



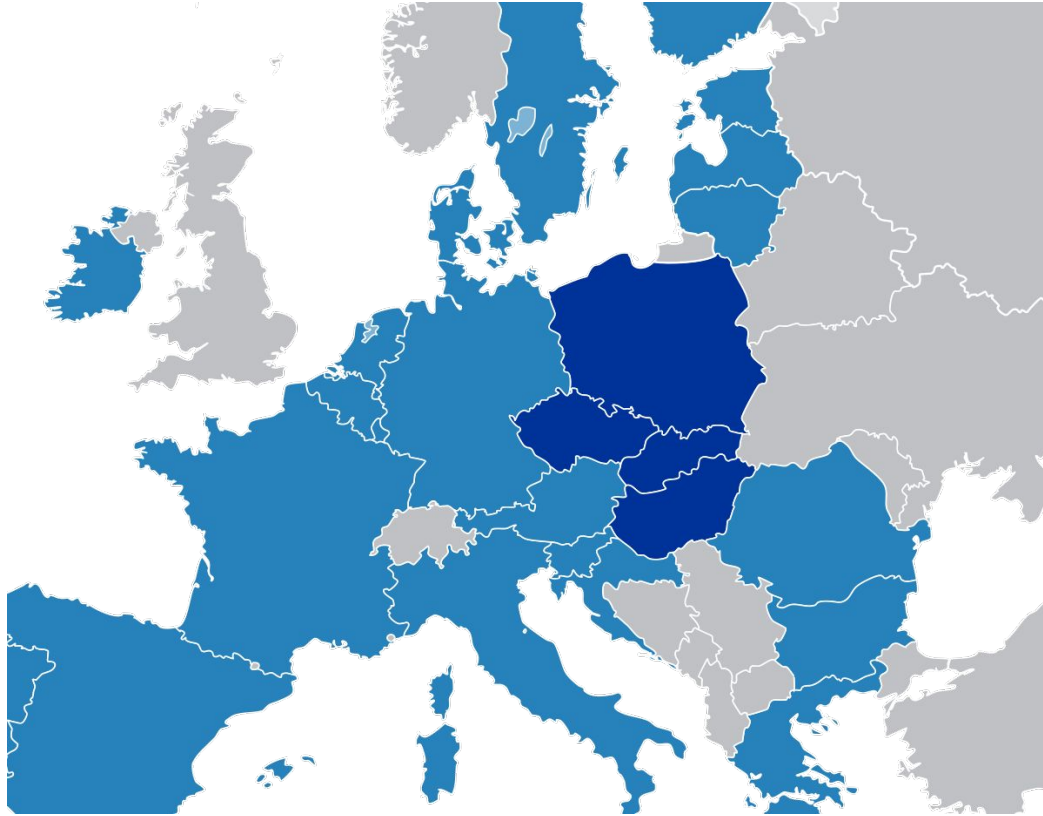
The Visegrad Group and the European migration policy

Castle Talks - January 2021



Sciences Po Strasbourg
MA Borders : Cooperations and conflicts





Map of the location of the four countries of the Visegrad Group in the European Union

Source : Wikipédia



The current heads of states of the V4 (from left to right) : **Igor Matovič** (Slovakia), **Viktor Orbán** (Hungary), **Mateusz Morawiecki** (Poland) et **Andrej Babiš** (Czech Republic)

Source : touteurope.org

I) A historical European antagonism

A) The beginnings of V4 (1991-2004)



The first meeting of the Visegrád Group in February 1991: József Antall, Václav Havel and Lech Wałęsa. By Péter Antall, Antall family's archives.

- The Visegrad declaration was signed in 1991
- Objective : Integrate the EU and NATO
- Shared already common positions on the protection of national interests in the multilateral system

I) A historical European antagonism

B) The roots of the opposition to the West of Europe

- For the V4, the collapse of the Iron Curtain was just a passage from a yoke to another.
- Since 2015, Hungary and Poland are the spearheads of the Visegrad group.

C) A group with common values

- The EU has been seen as an political and economical opportunity for their comparative advantages.
- Aim to reaffirm that "Budapest and Warsaw have as much right to define Europe as Paris or Berlin" and denounced the EU's "imperialism".

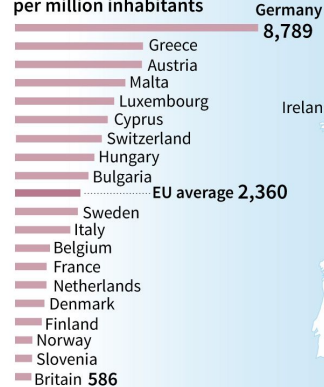
Jean-Claude Juncker's quota policy, distribution of 160,000 refugees

- Source : DG Migration and Home Affairs, European Commission ;
International Centre for Migration Policy Development.

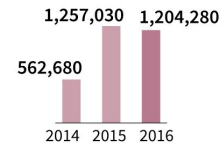
Asylum-seekers in Europe

1,204,280 requests in 2016, down 4% on 2015

Number of applicants
per million inhabitants

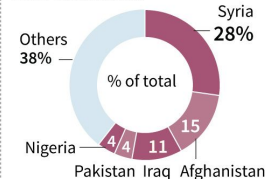


Total requests
EU member states

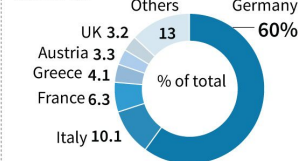


Source: Eurostat, as of March 16

Asylum-seekers
main nationalities



Host
countries



© AFP

Source : Eurostat/AFP

B) Challenging the principle of solidarity

- Face to the opposition of the Visegrad group on the principle establishing the country responsible for the asylum application, the Commission decided renounced to the quota policy and put forward the concept for "flexible responsibility".
- On the 23rd of September 2020, U. Von Der Leyen presented a new draft of the reform of Dublin III

C) Violation of European principles

- In 2017, the European Court of Justice rejected the action for annulment by Poland, Hungary and Romania against the Dublin Regulation and the quota policy.
- The Commission also brought Article 7 of the TEU against Poland and Hungary in 2017 and 2018 for violation of the founding values cited in Article 2 TEU as well as Article 49 TEU in which States undertake to respect and promote the European values.



Image credit : Zoltan Mathe - MTI via AP / Keystone

III. A health crisis serving the ideals of the Visegrad group

A) The V4 : The establishment of a permanent opposition to Berlin and Brussels

- The "solidarity" of the Visegrad group hardly boils down to the migratory crisis but seems to have developed as a permanent counterweight as we will observe now, during the COVID19 crisis.
- Through health state of emergency protocol, leaders of the V4 were able to implement all the measures they deemed necessary to limit the pandemic, many of which proved to be authoritarian drifts in the field of immigration



Image Credit: EPA-EFE/FRANCOIS LENOIR

B) Health crisis : violation of the principle of non-discrimination

- Hungary was the first state to close its borders hermetically from any citizens of the Schengen area, before making an exception only for the Visegrad Group in September.
- Poland had also published a list of no-fly countries targeting France and Spain at first.
- In Slovakia, several Gypsy camps were the first to be quarantined by the authorities after stopping the distribution of free meals.



Source : MTI-Hungary Today

C) The migration issue during the health crisis: a benefit for the migration policy of Poland and Hungary

- The countries of the Visegrad Group were less affected by the health crisis than most Western European countries. A low contamination rate that is used by the group's governments to highlight the effectiveness of their migration policies
- Warsaw and Budapest having obtained financial help from the EU do not really come to the aid of the homeless and jobless migrants and even deport them



Bibliography :

Agnès Faure, Qu'est ce que le groupe de Visegrad ? [en ligne], Toute l'Europe, 21 Juillet 2020 [consulté le 15 octobre 2020] Disponible sur : <https://www.touteleurope.eu/actualite/qu-est-ce-que-le-groupe-de-visegrad.html>

Aneta Zachová, Edit Zgut, Karolina Zbytniewska, Michał Strzałkowski et Zuzana Gabrizova, Les pays de Visegrad unis contre le système de relocalisation[en ligne] Euractiv, 14 juillet 2018 [consulté le 15 octobre 2020] Disponible sur : <https://www.euractiv.fr/section/politique/news/visegrad-nations-united-against-mandatory-relocation-quotas/>

Cécile Ducourtieux et Jean-Pierre Stroobants, La justice européenne valide les quotas de réfugiés [en ligne] Le Monde, 6 septembre 2017 [consulté le 15 octobre 2020] Disponible sur : https://www.lemonde.fr/europe/article/2017/09/06/la-justice-europeenne-valide-les-quotas-de-refugies_5181666_3214.html

Georgi Gotev, La «solidarité flexible», solution de l'est à la crise migratoire [en ligne] Euractiv, 20 septembre 2016 [consulté le 15 octobre 2020] Disponible sur : <https://www.euractiv.fr/section/politique/news/flexible-solidarity-becomes-new-tool-in-response-to-refugee-crisis/>

Immigration : les pays de Visegrad boycotteront le minisommet européen de dimanche [en ligne] Le Monde, 21 juin 2018 [consulté le 15 octobre 2020] Disponible sur : https://www.lemonde.fr/europe/article/2018/06/21/immigration-les-pays-de-visegrad-boycotteront-le-mini-sommet-europeen-de-dimanche_5319161_3214.html

Martin Michelot, LES PROCÉDURES DE « L'ARTICLE 7 » CONTRE LA POLOGNE ET LA HONGRIE [en ligne] Institut Jacques Delors, 22 mars 2019 [consulté le 15 octobre 2020] Disponible sur : <https://institutdelors.eu/publications/les-procedures-de-larticle-7-contre-la-pologne-et-la-hongrie-quels-effets-concrets/>

Mathilde Kupka, Le groupe de Visegrád, marqueur d'une Europe divisée ? [en ligne] Le journal International, 28 février 2019 [consulté le 15 octobre 2020] Disponible sur : <http://www.lejournalinternational.info/le-groupe-de-visegrad-marqueur-dune-europe-divisee/>

Pacte migration et asile : ce que propose la Commission européenne [en ligne] Vie publique, 29 septembre 2020 [consulté le 15 octobre 2020] Disponible sur : <https://www.vie-publique.fr/en-bref/276363-vers-une-reforme-de-la-politique-europeenne-de-migration-et-dasile#:~:text=Le%2023%20septembre%202020%2C%20la,la%20question%20migratoire%20sont%20nombreux.>

Vargovčíková, Jana. « Le Groupe de Visegrad, 20 ans après », *Politique étrangère*, vol. printemps, no. 1, 2012, pp. 147-159.

Chatignoux, Catherine: "Coronavirus : la Hongrie referme unilatéralement ses frontières" <https://www.lesechos.fr/monde/europe/coronavirus-la-hongrie-referme-unilateralement-ses-frontieres-1238432>
"En Pologne, les travailleurs migrants éprouvent des difficultés à rentrer au pays".
<https://fr.euronews.com/2020/04/05/en-pologne-les-travailleurs-migrants-eprouvent-des-difficultes-a-renter-au-pays>