

**PRESS RELEASE: V4 PRIME MINISTERS PRAISE THE WORK OF THE VISEGRAD FUND AND AGREE TO RAISE ITS BUDGET**

WARSAW/BRATISLAVA—At the annual summit in Wieliczka, Poland, the prime ministers of the Visegrad Group countries agreed to raise each V4 country's annual contribution to the Fund's budget by € 250,000. As of 2010, the annual budget of the Fund increases by 20% to € 6 million.

The prime ministers discussed the role of the International Visegrad Fund as the only institution of the Visegrad cooperation. They stated that the Fund is to be one of the key tools for the development and intensification of cooperation between the Visegrad Group and other countries.

The past activities of the Fund were highly valued by the prime ministers. The Fund was stated to have significantly contributed to the integration of local communities and to have allowed the flow of young people between the Visegrad Group countries and the bordering regions, namely the western Balkans and countries within the so-called eastern dimension of the European Neighborhood Policy.

The Prime Ministers also expressed their gratitude to the active role of the Fund's Executive Director, Ambassador Kristóf Forrai, whose 3-year term ends in August 2009 and whose position will be handed over to Mr. Petr Vágner.

The annual June summit of the Visegrad Group's prime ministers marks the handing over of the Group's presidency.

Mr. Gordon Bajnai—the Prime Minister of Hungary—outlined the major priorities of the Hungarian V4 Presidency focusing on the challenges for the region as regards the current EU agenda. From the regional perspective, Hungary would like to continue the work of its predecessors on the cohesion of V4 internal cooperation and wishes to strengthen the V4 identity through more visible actions. The development of the poorest areas of the region is one of the biggest challenges for the Visegrad Group and Hungary will strive for simplified procedures in access to EU funding.

Social integration of Roma communities will also be an important issue to deal with during the next 12 months. It was suggested that V4 experts consider their specific contribution to the existing regional frameworks, such as the one provided by the EU Platform for Roma Inclusion recently launched in Prague. Additionally, projects supported by the Fund's Strategic Grants will aim at social integration of Roma communities.

More information:

- **Press Release of the Polish V4 Presidency**  
(<http://www.visegradgroup.eu/main.php?folderID=1&articleID=23250&ctag=articlelist&iid=1>)
- **Hungary takes over the year-long Presidency of the Visegrad Group...**  
(<http://www.visegradgroup.eu/main.php?folderID=859&articleID=23254&ctag=articlelist&iid=1>)
- **International Visegrad Fund's 2008 Annual Report/Guideline to 2009 Programs**  
([http://visegradfund.org/press/ANNUAL\\_REPORT2008.pdf](http://visegradfund.org/press/ANNUAL_REPORT2008.pdf))