

GLOBAL LEADERSHIP BRIEFING | FUTURE OUTLOOK

Four for a Fifth Seat: Central Europe Lines Up Behind India's Security Council Bid

At the first-ever V4-India foreign ministers' meeting, Hungary, Poland, Slovakia and the Czech Republic backed New Delhi's push for a permanent UN Security Council seat. The diplomacy comes bundled with an annual business forum, and that is where the commercial story begins.

By **Ankit Kankar** | September 22, 2026



UN General Assembly week produces hundreds of handshakes, but some of them move the architecture. On the sidelines of the 81st session in New York, External Affairs Minister S. Jaishankar sat down with his counterparts from Hungary, Poland, Slovakia and the Czech Republic for the first V4-India foreign ministers' meeting, and all four Visegrad Group nations collectively endorsed India's campaign for a permanent seat on the UN Security Council. Slovak Foreign Minister Juraj Blahar put it plainly: India, as part of the Global South and an upcoming superpower in the Indo-Pacific region, must be at the table as a permanent member.

The arithmetic of India's bid was already formidable. Four of the five existing permanent members, the United States, Russia, France and the United Kingdom, have backed New Delhi, leaving China as the only P5 holdout. India also campaigns through the G4 grouping alongside Brazil, Germany and Japan, which pushes for a broader expansion of the Council. What the V4 endorsement adds is not another vote so much as a bloc: four EU and NATO members from a region that has historically taken its cues on such questions from larger Western capitals, now moving early and together.

Why Central Europe, and why now

The Visegrad countries have their own reasons to court New Delhi. All four are manufacturing-heavy economies, deeply embedded in European automotive and industrial supply chains, looking to diversify export markets and investment sources beyond an underperforming Germany and a complicated China. India offers scale on every axis: the world's most populous market, a defence-modernisation budget open to European suppliers, and a technology sector hungry for exactly the engineering talent and mid-cap industrial know-how the V4 specialises in. The New York agenda reflected that breadth, taking in technology, innovation, defence, space, connectivity and people-to-people ties, along with the geopolitical file from Ukraine to the Gulf.

The institutional outcomes are the part that outlasts the communique. The two sides agreed to make the foreign ministers' meeting an annual fixture and, more significantly for readers of these pages, to create an annual India-V4 business forum. Formats of this kind, the Gulf's joint commissions, the Central and Eastern Europe platforms China once built, tend to become the pipeline through which trade delegations, investment MOUs and market-entry deals flow. A standing forum gives mid-sized Czech, Polish, Hungarian and Slovak firms a structured route into India that previously required navigating Brussels or bilateral channels alone.

The WBW view

Security Council reform itself remains a long game; any change to the permanent membership requires amending the UN Charter, with approval from two-thirds of the General Assembly and ratification by all five current permanent members, and China's position has not moved. Decision makers should therefore read this less as news about the UN and more as news about alignment. India is methodically converting its economic weight into institutional endorsements, region by region, and Central Europe has just joined the queue. For businesses, the actionable piece is the annual forum: watch for its first convening, the sectors it prioritises, and the trade and defence packages that tend to follow when governments build permanent scaffolding around a relationship. Multipolarity is often discussed as an abstraction. This week it looked like four foreign ministers, one table, and a business forum with a recurring calendar slot.

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