

V4DIS

Visegrád Group for Developing Information Society
Prague and Hradec Králové, April 1–3, 2007

Evaluation and Responses 2007



Association of Czech @

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- Visegrad Fund
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Project V4DIS is supported by the International Visegrád Fund.

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Introduction

Concurrently with the ISSS/LORIS 2007 conference, which took place on 2 and 3 April 2007 in Hradec Králové, the meeting of working groups of the Visegrad Four countries – V4DIS (Visegrad Four for Developing Information Society) – was held for the fourth time. Representatives of public administration, as well as various initiatives and non-governmental organisations, discussed further development of public administration informisation in the Visegrad region, exchanged valuable experience and presented selected solutions in their respective V4 countries.

Just like last year, the V4DIS meeting took place under the personal auspices of Přemysl Sobotka, Chairperson of the Senate of the Czech Republic. Participants had the opportunity to meet a host of top politicians, including Mirek Topolánek, Prime Minister of the CR; Ivan Langer, Minister of the Interior of the CR; Jiří Čunek, Minister for Regional Development of the CR; and Jiří Pospíšil, Minister of Justice of the CR; as well as a number of other dignitaries, among them Oldřich Vlasák, MEP and Chairperson of the Union of Towns and Communities of the CR; several regional administrators; Paul Timmers, Head of the eGovernment Unit, DG INFSO of the European Commission; and Omar Al-Rawi, councillor of the City of Vienna. Among this year's prominent guests were Kristof Forrai, Executive Director of the International Visegrad Fund, who together with Přemysl Sobotka, Chairperson of the Senate of the CR, and Miloš Vystrčil, Administrator of the Vysočina Region, ceremonially opened the introductory programme block.

“I am very proud that I have the opportunity to be here and personally support this momentous conference,” said Kristof Forrai at the opening of the V4DIS proceedings. “Since its foundation in 2000, the International Visegrad Fund has supported some 1,300 projects in the Visegrad region. And the V4DIS workshop is one of the flagships of Visegrad projects in this area. It is an important forum for meetings of representatives of public administration, municipalities and regions, as well as representatives of the corporate sector from the entire Visegrad region. It is precisely the form of exchanging themes and experience that is the essence of the cooperation within the Visegrad Group at all levels.”

“I believe that this conference is the best means through which we can enhance cooperation within the V4 countries,” added Přemysl Sobotka, Chairperson of the Senate of the Czech Republic. “It is good that these four countries intensively cooperate and seek common topics. One of the topics is support for education at all levels – some of these projects will be presented here too.”

Alongside support for education and overall international cooperation in informisation of public administration in V4 countries, the meeting also focused on another two relevant topics – eGovernment and eTourism. In both cases, a key role was played by selected “best practices” from individual V4 countries. Further strategies and joint activities pertaining to eGovernment development were also discussed within the wider European framework, with regard to the i2010 initiatives or the eGovernment Action Plan. The new website of the Visegrad Group, created by the ministries of foreign affairs of all four states, was also presented during discussions about the use of ICT in tourism and promotion

of individual destinations and the entire region, as was the website of the European Quartet, focused on joint promotion of V4 countries as an attractive tourist destination.

“During the course of the renaissance of the Visegrad idea following the European Union’s enlargement, it began to be evident that an important part of the region is its appearance, not only the aesthetic form but also communication and coordination,” said Jiří Sýkora from the International Visegrad Fund, who unveiled the new V4 website. “We are striving for the new website to gradually grow into a synoptic information portal that will become part of a wider strategy aimed at explaining the V4 ideas both to the general public and professionals. A significant assistance in this endeavour can be afforded by a unique Visegrad dictionary, providing the majority of information in all the four national languages, and English too.”

A host of other interesting projects were showcased within the V4DIS meeting; for example, the Czech-Polish-Slovak Junior Internet project, whose activities include internet television broadcasting in Otvice, or the information system of the Košice region. “Participation in the Hradec Králové conference was an unforgettable experience for me,” said Daniel Pecynski, representative of the company Together Polska. “The experience and contacts gained are also enormously important because we intend to cooperate much more closely with the ISSS/LORIS/V4DIS platform and are even considering creating a category within which projects pertaining to public administration informisation will be evaluated. We want to make use of novel instigations and ideas submitted by our young colleagues and engage them in work on public matters.”

On the occasion of this year’s V4DIS conference, Přemysl Sobotka, Chairperson of the Senate of the Czech Republic, awarded commemorative sheets as appraisal of the activities carried out by non-profit organisations and municipalities of the Visegrad region countries contributing to information society development. These awards were bestowed upon: The United Organisation of the Blind and Partially Sighted and the Union of the Blind and Partially Sighted of Slovakia for the Blind Friendly Web Czech Republic and Blind Friendly Web Slovakia project; Slovakia’s Association for Youth, Science and Technology (AMAVET), and the organisations Together Polska and Together Czech Republic for the Junior Internet project; the towns of Děčín (CR), Dubnica nad Váhom (SR) and Tyczyn (Poland) for being nominated for the EuroCrest Award; the Union of Towns of Slovakia for its organisation of the Golden Crest Slovakia competition; the town of Moldava nad Bodvou (SR) for the project aimed at internetisation of the Bodva valley; the town of Walbrzych (Poland) for the “Multimedia Kiosk” project and the town of Karcag (Hungary) for the internet presentation of the town project.

All the prize-winning projects were presented within the international programme of the V4DIS conference; however, the lectures also aroused interest among the participants of the concurrently running ISSS and LORIS conferences.

At the present time, V4DIS is an extremely important element in information society development and mutual exchange of information between representatives of public administration, parliaments and local and regional governments in the Visegrad Four countries. Furthermore, it serves to enhance mutual cooperation within the EU and Visegrad aimed at pursuing their common interests. This year, the V4DIS meeting in Hradec Králové was held for the fourth time. Alongside official delegations from the Visegrad countries, it was also attended by representatives of a number of municipalities of V4 states – the capital cities Pra-

gue, Bratislava, Warsaw and Budapest, and other towns, among them: Banská Bystrica, Dubnica nad Váhom, Moldava nad Bodvou, Nitra, Nová Dubnica, Martin, Púchov, Trenčín (Slovakia), the Polish cities Walbrzych and Wrocław, and the Hungarian towns Enns, Karcag and Nyíregyháza.

In addition, the experience from the last few years has confirmed that a renowned conference event is an ideal background for similar working meetings. Besides negotiating the planned agenda, the participants also have the opportunity to meet a host of specialists and colleagues working for public administration in other countries and discuss aspects of building up information society in a much wider context.



Tomáš Renčín
Conference Director

Project profile and objectives

Visegrád for Developing Information Society – V4DIS

- Character:** International conference
- Lecturers:**
- Kristóf Forrai, executive director IVF
 - Jiří Sýkora, public relations manager IVF
 - István Zacharias, City of Moldava nad Bodvou
 - Miroslav Drobny, Union of towns and cities of Slovakia
 - Denisa Zilakova, Ministry of finance, Slovak republic
 - Pál Gaspár, ICEG EC
 - Renáta Jaksa, ICEG EC
 - Martina Gajarska, City of Bratislava
 - Andrzej Janicki, Alfa-Omega Foundation
 - Monika Walczak, Ministry of foreign affairs, Poland
 - Ivona Franova, City of Nitra
 - Waldemar Kujawa, City of Walbrzych
 - Alexander Kamaryt, City of Nová Dubnica
 - Peter Druga, BIC, City of Bratislava
 - Jaroslav Solc, City of Prague
 - Ivan Seycek, City of Prague
 - Branislav Mamojka, Slovak Blind and partially sighted union
 - and others
- Target group:**
- delegates of V4 municipalities and local governments
 - representatives of state governments and legislative bodies of V4 countries
 - IT specialists
- Focus and objectives:**
- Sharing of best practices on on-line services provided by municipal websites of V4 municipalities
 - Presentation of opportunities for V4 municipalities to take part in projects co-financed by European commission and European investment bank
 - Presentation of new web portal of International Visegrad Fund
 - Advantages of ICT in tourism for propagation of tourist destinations and its further improvement and development of services offered
 - Meeting of representatives of ministries of interior and other governmental bodies from V4 countries
 - Meetings of V4 delegations

Organisers and partners

Main organiser and project coordinator

- Association of the Czech @

Partners of the V4DIS conference

- Hungarian National Association of Local Authorities
- National Association of Intelligent Settlements – ITOSz Hungary
- University of Hradec Kralove, Czech Republic
- Option.hu Technology Development and Cultural Service Provider Ltd., Hungary
- Alfa-Omega Foundation, Poland
- The Union of the Towns and Cities of Slovakia
- City of Prague – Prague City Hall, Czech Republic
- Local Government of Nyiregyhaza Town of Country Rank, Hungary
- City of Moldava nad Bodvou, Slovakia

Auspice and project sponsor

- Project V4DIS was held under the auspice of Premysl Sobotka, president of the Senate of the Parliament of the Czech Republic
- Project V4DIS is supported by the International Visegrad Fund

Host cities

- City of Prague
- City of Hradec Kralove

Participation

Number of V4DIS 2007 participants:

347

The conference was attended by participants from all of the V4 countries, with most visitors coming from Czech Republic and Slovakia, with Hungary and Poland participating more on speakers than on visitor's level.

Participants represented all levels of government, coming from ministries, and other state government bodies, regional governments and bodies as well as from municipalities.

Evaluation

The international conference V4DIS was held in the Congress Centre Aldis in Hradec Králové in the days of 2 and 3 April 2007 in Hradec Králové. There was also already for the fourth time held a meeting of the working groups of the Visegrád Four countries – V4DIS (Visegrad Four for Developing Information Society). Representatives of public administration as well as various initiatives and non-governmental organizations from the V4 countries discussed here further development of informisation in the Visegrád region, exchanged valuable experience and presented chosen solutions from their countries.

The meeting of this year Visegrád conference was opened by the President of Senate of CR Přemysl Sobotka, under whose personal auspices the event was held, the executive director of the International Visegrád Fund Kristof Forrai and the President of Vysočina Region Miloš Vystrčil. The crux of the programme lay mainly in two important themes – e-government and e-tourism. In both cases a significant role was played by the chosen “best practices” from each V4 country. Other steps and common activities in the area of development of e-government were discussed also in the wider European context, taking into account the Initiative i2010 or eGovernment Action Plan. In the course of discussions about the question of using ICT technologies in the area of tourism and promotion of separate destinations as well as the whole region there were presented also new Web pages of Visegrád group, which are created with cooperation of the Ministries of Foreign Affairs of all four countries, same as European Quartet Pages which are aimed at common promotion of V4 countries as attractive tourism destination.

The project V4DIS is at present a very important element of development of information society and mutual informedness of the representatives of public administration, parliaments as well as local and regional self-governments in the Visegrád Four countries and simultaneously it helps to promote mutual collaboration of EU as well as Visegrád within their common interests. The meeting was this year held in Hradec Králové already for the fourth time and apart from official delegations of Visegrád countries, it was attended also by deputies of many towns of V4 countries – capital cities of Prague, Bratislava, Warsaw and Budapest as well as other towns such as for example Banská Bystrica, Dubnica nad Váhom, Moldava nad Bodvou, Nitra, Nová Dubnica, Martin, Púchov, Trenčín (Slovakia) Polish towns Walbrzych and Wrocław or Hungarian towns Encs, Karcag or Nyíregyháza.

The main organizer of the V4DIS conference is Association Czech At, the partners are then the Union of Towns of Slovakia, Hungarian National Association of Local Authorities (TÖOSZ), Polish Alfa Omega Foundation, National Association of Intelligent Settlements – ITOSz Hungary, University of Hradec Králové, Option.hu Technology Development and Cultural Service Provider Ltd. (Hungary), Capital City Prague, City of Nyíregyháza (Hungary), City of Moldava nad Bodvou (Slovakia).

Blocks evaluated as the most interesting

The evaluation of the most interesting blocks given below issues from the statistical data gathered by the organisers.

- The official conference opening and debate of top representatives of political parties (incl. the presentation held by Mr. Kristof Forrai, Executive director of International Visegrad Fund)
- Development of cooperation
- eGovernment
- eInclusion
- eTourism
- Geoinformation systems
- Communication infrastructure

Beside blocks mentioned above, miscellaneous round tables and sharing of best practices were important parts of the conference.

They said at the conference

...I believe that exactly this conference is the best thing, by which we can contribute to even more perfect mutual collaboration of the Visegrád Four countries,” declared on the occasion of opening the V4DIS meeting the President of Senate of CR Přemysl Sobotka. „It is good that these four countries collaborate and search common important themes such as for example support of education, which will be also presented within the programme of this meeting...

Přemysl Sobotka, president of the Senate of the Czech Republic

...from its establishment in the year 2000, International Visegrád Fund supported more than 1300 projects in all of the V4 countries and we are very pleased that this conference is among these projects ...

Kristóf Forrai, executive director, International Visegrád Fund

...the international LORIS conference is annually a unique opportunity to exchange international experience. A close connection with the national conference ISSS and in the last four years also with a working meeting of Visegrád countries V4DIS enables for a few days to concentrate in one place a whole number of personalities, experts, visions as well as examples from the practice. This is then logically found beneficial by all who collaborate on creating information society not only in the Czech Republic, but also in a number of other countries in Europe...

Miloš Vystrčil, president of the Vysočina Region, Jihlava

...every year we meet here with representatives of local and regional governments as well as ICT experts and people from tertiary sector and thanks to this, we as an Union of towns and cities of Slovakia, can promote development of informatization of municipalities and, which is very good, also promote the cooperation with municipalities from other V4 countries in deeper and wider collaboration between municipalities...

Marian Minarovič, general secretary of the Union of towns and cities of Slovakia

...you are bringing here together information technology, local and regional development and above all cooperation, and that is very much what Europe is about... ...eGovernment action plans shows clearly, that if you have top quality public administration, then you have top quality economy and society and that definitely links to innovation and competitiveness...

Paul Timmers, Head of Unit eInclusion, DG INFSO, EC

...last years experience also shows that close collaboration in this area brings its fruit and unquestionably contributes to faster development of e-government. We are glad that often discussed topics and commonly shared experience have raised growing interest also of colleagues from other countries...

Tomáš Renčín, Director of the Association of the Czech @, Prague

...conference in Hradec Kralove was a great time for me and it is an unforgettable experience. I have made a lot of useful contacts and I hope that I will cooperate with my friends from the Czech Republic and Slovakia in creating the information society in our countries. Our project is developing in a good way and since the conference we co-operate with the President of Wroclaw. For me as a young person, it was very interesting experience and I have learned very much. I wish I could go on such conference again in the future!

Daniel Pecynski, Junior Internet, Wroclaw

Competitions

V4DIS – honorary certificates of the President of the Senate of the Czech Republic, Mr. Premysl Sobotka

The President of Senate of the Parliament of CR Přemysl Sobotka bestowed on the occasion of this year Visegrád conference V4DIS, which was held under his personal auspices, honorary certificates that award activities of non-profit organizations and municipalities of countries of Visegrád region in the area of development of information society.

- United organization of the blind and the weak-sighted and the Union of the blind and the weak-sighted of Slovakia were awarded for the project Blind Friendly Web of Czechia and Blind Friendly Web of Slovakia
- Association for the Youth, Science and Technology – AMAVET and organization Together Polska and Together Czech Republic received an honorary certificate for the project Juniorinternet
- Towns Děčín (ČR), Dubnica nad Váhom (SR) and Tyczyn (Polsko) obtained honorary certificates for the nomination for the EuroCrest award
- Union of towns of Slovakia was awarded for organizing competition Golden Crest of Slovakia
- Town Moldava nad Bodvou (SR) for the project internetisation of the Bodva valley
- Town Walbrzych (Poland) for the project “Multimedia kiosk”
- Town Karcag (Hungary) for the project internet presentations of the town

All awarded projects were presented within the international programme of V4DIS, these presentations were however popular also among the participants of the simultaneously held conference Internet in Public Administration and Self-government.

Eurocrest

Announcement of the results of the EuroCrest competition for the best websites of towns, municipalities and regions in Europe was traditional part of the programme of the gala social evening of the tenth edition of the Internet in Public Administration and Local Government conference in Hradec Králové.

The EuroCrest competition issues from experience gained during organisation of the Golden Crest competition held in the Czech Republic and during the last years it spread across borders to other V4 countries. Very well organised competitions for best municipal websites now runs in Slovakia and Poland and it is highly probable that Hungarian associations of municipalities will soon start similar competition too.

Based on the call for proposals associations of towns and communities (or similar organisations) of the respective country nominate competitors - winners of national contest if this national contest is held.

EuroCrest, similarly to Golden Crest, aims to award extraordinary projects, support mutual exchange of experience and praise the endeavour of representatives of local governments and municipal authorities to effectively use information technologies in order to improve the quality and accessibility of public administration services.

This year's winners of the EuroCrest competition were the official websites of these V4 cities: Tyczyn (Poland) – www.tyczyn.pl, Dubnica nad Vahom (Slovakia) – www.dubnica.sk and Decin (Czech Republic) – www.mudecin.cz

V4DIS 2008

Venue:	Hradec Králové, Aldis Congress Centre
Date:	6–8 April 2008
Character of the event:	International conference
Main theme:	Informatisation of public administration
Expected number of participants:	250 from V4 countries
Organisers:	Association of the Czech @
Secretariat of the conference:	http://www.issc.cz/v4dis v4dis@issc.cz