RESEARCH ARTICLE

Mexico and the Visegrad Group: fundamentals, main directions and perspectives of a new multilateral and bilateral cooperation in the context of a new international order

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Abstract

Mexico and the countries of the Visegrad Group (V4: the Czech Republic/Czechia, Hungary, Poland, and Slovakia) are geographically distant countries. However, both parties share similar characteristics and problems. Although Mexico is the second-largest trading partner of the V4 states in the Americas, following the United States (US), their cooperative relations remain rather tenuous, despite the considerable potential for expansion. This paper pursues four objectives. First, it examines the current state of cooperative relations between Mexico and the V4. Second, it investigates the problems and challenges shared by both parties. Third, it analyzes Mexico's relations with the European Union (EU), particularly since the entry into force of the Global Agreement - formally titled the Economic Partnership, Political Coordination and Cooperation Agreement between the European Community and its Member States, of the one part, and the United Mexican States, of the other part. Fourth, it identifies the variables that hinder the further development of cooperation between Mexico and the V4. The research hypothesis assumes that Mexico and the V4 countries are highly dependent on their geographically proximate political and economic powers, which, to some extent, constrains the deepening of Mexico-V4 relations. Moreover, these relations are primarily grounded in economic links and in cooperation based on "soft power" capacities, particularly in the scientific and academic spheres.

Keywords

Mexico, the Visegrad Group (V4), the European Union, interregional cooperation

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Introduction

Mexico and the Visegrad Group V4 (V4; composed of the Czech Republic/Czechia, Hungary, Poland, and Slovakia) are geographically distant entities, classified as medium powers in international relations (whether considering Mexico, Poland, or the V4 as a whole), with corresponding political, economic, and soft power potentials.[1] As emerging countries both parties possess limited international capabilities. Mexico-V4 relations are not treated as a top priority by either side. Mexico primarily concentrates its foreign policy on the United States (US), followed by Canada and Latin America.[2] For the V4 members, the highest foreign policy priority is the European Union (EU), followed by Eastern Europe and the Western Balkans.[3] The US also plays a specific role for the V4 countries, being particularly important in political and military terms (as NATO's leader and guarantor of security), especially for Poland. Nevertheless, both Mexico and the V4 express their intention to develop further cooperation, particularly in the economic and scientific fields.

The paper's authors assess 4 research objectives. The first is to analyze the cooperative relations that currently exist between Mexico and the V4. The second is to investigate the problems and challenges shared both parties share. The third is to analyze the relations between Mexico and the EU, particularly since the entry into force of the Global Agreement, as well as the negotiation and modernization of the aforementioned agreement. The fourth one is to indicate the variables that hinder the increase of cooperative relations between Mexico and the V4.

The authors of the article examine the cooperation that exists between Mexico, the EU, and the V4, as well as Mexico's bilateral cooperation with each individual member of this Central European grouping. The research hypothesis rests on the assumption that Mexico and the V4 countries are highly dependent on their geographically proximate political and economic powers, which, to some extent, hampers the deepening of their mutual relations. Moreover, these relations are based primarily on economic ties and on cooperation connected to their "soft power" capabilities, particularly in the scientific and academic spheres. "Pure" politics and "hard" security issues do not play key roles in the relations under analysis. Nevertheless, the development of these relations remains possible, especially if Mexico and the V4 countries continue to increase their weight in the international arena.

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[1] On Poland as a medium-size power in international relations see e.g. M. Raś, "Polska w stosunkach międzynarodowych," in *Polska i Rosja w zmieniającej się Europie*, eds. K.A. Wojtaszczyk and I.N. Novikova (Warszawa: ASPRA-JR Publishing House, 2022), 125.

[2] R. Velazquez Flores, J.A. Schiavon and A. Mojaraz, "La política exterior de México: Capacidades y límites," in *Introducción al studio de la Política Exterior Comparada*, eds. R. Velazaquez Flores *et al.* (Universidad Iberoamericana, AMEI, Universidad Autonoma del Estado de Quinta Roo y Centro de Enseñanza sobre la Politica Exterior de México, 2024), 163–182.

[3] K. Ovchinnikova, "El Grupo de Visegrado: siete siglos de historia, tres décadas de unión," *EOM El Orden Mundial*, December 5, 2019, https://elordenmundial.com/grupo-de-visegrado/.

Mexico's position in International Relations

According to the International Monetary Fund (IMF), in 2023 Mexico was the twelfth-largest economy in the world. On the other hand, in the Global World Economic Outlook Ranking published in 2023 by the IMF, Mexico recorded a GDP of 1.72 billion USD Furthermore, Mexico currently ranks as the fourth-largest economy in the Americas, after the United States, Canada, and Brazil.[4] In recent years, the country has also emerged as a "tourism superpower", being the sixth most visited destination worldwide, according to the World Tourism Organization.[5]

Mexico is a part to the Agreement between the United States of America, the United Mexican States, and Canada (Canada–United States–Mexico Agreement/ CUSMA, also known as USMCA, T-MEC or "NAFTA 2.0") that entered into force in 2020. The CUSMA partners generate about 30% of the world´s GNP.[6]

The CUSMA has been a determining factor in the transformation and development of the Mexican economy, society, and culture. In fact, it has contributed to making Mexico a country distinct from other Latin American states. For example, the phenomenon of nearshoring has unfolded in Mexico in a markedly different way compared to other Latin American countries, with the exception of Brazil. The US represents Mexico's most important economic partner, followed by China and the European Union (EU). It is worth recalling that prior to the creation of the North American Free Trade Agreement (NAFTA), which entered into force in 1994, the Mexican economy had remained for decades on the periphery of the global economic landscape, in a manner comparable to the position of the V4 economies when they belonged to the former socialist bloc. By contrast, the Central European countries have undergone radical transformations as a result of their integration into the EU. For instance, Poland today represents the sixth-largest economy in the Union, while the V4 as a group constitutes its fifth-largest economy. Moreover, Central European economies are currently among the most dynamic within the EU.

It should be underlined that Mexico's soft power exerts a significant influence, particularly in the Americas, but also in other parts of the Western world. According to the Global Soft Power Report published by Brand Finance in 2020, Mexico ranked as the second-highest country in Latin America in terms of soft power, just

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[4] O. Martínez, "México avanza al lugar 12 en el top de las mejores economias del mundo," *El Heraldo de México*, December 21, 2023, https://heraldodemexico.com.mx/economia/2023/12/21/mexico-avanza-al-lugar-12-en-el-top-de-las-mejores-economias-del-mundo-564411.html.

[5] A. Martínez, "México emerge como potencia turística," Visit-mexico.mx, January 8, 2024, https://www.visit-mexico.mx/es/news/january-2024/mexico-emerges-as-global-tourism-power/.

[6] Gobierno de México, "El T-MEC es la única forma de enfrentar con éxito la competencia economica y comercial con China: presidenta Claudia Sheinbaum," Presidencia de la República, Comunicado, December 8, 2024, https://www.gob.mx/presidencia/prensa/el-t-mec-es-la-unica-forma-de-enfrentar-con-exito-la-competencia-economica-y-comercial-con-china-presidenta-claudia-sheinbaum.

after Brazil.[7] Taking into account its economic weight, soft power resources, and geopolitical position-situated between North and Latin America-Mexico can be regarded as a midium power in international relations.[8] Before the left-wing political party Morena came to power in the presidential and federal elections of 2018, Mexico's foreign policy was active in North America, Latin America, and Europe, particularly toward its most important EU partners. However, the administration of former president Andrés Manuel López Obrador displayed little interest in international relations.[9] For instance, during his mandate, he did not undertake any official visits to EU institutions or European countries, nor did he participate in G20 or Organization for Economic Cooperation and Development (OECD) meetings. Moreover, his government maintained a pronounced distance and confrontation with Spain. From his archaic and populist perspective, Spain should formally apologize to Mexico for crimes against humanity committed during the colonial period against indigenous populations - a position that was not broadly shared by Mexican public opinion. By contrast, the current president of Mexico, Claudia Sheinbaum Pardo, has shown considerably greater interest in international relations than her predecessor. Nevertheless, her political discourse on foreign policy continues to emphasize the principle of national "sovereignty". Regarding Spain, she has largely continued the political line of López Obrador. At the same time, Sheinbaum has concentrated on negotiating tariffs with the US. In light of the policies pursued under Donald Trump, both Mexico and Canada have been looking more actively than ever to diversify their international ties, particularly by strengthening cooperation with the EU, including the V4 countries.[10]

Relations between Mexico and the EU

For several decades, the EU was Mexico's second-most important economic partner after the United States. However, in recent years, China has overtaken this position. Previously, Mexico's diplomatic, political, and soft-power presence in Europe was relatively prominent, particularly in the most developed European countries. Since the aforementioned domestic political changes, however, Mexico's position in Europe - and especially in Central Europe - has declined significantly.

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[7] P. Pineda, "México el segundo país mejor calificado en soft power en America Latina," *El Economista*, July 18, 2020, https://www.eleconomista.com.mx/internacionales/Mexico-el-segundo-pais-mejor-calificado-de-America-Latina-en-soft-power-20200717-0045.html.

[8] Velazquez Flores, Schiavon and Mojaraz, "La política exterior de México: Capacidades y límites," in *Introducción al studio de la Política Exterior Comparada*, 163–182.

[9] J. Figueras, "Mexico y Francia deben asumir liderazgo," *El Heraldo de México*, March 1, 2025, https://heraldodemexico.com.mx/edicion-impresa/2025/3/31/mexico-francia-deben-asumir-liderazgo-687489.html.

[10] E. Ruiz Healy, "México apostó por una sola carta," *El Diario de Mexico*, March 31, 2025, https://diario.mx/opinion/2025/mar/30/mexico-aposto-a-una-sola-carta-1059757.html.

As mentioned above, the EU and its 27 member states represent Mexico's third-most important trading partner, while Mexico is the EU's fourteenth-largest trading partner. It is worth noting that relations between the EU and Mexico have developed under the framework of the Global Agreement, signed in 1997 and entering into force in 2000, officially known as the Economic Partnership, Political Coordination and Cooperation Agreement between the European Community and its Member States, of the one part, and the United Mexican States, of the other part. Since the entry into force of the Global Agreement, bilateral trade has more than tripled over the past two decades. The flows of goods between the two economies reached 82 billion EUR in 2023 and 22 billion EUR with trade in services in 2022. In 2021, the EU remained the second-largest net investor in Mexico, with 6,9 billion EUR (24.6% of total net FDI) only after the US.[11]

The most important pillars of bilateral cooperation are trade and political dialogue. Other areas of cooperation that can also be considered significant include international collaboration and security, migration, the promotion of human rights, and environmental protection.

Moreover, Mexico is an associated member of the European Bank for Reconstruction and Development (EBRD). Likewise, it has a free trade agreement with the European Free Trade Association (EFTA), which entered into force in 2001. Following Brexit, Mexico and the United Kingdom (UK) established the Trade Continuity Agreement, which came into force in 2021. Both parties to this agreement decided to maintain the preferential trade regime in their bilateral relations, as it existed when the UK was a member of the EU.

In 2016, the EU and Mexico initiated negotiations aimed at modernizing the Global Agreement, with the objective of updating it to address new economic and political challenges. Both parties reached an agreement in 2018 and finalized the negotiations in January 2025.[12] However, the new version of the Global Agreement has not yet been ratified by either party. Nevertheless, Mexico and the EU have indicated that they plan to ratify the updated agreement in 2026.

The new version of the Global Agreement includes new and important clauses, which are as follows:

- elimination of all tariffs relatet to the agricultural products that were not liberalized under current Global Agreement,
- simplification of customs procedures,
- establishment of progressive standards for sustainable development,

[11] Delegación de la Unión Europea en México, "La Unión Europea y México," July 30, 2021, https://www.eeas.europa.eu/mexico/la-union-europea-y-mexico_es?s=248.

[12] I. Saldaña, "Unión Europea y México concluyen negociación del acuerdo comercial; establece "marco ambicioso y moderno"," *El Universal*, January 17, 2025, https://www.eluniversal.com.mx/mundo/union-europea-y-mexico-concluyen-modernizacion-del-acuerdo-global-bilateral-establece-marco-ambicioso-y-moderno.

- combating corruption in the public and private sectors,
- extension of access to public procurement markets,
- providing a high level of protection of intellectual property rights,
- opening up trade in services (e.g., financial services, transport, e-commerce and telecommunications),
- improvement of investment conditions,
- reinforcement of commitments in human rights, sustainability, multilateralism and international security,
- human rights and democracy,
- promotion and protection of fundamental rights,
- sustainability and fair trade, included to ensure responsible and sustainable business practices,
- security and mobility cooperation: joint responses to challenges such as migration and global security.[13]

According to the European Commission (2020), the new version of the Global Agreement outlines the joint ambition of the EU and Mexico to promote and protect human rights, multilateralism, and international peace and security, while facilitating strategic cooperation on key geopolitical issues. These include reducing risks in supply chains, ensuring a sustainable supply of critical raw materials, and addressing climate change. The agreement is also expected to "substantially boost" trade between the EU and Mexico. The European Parliament welcomed the modernization of the pact, noting that it could increase European exports to Mexico by 75%, save European companies approximately 100 million EUR in tariffs, and provide them access to Mexican public procurement. Brussels emphasized that the European agri-food sector will be among the main beneficiaries due to the elimination of tariffs and other non-tariff trade barriers. Once the treaty is fully implemented, Mexico will eliminate tariffs on European products entirely. The European Commission also highlighted an expected increase in European exports of vehicles and vehicle parts, as Mexican companies will receive more favorable treatment when purchasing European components, as well as machinery, pharmaceuticals, and services in business, finance, telecommunications, and transport due to greater access to Mexican public markets. In the energy sector, EU sources noted that the agreement guarantees European companies the same treatment as other preferential partners of Mexico, such as the United States and Canada. Additionally, the agreement incorporates a new chapter on sustainable development and mechanisms for resolving potential disputes. Finally, the new Global Agreement

[13] The European Commission, "EU-Mexico agreement: Text of the agreement," accessed August 10, 2025, https://policy.trade.ec.europa.eu/eu-trade-relationships-country-and-region/countries-and-regions/mexico/eu-mexico-agreement/text-agreement_en.

replaces the previous dispute settlement system with a modern Investment Court System.[14]

Despite the EU having 27 member states, Mexico concentrates most of its foreign trade with only seven of them, as well as with the United Kingdom. These EU members are France, Italy, Belgium, Spain, Germany, the Netherlands, and, more recently, one V4 country: Hungary. Together, these countries account for more than 93% of Mexico's exports to the EU, as shown in Figure 1. There is an expectation that the new Global Agreement will enable Mexico to diversify its economic relations with other EU member states, including the V4 countries.

Background for the mutually beneficial cooperation between Mexico and the V4

Despite Mexico's recent modest political and diplomatic presence in the EU, and even more limited presence in Central Europe, it currently represents the most important economic partner in the Americas, after the United States, for the Czech Republic, Hungary, Slovakia, and, more recently, Poland.[15] Nevertheless, economic

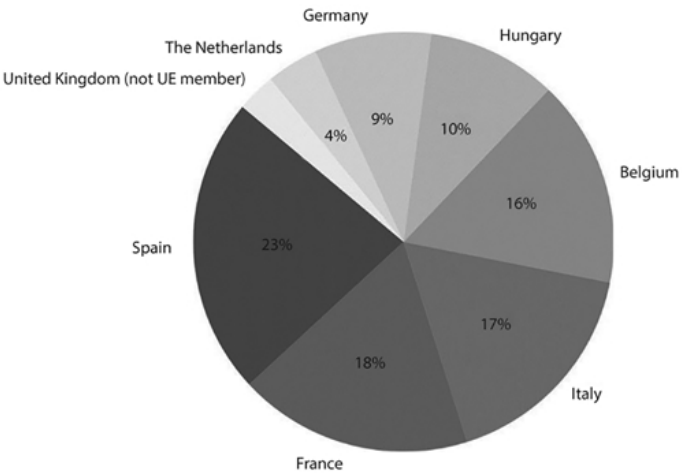

Figure 1. Mexico´s most important economic partners within the EU and non-EU Western European countries. Note: own elaboration based on data of Ministry of Foreign Affairs of Mexico, 2025.[16]

[14] The European Commission, "EU-Mexico agreement."

[15] Gobierno de México, "México consolida vinculos de cooperación con la Republica Checa y con Polonia," Comunicado No. 194, May 20, 2024, https://www.gob.mx/sre/prensa/mexico-consolida-vinculos-economicos-y-de-cooperacion-con-republica-checa-y-polonia?idiom=es-MX.

[16] Gobierno de México, "México consolida vinculos de cooperación con la Republica Checa y con Polonia."

relations between Mexico and the V4 countries remain relatively weak, particularly when compared with Mexico's economic relations with the CUSMA partners and the V4 countries' trade relations with Germany and other major EU members. On the other hand, when the V4 countries joined the EU, they also became parties to the Global Agreement.

It is worth noting that the Global Agreement has played an essential role in the context of the significant increase in economic cooperation between Mexico and each V4 country. Collectively, these countries represent the fourth-largest economy within the EU. Similar to Mexico, their emerging markets have become increasingly attractive for foreign investors. Most of the foreign direct investment (FDI) inflows to the V4 economies originate from Germany and other highly developed EU members. Over recent decades, Central European countries have received substantial FDI due to their EU membership, political stability, strategic geographical location, and socio-economic development. Furthermore, the V4 countries, along with other former socialist states, have markedly increased their economic competitiveness since the early 1990s, a development that has also been significant for Mexican entrepreneurs.[17] On the other hand, according to the World Economic Competitiveness Ranking of the World Bank, the most important Latin American economies have not achieved the same progress as the economies of the V4 in terms of their international competitiveness.[18]

However, the individual V4 markets are relatively small. Only Poland represents a medium-sized market of approximately 38 million consumers, while Hungary and Czechia have relatively small markets of around 10 million each, and Slovakia has an even smaller population of just 6 million. Nevertheless, the V4 economies today constitute the most dynamic economic zone within the EU's sub-regions. A common challenge for both the V4 countries and Mexico is the need to enhance their innovation and competitiveness through knowledge-based economic growth, including significantly increasing financial investment in research and development, as other emerging economies have done in previous decades (e.g., South Korea, Israel). Unfortunately, modest investment in innovation by Mexico and the V4 countries has left them highly dependent on technology and know-how from their main trading partners - respectively, the CUSMA countries, the EU, or other highly developed economies.

The V4 countries are in a much stronger position than Mexico regarding challenges such as corruption in the public and private sectors, the strength of political institutions, the quality of public education, and infrastructure in key economic areas

[17] P. Rodríguez, "El Grupo de Visegrado en la Unión Europea del Siglo XXI," *Revista de Relaciones Internacionales de la UNAM* 4, no. 138 (2020): 214–216, https://revistas.unam.mx/index.php/rri/article/view/77514.

[18] "Global Competitiveness Index," accessed June 15, 2025, https://data360.worldbank.org/en/indicator/WEF_GCIHH_GCI.

such as seaports, airports, railway systems, and highways. Another serious challenge facing Mexico is domestic security, particularly in the context of organized crime. Despite these obstacles, Mexico continues to attract foreign investors, largely due to its strategic geographical location and participation in the CUSMA. As a result, it serves as a convenient gateway to both North American and Latin American markets. Consequently, a considerable number of American, European, and Asian companies have established manufacturing operations in northern Mexico. In particular, Mexico has become a highly attractive destination for nearshoring, leveraging its proximity to the United States. This opportunity is also appealing for V4 entrepreneurs; indeed, some companies from Poland, Czechia, and Hungary are already utilizing it to export their products to CUSMA markets.

Bilateral relations between Mexico and the V4 countries

Poland

From Mexico's perspective, Poland plays the most important role within the Visegrad Group, not only due to its geopolitical location but primarily because of its socio-economic potential. Similarly, to Mexico, Poland serves as a gateway to the EU as well as to Eastern European markets. Moreover, Poland is perceived as more influential than the other V4 countries within the EU, a status reflected in its position and role among EU member states.

Poland is widely regarded as a success story in terms of systemic transformation, having achieved significant political, social, and economic progress since 1989. Moreover, Poland has been able to leverage its EU membership to experience a "second golden age",[19] ensuring dynamic socio-economic development characterized by sustained economic growth, social stability, poverty reduction, and the expansion of the middle class. The country has effectively utilized EU funds, which have contributed to enhancing its international competitiveness. As a result, after transitioning from a peripheral former socialist state and several decades of economic growth, Poland has already entered the group of high-income countries,[20] as well as reached the status of the 20th economy in the world in 2025.

Poland is Mexico's 19th-largest trading partner worldwide and the 13th among the EU's 27 member states. In 2023, Mexico became Poland's leading trading partner in Latin America and the second in the Americas, after the United States. The growth in bilateral trade between Mexico and Poland is also reflected in increasing Polish tourism to Mexico. Bilateral trade has increased more than tenfold from 109 million

[19] B. Wojna, "Polonia y México: una relación en construcción," *El Heraldo de México*, January 31, 2018, https://heraldodemexico.com.mx/opinion/2018/1/31/beata-wojna-polonia-mexico-una-relacion-en-construccion-31537.html.

[20] B. Wojna, "Más allá del vodka y el tequila. Relaciones económicas entre Polonia y México," *Comercio Exterior, Bancomext 9*, January–March, 2017, https://www.bancomext.com/wp-content/uploads/2017/01/CEB-9.pdf.

USD in 2004 to 1,444 billion USD in 2024. Since Poland joined the EU, trade relations between the two countries have grown by 247%. However, in absolute terms, this trade remains relatively modest. Moreover, trade relations between Mexico and Poland are still far below the economic potential of both countries.[21]

In November 2016, a report entitled *Recommendations for Strengthening Relations between Poland and Mexico* was published. The report was prepared with the participation of governmental institutions, the private sector, academics and researchers, as well as civil society organizations, and served as a guide for the development of bilateral relations between Poland and Mexico.[22]

From April 22 to 25, 2017, the former president of Poland, Andrzej Duda, paid an official visit to Mexico, emphasizing that Poland had selected Mexico as one of its five priority markets outside Europe and identifying the country as one of the most attractive investment destinations in the international economic scenario.[23] However, this goal has not yet been fully realized. During Duda's visit in Mexico, the presidents of both countries (Mexico was headed by Enrique Peña Nieto then) signed a Joint Declaration which was called: *Towards a Strategic Partnership Between Poland and Mexico*. The main aim of Poland was to support its business that could open up to the Mexican market, and Mexico's goal was to expand its cooperative relations with other European countries in economic, political, and scientific terms. On the other hand, the result of the visit was the signing of a number of agreements, which foster closer cooperation, between both parties. In the same year, the Mexico-Poland Business Committee was inaugurated.[24]

Poland-Mexico friendship groups were established in both chambers of the Polish parliament in March 2017. Strengthened political relations between Poland and Mexico contributed not only to bilateral intergovernmental and parliamentary cooperation, but also to the multilateral forum, especially the EU, the OECD, the United Nations, and the Pacific Alliance, which Poland has been observing since July 2015.[25]

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[21] A. Negrin, "Polonia: esa desconocida. Un modelo para armar la nueva relación estratégica con Europa," *Comercio Exterior. Bancomext 9*, January–March, 2017, https://www.bancomext.com/wp-content/uploads/2017/01/CEB-9.pdf.

[22] "Recomendaciones para el fortalecimiento de las relaciones entre México y Polonia," Centro de Estudios Internacionales Gilberto Bosques e Instituto Matías Romero, Secretaria de Relaciones Exteriores. Archives of Instituto Matías Romero, Secretaría de Relaciones Exteriores, 2016, https://centrogilbertobosques.senado.gob.mx/docs/Relatoria_Mexico_Polonia_230516_JPM.pdf.

[23] Wojna, "Más allá del vodka y el tequila."

[24] J. Łapaj-Kucharska, "Selected Aspects of Polish-Mexican Relations on the Political, Economic and Cultural-Scientific Level in the 21st Century," *Ad Americam. Journal of American Studies* 19 (2018): 66, 67.

[25] Łapaj-Kucharska, "Selected Aspects of Polish-Mexican Relations," 64.

Poland exports to Mexico a range of products, including alcoholic beverages, mechanical and electrical devices for recording and receiving sound, vehicles and automotive parts, aircrafts, ships and related equipment, base metal products, industrial chemicals, plastics, and agricultural products. Mexico exports similar goods to Poland, such as mechanical and electrical devices for recording and receiving sound, vehicles, and non-precious metal products. Currently, more than 53 companies with Polish capital operate in Mexico, while several Mexican companies, including CEMEX, Katcon, Nemak, Mexichen, and Saltillo Industrial Group, have a presence in Poland. There are specific sectors and industrial clusters in both countries whose growth should be actively promoted, particularly the automotive sector. This industry is one of the fastest-growing in both countries and represents one of the most complementary areas of economic cooperation between Mexico and Poland.

In terms of scientific cooperation, there exists a longstanding bilateral agreement, which is crucial to modernize in order to enhance collaboration between the two countries. Despite the presence of a considerable number of public and private universities that have established bilateral agreements to promote academic mobility for students and researchers, Mexican–Polish academic and scientific cooperation remains limited and leaves much to be desired.

Hungary

Relations between Mexico and Hungary are based on the Global Agreement, as well as on bilateral cooperation agreements. Mexico is Hungary's leading trading partner in Latin America and the second in the Americas.[26] Among EU member states, Hungary ranks as Mexico's eighth-largest trading partner. Trade between Hungary and Mexico accounts for more than 55.8% of Budapest's trade with other Latin American partners. The volume of bilateral trade reached a historic level of 1,43 billion USD in 2022, with Hungarian imports from Mexico totaling 309.9 million USD and Mexican exports to Hungary amounting to 1,12 billion USD.[27] Hungary exports to Mexico machinery, transport equipment, road vehicles, as well as power-generating and electrical appliances. Conversely, Mexico exports to Hungary machinery and transport equipment, office machines, data processing equipment, general-use industrial equipment, electrical machines and devices, alcoholic beverages, electrical accessories, telephone devices, and devices for receiving, converting, and transmitting sound. On December 6, 2013, the Mexico–Hungary Chamber of Commerce was established in Budapest.

[26] "México y Hungría fortalecen lazos económicos y comerciales," *El Economista*, April 9, 2019, https://www.eleconomista.com.mx/internacionales/Mexico-y-Hungria-fortalecen-lazos-economicos-y-culturales-20190410-0061.html.

[27] "México y Hungría fortalecen lazos."

Perhaps the most successful area of bilateral cooperation between Mexico and Hungary is scientific and academic collaboration, supported by bilateral agreements aimed at promoting the mobility of students, academics, and researchers. Mexico became a participant in the Hungarian government scholarship program, *Stipendium Hungaricum*, in 2015. As is the case with other Central European countries, a considerable number of bilateral agreements have also been established between public and private universities to further academic cooperation.

The Czech Republic

Mexico and the Czech Republic base their relations on the Global Agreement, as well as on bilateral cooperation. The Czech Republic is Mexico's 10th-largest trading partner among the 27 EU member states. The Mexican market absorbs 50% of Czech exports to Latin America. In 2023, bilateral trade between the two countries amounted to 1.3 billion USD. Mexico's exports to the Czech Republic mainly include machine parts and accessories, electrical equipment, copper pipes, car parts and accessories, food products, and alcoholic beverages. Czech exports to Mexico consist of telephones and mobile phones, machinery, electrical wires and cables, automobiles and other vehicles, iron, steel, and glass. Several major Mexican companies, such as Cemex, Bimbo, and Nemak, actively operate in the Czech Republic, while dozens of companies with Czech capital conduct business in Mexico. Czechia and Mexico also cooperate in the academic and scientific spheres, exchanging students, academics, and researchers through intergovernmental agreements as well as through direct collaboration between public and private universities in both countries.[28]

Slovakia

The weakest bilateral relations between Mexico and the V4 countries are with Slovakia. Diplomatic relations and cooperation between the two states were established immediately after the breakup of Czechoslovakia. Initially, Mexico maintained its diplomatic mission to Czechia as also accredited to Slovakia. Since 1996, Mexico's embassy in Austria has been accredited to the Slovak Republic. During this period, Slovakia established its embassy in Mexico City, while Mexico maintains only an Honorary Consulate in Bratislava. The Global Agreement serves as the core treaty for bilateral cooperation in this case as well, supported by additional bilateral agreements. Slovakia is Mexico's 18th-largest trading partner within the EU, while Mexico is Slovakia's main trading partner in Latin America and its second-largest in the Americas.[29] In 2023, trade between Slovakia and Mexico

[28] "México y la República Checa buscan impulsar relación ante retos globales," *El Economista*, 2019, https://www.eleconomista.com.mx/internacionales/Mexico-y-Republica-Checa-buscan-impulsar-relacion-ante-retos-globales-20191016-0127.html.

[29] Secretaría de Relaciones Exteriores, "México y Eslovaquia," 2022, https://embamex.sre.gob.mx/austria/index.php/es/la-embajada/mexico-y-eslovaquia.

amounted to 540.8 million USD. Slovakia's exports to Mexico include engines and compressors, automotive parts, tractors, electrical appliances and components, tools, and tires. Mexico's exports to Slovakia consist of automotive parts, machinery, electrical appliances and components, computer products, and copper and its derivatives. Scientific cooperation between the two countries is also supported through agreements established at the governmental level, as well as through partnerships between private universities, which promote the mobility of students, academics, and researchers from both countries.[30]

Conclusions

Although Mexico is the main economic partner in Latin America and the second in the Americas for the V4 countries, bilateral relations between the two parties remain of limited significance, especially when compared with Mexico's cooperation with its CUSMA partners or the V4 countries' trade relations with other EU members. Since the Global Agreement was established in 2000, economic relations between Mexico and the EU have more than tripled and evolved significantly. However, in recent years, China has overtaken the EU, which previously held the second position among Mexico's foreign trade partners. The Global Agreement has fostered closer cooperation between Mexico and EU member states, and since 2008, Mexico has been considered one of the Union's ten top strategic partners.

Undoubtedly, the new version of the Global Agreement will expand the opportunities for Mexico and the V4 countries to deepen their economic relations. It could also help both parties diversify their international partnerships. Currently, Mexico is the second-most important economic partner, after the United States, for Czechia, Hungary, Poland, and Slovakia. However, much remains to be done for these relations to reach their full potential. Mexico and the V4 countries are highly dependent on their most significant regional partners: the United States (or, more broadly, the CUSMA partners) for Mexico, and the leading EU members (particularly Germany) for the V4 countries. A major obstacle limiting the development of bilateral relations is the limited awareness of potential opportunities for enhanced cooperation among Mexican and V4 political and economic elites, as well as within public opinion and even the scientific communities in both regions.

As is well known, international relations have been radically transformed in the current century. In this context, both Mexico and the Central European countries are no longer peripheral actors on the global stage. On the contrary, they are now among the most important emerging economies in the world, and their geographical location provides unique economic and political opportunities. Consequently, Mexico and the V4 countries have the potential to further expand their cooperation, particularly in the economic and academic spheres. Undoubtedly, the resources

[30] Secretaría de Relaciones Exteriores, "México y Eslovaquia."

and capacities to achieve these objectives are available; what remains lacking is a clear recognition of the necessity for such cooperation and the corresponding political will. Finally, Mexico, the EU, and the V4 countries should adopt a new approach and develop strategies that will enable them to diversify their international partnerships and effectively address the threats and challenges posed by the evolving global order.

Ethics statement

Ethical approval and consent were not required.

Data availability

The data for this article consists of bibliographic references, which are included in this article.