

**JOINT STATEMENT ADOPTED AT THE 8TH MEETING OF THE  
CHAIRMEN OF FOREIGN AFFAIRS, DEFENSE AND EUROPEAN  
INTEGRATION COMMITTEES OF THE PARLIAMENTS OF THE CZECH  
REPUBLIC, POLAND, SLOVAKIA AND HUNGARY (BUDAPEST,  
JANUARY 31 – FEBRUARY 1, 2002)**

1. We, the representatives of Foreign Affairs, Defense and European Integration Committees of the national parliaments of the Visegrád Group, met in Budapest to overview the cooperation between our countries, primarily on the issues of European integration and security policy challenges.
2. We are pleased to note that our countries have entered the decisive phase of the process of accession to the European Union and based on the internal preparedness, we are capable to conclude the accession negotiations by the end of 2002 and become full members of the Union as of January 1, 2004.
3. We welcome the conclusions of the Laeken EU Summit which confirmed the will of enlarging the Union. We assume that the principle of judging the candidates on individual merits will be observed.
4. We call on the Spanish Government to make all the necessary efforts during its EU-presidency aimed at comprehensively negotiating all unconcluded chapters and formulating the relevant common EU-positions.
5. We disagree with the latest proposals included in the issue paper of the European Commission regarding direct agricultural payments that would allocate proportionally much less to the new members, in comparison with the current member states. We oppose every policy that would result in a “second-class” membership. The true European democracy should certainly include the genuine equality of all EU members.
6. As we are certain that our membership in the Union would not have any negative impact on the current EU-members’ economies, including their labor markets, we call on the respective European governments not to impose restrictions on the free movement of labor after the enlargement.
7. Guided by our responsibility for Europe, we will actively participate in the preparation of decisions concerning the future of the Union, thus, in the work of the Convent to be started soon.
8. The tragedy of September 11, 2001 deeply shocked our countries and we consider the terrorist attacks on the United States as an attack on all countries with democratic values. We consider terrorism, its direct and indirect support as a crime against the mankind. We join the international fight against terrorism as well as the efforts aimed at creating stability in Afghanistan.
9. We support the further enlargement of NATO, the extension of the zone of stability and security to all Central European countries who meet the membership criteria and are capable to contribute to the defense capabilities of the Alliance. We think that Slovakia – together with other candidate countries of our region – meets these requirements,

therefore we expect NATO's Summit to be held in Prague, November 2002, to make a decision in this sense.

10. We support the European Union's common security and defense policy, the decisions and preparations to this aim; however, in view of our upcoming membership in the EU, we would like to be more significantly involved in this process, since the security of the continent cannot be maintained without the contribution of the Central European countries.

11. We stressed again that the cooperation of the Visegrád countries is viable and represents an important factor in the stability and integration of the region.

12. We agreed that our next meeting will take place in Bratislava, in approximately half a year.

For the Czech Republic:

Republic Lubomir Zaorálek, Petr Nečas, Vladimír Laštůvka, Vítězslav Matuška, Jaroslava Moserová

For Poland:

Jerzy Jaskiernia, Stanisław Janas, Jerzy Czepułkowski, Genowefa Grabowska, Wiesław Pietrzak

For Slovakia:

Peter Weiss, Árpád Duka-Zólyomi

For Hungary:

István Szent-Iványi, Miklós Simon, Katalin Kiszely

[Quelle: <http://www.msz.gov.pl/english/indexang.html>]