



2024 ANNUAL REPORT

INTERNATIONAL
VISEGRAD FUND



EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

The International Visegrad Fund experienced several changes in 2024.

In this year, all four Visegrad Cooperation countries agreed on the need to increase our budget by 10%. This decision was made in the context of challenging economic conditions, as the countries continue to face the repercussions of the war in Ukraine, the energy crisis and inflationary fluctuations.

This decision by the V4 countries reflects continued support for the Visegrad Fund as a foreign policy instrument and acknowledges our 24 years of expertise and work. It is a significant step for the Fund, and we are grateful for this support.

In the summer of 2024, the Fund's executive directorship transitioned smoothly from Czech to Slovak leadership. I would like to express my gratitude to Ambassador Petr Mareš for his support during this period of change.

As the new Director of the Fund, I have approached my role with enthusiasm. The impact of our work is tangible and the connections we have fostered between various institutions are invaluable. The outcomes of our cooperation positively shape the perceptions of our partners, thanks to the collaborative nature of the projects we support.

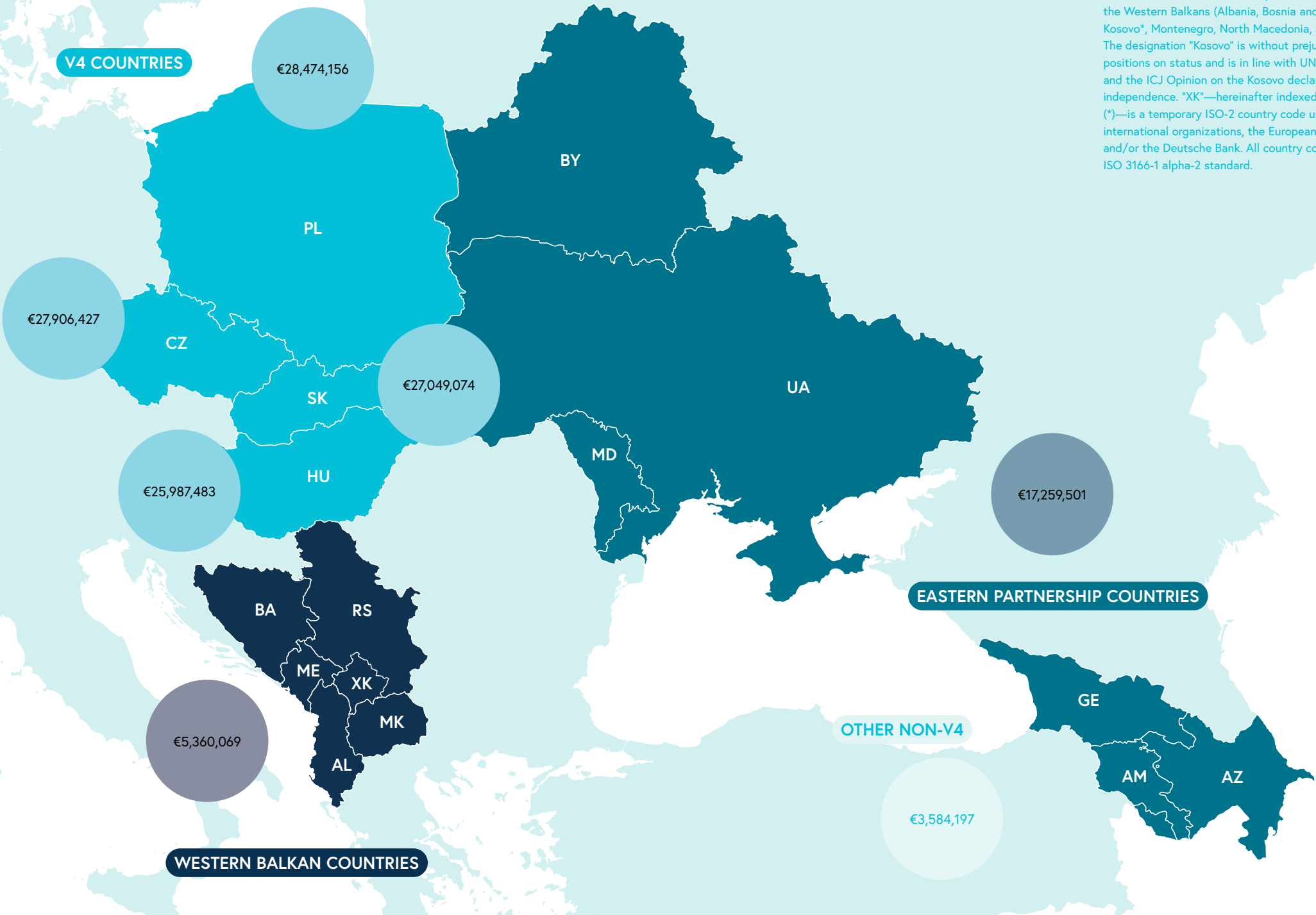
The Fund's scope is broad and its reach has long extended beyond the Visegrad region. In addition to our ongoing partnership with the Western Balkans Fund, which was established more than seven years ago in Tirana, Albania, and follows the model of our own Fund, we also cooperate with countries in the Western Balkans and the so called Eastern Partnership region. This expanded collaboration reflects the Fund's commitment to fostering cooperation and supporting projects across a wider geographical area.

In 2024, the Fund also continued to support projects from Ukrainian applicants, who, despite their challenging circumstances, have come together to find partners and develop initiatives worthy of support.

We are living in difficult times, and the issues we faced in 2024 remain relevant today. It is crucial for us to continue working together, focusing on positive topics in our agendas and exploring opportunities for an even more intensive cooperation in the region. We still face many challenges that divide us—but only through collaboration can we find effective solutions and move forward with a constructive approach. I consider achieving regionally balanced cooperation to be one of the main tasks of my tenure.

Linda Kapustová Helbichová
Executive Director

APPROVED FUNDING BY COUNTRY/REGION 2020–2024



Note: For clarity, the following abbreviations are used throughout the text: "the Fund" refers to the *International Visegrad Fund*; "MFAs" refers to a *ministry of foreign affairs*; "NVCs" refers to the *national V4 coordinators*; "QMS" refers to the *quality management system*; "EaP" refers to the *Eastern Partnership* and "WB6" refers to the *Western Balkans* (Albania, Bosnia and Herzegovina, Kosovo*, Montenegro, North Macedonia, and Serbia). The designation "Kosovo" is without prejudice to positions on status and is in line with UNSCR 1244/1999 and the ICJ Opinion on the Kosovo declaration of independence. "XK"—hereinafter indexed with an asterisk (*)—is a temporary ISO-2 country code used by several international organizations, the European Commission and/or the Deutsche Bank. All country codes follow the ISO 3166-1 alpha-2 standard.

APPROVED FUNDING BY COUNTRY/REGION IN 2024

Country/program	Visegrad Grants	Visegrad+ Grants	Strategic Grants	V4 Gen	Scholarships	Fellowships & WB6 Fellowships	Residencies	Total	% (2024)	% (2000–2024)
Czechia	1,297,060	95,080	58,030	242,123	100,500	32,360	69,025	1,894,178	23.49%	20.60 %
Hungary	699,810		36,000	153,268	64,500	63,900	63,025	1,080,503	13.40%	19.11 %
Poland	806,247	43,996	28,950	408,945	204,000	99,400	52,025	1,643,563	20.38%	21.02 %
Slovakia	1,321,012		28,397	283,275	133,500	73,120	70,025	1,909,329	23.68%	19.97 %
Albania						11,070		11,070	0.14%	0.24%
Armenia		68,166			12,000			80,166	0.99%	1.21%
Austria	27,010	29,575						56,585	0.70%	0.38%
Belarus					6,000			6,000	0.07%	1.48%
Bosnia and Hercegovina		49,130			15,000	9,850		73,980	0.92%	0.48%
Estonia	49,467							49,467	0.61%	0.04%
France	21,940							21,940	0.27%	0.24%
Georgia		105,489			9,000			114,489	1.42%	2.27%
Germany	21,920			8,333				30,253	0.38%	0.30%
Kosovo ⁱ		28,388			6,000	10,980		45,368	0.56%	0.33%
North Macedonia	40,980				1,500	10,840		53,320	0.66%	0.88%
Moldova		25,981			12,000			37,981	0.47%	0.49%
Montenegro						8,953		8,953	0.11%	0.32%
Portugal	22,450							22,450	0.28%	0.12%
Serbia		130,059			10,500	9,735		150,294	1.86%	1.67%
Ukraine		369,606	32,330	47,400	226,500	97,000		772,836	9.59%	6.56%
Grand total	4,307,896	945,470	183,707	1,143,344	801,000	427,208	254,100	8,062,725		
Total grants								6,580,417		

V4	6,527,573		80.96%	
EaP	1,011,472	Total non-V4 1,535,152	12.55%	% non-V4 19.04%
WB6	342,985		4.25%	
other non-V4	180,725		2.24%	
Total	8,062,725		100.00%	

"A year full of professional endeavors in the Fund."



Year 2024 was my second at the Fund and "the middle one" of my three-year term in Bratislava. A year when I felt already at home in the capital of Slovakia, and a year full of professional endeavors in the Fund.

In 2024, the Fund continued to support Ukraine by expanding our V4 oriented programs, namely V4 Gen Mini Grants and Visegrad Fellowships, to Ukrainian applicants. We are pleased to note that the ties between Ukrainians and V4 citizens are steadily strengthening.

The Fund cares about our neighbors! We were proud to begin a new chapter of collaboration with our long-term partner, the Western Balkans Fund. Thanks to our new common program "The Western Balkans–Visegrad Fellowships", twenty-six researchers from the south of Europe could develop their projects in V4 countries and fifteen Visegrad academics could explore their fields of interests in the Western Balkans countries (WB6).

Based on the feedback gathered during the Fund's field visits regarding the enhanced regional cooperation in the three regions that the Fund is focusing on, we have revised the partnership rules in our Visegrad + Grant program. As a result, starting from 2024, an applicant hailing from a WB6 or Eastern Partnership country (EaP) will have the option to either adhere to the "3xV4" rule, which mandates the inclusion of at least three partners from the V4 region, or to establish a consortium composed of at least two partner organizations from distinct V4 countries and one additional partner from a WB6 or EaP country that differs from its own.

Another significant change was made to our audit policy. We aimed to enhance the efficiency and consistency of audits by concentrating on the specific grant requirements. Therefore, we introduced a new method which provides auditors with clear steps to follow. Furthermore, starting with the third call in 2024, the threshold for the obligatory audit was increased from 10,000 to 15,000 Euros.

To ensure smooth project implementation, we have also slightly modified our grant guidelines and grant contract.

We are delighted that the Fund's accomplishments have been acknowledged by the Republic of Korea, a country that is committed to promoting projects dealing with democracy, reconciliation, peace, freedom, and security in the WB6 and EaP regions. The signing of a Memorandum of Understanding with the Republic of Korea, which defines the Korean contribution to the Fund, coincided with the 24th anniversary of our institution.

Let's get together in 2025 to celebrate our Silver Jubilee!

Maja Wawrzyk
Deputy Executive Director

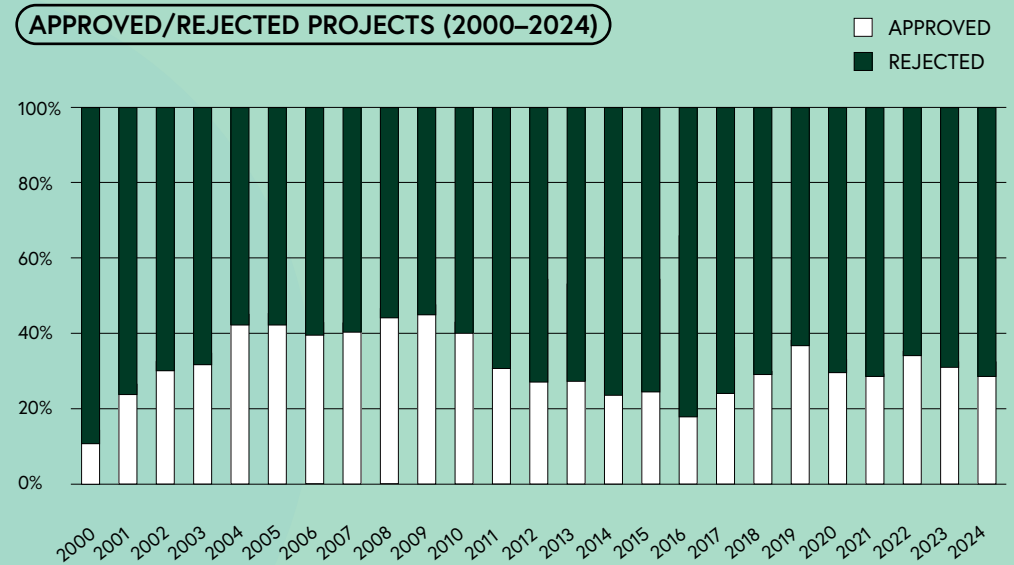
ALTOGETHER 204 REGULAR GRANT PROJECTS WERE APPROVED IN 2024.

I. GRANTS

1. Visegrad Grants/Visegrad+ Grants/ Visegrad Strategic Grants

Deadlines: February 1, June 1, October 1

Altogether 204 regular grant projects were approved in 2024. The "success" rate between the total number of submitted (692) and approved proposals fell, in the end, well within the long-term trend, thus giving the chance to roughly every third applicant (see below):



SUBMITTED/APPROVED—GRANTS 2024

<i>Deadline</i>	<i>Submitted</i>	<i>Approved</i>	<i>"Success rate"</i>
February	265	70	26.42%
June	213	68	31.92%
October	214	66	29.91%
Total	692	204	29.19%

APPROVED GRANT SUMS PER PROGRAM AND RECIPIENT COUNTRY IN 2024 (€)

Program Region	Country	Visegrad Grants	Visegrad+		Strategic	Total €	%	Sum €	%
			Visegrad+ EaP	Visegrad+ WB6					
V4	CZ	1,297,060	61,390	33,690	58,030	1,450,170	25.91	4,511,557	80.60
	HU	796,785			36,000	735,810	14.88		
	PL	806,247	43,996		28,950	879,193	15.71		
	SK	1,321,012			28,397	1,349,409	24.11		
non-V4	AM		131,466			131,466	2.35	1,085,791	19.40
	AT	27,010	29,575			56,585	1.01		
	BA			49,130		49,130	0.88		
	DE	21,920				21,920	0.88		
	EE	49,467				49,467	0.88		
	FR	21,940				21,940	0.39		
	GE		105,489			105,489	1.88		
	MD		25,981			25,981	0.46		
	MK	40,980				40,980	0.73		
	PT	22,450				22,450	0.40		
	RS			130,059		130,059	2.32		
	UA		369,606			32,330	401,936		
XK			28,388			28,388	0.51		
Total €		4,377,861	767,503	241,267	210,717	5,597,348			
			945,470						

The 2024 geographical distribution of the applicants (based on their official seat) varied country by country—with Hungary's and Poland's 15 and 16% respectively on the lower end, to Czechia's and Slovakia's 26 and 24% respectively on the higher end. Non-V4 applicants represented almost 18% of the total approved sum which follows the long-term trend (ca. 19% when taking into account the entire period 2000–2024).

As far as non-V4 countries are concerned, the EaP and WB6 regions were traditionally the biggest beneficiaries by grantee seat. While the Eastern Partnership was represented by 21 grants, the Western Balkans had 7 grant projects approved. In summary, for topic-related grant schemes, there were 33 Visegrad+ Grants approved altogether, 24 targeting

the EaP region and 9 targeting the WB6 region, considering an additional 5 proposals granted to Czech applicants, and with a single project each to a Polish and an Austrian applicant.

Altogether 7 Visegrad+ Grants (and additionally, a single €10,000 V4 Gen Mini Grants) were financed from the contribution of the Government of the Republic of Korea to the total amount of €254,221 in 2024.

"Protecting the environment and supporting sustainable development are core objectives of the Fund."



Protecting the environment and supporting sustainable development are core objectives of the Fund. A notable example is the project "How to stay alive in V4? Phosphorus Friends Club builds V4's resilience", focusing on the scarcity of raw materials and the sustainability of food production. As a strategic project, it brought together researchers from the Mineral and Energy Economy Research Institute of the Polish Academy of Sciences and other V4 research institutions over three years.

In addition to projects directly addressing environmental issues, I am proud to see a growing number of initiatives adopting responsible practices in their everyday activities. Since publishing our Green Recommendations for Applicants and Grantees in 2021, we have seen environmental awareness taking a firm hold in the Visegrad region, with more and more projects striving to save energy and other resources and reduce waste production.

Orsolya Rigó
Project Manager/Team Leader

"Both projects contributed to the shared goal of advancing the region's alignment with European values."



Since I began working at the Fund, I have been actively involved in Western Balkan cooperation, which has been a fantastic opportunity to deepen my understanding of the region. As a graduate of European studies, the region is particularly fascinating to me from an EU integration perspective. Supporting the Western Balkans on their path towards EU integration is not only one of the Fund's priorities but also that of our external donor, the Republic of Korea. Thanks to their in-kind contribution, we were able to support the "Plus Ultra—Further Beyond" project, implemented by the European Youth Parliament Serbia, which facilitated intercultural exchange and dialogue between youth from the Western Balkans and beyond.

Another notable project focused on EU integration was "Visegrad Group Supports Montenegro and Serbia in the Preparation for the EU Regional Policy" led by the Montenegrin Pan-European Union. This initiative aimed to share experiences, transfer knowledge, and advocate for further regional and local economic development from the Visegrad Group to Montenegro and Serbia. Both projects contributed to the shared goal of advancing the region's alignment with European values.

Kateřina Šrámková
Project Manager

Plus Ultra—Further Beyond

BUDGET

€15,798

LEAD ORGANIZATIONS

European Youth Parliament Serbia (RS)

PARTNER ORGANIZATIONS

European Youth Parliament Czech Republic (CZ), European Youth Parliament Poland (PL), European Youth Parliament – Georgia (GE), European Youth Parliament Croatia (HR), European Youth Parliament Albania (AL), Creative Youth Forum (RS)



The project fostered intercultural exchange and dialogue among youth from the Western Balkans, the V4 region, and across Europe. Its main event, held in July 2024 in Belgrade, brought together over 150 participants to discuss strategies for a peaceful and engaged Europe. Using European parliamentary procedures, the project equipped young people with the skills to prepare and present policy ideas to relevant stakeholders. It facilitated direct engagement between youth and decision-makers, ensuring their perspectives contributed to discussions at national and European levels.

"We contribute to sustainable solutions that support Ukraine's recovery and integration into and within the European community."



I dedicate my efforts to supporting initiatives that enhance regional cooperation and social impact. My work primarily focuses on V4 Gen Mini Grants, Scholarships, Fellowships, and Visegrad+ Grants, with a strong emphasis on Ukrainian projects.

In 2024, the Fund supported two impactful projects addressing war-affected populations. The first, "Animal-assisted therapy for recovery from PTSD of war victims in de-occupied territories," developed a comprehensive approach to PTSD treatment through innovative animal therapy programs. The second, "Best partnership practices of NGOs with local authorities in advocacy of Ukrainian refugees' issues," analyzed successful advocacy models to strengthen policy change and governance for Ukrainian forced migrants at the local level.

These initiatives reflect the mission of the Visegrad Fund—empowering communities, promoting resilience, and reinforcing regional solidarity in times of crisis. By investing in social impact projects, we contribute to sustainable solutions that support Ukraine's recovery and integration into and within the European community.

Yelyzaveta Kushyk
Project Manager

Best partnership practices of NGOs with local authorities in advocacy Ukrainian refugees' issues

BUDGET

€12,887

LEAD ORGANIZATIONS

International Institute of Education, Culture and Diaspora Relations (UA)

PARTNER ORGANIZATIONS

Ukrainian initiative in the Czech Republic (CZ), UNITERS Foundation (United Volunteers) (PL), Union of Ruthenians-Ukrainians of the Slovak Republic (SK)



The project analyzed best practices in NGO partnerships with local authorities to advocate for Ukrainian forced migrants. It identified effective lobbying strategies for policy change and governance at the local level in V4 countries. By examining cooperation between civil society and local authorities, the project highlighted successful advocacy models and improved support systems. Engaging both practitioners and researchers, it ensured a broad and lasting impact across the region.

With nearly €5.6 million approved within the regular grants, the average granted sum per project was **€27,438** (slightly less than the average €29,500 in 2023). The granted sums were similar across the vehicles (i.e., grants were similar in size regardless of whether they were Visegrad, Visegrad+ Grants, or Strategic Grants). On average, a Visegrad Grant amounted to €27,265 (compared to €28,332 in 2023) and an average Visegrad+ Grant amounted to €28,822 (compared to €31,810 in 2023). Strategic Grants' average size "dropped" again to only €23,413 when compared to €35,500 in 2023 and €43,744 in 2022. The low interest in Strategic Grants as a separate program and their shrinking average size follow a long-term trend and raise the question of whether the would-be proposals addressing the annual strategic priorities would not be better accommodated by the regular Visegrad Grants program.

As regards the thematic focuses of the supported projects (focus areas/objectives), for the first time in the fund's history, *culture and common identity* (with 28.92%) was topped by *education and capacity building* representing over a third of all approved grants (34.31%). The other categories were represented in similar proportions as in past years:

<i>Focus area / Deadline</i>	<i>February</i>	<i>June</i>	<i>October</i>	<i>Total</i>	<i>%</i>
Culture and common identity	23	13	23	59	28.92
Education and capacity building	29	23	18	70	34.31
Regional development, environment, tourism	1	5	3	9	4.41
Innovation, R&D, entrepreneurship	3	10	7	20	9.80
Social development	6	5	3	14	6.86
Democratic values and the media	6	5	6	17	8.33
Public policy and institutional partnership	2	7	6	15	7.35
Total	70	68	66	204	100.00

Apart from the regular standard objectives and focus areas, the following three strategic priorities were valid in 2024:

1. Supporting Ukraine and the EU Neighborhood

Assisting Ukrainian people in their struggle for the independence and territorial integrity of Ukraine as well as supporting societies of the Eastern Partnership and Western Balkan countries in their European integration processes.

2. Countering Disinformation and Misinformation

Raising awareness and improving societal resilience in the Visegrad, EaP and WB regions.

3. Promoting people-to-people contacts

Bringing together civil societies from the Visegrad region and beyond.

STRATEGIC GRANTS 2024

<i>ID #</i>	<i>Project title</i>	<i>Grantee</i>	<i>Approved €</i>
22410019	Regained Culture. Ukrainian Voices Curate Ukrainian Culture	Association of Borderline Culture Animation Folkowisko, Gorajec	31,950
22410301	Econverse Cup V4	Econverse Foundation, Poznań	39,650
22420006	Central Europe and Future EU Enlargement	Institute for the Danube Region and Central Europe, Vienna	27,010
22420073	"Structures of Uncertainty": Inclusive Education in Central and Eastern European Countries	University of Silesia in Katowice	28,950
22420086	V4-Ukraine Cooperation Enhancement Prospects in the Context of Ukrainian EU Accession Negotiations	University of Economics in Bratislava	28,397
22420236	Digital Innovations for Alternative Dispute Resolution in V4 Countries and Ukraine (DIGARD V4U)	Science Entrepreneurship Technology University, Kyiv	32,330
22430134	Visegrad Alliance for Digital Rights and Disinformation Defense	Charles University in Prague, Faculty of Law	58,030
22430255	Implementation of Ground Displacement Effects on Heritage Buildings in University Education	University of Žilina	9,900
22430298	The Geopolitics of Ukraine and Her EU Integration in V4 Context	Ludovika University of Public Service, Budapest	36,000
Total			210,717

"Digital technologies can revolutionize agriculture by helping farmers & food producers work more efficiently, and sustainably."



Agricultural techniques that are economical, socially, and environmentally sustainable are in high demand, especially with the war in Ukraine affecting food security in Europe. Digital technologies can revolutionize agriculture by helping farmers & food producers work more efficiently, and sustainably.

To contribute to this goal a professional network of academic stakeholders, across Poland, Czechia, Hungary, Slovakia, and Serbia, has been established under the guidance of the Faculty of Food Science and Biotechnology, University of Life Sciences in Lublin (PL). The project showcased technologies such as computer vision systems, 3D food printing, electronic eye technologies, non-destructive food quality analytical methods and others through training, study visits, and field trips to food production companies, demonstrating their practical benefits.

Another important topic in agricultural production is beekeeping, which brings significant social and environmental impacts. The lead organization, the Faculty of Veterinary Hygiene and Ecology of the University of Veterinary Sciences Brno (CZ), together with the V4 partners, researched and monitored the impact of nutrition sources on beekeeping by developing a unique Geographic Information System to predict optimal hive positions for sustainable beekeeping.

Lenka Bučková
Project Manager

FOOD Quality in the Digital Age

BUDGET

€65,150

LEAD ORGANIZATIONS

University of Life Sciences in Lublin, Faculty of Food Science and Biotechnology (PL)

PARTNER ORGANIZATIONS

University of Belgrade, Faculty of Agriculture (RS), Mendel University in Brno, Faculty of AgriSciences (CZ), Slovak University of Agriculture in Nitra, Faculty of Biotechnology and Food Sciences (SK), Hungarian University of Agriculture and Life Sciences, Institute of Food Science and Technology (HU)



The project facilitated digital transformation in agriculture and food production in the V4+ region. It fostered cooperation with local and regional stakeholders to explore, showcase, and disseminate smart technologies for precision food production. By combining advanced methods—3D food printing, computer vision systems, electronic eyes, non-destructive analysis, and surface evaluation—the project created an innovative toolkit for modernizing food quality assessment. The initiative also provided a unique five-module training program for researchers, enhancing skills in digital food evaluation.

"The initiative addressed the structural barriers, including the underrepresentation of women in these fields."



My primary area of focus is Public Policy and Institutional Partnerships. These initiatives aim to drive policy change by linking expert communities and key stakeholders with decision-makers and addressing a wide range of issues in the V4, Eastern Partnership and Western Balkan regions.

Among the projects implemented in 2024, I would like to highlight two. The project "Connecting networks of women in foreign, European and security policy, across the V4 states" brought an aim to contribute to empowering women. The initiative addressed the structural barriers, including the underrepresentation of women in these fields. This project's continuation is currently underway.

The second one—the Visegrad 4 Business Conference—is an initiative dedicated to reuniting our region through business. Following successful editions in Bratislava and Prague, the 2024 edition in Budapest welcomed over 400 participants to discuss topics like space technology, women in industry, green transition and other key issues.

I'm excited to see these initiatives grow and create new opportunities for collaboration.

Karolina Janik
Project Manager

Connecting networks of women in foreign, European and security policy, across the V4 states



BUDGET

€28,086

LEAD ORGANIZATIONS

AMO – Association for International Affairs (CZ)

PARTNER ORGANIZATIONS

Research Centre of the Slovak Foreign Policy Association (SFPA) (SK), Casimir Pulaski Foundation (PL), Centre for Euro-Atlantic Integration and Democracy (HU)



The project connected networks of women in foreign, European, and security policy across V4 countries through study visits in each partner country. These visits facilitated the exchange of best practices, networking, and supported the development of solutions for gender diversity in this field. It promoted equal representation in policy discussions and encouraged partnerships among women-led initiatives.

"The Fund actively supports proactive solutions to address the most contemporary regional challenges."



The Fund actively supports proactive solutions to address the most contemporary regional challenges. These efforts have been materialized in a variety of forms and means, with cross-border cooperation being one of them. We have worked to ensure preparedness both in situations of emergency and similarly—during periods of tranquility and self-(re)discovery, for instance by exploring Podtatrze's geotouristic potential.

The latest global events related to climate anomalies are bound to occur regionally as well, exposing the need for both solidarity and interoperability at all levels. Considering this, we have recently been glad to support projects focused on joint emergency response activities for both volunteer and professional firefighters. These transborder initiatives are actively responding to the growing number of natural disasters linked not just to one single border, but over much larger areas of land. This holistic approach contributes to protecting and thus advancing the potential of people-to-people contacts across regional borders to rediscover the sometimes overlooked great potential of the regions.

Adam Pasiński
Project Manager

Geotouristic potential of the Podtatrze area and the possibilities of its development

BUDGET

€8,147

LEAD ORGANIZATIONS

University of the National Education Commission, Institute of Geography (PL)

PARTNER ORGANIZATIONS

Slovak Academy of Sciences, Institute of Geography (SK)



The project promoted geotourism in the Podtatrze Region as an alternative to tourism in the Tatra Mountains. By directing visitors beyond overcrowded national park sites, it encouraged responsible tourism and sustainable use of natural resources. It developed diverse tourist products—trails, guides, websites, and apps—tailored to different age groups and physical abilities. The initiative also raised awareness among tourists and locals about mindful tourism practices, emphasizing nature, silence, and conservation. Aligned with UNESCO's geopark concept, the project supported the region's potential inclusion on the UNESCO Global Geoparks List, ensuring long-term sustainable development.

"Establishing a link to other closely related neighbouring regions."



While public policy-related project proposals and consequently supported projects from the Eastern Partnership usually outperform and outnumber applicants from the Visegrad countries, in line with the trend of applications from the V4, cultural and educational projects are also popular.

Let me highlight a rather unique project in the latter field: The Rolan International Film Festival (Yerevan, Armenia) provides space for film screenings and cinematographic workshops for youth, a rare target group for such projects in our experience. The festival's events stretch to several regions such as Lori, Shirak and Gegharkunik (Armenia). While it has been supported by the Fund several times involving V4 film screenings, innovative elements always enrich the project. This year organisers involved Serbian participants for the first time with the Fund's support, establishing a link to our other closely related neighbouring region, the Western Balkans.

Éva Merenics
Project Manager

"The Fund's focus on innovation, R&D, and entrepreneurship is evident in the high quality of the initiatives it funds."



As a project manager returning after five years, I've been impressed by the significant improvements in both the projects supported by the Visegrad Fund and its internal operations. The use of modern technologies has significantly improved administration and simplified communication with grantees, reducing bureaucratic hurdles and making the project management process much more efficient. The Fund's focus on innovation, R&D, and entrepreneurship is evident in the high quality of the initiatives it funds, encouraging new ideas and solutions in all supported areas. The shift towards digital tools has not only improved transparency but also strengthened the personal connections that make the Fund's work so impactful across the Visegrad and Visegrad+ region.

Darina Madleňáková
Project Manager

2. V4 Gen Mini Grants

Deadlines: March 15, July 15, November 15

The successful second year of running the V4 Gen mini-grants in 2024 gave the fund the opportunity to further fine-tune the project workflow process and optimize the application form. It also led staff to consider streamlining the deadline calendar proposing that we decrease the three annual deadlines to two which was duly approved by the Council of Ambassadors in December 2024.

Securing a better country balance continued to be a difficult task. Interest from Poland continued in 2024 and so did the relatively low turnout of Hungarian applications. The overall picture from the perspective of participating countries (regardless of applicant) was fully in line with the results in 2023.

The biggest difference of the year was the acceptance of Ukrainian entities as applicants/grantees (approved by the Council of Ambassadors in December 2023). The decision proved right and yielded 9 projects approved to entities based in Ukraine.

The slightly lower overall support caused by the depletion of the fund's previously accumulated reserves led to slightly lower overall support of 126 projects (compared to 135 in 2023). The average size of a mini-grant remained roughly the same—€9,074.17 compared to €9,091.99 in 2023.

1241xxxx + 1242xxxx + 1243xxxx

Country	Country-led Projects	Assigned budget €
CZ	20	242,123
HU	11	153,268
PL	67	408,945
SK	19	283,275
AT		
DE		8,333
UA	9	47,400
Total	126	1,143,345

PROJECT EXAMPLE

Summer Time Music 2024

BUDGET

€46,400

LEAD ORGANIZATIONS

Civic association Spectaculum (SK)

PARTNER ORGANIZATIONS

Jaroslav Ježek Conservatory and Higher Vocational School (CZ), Conservatory Žilina (SK), Liszt Ferenc Academy of Music (HU), The Karol Szymanowski Academy of Music in Katowice (PL)



The project provided an intensive music course in northern Slovakia, where top V4 musicians mentored students in an immersive, distraction-free setting. With five individual lessons, personalized guidance, and small group dynamics, it fostered both musical and social growth. Workshops covered essential non-musical skills like recording and PR, while a final concert under time pressure simulated real-life performance conditions. The project ensured access for talented students from low-income backgrounds, promoting inclusivity in music education.



"These projects show that when we invest in youth, we are investing in connections, creativity and perspective for our region."



In 2024, the Visegrad Fund continued to prioritize youth development that creates meaningful regional cooperation. By connecting young people across our region, we create pathways for growth, learning, and mutual understanding.

Summertime Music brought together young talented musicians, offering them an extraordinary opportunity to learn from renowned artists. Through individual lessons, ensemble rehearsals, and a final concert, these young musicians experienced a unique platform for artistic growth and cross-border collaboration.

Another impactful initiative connected youth organizations from Slovakia and Poland, focusing on building political awareness among young people. Through two study visits, an engaging online competition, and podcasts exploring democracy from youth perspectives, the project successfully presented the necessity of civic engagement in public participation. Their effective use of social media helped attract young participants and present democracy in an approachable way.

These projects show that when we invest in youth, we are investing in connections, creativity and perspective for our region.

Katarína Palková
Project Manager

"The program not only facilitated new cross-border friendships but also helped participants enhance their social skills."



Our processes are becoming more professional and applicant friendly. One constant remains however: the profound positive impact projects have on people's lives. This impact is particularly evident in the V4 Gen Mini Grants Program, which I currently oversee. What makes my job especially rewarding is the opportunity to witness our projects' significance firsthand and engage directly with the organizers in their communities.

Empowering marginalized groups (including people with disabilities) has brought several inspiring youth projects in this area. One notable example is "Pay it Forward II," initiated by an elementary school in Plzeň (CZ). This project showcases successful long-term collaboration among schools for hearing-impaired children across Slovakia, Czechia, and Poland, through a comprehensive youth exchange program combining educational and sporting activities.

Another remarkable initiative was "Health and Activity—The Bridge Between Cultures," a collaboration between special schools in Radom and Ostrava (CZ). This youth exchange brought together children with special needs, focusing on healthy lifestyle promotion, team building, and sports activities. The program not only facilitated new cross-border friendships but also helped participants enhance their social skills.

Barbora Ščepánková
Project Manager

Pay it forward II

BUDGET

€10,000

LEAD ORGANIZATIONS

Elementary school and maternity school for hearing impaired in Plzeň (CZ)

PARTNER ORGANIZATIONS

School for pupils with hearing impairment in Kremnica (SK), Secondary School for Young People with Hearing Impairments in Kraków (PL)



The project focused on the technical education of medically disadvantaged students, particularly hearing-impaired children with additional disabilities. Alongside technical learning, it fostered cooperation, social integration, and cultural exchange through interactive activities and sports. Students explored technology centers, a mining museum, and the Ema heap, gaining hands-on experience with industrial heritage. The initiative successfully strengthened communication skills, emotional development, and cross-cultural friendships.

"The Fund's priority is effectiveness, transparency, professionalism and empathy towards our grantees."



I am thrilled to start my fifth year as Project Manager in the International Visegrad Fund. The last few years have brought me many moments of happiness and strengthened my belief that working in a human-centered organization is my professional dream. The Fund's priority is effectiveness, transparency, professionalism and empathy towards our grantees. I am happy that these values have been conveyed in all areas of our work and personally proud that I could create and implement some of our supportive activities.

In 2024 year, our Team provided over 130 consultations and we wrote around 400 feedbacks for rejected applications with advice on how to improve and successfully submit the proposals. We also conducted several online webinars for project coordinators with recommendations on how to efficiently manage projects and comply with the Fund's rules. We wanted to be in touch with all interested individuals and entities, thus we held two editions of Info Week—a series of webinars dedicated to our different programs. We see that all these activities help our applicants and grantees be better understood and informed and make our cooperation smoother and more efficient.

Ewelina Stacherzak
Project Manager

**ALTOGETHER
95 SCHOLARS
WERE
APPROVED
FOR 178
SEMESTERS
IN TOTAL
AMOUNTING
TO €801,000.**

II. SCHOLARSHIPS AND FELLOWSHIPS

1. Visegrad Scholarship Program

The Visegrad Scholarship Program attracted 700 applications from the 16 eligible countries. The balance of applicants' citizenships both in terms of submitted and approved projects has yet again improved but the main trends continued in 2024.

From the point of view of the V4, EaP and WB6 regions—the highest interest was from Poland, Serbia, and Azerbaijan (although decreased from 531 to 356 in 2024) in terms of submitted proposals, and Poland, Bosnia and Herzegovina, and Ukraine in terms of approved proposals.

As per the approved scholars, exactly as in 2023, the highest numbers of approved scholars were the holders of Ukrainian, Polish, and Slovak passports receiving the support for 37, 20 and 14 scholars respectively (totaling 71, 38 and 24 semesters respectively).

In total, 95 scholars were approved for 178 semesters in total amounting to €801,000.

APPROVED SCHOLARS/SEMESTERS 2024

CC	Scholars	Semesters	Scholars €	Lump sum €	Total support €
CZ	4	8	24,000	76,500	100,500
HU	9	17	51,000	13,500	64,500
PL	20	38	114,000	90,000	204,000
SK	14	24	72,000	61,500	133,500
V4	47	87	261,000	241,500	502,500
AL	–	–	0	–	0
BA	3	5	15,000	–	15,000
XK*	–	–	0	6,000	6,000
ME	–	–	0	–	0
MK	–	–	0	1,500	1,500
RS	2	3	9,000	1,500	10,500
WB6	5	8	24,000	9,000	33,000
AM	2	4	12,000	–	12,000
AZ	–	–	0	–	0
BY	1	2	6,000	–	6,000
GE	1	2	6,000	3,000	9,000
MD	2	4	12,000	–	12,000
UA	37	71	213,000	13,500	226,500
EaP	43	83	249,000	16,500	265,500
Total	120	222	666,000	333,000	999,000

Regarding the host countries, there has been no change in the trend. The highest has been in higher-education institutions in Poland followed by Czechia and Slovakia. The eventual approval of the 178 semesters put Poland in the lead with 60 semesters, followed by Czechia with 51, and Slovakia with 41:

FROM/TO BY THE NUMBER OF SEMESTERS 2024

From/to	CZ	GE	HU	MK	PL	RS	SK	UA	XK	Total
AM	2						2			4
BA	5									5
BY	2									2
CZ	–				6		2			8
GE	2	–								2
HU	2		–	1	6		4	4		17
MD							4			4
PL	21	2			–		11		4	38
RS	1		2			–				3
SK	8		3		7	1	–	5		24
UA	8		4		41		18	–		71
Total	51	2	9	1	60	1	41	9	4	178

Regarding the academic fields, there were no significant changes from the past editions with engineering and technology as the most popular (28 scholars/56 semesters), followed by biology (15 scholars/26 semesters), and chemistry and history (both 7 scholars/14 and 13 semesters respectively).

After a decade of successful development of the only functional joint-degree program in the V4 region (kickstarted in 2013 by the Visegrad Fund*), small technical adjustments were made in the My Visegrad system in 2024 to allow Czech, Hungarian, Polish and Slovak MA-level students to apply for Visegrad Scholarships (this had not previously been possible, because the 2-year program has the students at a different host during each semester).

* The program titled VNDREAM has been coordinated by the Jagiellonian University (in cooperation with Masaryk University in Brno, University of Pécs, and Matej Bel University in Banská Bystrica) and was kickstarted by a special Visegrad University Studies Grant #61360003 and later co-financed by a Strategic Grant #22220040 ("V4 Booster...").

2. Visegrad Fellowships

The second full-year operation of the new short-term mobility program registered a very high interest among scholars and researchers all across the V4 region and Ukraine.

Altogether 122 fellows were approved support in 2024 utilizing 654 research/lecture weeks amounting to €327,000 in funding:

<i>Citizenship</i>	<i>Scholars</i>	<i>Weeks</i>	<i>Total €</i>	<i>Average length (wks)</i>
CZ	7	43	21,500	6
HU	17	104	52,000	6
PL	37	177	88,500	5
SK	26	136	68,000	5
UA	35	194	97,000	6
Total	122	654	327,000	5

The diversity of academic fields was yet again far greater than that within the scholarships—researchers/lecturers were supported in 30 academic disciplines covering natural and formal sciences as well as social studies, humanities and arts, and applied sciences. In parallel with Visegrad Scholarships, fellowships in engineering and technology, history and chemistry were the most frequently approved grants:

OVERVIEW OF ACADEMIC FIELDS

<i>Academic field</i>	<i>Scholars</i>	<i>Weeks</i>
Anthropology	3	24
Archaeology	1	10
Architecture and design	3	20
Biology	8	32
Business	3	11
Chemistry	10	55
Computer sciences	1	6

<i>Academic field</i>	<i>Scholars</i>	<i>Weeks</i>
Earth sciences	4	11
Economics	3	14
Education	1	10
Engineering and technology	21	136
History	16	94
International relations	3	20
Languages and literature	6	28
Law	6	18
Mathematics	1	10
Media and communication	1	2
Medicine and health	2	7
Performing arts	2	6
Philosophy	4	26
Physics	3	23
Political science	6	35
Psychology	2	8
Public administration	1	2
Sociology	3	12
Theology	1	3
Transportation and logistics	1	5
Veterinary medicine	1	4
Visual arts	5	22
Total	122	654

Regarding the host institutions, unlike within the scholarship program, the hosts were distributed throughout the entire region including regional colleges and universities as well as diverse institutes of science academies outside of the capital cities. Again, the most attractive proved higher-education and research institutions in Czechia (47) followed by Poland (36), Slovakia (26), and Hungary (13).

"A good grasp of history can have significant positive impacts on both understanding our region as a whole and on mutual relations among and between people."



I am proud that the Visegrad Fund invests in history research, thus supporting the common heritage of our region. As a Master of History, I am convinced that a good grasp of history can have significant positive impacts on both understanding our region as a whole and on mutual relations among and between people. Thanks to one of our projects, archaeology students from Slovakia, Czechia, and Hungary had the opportunity to gain hands-on experience during summer schools at the excavation site in KELEMANTIA (Roman Castellum) in Slovakia. Their program was further strengthened by lectures from invited scholars and the project served as a good networking opportunity for all participants as well. The summer school also helped promote the site, as participants had the chance to guide tourists. These experiences are invaluable in shaping the future of historical research and international cooperation, ensuring that our common history continues to inspire and unite us.

Tereza Vitiz
Project Manager

KELEMANTIA—Archaeological Summer School at the UNESCO World Heritage Site

BUDGET

€8,717

LEAD ORGANIZATIONS

Pro Archaeologica Classica (SK)

PARTNER ORGANIZATIONS

Trnava University in Trnava, Faculty of Philosophy (SK), Institute of Archaeology SAS (SK), Danube Region Museum in Komárno (SK), The Municipality of Iža (SK), Charles University, Faculty of Philosophy (CZ), Masaryk University, Faculty of Philosophy (CZ), ELTE Eötvös Loránd University, Department of Ancient Archaeology (HU)



The project supported the education and training of young people from Central Europe in the research, conservation, and presentation of historical heritage through the example of a UNESCO-protected monument. It focused on archaeological excavation, restoration, and heritage protection at the Roman fort in Iža/Kelemantia (SK), located on the North-Pannonian frontier—*limes Romanus*. The project promoted cooperation in education, research, and cultural heritage protection among V4 countries.

3. Western Balkan–Visegrad Fellowships

Finalized in Q3 2023, the first ever jointly-financed program run in cooperation with the Western Balkans Fund was launched in June 2024 attracting 155 applicants from the entire WB6 region as well as all V4 countries. Altogether 41 scholars were approved for a total sum of €100,208 (supporting altogether 175 research/lecture weeks across the region).

The evaluation of the candidates took place in close cooperation with both institutions, and the final list of approved candidates reflected both geographical distribution of citizenships as well as host countries. Unlike the regular fellowships, candidates for the WB6–V4 support could request individual travel grants (amounting to max. €500):

APPROVED WB6–V4 FELLOWSHIPS 2024

<i>Citizenship</i>	<i>Scholars</i>	<i>Weeks</i>	<i>Travel Grants €</i>	<i>Total €</i>	<i>Average length (wks)</i>
CZ	4	19	1,360	10,860	5
HU	5	21	1,400	11,900	4
PL	3	19	1,400	10,900	6
SK	3	9	620	5,120	3
AL	5	19	1,570	11,070	4
BA	3	18	850	9,850	6
XK*	4	20	980	10,980	5
ME	4	15	1,453	8,953	4
MK	5	18	1,840	10,840	4
RS	5	17	1,235	9,735	3
Total	41	175	12,708	100,208	4

Candidates were approved in 19 academic disciplines with the biggest support focused on history, economics, and political science.

OVERVIEW OF ACADEMIC FIELDS

<i>Academic field</i>	<i>Scholars</i>	<i>Weeks</i>
Anthropology	1	4
Archaeology	2	11
Architecture and design	2	5
Biology	2	8
Business	3	6
Chemistry	1	3
Computer science	2	5
Earth sciences	1	2
Economics	7	23
Engineering and technology	3	13
History	4	32
Human geography	1	8
International relations	2	8
Law	2	10
Mathematics	2	6
Physics	1	2
Political science	3	19
Sociology	1	8
Veterinary medicine	1	2
Total	41	175
Total	122	654

"For the first time in the Fund's history, we launched a jointly run and co-financed program together with our partner the Western Balkans Fund."



Two things stood out in 2024—the launch of the Western Balkan–Visegrad Fellowships and the simplification of rules for Ukrainian applicants.

For the first time in the Fund's history, we launched a jointly run and co-financed program together with our partner the Western Balkans Fund based in Tirana. This initiative facilitates short-term research and guest-lecture fellowships, strengthening connections between the two regions.

Secondly, a few adjustments to the conditions of the V4 Gen Mini Grant and Visegrad+ Grant programs have made the application process simpler for organizations based in Ukraine—further strengthening the already growing ties between Ukraine and the V4 region.

Jiří Sýkora
Chief of Cabinet

4. Visegrad–Taiwan Scholarships Program

The cooperation with the Taipei Economic and Cultural Office (TECO) in Prague continued with a fourth deadline (since its reopening in 2021) on September 30, 2024. Out of the 14 registered applications in 2024, only 8 were eventually submitted, out of which 6 scholars were approved for support:

<i>Name</i>	<i>CC</i>	<i>Discipline</i>	<i>Host</i>	<i>Months</i>	<i>Support €</i>
Dominik Stęпка	PL	Engineering and technology	National Chung Hsing University	2	3,000
Adam Šlechta	CZ	Engineering and technology	National Chung Hsing University	10	11,000
Paulina Zofia Uznańska	PL	Law	National Taiwan University	1 *	2,000
Jakub Józef Orkisz	PL	Law	National Taiwan University	1 *	2,000
Adrianna Jakubowska	PL	Psychology	National Taiwan University	2	3,000
Šimon Suk	CZ	Languages and literature	National Taiwan Normal University	4	5,000
Total					26,000

* Both fellowships of P. Z. Uznańska and J. J. Orkisz (#52410013 and #52410014), while originally intended (and confirmed) for 2 months, were shortened to 1 month each before contracting.

5. Research Grants at the Historical Archives of the EU (HAEU)

The outsourced research fellowship program operated in cooperation with the European Union Institute (EUI) in Florence continued with another edition and approved six candidates altogether for support out of 23 submitted applications:

<i>Scholar</i>	<i>CC</i>	<i>Topic</i>
Tomasz Woźniakowski	PL	FIMICA: Building a Fiscal-Military Capacity in the US, Switzerland and the EU—a Comparative Historical Perspective!
Wojciech Białyżyt	PL	Parallel Diplomacy of the Solidarity Movement with European institutions 1980–1989: Setting Foundations for Future Europe's Re-unification
Péter Budai	HU	The Development of the Protection of the Environment within Community Law: A Case Study of the Expansion of Powers
Eszter Hajdu	HU	The 'Jewish question' in the European Parliament: A Research for a Documentary Project
Slobodan Vukadinovic	RS	Origins and Development of Consumer Protection Aimed at Safeguarding the Single Market of the European Community and Union
Xhoana Agaci	AL	The EEC/EU Policy towards Albania and Western Balkans 1970s–1990s

6. Visegrad Scholarships at the Open Society Archives (OSA)

Under the theme of "The Language(s) of Freedom(s)", the two calls for proposals in May and November 2024 were part of a reflexive-research program at the Archivum focused in connecting past issues related to oppressive regimes, censorship, violence, and information manipulation, to current phenomena. Altogether twenty-three researchers were approved for funding in the two deadlines—ten in the May deadline and thirteen in the November deadline:

DEADLINE: MAY 2024

<i>Name</i>	<i>CC</i>	<i>Research title</i>
Job van Aken	NL	A visual Ethnography on Heroism at the Heroes' Square
Cristina Galmarini	IT	Disability and Freedom in Russia from Perestroika to Bolotnaia
Natalya Ilchuk	UA	Lasting Commitment. Discourses in the Ukrainian Diaspora Publications
Bence Keresztes	HU	The concept of Dissidence during the Kádár Regime
Edit Kiraly	HU	The Politics of Nature. Topics of the Hungarian Danube Environmentalist Movement in the Late Kádár Era
Mate Konkol	HU	Research on Narrating Gender in the Hungarian Democratic Opposition
Dima Kortukov	IL	Research on 1990 Parliamentary Elections and Dissolution of the USSR
Sofia Lopatina	RU	Research on Groups of Young Non-conformists and Surveillance in Leningrad (1956–1968)
Nora Lukacs	HU	"If the Berlin Wind Blows my Flag" (meetings and exchanges in the artistic field during the Cold War)
Domokos Szokolay	HU	State-Controlled National Remembrance: Production of the Past and the Remembrance of the Communist Dictatorship in Hungary from the 1980s to the Present Day

DEADLINE: NOVEMBER 2024

<i>Name</i>	<i>CC</i>	<i>Research title</i>
Nicola Belli	IT	Environmental Protection and the Pursuit of Transparency: A History of Lithuanian Ecologism during Perestroika
Kata Benedek	HU	Within and Outwith Censorship
Dmitri Dubrovsky	RU	Academics as Testimonial Experts in Soviet Trials: How Soviet Academics Assisted in Repression Against Dissidents
Mansur Gazimzianov	RU	RFE/RL Tatar-Bashkir Office's Role in Transmitting Historical Knowledge
Jasna Jovicevic	RS	Sounding Freedom—Avant-Garde Jazz in Cold War Hungary as Cultural Resistance
Ushi Klein	NZ	Exploration of Cultural Practices of Resistance through Seeing and Listening during Romania's Communist Era
Volodymyr Kulikov	UA	Coal Mining and the Language of Freedom in the Donbas (1890s–1990s)
Anne Madelain	FR	Book Publishing and Publishers in the post-Yugoslav Space: Re-organization, Legacy, Circulations (1991-2021)
Ioana Paun	RO	Do You See That Plane? Examining Plane Hijackings as a Means of Resistance during Communist Dictatorship
Ksenia Poluektova-Krimer	RU	Yurii Afanasoev and the Reinvention of Post-Soviet Historiography in Russia
Oleksandr Stoianov	UA	The Comparative and Differing Understandings of What Constituted Authorship and Censorship in the Depiction of Labor Camps in Soviet Propaganda films
Mikhail Suslov	RU	Geopolitical Culture of Eurasianism in the Postwar Period
Ileana Gabriela Szasz-Voinea	RO	The Political Dimension of Personal Documentaries in the Eastern European Mediascape

THE ARTIST RESIDENCIES CONTINUED TO BE THE MOST DIVERSE MOBILITY PROGRAM THE FUND OPERATES.

III. ARTIST RESIDENCIES

Artist residencies continued to be the most diverse mobility program with five distinct chapters separating *visual and sound arts*, *performing arts*, *visual arts residencies in New York*, *fashion residencies in Milan*, and *literary residencies in Prague, Budapest, Krakow, and Bratislava*.

Except for the literary residencies administered by the Villa Decius Foundation with two annual deadlines, applications for all other residency projects were collected within a single deadline on November 15.

As every year, all schemes attracted the highest overall turnout of applications from other programs the Fund operates with the average "success rate" being 11%.

Visual & Sound Arts

CC	Artists		Hosts		Total (€)
	Projects	€	Projects	€	
CZ	4	12,000	4	12,000	24,000
HU	4	12,000	5	15,000	27,000
PL	4	12,000	2	6,000	18,000
SK	4	12,000	5	15,000	27,000
Total	16	48,000	16	48,000	96,000

Performing Arts

CC	Artists		Hosts		Total (€)
	Projects	€	Projects	€	
CZ	2	8,000	4	11,000	19,000
HU	2	8,000	1	2,000	10,000
PL	2	8,000	0	0	8,000
SK	2	8,000	3	9,000	17,000
Total	8	32,000	8	22,000	54,000

The following is the list of authors approved for literary residency projects organized by the implementing organizations—the Arts Institute in Prague, Petőfi Literary Museum in Budapest, Villa Decius in Krakow, and the Center for Information on Literature in Bratislava:

3-MONTH EDITION

<i>Name</i>	<i>CC</i>	<i>Host Organization</i>
Václav Holanec	CZ	Arts Institute in Prague
Veronika Hegedüs	HU	Arts Institute in Prague
Agnieszka Ewa Fulińska	PL	Arts Institute in Prague
Jana Micenková	SK	Arts Institute in Prague
Ondřej Macl	CZ	Centre for Information on Literature in Bratislava
Renátó Fehér	HU	Centre for Information on Literature in Bratislava
Jakub Pszoniak	PL	Centre for Information on Literature in Bratislava
Ivana Gibová	SK	Centre for Information on Literature in Bratislava
Petr Šourek	CZ	Petőfi Literary Museum in Budapest
Rita Halász	HU	Petőfi Literary Museum in Budapest
Stanisława Anna Budzisz-Cysewska	PL	Petőfi Literary Museum in Budapest
Anna Grusková	SK	Petőfi Literary Museum in Budapest
Barbora Bažantová	CZ	Villa Decius Association
Marta Eles	HU	Villa Decius Association
Marta Sokołowska	PL	Villa Decius Association
Jana Beňová	SK	Villa Decius Association

6-WEEK EDITION

<i>Name</i>	<i>CC</i>	<i>Host Organization</i>
Martina Lupínková	CZ	Arts Institute in Prague
Márton Szijj	HU	Arts Institute in Prague
Barbara Woźniak	PL	Arts Institute in Prague
Lukáš Cabala	SK	Arts Institute in Prague
Miroslav Zelinský	CZ	Centre for Information on Literature in Bratislava
Noémi Szécsi	HU	Centre for Information on Literature in Bratislava
Robert Król	PL	Centre for Information on Literature in Bratislava
Dominika Moravčíková	SK	Centre for Information on Literature in Bratislava
Alena Zemančíková	CZ	Petőfi Literary Museum in Budapest
Gyöngyi Bakos	HU	Petőfi Literary Museum in Budapest
Małgorzata Boryczka	PL	Petőfi Literary Museum in Budapest
Barbora Hrínová	SK	Petőfi Literary Museum in Budapest
Eva Klíčová	CZ	Villa Decius Association
Zsombor Attila Biró	HU	Villa Decius Association
Aleksandra Kasprzak	PL	Villa Decius Association
Pavel Rankov	SK	Villa Decius Association

"Artistic residencies remain a vital part of our funding strategy, providing essential support to artists across the V4 region."



Artistic residencies remain a vital part of our funding strategy, providing essential support to artists across the V4 region. This year, we observed a remarkable increase in applications across all residency types—with both the Literary and Performing Arts Residencies receiving 16 more applications each, and the New York Residency seeing an impressive rise of 43 additional applications.

I take pride in having built the Fashion Residency Program from the ground up. Now in its second year, the program continues to thrive, offering residents the opportunity to attend classes at the prestigious Accademia Costume & Moda in Milan (IT).

Additionally, 2024 marked the introduction of online reporting for the Visual and Sound Arts and Performing Arts Residencies, streamlining the process for artists and reinforcing our commitment to sustainability.

Martin Marciña
Project Manager

Fashion residency in Milan (IT)

BUDGET
UP TO
€3,500
/PER RESIDENT

GRADUATES OF 2024

Patrícia Harsányi (HU), Michaela Stanová (SK),
Paweł Włodarski (PL), Klára Židková (CZ)

LEAD ORGANIZATIONS

Accademia
Costume & Moda,
Milan (IT)



The Fashion Residency Program in Milan (Italy) opens unique two-month opportunities for V4 professionals from the field of fashion, costume design and digital art to work in Milan, the heart of the fashion industry. It provides the opportunity to get inspired by renowned fashion brands and fairs. Accademia Costume & Moda is one of the top three fashion schools in the world and provides an individual approach to research, alongside customized lectures and visits.

IV. OTHER PROJECTS

1. Visegrad Strategic Conferences

The budget of the Strategic Conferences program continued with its €500,000 annual allocation in 2024 and events took place in all four V4 countries:

<i>ID code</i>	<i>Grantee</i>	<i>Project title</i>	<i>Budget (€)</i>
VSC24CZ1	Forum 2000 Foundation	28th Forum 2000 Conference	65,000
VSC24CZ2	EUROPEUM	Prague European Summit	30,000
VSC24CZ3	EUROPEUM	Transatlantic Policy Forum 2024	30,000
<i>CZ Subtotal</i>			125,000
VSC24HU1	Institute for Foreign Affairs and Trade	Budapest Balkans Forum	125,000
<i>HU Subtotal</i>			125,000
VSC24PL1	Res Public Foundation	Europe Future Forum	62,500
VSC24PL2	Casimir Pulaski Foundation	Warsaw Security Forum 2024	62,500
<i>PL Subtotal</i>			125,000
VSC24SK1	Universitas Matthiae Belii, o.z.	Slovak BioEconomy Valley	65,720
VSC24SK2	Faculty of Law, Comenius University in Bratislava	Bratislava Legal Forum 2024	59,280
<i>SK Subtotal</i>			125,000
<i>Total</i>			500,000

2. Think Visegrad Think-Tank Network + the Mid-Term Conference

The Think Visegrad think-tank platform concluded its thirteenth year of operations in January 2024. Altogether, the consortium developed two policy briefs, three scenarios, a policy paper, and two thematic analyses.

Policy briefs:

- European Political Community before the Summit in the UK (revisited)
- Austria after Elections

Scenarios:

- EP Elections. New Parliament, New Commission
- Implications of Elections in the US for EU–US Relations
- Can the V4 Survive, and In What Form?

Thematic analyses:

- Internal Situation in Germany: the Growing Importance of Anti-Establishment Parties in the Context of Next Year's Parliamentary Elections
- Western Balkans' Scoreboard 2024

Policy paper:

- Foreign policy strategies of the V4 countries

Altogether, eight **visiting fellows** in total from non-V4, non-EU countries received support for short-term research stays in the respective think tanks in 2024, representing diverse regions incl. western Europe (ES, UK), the western Balkans (AL, BA, MK), the southern Caucasus (AZ), eastern Europe (UA) or South America (EC).

The tenth annual **Mid-Term Review Conference** was organized by the EUROPEUM Institute for European Policy marking the 20th anniversary of the EU enlargement. The event was organized under the title "Think Visegrad Midterm Conference: 20 Years of Reuniting Europe's East and West" in the Czernin Palace in Prague on April 10–11, 2024.

3. Think Visegrad in Brussels

EUROPEUM's Brussels office continued to enjoy the usual support of the Think Visegrad platform in Brussels in 2024.

In total, eight expert-level debates occurred, of which five took the form of private roundtables and the remaining three were public events:

- Making enlargement work again: Supporting the Western Balkans through the experiences of Central and Eastern Europe,
- A wind of change? The role of Central Europe in the next EU political cycle,
- Reassessing EU–US relations after the EP and US elections: Views from Central Europe (and beyond),
- Regional Cooperation in Central Europe in the Aftermath of Russia's war: Changes and Prospects,
- Ukraine's EU membership: an economic challenge or an opportunity?
- Transforming words into action. How to keep current momentum in EU enlargement?
- The Role of the Middle Corridor in the EU's Energy Independence,
- Geopolitics first: Perspective of CEE on the EU's global challenges in the next political cycle.

Moreover, eight fellows were hosted in Brussels as part of the Think Visegrad Fellowships. Additionally, outreach was conducted with the use of social media as well as a regular, monthly newsletter distributed by EUROPEUM. Furthermore, space was made available for think-tankers from the V4 region to use for a week-long study trip in Brussels.

4. Civil Servant Mobility Program

The unique experience-sharing instrument took place in a full format in 2024 targeting Kosovo, Montenegro, and Ukraine, and implemented the overdue visit of Albanian civil servants to Poland. Due to logistical challenges, however, two target countries (and three visiting groups) remained unsettled regarding their visits planned to Hungary (Moldova from 2023 and Ukraine from 2023 and from 2024). Both editions are planned to take place in Q1 2025 and will be duly reported in 2025.

The actual visits took the following schedule in each country in 2024:

Country	Topic	Dates
AL	Transport system (PL)—overdue visit from 2023	Oct. 6–12, 2024
XK	Development of strategies to counter disinformation, malign influence, and hybrid threats (CZ), Environmental protection and climate policy (HU), Building resilience against hybrid threats, such as cyberattacks, disinformation, and instrumentalized migration (PL), Informatization and digitalization in public administration (SK)	Oct. 7–11 (CZ), June 2–8 (HU), Dec. 1–6 (PL), Dec. 8–13 (SK)
ME	Development of strategies to counter disinformation, malign influence, and hybrid threats (CZ), Environmental protection and climate policy (HU), Rule of law and protection of human rights (PL), Alternative sanctions and physical security and cybersecurity of prisons (SK)	Oct. 7–11, 2024 (CZ), June 2–8, 2024 (HU), Oct. 14–19, 2024 (PL), Feb. 10–14, 2025 (SK)
UA	EU integration, Eastern European policy, and the enhancement of trade, digitalization, and policy alignment between Ukraine and the EU (CZ), EU accession negotiations and preparation for EU membership (PL), Energy efficiency and smart and carbon neutral cities (SK)	June 10–14 (CZ), Sep. 30–Oct. 4 (PL), Dec. 1–6 (SK)

5. V4 Energy Think Tank Platform

The seventh edition of the energy think tank project addressed the regional solutions to the ongoing energy transition in the context of the war in Ukraine. The consortium comprised the same group of think tanks as in the previous years—The Association of International Affairs in Prague (AMO), REKK in Budapest, the Center for Eastern Studies (OSW), Warsaw, and the Research Center of the Slovak Foreign Policy Association (SFPA).

The following working papers were produced within the consortium in 2024:

Lead author(s)	Working paper—Title
Oldřich Sklenář (AMO)	Role of Green Gases in the Energy Transition of V4 Countries
Gabriella Szajkó (REKK)	Sustainable Use of Biomass in V4 Countries
Agata Łoskot-Strachota, Krzysztof Dębiec, Andrzej Sadecki (OSW)	Nuclear Energy in V4—the Current Situation and Perspectives
Adam Čermák (SFPA)	Revitalizing Ukraine's Energy System: Exploring V4 Contributions to Reconstruction and EU Accession in the Field of Energy

6. V4 Startup Force

Design Terminál, Kft. continued with the V4 Startup Force in cooperation with DEX (CZ), Startup Hub Poland, and Campus (SK). The budgeted sum of €149,660 was fully utilized through the usual outputs—a hybrid lecturing program, an on-line bootcamp and one-on-one mentoring sessions and pitching for a for an international jury.

7. Visegrad Bicycle Races

The thirteenth edition of bicycle races organized under the single banner of the Visegrad Bicycle Race took place in June and July 2024. Based on the decision of the NVCs (formally approved by the Conference of Ministers while passing the 2023 budget), the 2024 edition was supported with a lower sum of €60,000:

<i>Grantee</i>	<i>Venues</i>	<i>Dates</i>	<i>Awarded sum (€)</i>
Czech Cycling Federation, Prague	Brno → Mikulov → Brno	July 20, 2024	12,000
Movement Health Recreation Sport Club, Budaörs	Budapest → Pannonhalma	July 6, 2024	12,000
Dolnośląski Związek Kolarski, Wrocław	Głogów → Grębocice	July 21, 2024	24,000
Slovak Cycling Federation, Bratislava	Nová Baňa	July 7, 2024	12,000
Total			60,000

8. V4 innovators in Israel Training Program

The program is on temporary hold.

9. Western Balkans Fund

Cooperation with the Western Balkans Fund continued in 2024 in the framework of the Memorandum of Understanding concluded on November 14, 2023, and with validity extended until the end of 2025.

The main task of 2024 was finalizing, setting up, launching and "processing" the first joint call of the two institutions—the inter-regional academic and research mobility program titled Western Balkans–Visegrad Fellowships.

The Fund also agreed to support with organizing the annual conference the Western Balkans Fund organizes in Tirana. The 2024 organization was postponed until

March 2025. The conference under the title "Balanced Development through Regional Cooperation: The Impact on Local Authorities" will be organized with the support of the Embassy of Japan in Tirana, and with the support of a €5,000 public relations mini-grant from the Visegrad Fund.

The Fund also extended its assistance in regard to identifying suitable project partners in the V4 region, in particular the respective associations of towns and municipalities in each country.

10. V4–Japan Joint Research Program

Based on the joint statements issued at the V4–Japan Summit in Warsaw in June 2013 and sealed by the Memorandum of Cooperation on Scientific and Technological Cooperation between the Fund and the Japan Science and Technology Agency on September 23, 2014, two rounds of joint projects in the area of advanced materials took place. While the first batch from 2015 had been concluded, the second edition of the relaunched cooperation in 2021 has been implemented in the recent years and three out of the five projects concluded in 2024:

<i>ID #</i>	<i>Grantee</i>	<i>Seat</i>	<i>Total budget (€)</i>	<i>Status</i>
JP1648	Institute of Fundamental Technological Research,	Warsaw	49,448	Prolonged until April 30, 2025
JP22420	Polish Academy of Science	Prague	19,550	Finished
JP29420	University of Chemistry and Technology, Prague	Prague	39,100	Prolonged until October 21, 2025
JP3936	J. Heyrovský Institute of Physical Chemistry	Budapest	59,160	Finished
JP39421	Eötvös Loránd University/ Institute of Physics	Košice	72,720	Finished
Total			239,978	

**SOCIAL
MEDIA REACH
INCREASED
BY 26.5%
AND BROUGHT
1745 NEW
FANS.**

V. PUBLIC RELATIONS AND OUTREACH

In 2024, awareness of grant and mobility programs was built through all communication channels while strengthening the Fund's reputation. In-person presentations, information sessions, and two editions of on-line webinars were held to help the current as well as potential recipients prepare successful applications.

Key promotional achievements of the year:

- the number of contributions published through the communication channels was 30% higher than in the previous year
- the social media reach increased by 26.5% and brought 1,745 new fans
- 6 editions of the newsletter were circulated to almost 5,800 people

Furthermore, Bratislava's Europe Day 2024 with the slogan "In Europe We Are at Home" took place on May 9, 2024, in

the Old Market Hall in Bratislava and the Fund took part in the event.

The "Project of the Year" contest selected the project "Azył shorts 2023" implemented by Azył Production (SK) in collaboration with the Czech company Kruton, Cultural Centre Białystok, the Hungarian company MER-KEL Film and the Ukrainian company KISFF Films (and other partners).

The annual anniversary reception was held in Bratislava on June 12, 2024, where the grantees of the Project of the Year were awarded.

The Fund was present at the V4 Presidents' Summit on December 16, 2024, where the Fund's Executive Director presented the Fund's achievements to the V4 heads of state.

Before the end of the year, the Fund also welcomed media representatives to present its current activities and priorities for the coming year.

"From the very beginning, I felt at ease with both the team and the responsibilities I was entrusted with."



In March 2024, I joined the team as an intern and later transitioned into the role of Project Manager with a focus on social media. From the very beginning, I felt at ease with both the team and the responsibilities I was entrusted with.

Throughout the year, I took part in various activities aimed at showcasing teamwork within the Fund. These included Europe Day at Stará Tržnica in Bratislava (SK), team-building sessions in both spring and autumn, the Breast Cancer Awareness campaign, and a colleague-led clothing swap.

Together, we worked to strengthen the Fund's social media presence, engage with project grantees by monitoring ongoing initiatives, and promote successfully completed projects.

Agata Miętus
Project Manager

"This year's nominations include powerful and worthy topics—stories that truly deserve attention, recognition and sharing."



Behind many of the grant projects supported by the Visegrad Fund lie powerful stories, remarkable dedication, and real impact. Applicants for Visegrad Grants face complex challenges, which they transform into tangible results—whether it involves connecting communities, promoting culture, education, innovation, research and development, regional and social development, or strengthening cross-border cooperation.

Each year, we honour these projects through the Project of the Year Award, a recognition the Fund has been granting since 2016. Selecting the nominated projects and presenting them as inspiring video stories for our followers and the wider public is always both a challenge and a privilege. The public's responses and votes ultimately decide which of these projects receives the award.

In 2024, we will be presenting the Project of the Year Award for the ninth time, and it is a personal pleasure for me to be part of this meaningful initiative. This year's nominations include powerful and worthy topics—stories that truly deserve attention, recognition and sharing.

Sylvia Kovalčíková
PR Manager

The logo consists of a circular arrangement of white dots of varying sizes, creating a starburst or galaxy-like effect. The text "Visegrad Fund" is centered within this dot pattern.

Visegrad Fund