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Is Visegrad-4 Countries Future in the European Union Questionable?[1]

Abstract: *Visegrad Four (Czechia, Hungary, Poland and Slovakia) countries, known on international arena as V-4, never being strictly unified grouping, in the context of the migrant crisis in the EU (2015 and after) seemed to emerged as one, unified voice, at least in this particular issue. Due to the fact that especially Hungary and Poland are increasingly treated as a (nationalistic and populist) challenge toward the European values, as defined in so called Copenhagen criteria, the Author is trying to find the answer about the future of the V-4 in the EU in the years to come.*

Keywords: European integration, the European Union, Visegrad Group – V-4, liberal values, crises in the EU, nationalism, populism, external and internal security

This question could not have got any attention a few years ago. During the first decade of membership in the European Union (EU) all experts or serious politicians, let alone the larger communities of the V-4 countries, considered accession in 2004 as a qualitative cornerstone in their historical development from security, geopolitical, political, economic and social point of view alike. All of them were aware of and repeatedly emphasized the unambiguous advantages of having joined the EU based on various cost-benefit analyses.

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At present, however, some developments in the V-4 countries, particularly in Hungary (earlier) and in Poland (more recently), less in the Czech Republic and Slovakia (both of them, and especially the first one, not immune to anti-EU trends) seem to justifiy this question and require reasonable answers in order to stop the dangerous and self-defeating populist wave. This paper aims at contributing to the expert debate expecting that a comprehensive and objective discussion can be started not only with populist politicians but, first of all, with broader circles of the population in all V-4 countries.

1. Why did the question of non-membership (re)emerge?

First, political changes in the last years leading to the establishment of authoritarian systems (in prime minister Viktor Orbán's expression 'illiberal democracy'), the special interpretation of the 'rule of law', the demolishment of basic democratic institutions became a basic challenge to European values cemented in EU treaties and signed by all V-4 countries in 2002 when official negotiations were finished and the way became open to membership in 2004. Strong national(istic) efforts started to put into question the right (and obligation) of Brussels in 'intervening' into 'domestic affairs' of the member countries.

Second, and as an unprecedented development within the EU, one of the member countries, namely the Hungarian government, blamed and accused Brussels openly and on the highest political level. Anti-EU or EU-sceptical movements can be found in (almost) all EUmember countries, however anti-EU propaganda did not appear on the agenda of any government of a member country. The poster campaign of 'Let's stop Brussels' in Hungary was, at least until today, the most manifest example.

Third, the migration plan with obligatory resettlement of a very modest number of asylum seekers (not 'migrants'!) fostered the V-4 cohesion and confronted the priority of 'national identity' ('we are not an immigrant country') with the EU's migration plan. Although the Hungarian and Slovak appeal has been rejected by the European Court of Justice, this confrontation did not finish. Just the opposite, it seems to be the most important element of demonstrating the (never existed) strong cohesion among the V-4 countries.

Fourth, Brexit and its potential consequences fundamentally weakened the position of the V-4 within the EU. Great Britain had always been considered by V-4 politicians as the basic ally against any deepening of the integration. With the potential Brexit, V-4 countries not only are losing their strategic ally but, at the same time, may be facing the revival of the deepening process of crisis in the EU and the emerging institutional dividing lines between the 'core' and the 'periphery'. It raises a huge dilemma for all anti-EU politicians. Nobody would like to end up at the (institutional) periphery of the integration because everybody is concerned with the potential geopolitical and socio-economic consequences. Therefore, obvious steps have to be made to avoid such a situation, which means that V-4 countries have to accept the rules, conditions and consequences of deepening divisions in various areas of the integration. This, however, contrasts with populist anti-EU policies at home, because, at a given moment, such a domestic socio-political environment could easily lead to 'self-peripherization'. The 'peacock dance' (to use V. Orbán's expression) consisting of accepting practically all EU-level decisions in Brussels and at the same time continuing with anti-EU rhetoric at home has to be stopped in order to avoid a self-generating process of 'self-peripherization'.

Fifth, V-4 countries, belonging to the main beneficiaries of EU cohesion fund are fully aware of the fact that the unprecedented modernization chance financed over two budgetary periods (2007–2013 and 2014–2020) is unlikely to be prolonged after 2020. The new multiannual budget (2021–2027), with official negotiations just starting, will look rather different from the previous ones. First, due to the consequences of Brexit, the EU cannot any more rely on payments coming from the second largest contributor. The alternatives are looking for additional contributions by the remaining members or seriously cutting the next budget. Second, the changing priorities of the EU (more resources for future-oriented activities instead of fostering the 'status-quo' mentality and behaviour), are expected to substantially modify the structure of expenditures. Third, even if cohesion funds were to remain and were not be seriously reduced, the conditions of getting resources will be changed (from one-sided flow of money towards long-term and repayable credits).

Sixth, emerging self-deceiving arguments by V-4 politicians, as part of demonstrating the 'independence' and 'maturity' of the four countries both in alliance and individually have to be professionally criticized. Most recently, the Hungarian prime minister announced, that Hungary does not need any more EU money, because it stands on its feet and can generate high growth rates without EU support. Polish politicians emphasize that EU funds, to a large extent, served and enriched the net contributer countries, first of all Germany, and not Poland. The Czech scene is more modest, since the key argument is more national manouevring room and less 'interference' (or 'dominance') by Brussels. Also, the V-4 level argument according to which it is this group that may become the driver of EU growth and a key player in preparing the integration for the challenges of the 21st century and in exerting manifestly growing (or even decisive) influencing on shaping the future of the EU has to be mentioned and righly addressed (for specific comments see Chapter 3).

2. Membership vs. non-membership: some basic facts

It would be an ahistorical approach to imagine what would have happened with the V-4 region and the individual countries if they had not entered the EU. However, as an intellectual exercise, we could develop some scenarios concerning geopolitical security, domestic political stability, the development and sustainability of the democratic system that started to unfold after the systemic change in 1990. In addition, economic issues, such as growth, structural change and competitiveness, behaviour of foreign investors, unemployment, foreign trade and the availability (and costs) of external financial resources could extensively be dealt with in the framework of costs and benefits of 'economic independence' in a period of unprecedented globalization. Finally, the imaginary discussion should not ignore the potential impacts on 'social modernization'.

However, instead of yielding to the seduction of imagining never happened scenarios, this paper focuses on the current, rather complicated reality. The real issue is how did more than one decade of full-fledged EU membership shape the V-4 countries in general, and their relations with(in) the EU.

Before an economic analysis, two basic pillars have to be underlined. First, all acceding countries have committed themselves to the EU rules, including the primacy/supremacy of EU law over national legislation in all areas where EU law prevails. Moreover, they accepted the 'no opt-out' principle, according to which, they have to join all EU policies in the future, even if transitional periods, both in the interest of the EU and of the joining member countries, can or have to be admitted (Eurozone, Schengen, etc.). Second, the V-4 countries have clearly defined their interests in membership, including the four freedoms (trade, services, capital and with special emphasis on citizens and manpower), just access to EU funds and full-fledged participation in EU institutions and decision-making bodies. In all areas, membership guaranteed these requirements. It is regrettable, that, from the very beginning of accession, the political leadership in each country stressed the importance of free flow of labour and access to EU money and ignored the unique opportunity to have become member of an international organization in which small countries, based on shared sovereignty, could have a much greater impact than in case of insisting on 'national sovereignty'.

2.1. Impact on overall growth

V-4 growth over the entire period (2004–2016) was substantially higher than that of the EU-28 (and even more than that of the EU-15). Although the 2008–2009 crisis interrupted this process, most countries recovered quite soon, being Hungary the exception. In 2009, EU-28 growth suffered a decline of 4.3 per cent, but Poland remained the only EU member country with positive growth (1.6 per cent), while the Czech and Slovak figures were slightly below the EU average (4.5 and 4.9 per cent, respectively), and only Hungary experienced a very strong decline (6.8 per cent). Between 2010 and 2013 average EU-28 cumulative growth (5.1 per cent, fully offsetting the 2009 decline) was accompanied by above average growth on Poland (16.2 per cent), Slovakia (12.6 per cent) and the Czech Republic (7.5 per cent), being Hungary the only one not yet fully absorbing the consequences of the crisis (4.0 per cent).

Prospects for the period of 2017–2018 indicate that an EU-28 average growth of 3.6 per cent will be accompanied by much higher growth in all V-4 countries (6.6 per cent for Poland, 6.5 per cent for Slovakia, 5.1 per cent for Hungary and 5 per cent for the Czech Republic). These figures confirm that EU membership substantially contributed to higher than average growth and, accordingly, to the successful catching-up process to EU average. Of course, the share of the respective growth factors contributing to and explaining this outcome, such as domestic consumption, investments and foreign trade may be different from country to country. Unfortunately, an in-depth analysis cannot be made here due to the limited size as well as the key focus of this paper. It has to be added that domestic (partly still transformation-generated), external (trade, foreign direct investments and EU funds) and, more importantly, more or less successful combination and interaction of both factors have generated these figures.

2.2. Foreign trade developments

Foreign trade proved to be the key driver of growth, structural change and unprecedented and successful geographic reorientation for all V-4 countries. In contrast to the opinion of many experts, high dependence on the ex-Soviet market could be changed within a few years, partly due to the collapse of the Soviet market and partly to the opening of EU markets, including first large-scale investments of foreign companies with trade-generating impacts. Definitely, this process, both due to its dramatic speed and the lack of institutional preparedness (including several intransparent privatization deals) did involve high costs and not only benefits. However, all other (imagined) options would have entailed much more costs and much less benefits.

Well before membership (even at the moment of starting accession negotiations) all V-4 countries have completely changed the geographic orientation and concentrated on the EU markets. In fact, almost completely free trade (excepting some agricultural products) was implemented several years before accession. Between 2005 and 2015 the V-4 share in total EU-exports grew from 6.4 to 9.8 per cent and in EU total imports from 6.7 to 9.6 per cent (see Table 1). More importantly, excepting Poland, the other three Visegrad countries belong to those EU member countries with very high dependence on foreign trade (about 80 to 90 per cent of export in GDP and about 150 to 160 per cent of 'openness' as expressed by exports plus imports in GDP).

It has to be underlined that the V-4 countries, due to their historical heritage and their geopolitical situation, are much heavier relying on EU trade than most of the other member countries. On V-4 level, 83 per cent of their total exports was located in other EU member countries in 2005 and almost the same share (81.7 per cent) in 2015. At the same time, the EU-28 average declined from 68 to 63 per cent in a decade, due to the impact of the crisis that forced several countries to find new markets outside the sluggish EU economy but also thanks to higher competitiveness in a globalized environment. Similar, although more moderate trends can be identified in imports as well (not independent from rapidly falling oil prices). (For details see Table 2).

The very high and structurally (and geographically) determined reliance on the EU had been confirmed by the reaction of the member countries to the financial and economic crisis of 2008–2009. Obviously, all member countries open and heavily dependent on trade had to look for extra-EU markets in order to mitigate the negative impact of the crisis. The efforts proved to be rather differentiated. Overall, the V-4 countries were unable to substantially reorient their exports. Despite the fact that, for instance Hungary, came up with a rather costly and non-performing 'strategy of opening towards the East', and most recently, with a trade strategy towards the South (Africa and Latin America). Lacking competitive commodities and market knowledge of small and medium sized domestic firms, both initiatives were a complete and high-cost failure with personal benefits to friends of the governing party only, who were nominated heads of (non-performing) trade representations in different parts of the world.

In sum, foreign trade of the V-4 is strongly rooted in the intra-EU context. It used to be over a longer period and, to a small extent, is still one of the driving factors of growth. Its size, geographic orientation and structural modernization are to a large extent dependent on foreign (mainly EU) firms with substantial investments in manufacturing (partly also in the financial and service sectors). The development of genuine small- and medium-sized companies has started but, in most cases, it did not reach the critical level of competitiveness, excepting some highly export-oriented firms or successful subsidiaries of multinational companies firmly integrated into the international intra-firm supply chains. Therefore, from the aspect of trade, growth and also employment, membership in the EU is crucial for all V-4 countries.

2.3. Foreign direct investments and EU membership

Foreign capital played a decisive role in the success of transformation, structural change and competitiveness of the V-4 countries. In addition, based on their own interests, they were important drivers of EU accession. They started to invest in the region well before official negotiations started in 1998 (see Hungary) or during the accession period, anticipating membership for granted. No cost-benefit analysis can ignore that foreign companies fundamentally contributed to economic growth and structural modernization, transfer of technology, education and training, employment and creating a new social environment. In sum, they definitely strengthened the region's integration in global and EU-level structures. It remains a crucial challenge to national economic (and overall) policies how to enhance the value-added share of domestic production, including competitive small- and medium-sized companies. Among others, in the framework of a comprehensive strategy, available EU funds could be(or could have been) used for this purpose. Solid membership in the EU remains a cornerstone for foreign capital located in the V-4 countries, both concerning additional investments in structural upgrading of their current production and as far as future green-field investments in the region.

2.4. Free movement of persons

This was one of the most important requirements of the new member states (mainly driven by Poland) to sign the accession treaties. After 2004 three members (United Kingdom, Sweden and Ireland) immediately lifted all restrictions, while other 'old' member countries did it within a transitional period of 7 years (being Germany and Austria the last countries to eliminate all barriers). The 'migration capacity' of the individual V-4 countries was rather different after 2004. While we experienced a huge outflow from Poland (and partly Slovakia), Czech and Hungarian citizens made rather limited use of this possibility, concentrating on highly-skilled areas, such as doctors (in Sweden) and computer engineers (in Ireland). The situation dramatically changed after 2010 in Hungary, resulting in an additional 500.000 citizens leaving the country in the last seven years (as compared to 100.000 employers or employees in other EU countries between 2004 and 2010).

At the moment there are about 6 mn EU citizens working (and living) in another EU country, out of which about 40 to 45 per cent originate in the V-4, with clear dominance of Polish, and increasingly Hungarian citizens. The reasons of working abroad are manifold and can by far not just be explained by wage differences. Overall living conditions, economic security, social and political environment, democracy, rule of law, predictability of personal life and professional career are partly already more important ingredients of the decision of going to (and remaining in) another EU member country.

Of course, massive (e)migration is an ambiguous development. On the one hand, it reduces high-level and socially unfavourable domestic unemployment (see Poland over a longer period) and increases financial resources as a result of remittances sent back by citizens working abroad. The latter, at least for a certain time, can become an important factor of external financial stability and, not least, of domestic stability and higher consumption, if it reaches poorer people left behind in the country of origin and automatically contributing to a fairer redistribution of income. On the other hand, it may deprive the sending country of the best prepared, talented, mobile and young people, increase lack of skilled labour needed by competitive domestic and foreign-based companies, sharpen demographic problems, increasing regional differentiation and depriving governments from a broad group of taxpayers. However, the most dangerous negative impact, as we can already see today, is that 'mental contamination campaigns' of the governments, not least against the EU find a fertile soil in wide segments of the population that feels loser of the changes, lives in backward regions and belongs to the rapidly growing elder generation.

Still, free movement of citizens (and labour) was a precondition of membership. Remaining outside the EU or leaving the EU today, would bring back high level of unemployment, closing of many factories operated by foreign companies with additional unemployment, lack of remittances and higher level and more poverty and regional backwardness. The returning or retained 'brain drain' could not compensate for the costs, due to lack of capital and competitive investments as well as to growing internal social or even political instability. In sum, such a situation would be much more harmful than the cost-benefit balance of (e)migration.

2.5. The impact of EU resources

Over the period of two multiannual financial frameworks (2007–2013 and 2014–2020) the V-4 region had access to EU funds in the amount of about 240 bn euros, or, on the average, 17 bn Euro annually. Of course, the money, even if fully used (which has not been the case), has not been distributed evenly from year to year. In some years, mainly in the first period with projects launched, only a very modest sum could be drawn, while the second half of the period showed very high payments. There is no doubt, however, that EU resources over 14 years offered an unprecedented historical opportunity for sustainable modernization, provided the money had been or is being spent correctly and for the right purposes. On yearly average, EU transfers corresponding to 2.5 per cent of GDP of the region (and about 3.5 per cent in case of Hungary) can (or should be able to) produce an annual growth of 2.5 per cent without any change in the domestic economic performance – at least on paper. This calculation does not include successful use of EU resources for developments with multiplier effects, since the latter would further contribute to growth. The use (or abuse with) EU funds needs a comprehensive analysis in each V-4 country, not least because arguments for and against the construction of the next multiannual financial framework will essentially be influenced by how previous EU resources have been used or misused. Just an example: we do not know what has happened with EU funds available to Hungary equal to 3.5 per cent economic growth (on paper). Namely, real economic growth through the last decade remained significantly below this figure.

The experience of the V-4 with EU funds reinforces some arguments against the one-sided flow of money without strict EU-level control. There are several cases in which EU resources have strengthened uncompetitive structures, fostered business and social attitudes against any change, created 'fund-dependency', and, not least, became the hotbed of large-scale corruption. Public procurement processes ignoring clear EU rules, blatant (shameless) overpricing and use of the money for other purposes than those formulated in the contracts belong to the frequent forms of misuse and could be easily identified and punished if an adequate control system functioned. Hungary is on top of the negative impacts of using EU funds. Not only due to the largest difference between the highest share of EU funds as compared to the GDP of the country, and the lowest growth in V-4 comparison, but mainly in the qualitative context. It is unprecedented in EU history that the largest part of EU resources creates and consolidates the economic background of a political maffia openly hostile to the EU in general, and permanently neglecting or even deliberately undermining basic EU rules, in particular.

In sum: EU resources have substantially contributed to the adjustment and catching-up process of the V-4. However, due to several reasons, the real effect was much lower than the potential and expected one. In addition, they have generated not only positive but also negative consequences, from structural rigidities, through passive attitudes to direct or indirect support to corruption in general, and to corrupt governments, in particular.

2.6. Membership in Schengen

The importance of Schengen is generally not emphasized or not even acknowledged. However, it has a very positive impact on member countries, not least the V-4 region. First, it can be considered as a win-win system for European security. On the one hand, it shifted the Eastern (security) border of the 'old' EU to the new members' Eastern border (excepting Finland). On the other hand, belonging to Schengen (together with belonging to the NATO) has enhanced the security of the new member countries which became the new Eastern (and Southern) border of the EU. Second, free flow of citizens would be massively and negatively affected with border controls among member countries. This would be a relevant barrier to keep on working in another EU member country (and regularly returning to the home country for short visits or longer term stay). Third, several transnational companies based on just-in-time-production would not have considered the V-4 countries as favourable location for their investments. For instance, Audi or Mercedes, two leading German car companies (generating about 25 per cent of Hungarian exports) opted for investments in Győr and Kecskemét because, among other factors, such as direct highway connections, production costs can be substantially reduced by not establishing huge stocks in the factories but supplying continuous production by continuous daily deliveries of industrial inputs, spare parts, accessories, etc. This continuous flow of commodities in both directions (including export of cars) can only function if there is no border control and substantial loss of time. Non-Schengen would immediately disrupt this supply chain.

3. Weak anti-EU arguments of populist governments

In the concluding part let me come back to some of the most frequently used anti-EU arguments mentioned at the beginning of the paper.

First: Hungary cannot survive without EU support. An almost 4 per cent growth registered in 2017, the highest in a decade, is more or less equivalent to the average annual inflow of EU money. Since for 2018 a higher than average inflow of EU resources is predicted, a 4 per cent growth rate will even more remain fundamentally dependent on EU money. Since EU funds will most probably be much lower and linked to strict conditions after 2020, and genuine domestic sources of sustainable development cannot be identified, mainly because they were not created in an unprecedentedly favourable modernization period offering a never returning historical window-of-opportunity, the country is far away from fulfilling its officially proclaimed slogan of 'living on its own feet'. Not saying a word about the high (inter) dependence on trade and foreign capital activities in Hungary.

Second: the Polish authorities' argument, according to which EU funds mainly favoured foreign companies, can easily be rejected. Of course, nobody denies that also companies of net contributing countries benefitted from the EU funds obtained by Poland. However, there is a very strong and multiple interlinkage among beneficiaries, both Polish and foreign ones. EU funds financing infrastructure projects benefitted not only foreign firms to consider location in Poland favourable but also domestic companies and citizens alike. In addition, foreign companies working in Poland create employment, contribute to the Polish budget, develop and implement educational, training and social programs, introduce new technologies, etc. In addition, interlinkages enhance economic security.

Third: the artificially but deliberately created common demon/devil, namely the threat of migration has to be correctly interpreted and presented to the already mentally contaminated societies of the region. If Polish politicians believe that about 6000 legally relocated asylum seekers (or, in the Hungarian case, 1.294 asylum seekers) would really threaten the 'national identity' of the country, then there must be a basic problem with this identity. Especially in the situation, when up to 10 per cent of the domestic labour force seeks its future outside the country. Why is this very unfavourable development not considered to be THE real threat to 'national identity'?

Societies closed to the world will not be able to survive the challenges of the 21st century, small ones even less than larger ones. V-4 countries, in their own fundamental interest, need to change their current attitude against the outside world (migration is just one topic, further EU membership and its quality is another and there are many additional issues on the agenda). They have to start building 'innovative societies', the only guarantee of successful and sustainable development. Innovative societies are built on openness and not closing-down, cooperation and not hate campaigns, cohesion and not polarization, future-oriented approach and not flight back to 'glorious'(?) history, acceptance of the principle and practice of two-way solidarity, etc. In this context, scope and limits of 'national sovereignty' in the global and further globalizing environment of the 21st century have to be addressed and widely discussed, both in each of the V-4 countries and in all cross-V-4 meetings.

Fourth: It is crucial to develop a realistic view of the potential of the V-4 in the EU context. V-4 represents 6 per cent of the GDP of the EU-28, much less than the Benelux group. The latter has never come up with leadership demand but could substantially influence decision-making processes by clever compromises, flexibility and high level of adjustment capacity. Self-proclaimed leadership of the V-4 may be a political slogan without any content and credible implementation capacity. Of course, more cooperation on the regional level and a new quality of participating in the renewal of the European integration would be most welcome. However, in order to take on this role, anti-EU attitudes should be urgently abandoned, before they will reach a critical level of hatred against foreignes in general, and the EU instititutions or integration efforts in particular, in the respective societies – with irreversible developments or, minimally, with extraordinary and long-term economic and social costs.

The last decade, after V-4 countries accession to the EU, would have offered at least two historical chances which have not been used. First, immediately after accession, and just by mere looking at the map, it became clear that the enlarged union needs a third North-South infrastructure corridor (both for rapid train and highway connections), as such a corridor had been implemented earlier between Scotland and Gibraltar and between Scandinavia and Sicily. Unfortunately, nobody in the V-4 group came up with such an idea, although the EU developed a long-term plan of infrastructure development. With proper cooperation such a corridor could and should have become part of this strategy.

Interestingly, this idea has emerged most recently but outside the V-4. It is China that seems to have discovered this missing link in European North-South connection, linked to the strategic Belt and Road (or New Silk Road) project. The ownership of the Pireus port in Greece and the planned (and highly disputed) railway modernization between Belgrade and Budapest can be considered as part of a strategy, provided further elements of this strategy will become available in the near future. Second, nobody would have impeded the V-4 countries to start a strategic cooperation in fostering their respective small- and medium sized entrepreneurial sector and, particularly, extending such initiatives to regional, cross-country cooperation. Even sizeable EU resources could have been used for creating a competitive and strong, young and innovative regional entrepreneurial sector based on export-orientation, participation in the global or regional value chain of transnational companies and successfully competing with imported goods and services in V-4 markets.

Without strong economic fundaments, the realistic assessment of possibilities and limits of joint actions and clear and prospective (not hostile) views on the future of the EU, the V-4 cooperation remains strictly limited to political slogans and commonly created and manipulated enemies. At the same time, decisive dividing factors remain, such as the assessment of Russia (with huge geostrategic assymetry between the Hungarian and the Polish view), or the introduction of the euro (with Slovakia being Eurozone member, and with its clear preference to the EU and the Euro, in case it should choose between the EU and the V-4). In fact, in all those circumstances, V-4, in its current form and with its current performance, may be or should be more appropriately coined as 'Vacuum-4'. That is a very ambitious gathering of states fighting separately for their own narrow-minded 'national interests', without taking into consideration wider perspective and long-term blueprints or scenarios.

Open cross-country and multi-level EU-wide discussion about the 'costs of non-EU' would be beneficial for future-oriented approaches towards a deepening and stronger integration in the new global environment. Also, and not less importantly, well-founded arguments should be used to stop and reverse the ongoing 'mental contamination' already present – and unfortunately strong and increasing – on the regional level, in favour of the sustainable future of the V-4 countries, but also of further and fruitful European integration.

Table 1. Share of the V-4 countries in total EU exports and imports

(a) Exports (EU-28 = 100)

Countries	2005	2008	2010	2015
Poland	2.2	2.9	3.1	3.7
Czech Rep.	1.9	2.5	2.6	2.9
Slovakia	0.8	1.2	1.2	1.4
Hungary	1.5	1.8	1.8	1.8
V-4 total	6.4	8.3	8.7	9.8

(b) Imports (EU-28 = 100)

Countries	2005	2008	2010	2015
Poland	2.4	3.3	3.3	3.7
Czech Rep.	1.8	2.3	2.4	2.7
Slovakia	0.8	1.2	1.2	1.4
Hungary	1.6	1.7	1.7	1.8
V-4 total	6.7	8.5	8.6	9.6

Source: Eurostat and own calculations.

Table 2. Intra-EU share of exports of and imports by the Visegrad countries (in per cent of total exports and imports)

(a) Intra-EU exports

Country	2005	2008	2010	2015
EU-28	68.0	67.7	65.4	63.2
Poland	79.0	78.1	79.3	79.2
Czech Rep.	86.1	85.4	84.3	83.3
Slovakia	87.9	85.7	84.8	85.4
Hungary	82.5	79.8	78.4	81.3
V-4 average	83.0	81.7	81.4	81.7

(c) Intra-EU imports

Country	2005	2008	2010	2015
EU-28	64.6	62.7	61.9	63.3
Poland	75.4	71.9	70.8	70.3
Czech Rep.	81.5	77.0	75.0	77.1
Slovakia	78.1	73.2	72.1	78.7
Hungary	70.2	68.6	68.0	76.3
V-4 average	76.2	72.7	71.6	74.6

Source: Eurostat and own calculations.

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