

YOUTH and V4 co-operation



Visegrad co-operation under the
European Union YOUTH programme



Youth



Education and Culture



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WHAT IS THE VISEGRAD GROUP

The Visegrad Group is the alliance of four Central European countries (V4) focused on co-operation in the field of culture, education, science and exchange of information. The Czech Republic, Hungary, Poland and Slovakia have always been part of one civilization sharing cultural and intellectual values and common roots of religious traditions that they wish to preserve and further strengthen. The V4 Group aspires to contribute towards building the European society based on effective, functionally complementary and mutually reinforcing cooperation and coordination within existing European institutions.

WHAT IS THE YOUTH PROGRAMME

European Union encourages the development of the field of education and training through various programmes and events. YOUTH programme (2000 – 2006) supports non-formal education of young people via the international activities prepared and implemented by and for young people tailored to their needs and expectations. Most of the finances are allocated to the youth exchanges and voluntary service projects. In each programme country there is National Agency responsible for successful implementation of the Programme (promotion, distribution of relevant information, support and training for the potential applicants etc.).

WHY THIS PUBLICATION

The co-operation of the National Agencies in the countries of the Visegrad group started in the Youth for Europe programme (the predecessor of the YOUTH programme), open for pre-accession countries from 1998, where first projects were granted and realized. Until the 1st of May 2004 projects among Visegrad countries (without the presence of the EU Member state) were not eligible. As the YOUTH programme became in the last four years one of the biggest financial sources for international projects of organizations and institutions in V4 countries and joint projects among V4 countries were not allowed, international projects involving V4 countries were less frequent and the contacts previously developed faded or perished. Nowadays, young people in V4 countries have much more experiences and information about the lives of their peers from former EU Member states than about their closest neighbours from V4.

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National Agencies YOUTH in Visegrad Group countries wish to encourage re-establishment and further development of the contacts and co-operation in the youth field. From 2004 when Visegrad countries entered European Union, such cooperation is perceived in different lights and angles than previous one and faces various challenges. One of them is the lack of information about the possibility to support projects involving pure Visegrad countries among general public and descendent motivation towards such cooperation caused by small if any contacts and information about Visegrad Group countries that attracts the interests of future applicants. This publication does not aspire to be solution to all obstacles and problems but small contribution to various initiatives taking place in Visegrad countries.

WHAT YOU CAN FIND HERE

Publication offers the information from the history of Visegrad group in general, history and results of the co-operation of National Agencies YOUTH as well as the examples of the first “pure” Visegrad project with ideas and views of their participants. Along with all this you can find interesting information about the Visegrad countries, about young people living there, some tips while travelling to V4 countries and contacts where to find more information and further support.

VISEGRAD GROUP – HISTORY AND PRESENT

The Visegrad Four is an unofficial name given to the four Central European post communist countries the Czech Republic, the Republic of Hungary, the Republic of Poland and the Slovak Republic. Originally, the group was called the Visegrad Troika and the Four is the result of the split of the Czech and Slovak Federal Republic in 1993.

The V4 Group was not created as an alternative to all-European integration efforts nor does it try to compete with the existing functional Central European structures. Its activities are in no way aimed at isolation or the weakening of ties with the other countries. On the contrary the Group aims at encouraging optimum cooperation with all countries, in particular its neighbours, its ultimate interest being the democratic development in all parts of Europe.

All the activities of the Visegrad Group are aimed at strengthening stability in the Central European region. The participating countries perceive their cooperation as a challenge and its success as the best proof of their ability to integrate also into such structures as is the European Union.

The contacts and mutual co-operation among Czechs, Hungarians, Slovaks and Poles started long time ago from now. In 1335 the Castle of Visegrad, then the seat of the Kings of Hungary, was the scene of the royal summit of the Kings of Poland, Bohemia and Hungary. They agreed to cooperate closely in the field of politics and commerce, inspiring their late successors to launch a successful Central European initiative.

The name of this grouping was chosen during a meeting of the President of the Czechoslovakia Václav Havel, the Prime Minister of Hungary József Antall, and the President of Poland Lech Walesa at an event held at the north Hungarian town Visegrad on February 15, 1991. At this meeting the leaders signed a declaration on a close co-operation of these three (today four) countries on their way to European integration. After the collapse of the communist regime their co-operation was important for the transition from a totalitarian regime to a free, plural and democratic society.

On the regular basis there are organised meetings of V4 presidents, prime ministers and other decision makers from various ministries, V4 coordinators etc. Regularly there are meetings of ministers responsible for education, youth and sports. From 2001 regular V4 youth conferences and V4 youth meetings are taking place. The aims of co-operation are the protection of youth, drug prevention and the question of especially endangered groups of young as main interests, co-operation among NGOs. In the field of education there are some initiatives concerning the exchanges of students, teachers and researches as well. In 2003 Conference of representatives of Ministries of Education on the White Paper of the European Commission on Youth took place in Budapest.

In March 2003 the Visegrad Youth Confederation was established. Seven youth NGOs from V4 countries gathered to sign the Founding Charter of VYC. Their main aim was to co-ordinate and to deepen the co-operation of young people from V4 countries. Participants noted the necessity to improve the efficiency and operability of infrastructure in order to enhance multilateral co-operation between the V4 and surrounding countries. Representatives of the V4 youth NGOs called for the creation of scholarships for students from V4 and V4 bordering countries at the East and South to study at schools within V4 and for the enhancement of cross border co-operation among educational institutions both inside and outside V4, thus creating better opportunities to bring co-operation closer to the people.

A GLANCE INTO V4 YOUTH COOPERATION

The common roots and similarities of cultures, history and joint interests towards the European Union integration led National Agencies YOUTH programme to regular and systematic cooperation from 2002 when the tradition of V4 National Agencies staff meetings started in **Guzowy Piec in Poland**.

First meeting defined the aims of future co-operation mainly as getting to know the colleagues in partner National agencies, their structures and working cultures as well as the exchange of good practice in implementation of the programme and to start mutual projects. First joint activities were job shadowings of Slovak, Hungarian and Czech National agencies, meetings of regional network persons (Slovak

– Polish regional network meeting) and several visits of Eurodesk officers and its local relays in Poland, Hungary and the Czech Republic.

Four National Agencies held its 2nd seminar on Visegrád co-operation in May 2003 in **Visegrad in Hungary**. The seminar was expected to have a major role in strengthening the regional cooperation among the four Visegrad countries through promoting closer working together and further discussing common needs related to the Youth Program. The results were the common articles in all NA's newsletters, common training activities for EVS in the region, sharing in the trainers' pool development in V4 countries, a language course for youth workers in the region and action based jobshadowings. National agencies agreed to invite regularly V4 colleagues to participate at national and international YOUTH events to share good examples and practices at on going base. Several joint actions were prepared in the framework of YOUTH IN ACTION WEEK in borderline regions of V4 countries. SMS competition and afterwards trip to Hungary and Slovakia for winners was organised as initiatives of Slovak and Hungarian National agencies.

Meeting in **Telč (The Czech Republic)** in May 2004 disclosed the slight change of situation in YOUTH programme implementation. The lack of contacts among Action officers from previous years disappeared due to regular staff meetings organised by European Commission. The very needed regional cooperation was developed mainly between Slovak and Polish borderline regions. Concrete promotion material was still missing and the information about V4 "possibilities" was very rarely spread in general public. Co-operation among the trainers pool strengthened after several V4 pool of trainers meetings. National agencies started to use

the potential of V4 trainers mainly during EVS trainings, trainings for regional networks and EURODESK officers and regional co-workers. English language and IT trainings for youth leaders with little or no experiences in organising youth exchanges took place in Slovakia for Czech, Slovak and Hungarian youth workers. These trainings were great opportunities to get to know new partners and develop some plans for future projects among participating countries.

Challenges for upcoming years are mainly the strengthening and further development of regional V4 co-operation. The step forward is the first regional network meeting in Crakow taking place in April 2005. The idea behind is to create space for building of personal contacts, exchange of good practice and defining the areas where regional networks are able and motivated towards V4 cooperation.

National Agencies YOUTH meeting in Slovakia in 2005 finishes the series of these meetings started in 2002 in Poland. The content will be more focused on training needs of National agencies' staff and defining the future strategies and conceptions taking into consideration the forthcoming YOUTH IN ACTION programme in 2007.

GOOD EXAMPLES ATTRACT!

From May 2004 when all Visegrad Group countries entered European Union only few projects of youth exchanges and contact making seminars involving all V4 countries were realised.

What are youth exchanges?

Youth exchanges are special type of events supported under the YOUTH programme where young people spend minimum six days together working on the theme that is chosen by themselves and transformed into the concrete

programme, with specific aims and objectives. The strong emphases while supporting these projects are put on non-formal education and intercultural learning, team work and the raise of solidarity and tolerance among young people from various programme countries. Young people with fewer opportunities are the special target group of the highest importance. The precondition of each youth exchange is that the project – its preparation and implementation – is done by young people themselves with support and motivation given by youth leaders.

Why do we have contact making seminars?

The main idea is to provide the participating countries, organisations and groups with time and space to get to know each other, to learn about the partners' missions and activities and look for common needs to fulfil by joint projects preferably under the YOUTH programme. Contact making seminars are usually oriented on some concrete topics or themes to get together youth workers from the same area. Direct involvement into the youth work is basic requirement on the participants profile.

Near of far

One of the first multilateral V4 contact making seminars supported by Polish National Agency involved 10 various partners: European Culture Society (Slovakia), Centrum voľného času (Slovakia), University Student Council (Slovakia), S.D.M. – Sdružení dětí a mládeže České Budějovice (the Czech Republic), Androgyn (Hungary), Youth Information Centre (the Czech Republic), YFU (Hungary), HEEMP (Hungary), Stowarzyszenie Kulturalne MEM (Poland) and Stowarzyszenie Trawa (Poland).

Motivation towards realisation of such project was closely linked to the Enlargement of European Union. That was also a time for a debate over

the V4 future. Some doubts were raised and this was what motivated organization to come out with an idea. The applicant organization invited other parties to show the meaning of the close cooperation of neighbouring countries in V4 region.

The general idea was to prepare grounds for future international cooperation in V4 region. The participants met in order to find out about their organizations, to think about the options they have if working together, finally to exchange good practices. The other objective of this meeting was to get to know the cultures the participants represented, to find similarities that could benefit all participants. This goal was achieved, and will undoubtedly have a positive impact on future cooperation, its quality and mutual understanding.

There are a few projects that are currently planned and discussed among the participants from V4 countries. Database of originations is being prepared.

Saving cultural and environmental heritage

This project originated during the trip where young Poles met Slovaks on the top of the Babia Góra mountain. They started talking and soon found out they shared similar interests, needs and expectations. First organizations were Gminny Ośrodek Kultury (Poland) and Obec Uhrovec (Slovakia). Together they found more organizations such as SK SLAVIA ORLOVA from the Czech Republic and Polonijny Zespół Polonez from Hungary and decided to apply to the YOUTH Programme in Poland under Action 1.

The idea was to raise awareness among the youth relating to the environmental issues as well as the cultural heritage. So the project had two

dimensions: cultural and ecological. Organization wanted to show its most valued Polish environmental sites to its neighbours. They also wanted to show the potential consequences of unlimited use of Earth resources. Relating to the cultural dimension the participants were learning about disappearing of traditional wood architecture. Think globally, act locally was the idea. Neighbours from V4 were natural partners for the project.

As the follow up of the project – participants are working on the database of environmental attractions of Poland and the World. Working on this long term project is supposed to strengthen the relations among the participants.

Poslovia vianoční (Messengers of Christmas)

This project took place in Slovakia and the Slovak host organisation of multilateral V4 youth exchange was a local NGO oriented on preservation and revitalisation of old cultural traditions and support of young amateur artists – called PLUS.

The partners of youth exchange were institutions and organisations actively involved in the field of cultural activities (local and regional) – all working with children and young people in the field of preservation of tradition, folk habits, folklore etc.: Miejsky Ośrodek Kultury im. Henryka Bisty, Ruda Śląska (Poland), Městské Kulturní středisko, Holešov (Czech Republic) and MEDIAWAVE Nemzetközi Vizuális Nűvészeti Alapítvány, Győr (Hungary).

Programme of the youth exchange was divided into several parts connected by the idea of presentation of various faces of Christmas tradition in individual countries, looking for common roots and enriching differences. One of the tasks was to prepare the model of Euro-Christmas – involving

the best parts of the individual Xmas into one EURO model. Some parts were dedicated to the discussions about the everyday life of young people and social and cultural activities.

Most of the tasks were organised in mixed groups what functioned very well. Youth leaders were aware of the possible exclusion of Hungarians as the other groups speak quite similar languages. Special attention was allowed to the preparation of all participants to be sensible while using own languages and most of the young people spoke English all the time.

WHY ARE THE V4 PROJECTS IMPORTANT FOR YOUNG PEOPLE?

Mr. Pukša, Slovak youth leader of the project Messengers of Christmas, explained his idea: "The importance of V4 youth projects is in getting to know our common space, our identity. V4 countries are our closest neighbours. We need to know first neighbours at our floor, then in our block of flats, in our streets... The same I feel towards V4 and other countries of European Union. All our countries came out from the same history and similar conditions. During communist regime we were not only isolated from the Western Europe but also from our Visegrad neighbours. So we have similar historical experiences, but to know our normal human dimensions – stories, problems and knowledge – we were allowed only in last years. The opinion that people from V4 know each other well – is widely spread. The opposite is true! Especially it is not true when talking about young people. They are influenced by opinions of older generation. They should get to know each other personally, to acquire self-confidence and start perceiving themselves as citizens of European Union. V4 projects are the excellent space for getting all out of that".

BASIC INFO OR WHAT YOU SHOULD KNOW ABOUT V4 COUNTRIES

Countries of V4 are rich in various traditions, excellent food and drinks, hospitality and friendship; they vary in natural sights and tourist attractions. After the boom of travelling to the Western Europe for such a long time forbidden to nowadays middle and older generation (parents of today youth), many people feel like being quite strangers in our closest neighbouring countries. To overcome that feeling we invite you to small-guided tour on V4 countries. At the beginning few basic facts about these countries are introduced. In further sections you can find information about food and drinks, what is considered to be the most remarkable things in each V4 country, some information about young people and some tips for travelling to V4 countries.

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Name of the country in native languages:

Magyarország

Rzeczpospolita Polska

Česká republika

Slovenská republika

Border countries:

Poland: Germany (467 km), Czech Republic (762 km), Slovakia (538 km), Ukraine (529 km), Belarus (416 km), Russia (210 km), Lithuania (103 km), Baltic coastline (788 km),

Hungary: Slovakia (668,6 km), Ukraine (136.6 km), Romania (448 km), Federal Republic of Yugoslavia (165.8 km), Croatia (355.3 km), Slovenia (100 km), Austria (356 km),

Slovakia: Czech Republic (265 km), Austria (106 km), Hungary (668,6 km), Ukraine (98,5 km) and Poland (538 km),

Czech Republic: Germany (810 km), Poland (762 km), Austria (466 km), Slovakia (265 km).

Areas:

Poland: 322,577 sq km

Hungary: 93,030 sq km

Slovakia: 49,034 sq km

Czech Republic: 78,866 sq km.

Inhabitans:

Poland: 38,7 mil.

Hungary: 10,1 mil.

Slovakia: 5,4 mil.

Czech Republic: 10,3 mil.

Nationalities and minorities:

Poland: Poles 98,5%, Ukrainians 0,6%, Germans 0,5%, others 0,4%,

Hungary: Hungarians, a Roma population of about 7%, small minorities of German, Romanian, Slovak, Greek, Croatian and Slovenian nations,

Czech Republic: 94% Czech (including Moravians and Silesians), 3% Slovaks, 1,3% Roma, 0,6% Polish, 0,5% Germans, 0,6% others,

Slovakia: Slovaks 85,8%, Hungarians 9,7%, Czechs 0,8%, Ruthenians 0,4%, Romas 1,7%, Ukrainians 0,2%, others 1,4%.

Official languages:

Polish, Hungarian, Slovak, Czech

Currency:

CZ: Koruna česká (CZK), 1 € – 30 CZK

HU: Forint, 1 € – 250 Forinta

PL: 1 Zloty (PLN) – 100 Groszy (aprx. 4 €)

SK: Slovenská koruna (SKK), 1 € – 37 SKK

Mini dictionary:

Hello

CZ: Ahoj

HU: Szia!

PL: Cześć!

SK: Ahoj!

How are you

CZ: Jak se máš?

HU: Hogy vagy

PL: Jak się masz?

SK: Ako sa máš?

Here you are...

CZ: Prosím

HU: Tessék

PL: Proszę

SK: Prosím

Thank you

CZ: Děkuji

HU: Köszönöm

PL: Dziękuję

SK: Ďakujem

Good morning!

CZ: Dobrý den!

HU: Jó reggelt!

PL: Dzień dobry!

SK: Dobrý deň

Good bye!

CZ: Na shledanou / Čau

HU: Viszontlátásra!

PL: Do widzenia!

SK: Dovidenia

Yes

CZ: Ano / Jo

HU: Igen

PL: Tak

SK: Áno

No

CZ: Ne

HU: Nem

PL: Nie

SK: Nie

Excuse me

CZ: Promiň(te)

HU: Elnézést kérek

PL: Przepraszam

SK: Prepáč (te) mi

I don't understand

CZ: Nerozumím

HU: Nem értem

PL: Nie rozumiem

SK: Nerozumiem

How much?

CZ: Kolik to stojí?

HU: Mennyibe kerül?

PL: Ile to kosztuje?

SK: Koľko to stojí?

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NATIONAL CUISINES OR WHAT YOU SHOULD TRY IN V4



HUNGARY

Hungarian cuisine is multi-super-varied. Hungarians love soups and puréed vegetables (**főzelék**) but cold fruit soup is also worth to try. **Paradicsom leves** is hot refreshing tomato soup, sometimes with rice. Strongly recommended is **halászlé** – hot and spicy fish soup. Worldwide famous is Hungarian **gulyásleves** or goulash soup.

If you want to try something typical Hungarian – go for **lecsó** – stewed onions, tomatoes and peppers, pickled gherkins, **paprikás krumpli** – potatoes with paprika, Debrecén sausage, **pogácsa** – small savory scones, **hortobágyi húsos palacsinta** – battered pancakes filled with meat and many more. **Töltött káposzta** is stuffed cabbage (stuffed with rice, spices: paprika, salt, pepper, and meat, usually pork meat), it is served in tomato sauce or dill sauce, **paprikás csirke** – chicken meat with special sauce which made from fried onion, and paprika. **Marhapörkölt** is beef meat in special sauce made from fried onion. **Rakott burgonya** – potato, eggs, sausage, source cream and spices, baked together.

From deserts nobody can resist **mákos guba** – poppy seed dumplings soaked in honey and milk, **Somlói galuska** – sponge cake covered in chocolate, rum and loads of cream, **szilvásgombóc** – plump dumplings, **túrós palacsinta** – cottage cheese pancakes. Always good but especially as the aperitif **Tokaj wine** is served. **Túró Rudi** – special Hungarian sweet stick is made from cottage cheese with chocolate, with funny red dotted packing.

Bear in mind that most dishes with adjective “**paprikás**” in their name also contain large

amounts of sour cream. “**Paprikás**” does not mean necessarily hot!



POLAND

Most common Polish soups are **barszcz czerwony** – hot refreshing beetroot soup, sometimes with dumplings, a hard boiled egg or beans and **żurek** – sour rye soup with a potato, sausage or an egg, sometimes served in a bread loaf.

As the main course each visitor of Poland should try something from the traditional and popular Polish meals. Very special is baranina – roasted or even grilled lamb – great especially in the mountains. **Bigos** – appetizing, seasoned sauerkraut “hunter” stew with various kinds of meats and sausages, extremely traditional. Some may recommend trying **gołąbki** – “little pigeons” – cabbage parcels originally from Lithuania, they are stuffed with mushrooms. **Kielbasa** means sausage – especially white sausage, they go well with **ogórek kiszony** (pickled gherkins) in combination with beer, vodka and fresh air. You can try them in tomato sauce as well.

Something sweet at the end? The choice is wide! **Makowiec** – sweet poppy cake or **napoleonki** – omelettes stuffed with meat and many more things like jam, fruit, etc. very similar to crepes. But you can try **paczki** – doughnuts or **sernik** – delicious fat cheese cake. Bon appetite!



THE CZECH REPUBLIC

The present day the Czech Republic consists of three historical lands – Bohemia, Moravia and Silesia – which have their own gastronomic traditions determined by climate, natural resources and cultural influences of neighbouring regions. However, there are some meals, which you can find practically everywhere.

From the soups, when you are in the Czech Republic, you should try **bramboračka** – thick, nutritious soup made of potato, mushrooms, root vegetables and seasoned with garlic, pepper and marjoram or **česnečka** – strong garlic broth with potato which brings you to your feet after a whole-night party.

Typical Czech starters, usually preceding, accompanying or ensuing extensive beer consumption, are **zavináče** – sour herring with onion and pickles and **nakládaný hermelín** – Czech camembert-style cheese pickled in oil and served with hot pepper or **utopenci** – pickled sausage served with onion rings and/or sauerkraut.

To be in the Czech Republic and not to try **vepřo-knedlo-zelo** – roasted pork with bread dumplings and white/red cabbage is unforgiving thing! Another delicious meal is **svíčková na smetaně** – fillet of beef with cream sauce and bread dumplings. Czech cuisine is well known for round and flat or ball-shaped dumplings made of flour, pieces of bread or crushed boiled potato, sometimes refined with chopped bacon called **knedlíky (houškové / bramborové / špekové)**.

Czech sweet Titbits – here they go: **jablečný závin, štrúdl** – apple pie sometimes served with vanilla ice cream, **buchty** – cube-shaped cakes stuffed typically with plum jam, sweetened poppy seeds or cottage cheese, **ovocné knedlíky** – ball-shaped dumplings filled with fruits (cherries, strawberries, apricots, etc.) and **bábovka** – marble cake.

SLOVAKIA

Slovak cuisine is cuisine of pork, cabbage and potatoes. However, some meals are extremely interesting and delicious.

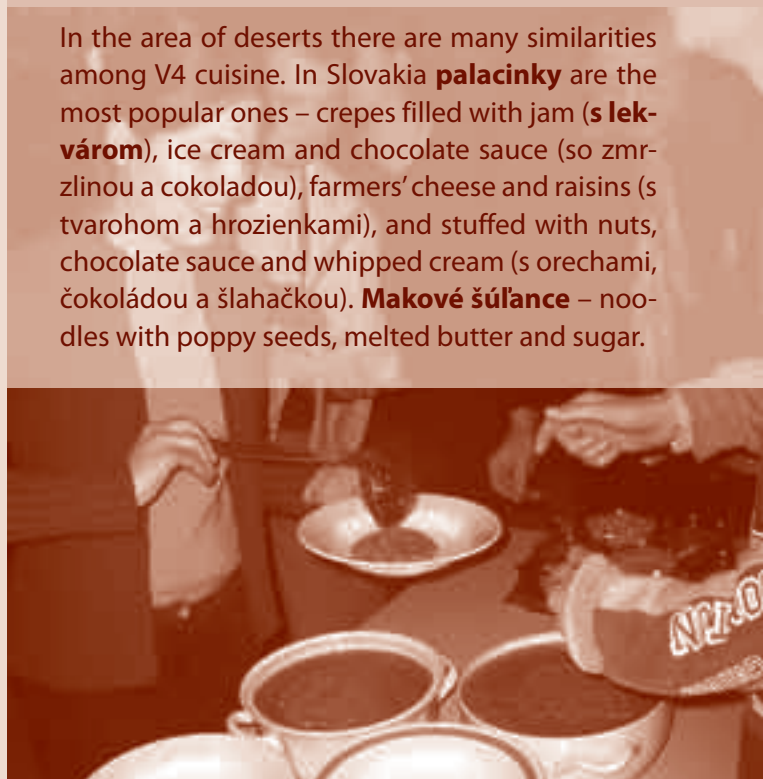
Traditional soups are thick and always served warm. At Christmas most of the families have

kapustnica – a hearty cabbage soup with smoked pork sausage that often contains mushrooms, and sometimes plums. Every Slovak knows and usually likes **fazuľová polievka** made of beans and root vegetables such as carrots and parsley. Sometimes, smoked pork is added.

Pork is used and served in every form: pork chops (**kare or rezeň**), pork steak (**černoهورský bravčový rezeň**), rib of pork, (**rebierko**), and leg of pork. It is commonly stuffed with ham and cheese (**šunka, syr**). Notwithstanding sounds Hungarian – **Segedínsky guláš** – is typical Slovak meal, a delicious combination of stewed pork, sauerkraut, spices and sour cream. Pork is also popular served in a large potato pancake (**zemiaková placka**).

Bryndzové halušky – a serving of dumplings with melted sheep cheese and fried bacon sprinkled on the top. Many refer to this as the national dish and it is usually the least expensive menu item. **Strapačky s kapustou** – dumplings with cabbage and sometimes bacon – also very traditional.

In the area of deserts there are many similarities among V4 cuisine. In Slovakia **palacinky** are the most popular ones – crepes filled with jam (**s lekvárom**), ice cream and chocolate sauce (so zmrzlinou a cokoladou), farmers' cheese and raisins (s tvarohom a hrozienkami), and stuffed with nuts, chocolate sauce and whipped cream (s orechami, čokoládou a šľahačkou). **Makové šúľance** – noodles with poppy seeds, melted butter and sugar.



REMARKABLE PLACES OR WHAT YOU SHOULD SEE IN V4



POLAND

14 million tourists visit Poland every year, Poland ranks 14th in the world as a tourist destination. Many Polish tourist sights have already gained a worldwide reputation and are an absolute must to see if you consider a journey to this area: Kraków, Warszawa, Gdańsk, Częstochowa, Auschwitz and the Tatra mountains.



HUNGARY

The territory of the country is smaller than 100,000 square kilometres, the Hungarian language is spoken only by Hungarians, Hungarian folk songs are not similar to those of any other nation – yet the Hungarians have been living in the middle of Europe for over 1100 years. Despite the numerous disastrous turns of its history Hungary is still rich in values attracting many visitors from all over the world.

For its wonderful scenic values, Budapest, the capital city of Hungary is included in the World Heritage list of UNESCO. Hungary has the largest surface thermal water supply – after Iceland – and the hundreds of thermal springs enable thousands of people to cure a variety of conditions. Lake Balaton, the largest lake in the Central Europe, is a paradise for families with small children, fans of sailing and those who simply like to spend their vacation near a lake.



THE CZECH REPUBLIC

The Czech Republic enjoys remarkable popularity among tourists from all over the world. Thanks to its position in the very heart of the continent as well as its rich cultural and natural heritage, it has become a sought-after destination for all kinds of travellers. The Czech Republic attracts the

visitors predominantly with the beauty of castles, chateaus and historic towns, with „Golden Prague” as a city of history and culture, and – last but not least – with its health spas as places of relaxation and enjoyment. To the most popular destinations rank – besides Prague – Český Krumlov, Karlovy Vary, Telč, Olomouc or Kroměříž.



SLOVAKIA

Many visitors are every year attracted by the beauty of the High Tatras mountains (Vysoké Tatry) but constantly increasing number of people discover also the canyons and valleys of Slovak Paradise (Slovenský raj) where the touristic paths lead through streams and small rivers on bridges, ladders and ropes. The most visited towns are former medieval mining “golden” towns as Banská Štiavnica, Kremnica but also Kežmarok, Banská Bystrica, Spišská Kapitula. Bratislava is destination of many visitors of Vienna (60 km far), Austria. Košice, the second biggest town in Slovakia, is well known because of its fully restored historical old town full of cafés and restaurants and old cathedral.

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YOUNG PEOPLE IN V4 COUNTRIES IN FACTS AND FIGURES



HUNGARY

The number of young people between the age of 15-25 in Hungary is 1,487,000 (14,7% of total population),

- ... 42% live in villages,
- ... 50% speak a foreign language (10% have a certificate in English language),
- ... most of them consider learning and profession as a prior objective in life, followed by housing and family,
- ... they get married first at the average age of 21,
- ... they consider family, friends and income the

- ... most important factors, and they consider politics, public life and religion the least important factors in their lives,
- ... they see money, competence, then contacts the most important factors as regards their career,
- ... they think that unemployment, housing and money the most burning social issues among young people,
- ... 60% of young people do not smoke,
- ... one-third of them do sports regularly (football is the most popular).

SLOVAKIA

- ... popular free time activities among young people are listening to the music, meeting within families, watching TV, meetings with boyfriends and girlfriends and meetings with peers,
- ... important values in life for young people: job, happy marriage, to have children, to live harmonic life and to have lots of friends,
- ... statistically young Slovak speaks to father 9 minutes and to mother 24 minutes per day,
- ... only 15% of young population finish University study,
- ... 6% of young people at the age 16 – 17 drink alcohol regularly,
- ... young people watch TV 2 hours per day,
- ... 61% of young people aged 15-25 welcomed that Slovakia became the member of European Union.

THE CZECH REPUBLIC

- ... 56% of employed young Czechs have not faced any difficulty in finding their first job,
- ... 69% of young Czechs find it absolutely essential to live in a healthy environment,
- ... only 17% of young people consider very important the opportunity to affect the developments in the society,
- ... 74% of young people use computer more

- ... than once a week,
- ... 67% of youth are sometimes bored in their leisure time,
- ... 72% of young Czechs consider hard drugs the most serious social problem whereas soft drugs are regarded substantially problematic only by 2% of them,
- ... 89-95% of young people would not mind having a classmate with different national, racial or religious background,
- ... 89% of young Czechs find the relationship between Czechs and Slovaks good or rather good, only 5% tell the same about the relationship between Czechs and the Romany,
- ... only 4% of young people believe that their opinions and attitudes are influenced by films and television,
- ... only 5% of young Czechs are ready to help local authorities and NGO's with solving problems in places where they live,
- ... 72% of young people consider the European integration a positive process and that 90% of them call for a close co-operation with other Central-European countries.

POLAND

- ... 66% of students and 58% of secondary schools pupils in Poland are willing to work abroad, but only 14-16% undertake any activities to realize these plans,
- ... 3 out of 4 young people in Poland want to live in stable partnership with "chosen one",
- ... 82% Polish young people under 20 and 74% around 20 years old can speak at least one foreign language,
- ... young Polish people prefer socializing, meeting with friends rather than going to the cinema or reading books,
- ... Polish young people perceive that the most interesting countries from V4 group are (in the following order): Hungary, than Czech Republic and Slovakia,

- ... young people in Poland trust their peers (friends, colleagues) the most. In case of troubles almost 80% of them would go to their friends, only 57% would tell about them their mother and only 29% their father,
- ... 1/3 of unemployed Polish people are young people (under 24),
- ... Pope John Pole II is the biggest authority for Polish youth,
- ... 1/3 of Polish young people use Internet every day,
- ... 3/4 of young people in Poland use mobile phones.

TIPS FOR TRAVELLING TO V4

No visas needed for citizens from all the states of the European Union and EFTA countries in any V4 country.



POLAND

Toilets

Gents' are often marked with a triangle and ladies' with a circle. You may be sometimes expected to pay one zloty in your bar's or pub's toilets, which can be rented to private entrepreneurs. Public conveniences are not often in a very good shape.

Shopping

Opening hours very much vary and it is difficult to apply any rules. Groceries usually start at 7-8 in the morning and are open until 7 p.m. There are many exceptions.

Souvenir

As a souvenir we cannot but recommend decorated Easter willow twigs, woodwork from Polish mountains (mountain sticks), cheese oscypek, sheep fleece or traditional ceramics from Bolesławiec.

Alcohol

Recommendable beer brands are Okocim, Tyskie, Żywiec, Heweliusz, Lech or Tatra. You can also test the other names: Królewskie, Warka, EB, Piast, Kujawiak, Brok or Dojlidy. It is very popular to mix beer with raspberry or black currant juice (piwo z sokiem) and drinking it using a straw.

If you want to try the most famous brands of vodka, choose Żubrowka with the characteristic bison label, distilled in Białowieża world-known for the last bison reserve in Europe. Żubrowka has a long leaf of special grass in the bottle, which blesses vodka with green colour and a special flavour.

Mead (miód pitny) is considered the oldest drink of all Slavonic nations. Do not forget it, mead has a very delicate, sweet taste.

Traveler's basket

Loaf of bread – 2 PLN; Milk 1 liter – 1.80 PLN; Mineral water 1.5 liter – 2 PLN; 10 eggs – 4 PLN; Apples 1 kg – 2 PLN; White cheese 1 kg – 10 PLN; Yellow cheese 1 kg – 20 PLN; Ham 1 kg – 20 PLN; Big Mac – 6.20 PLN; Snickers – 1.20 PLN; bus ticket – 2.40 PLN; beer ½ liter: in a shop – 3 PLN, beer ½ liter: in a bar – from 5 PLN; packet of cigarettes – 6 PLN.

Road rules

Highest speed: 60km/ hour in towns, 90km/ hour outside urban areas, 110km/hour on dual carriageways and 130km/hour on motorways. Permitted alcohol content in blood is 0.2 promilles. Foreign drivers can use a driving license from their home country or an international driving license for up to six months after entering Poland. Afterwards they are obliged to pass through local examinations, which presuppose the knowledge of Polish language. Polish fines range from 50-500 PLN (speeding).

Contact

When meeting, people usually shake hands. Especially older generation is used to kiss lady's hand. Now hand-kissing happens in the public only occasionally, but politeness in the first contact is highly appreciated.

Transport

For city transport, buy tickets in the stalls (kioski). Elderly people expect in the public transport that younger people will let them sit down. If they won't, some pensioners may feel abuse and show it.



THE CZECH REPUBLIC

Toilets

You will find public toilets in the underground (Prague), on busy places (squares) in towns, sometimes in parks. Don't expect much in terms of cleanliness. If you are in urgent need, you can also look for McDonalds.

Shopping:

Stores outside of Prague tend to open at 8 or 9 a.m. (larger grocery stores at 7 a.m.) and close at 6 or 7 p.m. Some stores are closed during lunch hours. The hours are shorter on Saturdays and most stores are closed on Sundays. Some stores in Prague have longer hours – large grocery stores stay open until 8 or 10 p.m., or even later – and are also open on weekends.

Souvenirs

Besides Karlovarské oplatky (thin waffles sold plain or with chocolate filling) Becherovka (herbal liquor) both from Karlovy Vary, Pilsner or Budweiser beer, the Czech glass enjoys international reputation.

Alcohol

Popular beer brands are Plzeň (Pilsner Urquell and Gambrinus), Staropramen, Budvar, Krušovice,

Starobrno or Bernard which you can find in pubs and restaurants across the whole country. However, each region usually has its own local beer brand that are also worth trying if you do not want to touch the pride of local people. Wine is produced mainly in South Moravia. The most popular grape varieties are Mueller Thurgau, Vlašský Ryzlink (Riesling) and Rulandské bílé (Pinot blanc) among white and Svatovavřinecké (Saint-Laurent), Frankovka (Blaufränkisch) and Modrý Portugal (Blauer Portugieser) among red wines. As far as spirits are concerned, Czechs like a drink called Tuzemák or Tuzemský rum which is for its special flavour often added to tee or cakes. Slivovice, a plum brandy, is sometimes said to be a universal remedy for all kinds of ailments. Becherovka, a herbal liquor produced in Karlovy Vary, makes probably the most famous souvenir from the CR.

Traveller's basket

Loaf of bread – 20 CZK; Milk 1 liter – 15 CZK; Mineral water 1.5 liter – 20 CZK; 10 eggs – 25 CZK; Apples 1 kg – 30 CZK; Eidamer cheese 1 kg – 140 CZK; Ham 1 kg – 120 CZK; Big Mac – 60 CZK; Snickers – 15 CZK; public transportation ticket – 8 – 15 CZK; bier ½ liter: in a shop – 5-25 CZK, bier ½ liter: in a bar – from 15 CZK; packet of cigarettes – 55 CZK.

Road rules:

Highest speed: 50 km/ hour in towns, 90 km/hour outside urban areas, 130 km/hour on motorways, No permitted alcohol content in blood! Foreign drivers can use a driving license from their home country or an international driving. Czech fines range from 500-2000 CZK (speeding).

Contact

When meeting people usually shake hands. However, teen-agers usually do not follow this convention and sometimes use special manners of greetings similar to "give me five" or develop their own ways accepted within their particular group.

Cheek-kissing is rare and usually acceptable only between opposite sexes.

Transport

Tickets for public transportation are usually available at small tobacco and newspaper stalls called "trafika" or "stánek". In trams, city buses and in the underground, elderly people expect that younger people will offer them their places to sit down. Surprisingly, it is not the rule in trains and coaches where passengers typically buy a seat reservation ticket called "místenka".



HUNGARY

Toilets

Gents' are often marked with a triangle and ladies' with a circle. You may be sometimes expected to pay one hundred forints in your bar's or pub's toilets, which can be rented to private entrepreneurs.

Shopping

Opening hours very much vary and it is difficult to apply any rules. Groceries usually start at 8 in the morning and are open until 7 pm. There are many exceptions.

Souvenir

As a souvenir we cannot but recommend Matyó dolls, ceramic from Hollóháza or Zsolnay ceramic, chocolate, cakes, Csabai or Gyulai sausage.

Alcohol

Recommendable beer brands are Dreher, Arany Ászok and Borsodi. Besides, you can quite easily find also Czech, German, Danish or American beer. The Tokaj and Villány wines are famous around the world, Tokaji Aszú for example.

Traveler's basket

Loaf of bread – 200 Ft; Milk 1 liter – 200 Ft; Mineral water 1.5 liter – 80-150 Ft; 10 eggs – 200 Ft; Apples 1 kg – 50-100 Ft; White cheese 1 kg – 1000-1500 Ft; Ham 1 kg – 1500-3000 Ft; Big Mac – 300 Ft; Snickers – 150-200 Ft; bus ticket – 180 Ft; bier ½ liter: in a shop – 80-150 Ft, bier ½ liter: in a bar – from 300-600 Ft; packet of cigarettes – 500-690 Ft.

Road rules

Highest speed: 50 km/hour in towns, 90 km/hour outside urban areas, 110 km/hour on dual carriageways and 130 km/hour on motorways. Foreign drivers can use a driving license from their home country.

Contact

When meeting people usually shake hands.

Transport

For city transport, buy tickets in the stalls (trafik).

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SLOVAKIA

Toilets

Gents' are marked with a symbol of man and ladies' with a symbol of woman. The fees can vary from 5 – 10 Slovak crowns.

Shopping

In bigger towns the shops are open from 9 a.m. until 6 p.m. In small towns and villages the opening hours can vary from 6-7 a.m. until 4-5 p.m. On Saturdays the shops are usually closed at noon, but big stores are open until 10 p.m.

Souvenir

Foreign visitors usually buy leather products, articles from crystal or glass generally, cheese and wine, ceramics, folk products.

Alcohol

Very popular is Demänovka (herbal liquor) or slivovica (plum brandy). Slovakia has excellent wine but exports quite a small amount. Slovaks are usually joking that all wine is drunk mostly by themselves. Recommended wine regions: Nitra, Veľký Krtíš. Very delicious dry white wine: Rulandské biele, Ryzling rýnsky, Tramín červený, red – Frankovka, Svätovavrinecké.

Traveller's basket

Loaf of bread – 20 SKK, Milk 1 litre – 18 SKK; Mineral water 1.5 litre – 15 SKK, 12 eggs – 30 SKK; Apples 1 kg – 10 SKK, White cheese 1 kg – 150 SKK; Ham 1 kg – 170 SKK, Cheese Burger – 30 SKK; bus ticket – 10 – 16 SKK, beer ½ litre: in a shop – 20 SKK, beer ½ litre: in a bar – from 25 SKK; packet of cigarettes – 70 SKK.

Road rules

Highest speed: 60 km/ hour in towns, 90 km/ hour outside urban areas and 130 km/hour on motorways. No alcohol content in blood while driving. Slovak fines are maximum 2000 SKK (speeding).

Contact

People usually shake hands, when they meet. Girls and women usually kiss at both cheeks as well as members of families and when meeting closer friends.

Transport

For town transport, buy tickets in the stalls (stánok). The price of the ticket is usually from 10 – 16 crowns. There are one-journey tickets and time-limited tickets. You should always ask about the system in concrete towns.

Few words at the end

European Union YOUTH programme offers various possibilities for strengthening the cooperation in the youth field. To get to know peers from former EU Member states is equally important than to know ones from countries recently joined European Communities. There have been many reasons to look for partners for your future projects among V4 countries. We all hope that after reading this brochure you become curious and more motivated towards the idea.

We wish you many nice experiences while looking for differences and similarities, and visible or inside information about the life of young people in Visegrad countries. National agencies YOUTH are ready to support and accompany you during the whole process.

Good luck!

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LINKS AND CONTACTS

Maps of V4

<http://www.eurofresh.se/poland-map/polska-nowa.htm>

<http://www.mapy.cz>

<http://www.magyarorszag.hu>

<http://www.mapy.atlas.sk>

Tourist information

www.poland-tourism.pl

www.hungarytourism.hu

www.czechtourism.com

www.slovakia.org

National agencies YOUTH in V4



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FURTHER READING AND SOURCES:

User's guide to Hungary 2004/2005, Tempus Public Foundation, 2004, Budapest.

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