summit in Samarkand** 🇺🇿 on April 4, 2025, the **Enhanced Partnership and Cooperation Agreement (EPCA)** marks a major milestone in EU-Uzbekistan relations 🇪🇺.

The agreement opens new opportunities for collaboration in **critical raw materials** ⚡ 🌱 supporting the **green and digital transitions**, building on the 2024 EU-Uzbek MoU. It also strengthens **regional connectivity** 🌐, including the **Global Gateway initiative** and the **Trans-Caspian Transport Corridor** 🇺🇸 🇷🇺.

The EPCA concludes **bilateral market access negotiations** 📄, covering tariffs and services – an important step for Uzbekistan's **WTO accession process**.

🗣️ EU Commission President Ursula von der Leyen noted:

*“The Enhanced Cooperation and Partnership Agreement provides a framework for Uzbekistan and the European Union to work together for the mutual benefit of our citizens. It is the moment to consolidate an already strong partnership.”*

The framework is expected to **simplify trade procedures**, improve regulatory alignment, and further integrate Uzbekistan into **European and global transport and trade networks**, supporting **economic modernization** and **sustainable growth** 🌱 🏗️.

In this **October 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



**Filip Křenek**

**The role of the Czech Republic and EU competitiveness, economic security, relations with the US and China, and the Global Gateway strategy | Background paper of the National Convention on European Union**



**Iwona Wisniewska**

**Trump's first sanctions, the EU's 19th sanctions package: the West increases the pressure on Russia**

**Łukasz Maślanka**

**The European Council greenlights greater EU involvement in strengthening military capabilities**



**Katarina Schachtschneider**

**Participatory democracy in Slovakia: Participation as a path to a resilient society.**

**Vladislava Gubalova**

**Shaping Secure and Resilient Tech Futures: The Women's Perspective**

›-INSTITUTE OF INTERNATIONAL RELATIONS PRAGUE

**Linda Monsees**

**Beyond the Ban: TikTok and the Politics of Digital Sovereignty in the EU and US**

**Míla O'Sullivan**

**Emancipatory Dimensions of In:Security – Coping with the Challenges of War in Ukraine**

**Kinga Dudzińska**

**Denmark's Climate Ambitions and Experience May Help Shape Europe's Energy Transition**

**Melchior Szczepanik**

**Crisis Management Continues in Von der Leyen's Second Commission**



**Magyar Külügyi Intézet**  
Hungarian Institute of International Affairs

**Péter Siklósi**

**Who Can Move What in the Grand Chess Game of Ending the Russia-Ukraine War?**

**Ágnes Vass**

**Dwindling Solidarity – Czechia's Political Realignment Driven by the Division over Ukraine**

## Reading Tips



 **Visegrad Four as an Institution in Times of EU Crises**  
by Petr Kaniok and Vit Hlousek

 A sharp comparative look at **how the Visegrád Group (V4) responded to three major EU crises** - migration, COVID-19, and the war in Ukraine. The authors show that V4 cooperation was not driven by the severity of crises but by **domestic politics**, explaining why the group acted cohesively during the migration crisis but fractured during COVID-19 and Ukraine.

 A valuable read for understanding **when and why the V4 works as a political bloc**.

 Released last month, in October.

**Learn More**

## 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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