The Visegrad Cooperation of Central and Eastern European Countries was established on February 15, 1991, ten days before the end of the Warsaw Pact. The motivation was cooperation in the transition from totalitarianism to liberal democracy. The return of Central and Eastern European Countries back to the Western civilization circuit (joining NATO and the EU) was fast. Czech Republic, Hungary, Poland and Slovakia have gone a long way since, not always forward. There is already second generation of the children born into democracy and freedom in V4 countries, yet countries still struggle with the heritage of communism.

The Communist regime was characterized by the limitation of all types of freedoms and also by the devastation of the environment. The centrally planned economy plundered raw materials and damaged the air and health of its inhabitants. The situation has improved radically since. Nevertheless, the Visegrad Group is still heavily dependent on coal. Poland produces 80% and the Czech Republic 47% of electricity from coal. V4 is characterized by the highest carbon intensity, i.e. carbon emissions per unit of GDP. So far, none of the V4 countries has submitted plans to shut down coal-fired power plants as the vast majority of Western Europe. Is there a two-speed Europe again?

Undoubtedly, Visegrad has fulfilled its main task, i.e. the transition from totalitarianism to democracy effectively and quickly. However, subsequently has mutated into an association that hampers the adoption of robust common European policies and instruments for climate protection: V4 countries have rejected proposals for more ambitious targets for reducing greenhouse gas emissions, rejected national binding targets for renewable energy and refused to support the date, when the EU should be carbon neutral. The V4 countries either halted or significantly reduced the support for the development of renewable energy sources and are betting on postponing the phase-out of coal-fired power plants and dreaming of building new nuclear reactors, regardless of the fact that their construction economy makes them completely uncompetitive. The influence of coal and nuclear interests hampers the development of clean, cheaper RES, which in addition delivers decentralization and thus democratization of the energy sector.

Key renewable energy associations from V4 countries and Austria consider Visegrad cooperation based on ignoring climate threats, attempting to extend fossil fuel
burning, exempting air pollution limitations and underpinning RES development as a
death project, which in addition hurts interests and health of its own citizens. However,
you see a great potential for cooperation between Central and Eastern European
countries in transforming energy from fossil to renewable energy at the same time.
That is why we are calling together: “Visegrad is dead. Long live Visegrad+”.

Memorandum signatories perceive the continuation of Visegrad+ cooperation
positively. The + sign means not only a qualitative shift of V4+ from coal to renewable
energy, but also the openness to cooperate with other Eastern European
countries, which have similar historical experience, high energy intensity of their economies and
are facing deep economic, environmental, energy as well as mental transformation.

Visegrad+ is the cross-border cooperation of renewable energy associations in order
to promote and accompany sustainable transformation of the regions through joint
political advice, communication and cooperation, as well as to balance the voice of
conventional energy producers, to actively accelerate energy transformation to
sustainable and fairly distributed renewables. Therefore, V4 representatives have
invited Austria, which has extensive experience in renewable energy, to co-operate.
Austria borders three out of four countries and a cross-border cooperation has already
underway in many other areas, unfortunately not in the field of renewable energy and
climate protection. The aim of the cooperation is to fill the white space.

Signatories hereby establish "Visegrad+ for Renewable Energy" (V+RE) and confirm
their interest in cooperating in the following areas:

- Build a strong regional coalition based on this platform and invite other
  representatives of renewable energy from CEE countries who are interested in
greening the V4+ region's energy transition;
- Exchange of experiences in transforming the region's energy systems towards
  renewable and sustainable economies;
- Promote the energy transition of the V4+ region through the design of energy
  policy and communication on the benefits of a progressive energy policy based
  on the vast potential of renewable energy;
- Advice for politicians, institutions and media on the energy transformation of
  the region;
- Sharing and communicating best practices towards a renewable energy
  system;
- Actively work on the earliest possible phase out of coal within the V4+ region;
- Actively work on a gradual phasing out of nuclear power from the V4+ region;
- Reduce the EU's dependence on fossil fuel imports and actively promote the
  European goals of energy transformation and climate protection;
- Support the process of just transition in Central/Eastern Europe towards the
  green economy compatible with the Paris agreement.
List of signatories:

Stepan Chalupa
Chairman

Veronika Galekova
Director

Irena Gajewska
Director

Florian Maringer
Managing Director

Ernő Kiss
President

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Ada Amon
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Gabor Orban
CEO

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