

MEXICO AND CENTRAL EUROPEAN COUNTRIES: BILATERAL AND MULTILATERAL COOPERATIVE RELATIONS

MÉXICO E PAÍSES DA EUROPA CENTRAL: RELAÇÕES DE COOPERAÇÃO BILATERAIS E MULTILATERAL

MÉXICO Y PAÍSES DE EUROPA CENTRAL: RELACIONES DE COOPERATIVA BILATERALES Y MULTILATERALES

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ABSTRACT

This article analyzes the cooperative relations between Mexico and the Visegrad Group, also known as the V4. Mexico and the members of V4 (Poland, Hungary, the Czech Republic, and the Slovak Republic) are geographically distant countries. However, both parties share similar aspects and problems. Although Mexico has become in the Americas, after the United States, the first trading partner of the V4 members, the cooperative relations between the two actors can be characterized as “tenuous”, despite the enormous potential that exists to expand such cooperation. This article has 4 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 both parties share. The third is to analyze the relations between Mexico and the European Union (UE), particularly since the entry into force of the Global Agreement, as well as the negotiation and modernization of the agreement. The fourth



and last objective, is to investigate the variables that hinder the increase of cooperative relations between Mexico and the V4.

Keywords: Mexico; Visegrad Group; V4; European Union and intraregional and bilateral cooperation.

RESUMO:

Este artigo analisa as relações de cooperação entre o México e o Grupo de Visegrado, também conhecido como V4. O México e os membros do G4 são países geograficamente distantes. No entanto, tanto o México quanto os membros do G4 compartilham questões e aspectos semelhantes. Embora o México tenha se tornado o segundo maior parceiro comercial nas Américas para Polônia, Hungria, República Tcheca e República Eslovaca, depois dos Estados Unidos, as relações de cooperação entre o México e os países mencionados podem ser caracterizadas como "tênuas", apesar do enorme potencial existente entre ambas as partes para aprofundar ou expandir essa cooperação. Este artigo tem quatro objetivos. O primeiro é analisar as atuais relações de cooperação entre o México e os membros do V4. O segundo objetivo é investigar os problemas e desafios enfrentados por ambas as partes. O terceiro objetivo é investigar as relações entre o México e a UE sob a perspectiva da negociação e renovação do Acordo Global. O quarto e último objetivo é analisar as variáveis que dificultam o aumento das relações de cooperação entre o México e os membros do V4.

Palavras-chave: México; V4; cooperação inter-regional y cooperação bilateral.

RESUMEN:

Este artículo analiza las relaciones de cooperación entre México y el Grupo de Visegrado, también conocido como el V4. México y los miembros del G4 son países geográficamente distantes. Sin embargo, tanto México como los miembros del G4 comparten problemáticas y aspectos similares. Aunque, México se ha convertido en el segundo socio comercial de las Américas de Polonia, Hungría, República Checa y de la República Eslovaca, después de Estados Unidos, las relaciones de cooperación que existen entre México y los países anteriormente mencionados pueden caracterizarse como "tenues", a pesar del enorme potencial que existe entre ambas partes para profundizar o ampliar dicha cooperación. Este artículo posee 4 objetivos. El primero es el de analizar las relaciones de cooperación que existen actualmente entre México y los miembros del V4. El segundo objetivo es el de indagar las problemáticas y los retos que enfrentan ambas partes. El tercer objetivo, es indagar las relaciones entre México y la UE, desde la perspectiva de la negociación y renovación del Acuerdo Global y el cuarto y último objetivo, es el de analizar las variables que obstaculizan el incremento de las relaciones de cooperación entre México y los miembros del GV.

Palabras clave: México; GV; cooperación interregional y cooperación bilateral.

1 SCIENTIFIC STRUCTURE



In the first part, the authors present the introduction, the objectives, as well as the scientific methodology used in this article, which include the theoretical framework and the hypothesis. The second section of this article, assess the new weight of Mexico in the international stage in the framework of the 21st century. In the third part, it assesses current relations between Mexico and the European Union (UE) and fourth and last part, explore the background of cooperative relations between Mexico and V4, from the point of view of multilateral and bilateral relations among both parties.

2 HYPOTHESIS

The hypothesis use in this article is explanatory and descriptive, as this article explain the type of cooperation that exist between Mexico, the UE and the V4, as well, as Mexico's cooperation with each individual member of the Central European organization whose members are Poland, Hungary, The Czech Republic and the Slovak Republic. From the point of view of this hypothesis, Mexico and the V4 are highly dependent on their geographical neighbors who are economic, political and military superpowers, which hamper to increase their multilateral and bilateral cooperative relations. It is worth mentioning, that despite of the above, the increase of cooperative relations it is difficult, nevertheless, not impossible, particularly when Mexico and the members of the V4 are increasing their weight in international scenario.

3 INTRODUCTION

Mexico and the V4 are geographically distant entities, with medium-sized power in international relations (considering the V4 as a whole) with high economic, political, and soft power potential. Nevertheless, as emerging countries both parties have limited international capabilities. Taking the above into account, relations between both parties will certainly not be their highest priorities in their foreign policy. Hence, Mexico concentrates most of its foreign policy first, with the United States and afterwards with Canada and Latin America. However, the United States connotes the cornerstone of Mexico's priority in the context of its foreign policy. (Rafael et al., 2024). For the members of the V4's their highest foreign policy priority is the EU and then others Eastern European countries (which are not members of the UE), and the Western



Balkan countries, which most probably will join the UE soon (Ovchinnikova, 2019). Despite of it, Mexico and the V4 express their wish to develop further cooperation, especially in the political, scientific, and economic field.

4 THEORETICAL FRAMEWORK

This article takes into consideration the complex interdependence theory to understand, and explain cooperative relations between Mexico, the UE and the V4. The complex interdependence theory was published in the book: Power and Interdependence where Robert Keohane and Joseph Nye described the main characteristics of the theory (Keohane and Nye, 1977). According to Robert Keohane and Joseph Nye, in the framework of the 21st century, international relations is not only a matter of military force and wars and the balance of power between states could be transformed through interdependence and cooperation. Theorists of the complex interdependence theory recognize that interdependence between states and societies are currently increasing, while military strength and the balance of power is decreasing. This theory has three main fundamental elements, which are as follows: 1. the existence of multiple channels connecting societies. These channels could be between states, international corporations, civil society, non-governmental organizations, trade unions, among others., 2. Military security and wars between states does not consistently dominate the international agenda. Therefore, states can establish cooperative relations in economic, political and scientific terms. Hence, military force is not used by governments, *vis-à-vis* other states where complex interdependence prevails. Nye and Keohane furthermore underline the importance of the states diversifying their relations, particularly when they are highly dependent on other states, who possess greater power in economic, technological, and political terms.

5 MEXICO WEIGHT THE INTERNATIONAL STAGE IN THE FRAMEWORK OF THE XXI CENTURY

According to the International Monetary Fund (2023) Mexico currently represents the twelfth largest economy in the world, as it can be seen in graphic 1.



On the other hand, in the Global World Economic Outlook Ranking carried out in 2023 by the International Monetary Fund (IMF), Mexico reached a GDP of 1.72 trillion dollars, surpassing other European or other emerging economies such as: Switzerland, the Netherlands, South Korea, Portugal, and Spain (Martínez, 2023). Furthermore, today Mexico's economy is the largest economy in the Iberoamerican world (1), with the exception of Brazil (Morales, 2020), which is the ninth largest economy in the world, as table 1 shows:

Table 1. *The top fifteen largest economies in the world according to the IMF, 2024*

	COUNTRY	GDP IN US DOLLARS
1.	United States	26.85 billones
2.	China	19.37 billones
3.	Germany	4.41 billones
4.	Japan	4.31 billones
5.	India	3.74 billones
6.	United Kingdom	3.16 billones
7.	France	2.92 billones
8.	Italy	2.17 billones
9.	Brazil	2.09 billones
10.	Canada	2.08 billones
11.	Russia	2.06 billones
12.	Mexico	1.72 billones
13.	South Korea	1.71 billones
14.	Australia	1.66 billones
15.	Spain	1.49 billones

Note: own elaboration with data from: IMF (2023).

On the other hand, in recent years Mexico became a superpower in terms of tourism, being the sixth most visited country in the world, according to the World Tourism Organization (Martínez, 2024), as it can be seen in table 2.

Table 2. *Top 10 most tourist countries in the world according to the WTO*

	Country	Millions of tourists receive per year
1	France	77.5
2	Spain	71.1



3	United State	51.6
4	Turkey	50.7
5	Italy	48.5
6	Mexico	38.2
7	Greece	30.0
8	Germany	28.5
9	Austria	27.1
10	Portugal	24.5

Note: own elaboration with data from: WTO (2025) and EnteraT (2025).

On the other hand, Mexico is a member of the USMCA. The USMCA generate 18.3 percent of world's GNP, China 18% percent, the UE 17.63 percent, while the members of the V4 Generate as a block of countries contribute 1.4 percent towards the world's GNP: (Secretaria de Economía: 2020). For Mexico the USMCA has been a determining factor within the transformation and development of the Mexican economy, society and culture. In fact, the USMAC has contribute to make Mexico a different country compared to other Latin American countries. To mention an example, the nearshoring is a phenomenon that has contributed in relation to Foreign Direct Investment (FDI), that no other country in Latin America receives of such magnitude (except for Brazil), as Mexico. On the other hand, in recent years Mexico has become the first most important economic partner for the United States. China represents the second most important economic partner for this North American country, and the UE the third. **It is worth mentioning**, that before creation of the North American Free Trade Agreement (NAFTA) which came into force in 1994, the mexican economy was on the economic periphery of the international economic scenario, with very little relevance in the global economy.

Paradoxically, the same phenomenon occurred with the members of the V4. Hence, before Poland, the Czech Republic, the Slovak Republic and Hungary joined the EU, their economies were also little competitive on the world economic scenario, the former socialist infrastructure was totally obsolete, therefore Central European former ex socialists' countries were in the economic periphery of the international



economic scenario. The economies of Central Europe were so devastated after the collapse of the political system of real socialism, that they were considered as economies that needed international aid and cooperation, to transform successfully their former state economies into market or capitalist economies (Rodríguez: 2006). However, Central European countries have been radically transformed largely due to their incorporation into the EU. To mention an example Poland today represents the sixth largest economy in the EU, and the V4 (as a block of countries) represent the fifth largest economy of the organization. In addition to the above, Central European economies are the most dynamic of the UE. It has been placed on the list of the top 15 largest economies of the world, representing the 12th largest economy within the international stage. On the other hand, its soft power has an important impact, particularly in the Americas, as well as in other parts or the western world. According, to the Global Soft Power report made by Brand Finance in 2020, Mexico was the second highest rated country in Latin America terms of soft power, after Brazil (Pineda, 2020). It means, that after the United States and Brazil, Mexico is the third superpower in terms of soft power in America (Pineda Perla, 2020).

Unfortunately, this economic new economic power and soft power has not been translated in Mexico playing a more important role in international affairs. Mexico plays a middle and sometimes very modest role in international affairs outside North America and Latin America and sometimes and sometimes with the countries of the Caribbean, where Cuba represents a priority for ideological and humanitarian aid reason (Velazquez, et al., 2024). Before that the left-wing political party known as Morena, took power in the presidential elections and other federal political elections in 2018, Mexico's foreign policy was very active in North America, Latin America and in Europe (particularly with the most important members of the UE). However, the left-wing political party that currently governs Mexico has not show very much interest in international relations and unfortunately, in deepening its cooperation relations with the UE and much less with the V4 (Figueras, 2025).

It is worth it is worth mentioning, that former president of Mexico, Andrés Lopez Obrador, who left power just a few months ago, did not pay any official visit to any EU's institution or to any European country, and much less to any country of Central Europe. Likewise, he did not even attend any G-20 or OCDE summit, as well as any meeting of the Organization for Economic Co-operation and Development (OECD). Furthermore, Its government maintained a very deep distance and confrontation with



Spain. From his archaic and populist point of view, Spain should apologize to Mexico due to crimes against humanity that occurred during the Spanish colonization against Mexican indigenous population. It is important to mention that most of the Mexican public opinion don't share this opinion. Fortunately, the actual president of Mexico Claudia Sheinbaum Pardo has shown much more interest in international relations than his predecessor. However, her political discourse in the context of Mexico's foreign policy continues to be archaic and populist, always alluding to the respect for sovereignty of Mexico. Unfortunately, she has not shown much interest in Mexico having or playing a leading role in international affairs, as well as to diversify Mexico's international relations and open new markets, where V4 markets could play an important role. Concerning, Spain she continues with the same opinion as former president Andrés Manuel López Obrador, concerning Spain's apologies towards México due to the reasons. Concerning current priorities of Mexico's foreign policy, the new president of Mexico is totally concentrate in negotiating with the United States tariff measures that Donald Trump imposes towards its main trading partners of the USMCA, regardless of whether these measures violate the regulatory bases of the USMCA, as well as the rules of international trade established by the World Trade Organization (WTO). Unfortunately, the president of the United States, has gone much further than his trade war against the United States partners from the USMCA, constantly threatening in annexing Canada and integrate this country, as the 51st state of the United States. Likewise, he has created serious political tensions with Mexico, changing the name of the Gulf of Mexico for Gulf of America. In this sense, as the theory of complex interdependence illustrate, that more than ever México and Canada look forward to diversify their international relations where the UE and the members of the V4 could play a very important role. As mentioned before, Mexico and Canada are extremely dependent on the U.S. market. It is worth mentioning that more than 85 percent of its foreign trade is directed to the market of this country (Ruiz: 2025)

6 RELATIONS BETWEEN MEXICO AND THE EU

For some decades the UE was Mexico's second most important economic partner. However, in recent years China took this place. In decades before, Mexico's diplomacy, political and soft-power presence in Europe was very active, particularly



with the most developed member states of this organization. However, as mentioned before with the arrival of power of the Left-wing political party know as Morena, Mexico's diplomacy, political and soft-power presence in Europe and much more in Central Europe has declined dramatically.

The UE and its 27 member states represent Mexico's third most important trading partner, while Mexico is the EU's fourteenth largest trading partner. Trade relations between the EU and Mexico are governed by the 1997 Global Agreement, and its successive separate trade decisions (hereinafter referred to as "the FTA"), which entered into force in 2000 for trade in goods and in 2001 for trade in services. By 2020, bilateral trade had more than tripled in the 20 years since the Global Agreement entered into force. The flow of goods and services between the two economies amounts to almost 60,000 million euros. In 2021, the EU remained the second largest net investor in Mexico with 6, 900 million euros (24.6% of total net FDI) only after the United States.

Mexico is a member as of the G-20, the OECD, and it is contributing and associated country of the European Bank for Reconstruction and Development (BERD). Likewise, it has a Free Trade Agreement (FTA) with the members of the European Free Trade Association (EFTA), which members are Iceland, Liechtenstein, Norway and Switzerland. This agreement was signed on November 27, 2000, and came into force on July 1, 2001. On the other hand, Mexico and the United Kingdom (UK), established the so called: Trade Continuity Agreement, which came into force on June 1, 2021. This agreement maintains preferential trade regime for both parties, as when the UK was a member of the UE. In a few words, it means a Free Trade Agreement (FTA) between the two parties. As mentioned before, for Mexico, the EU and its 27 members constitute one of its highest priorities in the context of its foreign policy. This priority could be explained and understood with the complex interdependence theory, because both parties look forward to diversifying their relations, particularly in the economic and political context. Furthermore, the participation of social connections, paradiplomacy, civil society, international corporations, non-governmental organizations are establishing closer relations between Mexico and the UE, what can be understood through The complex interdependence theory.

For Mexico relations with the UE and its 27 members are of extreme importance. In this sense, today one of the priorities of Mexico's is to strengthen its relations with



the EU and modernize the Economic Partnership, Political Coordination and Cooperation Agreement between the EU and Mexico, also known as: the Global Agreement. This agreement was signed in December 1997 and entered into force in July 2000. The Global Agreement regulates relations between Mexico and the UE. For the UE, Mexico represents a bridge between North America and Latin America and to certain extent, between industrialized and emerging countries. Furthermore, as mentioned before Mexico is a member of the USMCA, which means that this North American country represents the most accessible and economic gateway for North American markets (US, Mexico and Canada) which has 500.800.141 inhabitants. Finally, Mexico has a market of 130 million inhabitants which is which is very attractive for European companies and FDI. It is worth mentioning that since 2008 Mexico was considered by the UE as one of its ten top strategic partners. The ten top strategic partners of the UE are as follows: the United States, Canada, Mexico, Brazil, South Africa, Russia, China, Japan, India and South Korea.

Relations between the EU and Mexico have developed in a considerable number of areas since the entry into force of the Global Agreement. The most important pillars of the Global Agreement are political dialogue, free trade and cooperation. Other areas of cooperation are to work together to address common challenges such as international security, migration and the promotion of human rights. Mexico and the EU have a very old historical and cultural ties. For a long time, Mexico represented a country of European migration, mostly from Spain, due to the War between Spain and Morocco (1859-1860), the Spanish Civil War (1936-1939) and II World War. Other reasons for Spanish migration to Mexico was the weak Spanish economic conditions before this country entered the UE. Other European migrants found in Mexico a land of opportunities, during and after first and second world wars. These migrants or political refugees came from Germany, Lithuania, Estonia, Latvia, as well as, from other countries of Eastern Europe where the Jewish community was persecuted by Nazi Germany.

The gradual strengthening of bilateral relations between Mexico and the EU is based on the guidelines of the Global Agreement which led to the establishment of closer political, economic and cooperation ties. In terms of political cooperation, this agreement symbolized the beginning of a new era of cooperation between both parties. During this time, Mexico was the first country of the Americas with whom the UE established an association agreement of such magnitude. The Global Agreement



between Mexico and the UE established an important political collaboration in the framework of political dialogue which take into consideration the following areas: bilateral cooperation: multilateralism, arms control, disarmament, climate change and human rights. Even though the EU ceased to be Mexico's second largest trading partner, in 2021, the EU remained the second largest net investor in Mexico with 6,900 million euros (24.6% of total net FDI) only after the United States. By 2020, bilateral trade had more than tripled in the 20 years, since the entry into force of the Global Agreement. The flows of goods and services between the two parties' amount to almost 60,000 million euros (Delegación de la Union Europea en México, 2024).

In 2016, the EU and Mexico started negotiations to modernize the Global Agreement with the objective to update it to the new economic and political challenges of the XXI century. Both parties reached an agreement in 2018 and finalized negotiations in January 2025 (Saldaña, 2025). However, the new version of the Global Agreement has not been ratified by both parties. The new version of the Global Agreement includes new and important clauses which are as follows:

- eliminate virtually all tariffs on other agricultural products that were not liberalized in the current Global Agreement.
- simplify customs procedures.
- establish progressive standards for sustainable development.
- combat corruption in the public and private sectors.
- expand access to public procurement markets.
- provide a high level of protection of intellectual property rights.
- open up trade in services (e.g. financial services, transport, e-commerce and telecommunications).
- improve investment conditions.
- reinforces commitments in human rights, sustainability, multilateralism and international security.
- human rights and democracy.
- renewed commitment to the promotion and protection of fundamental rights.
- sustainability and fair trade: clause which included ensuring responsible and sustainable business practices.

- security and mobility cooperation: joint responses to challenges such: as migration and global security.

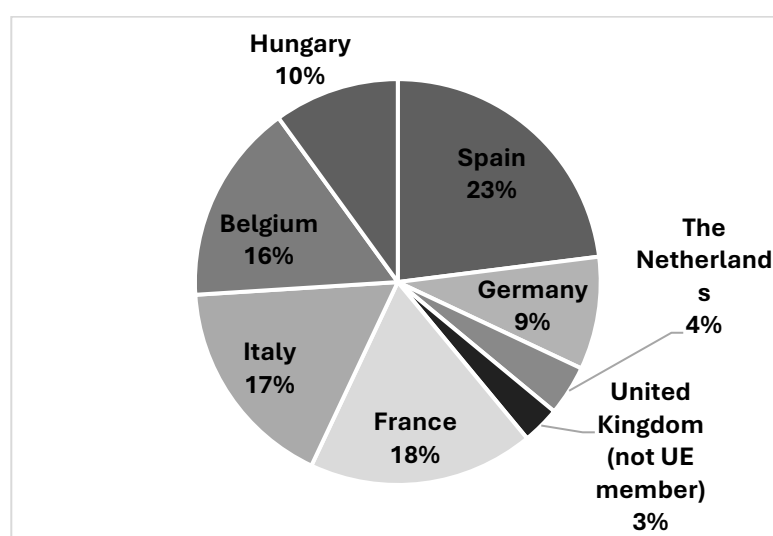
According to the European Commission (2020) “the new version of the Global Agreement, sets out the joint ambition of the EU and Mexico to promote and protect human rights, multilateralism and international peace and security, while facilitating strategic cooperation on key geopolitical issues, including to reduce risks in supply chains, ensure a sustainable supply of critical raw materials, and address climate change. It will also “substantially boost” trade between the Twenty-seven and the North American country, which reached 82,000 million euros in the exchange of goods in 2023 and 22,000 million euros in trade in services in 2022, making Mexico the EU's second largest trading partner in Latin America, after Brazil. The European Parliament also welcomed the modernization of the pact that could increase European exports to Mexico by 75%, and save €100 million in tariffs for European companies, give them access to Mexican public tenders. Brussels stressed that the European agri-food sector will be one of the most benefited by the agreement due to the elimination of tariffs and other non-tariff trade barriers. Once the treaty is fully implemented, Mexico will fully eliminate tariffs on European products. The European Commission highlighted an increase in European exports to the country of vehicles, and their parts is also expected – Mexican companies will receive more favorable treatment if they buy European components – machinery and pharmaceutical products, as well as business, financial, telecommunications and transport services thanks to a greater opening of Mexican public markets. In terms of energy, EU sources stressed that the text guarantees that European companies will receive the same treatment as those of other preferential partners of Mexico, such as the United States and Canada. The agreement also incorporates a new chapter on sustainable development and with a view to resolving possible disputes. Finally, the new Global Agreement replaces the old scheme to resolve any commercial disputes with a new Investment Court System (European Commission, 2025).

7 TRADE RELATIONS BETWEEN MEXICO AND THE UE



Despite that the UE has 27 members, Mexico concentrates most of its foreign trade with just 7 members of this organization and with the UK, which is not a member of this organization. These members of the UE are France, Italy, Belgium, Spain, Germany, the Netherlands and recently with one member of the V4: Hungary. The members of this organization absorb more than 93% of Mexico's exports to the EU (Secretaría de Relaciones Exteriores, 2025), as table 3 show:

Table 3. Mexico´s most important economic partners in the European Unión



Note: own elaboration with data from: Secretaría de Relaciones Exteriores de México, 2025.

There is an expectation that the new Global Agreement will allow Mexico to diversify its economic relations with other EU members states, such as with the V4 members.

7 BACKGROUND FOR THE MUTUALLY BENEFICIAL COOPERATION BETWEEN MEXICO AND V4

Despite Mexico's recent modest political and diplomatic presence in the UE and much less in Central Europe, Mexico currently represent the most important economic partner of Americas, after the United States, for the Czech Republic, the Slovak Republic, Hungary and recently for Poland (Gobierno de México: 2024). Despite of it, economic relations between both parties is still weak, especially if they are compared to Mexico's economic relations with the members of the USMCA and V4's trade relations with Germany and their most important UE´s economic partners. On the other

hand, when V4 obtained EU's membership, on 1 of May of 2024, they joined the Global Agreement.

It is worth mentioning, that the Global Agreement has played an essential role within the context of the revolutionary changes in the framework of the increase of bilateral trade between Mexico and each member of the V4. Central European countries (together as a block of countries) represent the fourth largest economy in the EU (Ovchinnikova, 2019). Like Mexico, their emerging economies are very attractive for FDI. Most of the FDI that arrives towards V4 economies comes from Germany and from others developed UE members. In recent decades, Central European countries have received a considerable amount of FDI, due to their EU membership, political stability, strategic geographic location, as well as, for their economic and development growth. Furthermore, V4 countries, as well, as other former ex socialist countries have extraordinarily increased their economic competitiveness on the economic international stage (Rodríguez, 2020). According to the report of the World Bank known as: *Doing Business Archive: Ease of Doing Business rankings 2023*, V4 members, and other countries of Eastern Europe which today are members of the UE, are ranked in a very favorable position as table 4 illustrates.

Table 4: *Economic competitiveness of V4 members and other Eastern European countries: Doing Business Archive: Ease of Doing Business rankings, 2023.*

RANK	ECONOMY
18	Estonia
19	Latvia
37	Slovenia
40	Poland
41	Czech Republic
45	Republic of Slovakia
52	Hungry

Note: own elaboration with data from the World Bank Group (2023).

On the other hand, the most important economies in Latin America have not made the same progress in terms of their **economic competitiveness**. Despite of this, some economies of Latin America, are not far behind in terms of their international competitiveness, compared to the economies of the V4, particularly Chile and Mexico, as Table 5 show:

Table 5: *World Economic Competitiveness Ranking of the most important Latin American economies, 2023.*

RANK	ECONOMY
59	Chile
60	Mexico
67	Colombia
124	Brazil
129	Argentina

Note: own elaboration with data from the World Bank Group (2023).

Despite the progress made by the economies of the V4 in terms of their economic competitiveness, this group of countries does not have a worldwide transnational corporation. In addition, individual V4 markets are relatively small. Poland alone has a 'relatively medium-sized' market of 38 million of population. In fact, the Polish market represents the largest market in Central Europe. Hungary and the Czech Republic have a relatively small markets of approximately 10 million of population, and the Republic of Slovakia has a very small market of just 6 million of population. However, V4 economies constitute today the most dynamic economic zone in Europe.

In the same way as Mexico, Central European economies need to attract more FDI to finance the creation and modernization of their infrastructure, as well as, to decrease their wage gap *vis-à-vis* the most developed economies of Europe and in the case of Mexico this North American country needs to decrease their wage gap *vis-à-vis* the members of the USMCA. In this sense, Mexico and V4 countries will reduce migration towards them to their developed neighbors. The phenomenon of migration from Mexico the United States and migration from Central European countries towards their neighboring countries, which are indeed economic powers does not occur because Mexico and V4 members are poor countries, but because of the great wage difference that exists between them and their neighboring countries.

Other problem they share Mexico and V4 members is the need to invest more in research and technological innovation, as some others emerging countries has done in recent decades, such as: South Korea which invest more than 4, 81 % of its GDP in research and technological innovation or Israel which invest 4, 3% of its GDP in research and technological innovation. In the case of Mexico, there is a serious government disinterest in investing more in science, technological development and innovation, regardless of the political orientation of the political party that governs the country. Hence, Mexico invests just 0.5% of its GDP in scientific research and technological innovation. Unfortunately, this modest investment has made Mexico highly dependent on high technology and *know-how* from its main trading partners of the USMCA, Europe and some others developed countries. According to the 2024 Global Innovation Index provided by the World Intellectual Property Organization (WIPO, 2024), V4 countries are, and others Eastern European countries are located in a much more favorable position in terms of technological development and innovation, compared to the most important economies in Latin America, as table 6 show.

Table 6: *Global Innovation Rank of V4 and others Eastern European countries members of the UE*

Global Innovation Rank of V4 and others Eastern European countries members of the UE	
RANK	Score:
52.3	Estonia
36.4	Latvia
40.2	Slovenia
37.0	Poland
44.0	Czech Republic
34.3	Republic of Slovakia
39.6	Hungry
33.4	Rumania
38.5	Bulgaria
40.1	Lithuania

Note: provide information with data from WIPO [Innovation Index 2024](#). Note: These scores are descendants and not incidents. For example: Switzerland's which is the best ranked country in the world in terms of scientific innovation its score is 67.5 and Angola which is the worst ranked country its scored is 10.2

In terms of the most important economies of Latin America, according to the Global Innovation Index provided by the WIPO, they are ranked as table 7 show:

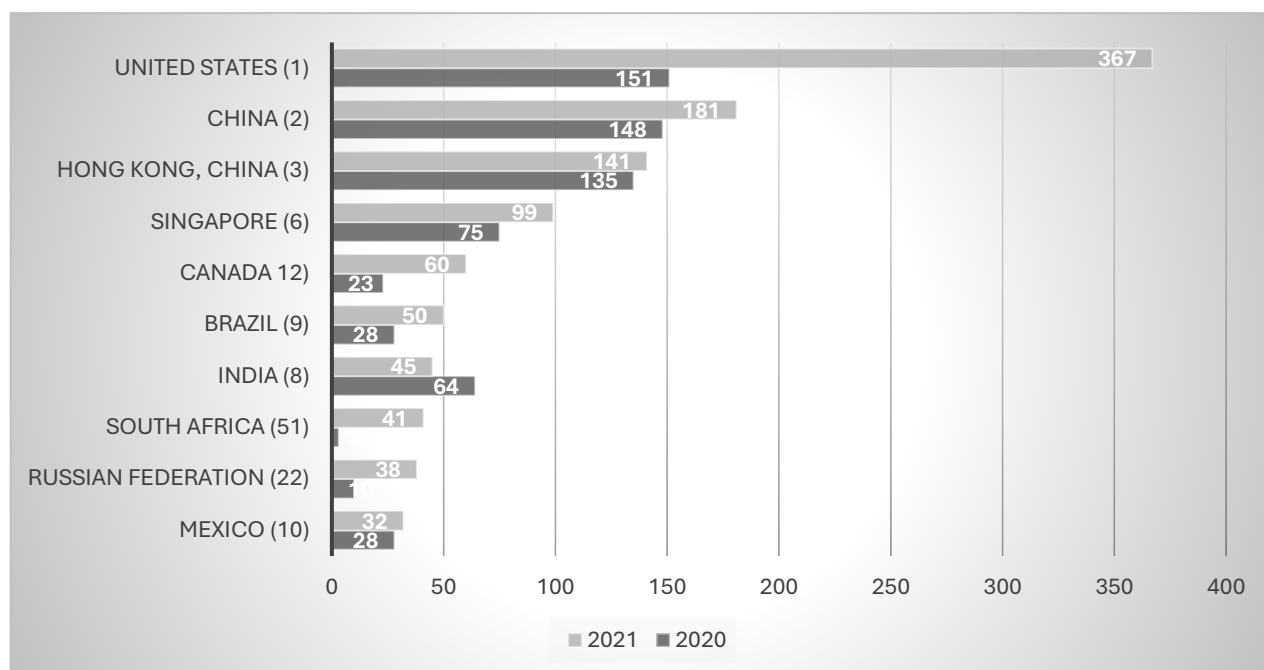
Table 7. *Global Innovation Rank of most important economies of Latin America*

RANK	Score
32.6	Chile
30.4	Mexico
29.2	Colombia
32.7	Brazil
26.4	Argentina

Note: provide information with data from WIPO Innovation Index 2024.

Among the problems that face Mexico to increase its economic competitiveness are public and private corruption, weak political institutions, weak quality of public education and the modernization of infrastructure in key economic sectors such us: seaports, airports, rail system, highways, and the modernization of its southern borders. Likewise, Mexico needs to increase its investment in public state universities, as well as scientific development, research, technological innovation and artificial intelligence. Another serious problem which faces Mexico to increase its international economic competitiveness is internal security. Despite the problems mentioned above, according to the 2022 report of the **UNCTAD: Conference on Trade and Development**, Mexico today is on the list of ten largest economies of the world which receives more FDI (Expansion, 2022), as graphic 8 illustrates:

Table 8. FDI inflows, top 10 host economies, 2020 and 2021 (Billions of dollars)



Note: own elaboration provides information data from: Expansión (2024).

This phenomenon could be explained because Mexico's membership in the USMCA and because of its strategic geographical location. Hence, it is the gateway to North American and Latin American markets. Therefore, a very considerable number of American, European, and in the last years, Chinese and south Korean enterprises, have established their manufacturing companies in the northern states of Mexico that borders with the United States. In this context, Mexico has become a very attractive country for the nearshoring. It is worth mentioning that this nearshoring could be very attractive for international companies on the V4. In fact, some companies from Poland, the Czech Republic, and Hungary are using this nearshoring to export their products for the markets of the USMCA.

8 BILATERAL RELATIONS BETWEEN MEXICO AND THE MEMBERS OF THE V4 POLAND

Poland is the most important country in Central Europe due to its geographical and geopolitical location, as well as because of its demographic weight with 38 inhabitants, which means that it is the largest country in Central Europe. In a similar

way to Mexico, it represents, the gateway to the EU and Eastern European markets, which are integrated in the European Common Market (ECM), as well as others Eastern European countries which are not members of the organization. Poland also plays a deep leadership role within the V4, as it is reflected by its active participation in the context of the Russia-Ukraine war.

Poland is currently the 26th largest economy in the world and the sixth in the EU. In addition to the above, this country has established very positive results within the context of its structural reforms, particularly in the education field. According, to the OCDE 2024 Pissa education report, the education system of Poland is ranked as the 10th best educational systems in the world. On the other hand, after joining the EU Poland is experiencing, as the former polish ambassador in Mexico, Beata Wojna mentions (2017) “is second golden age” and it is the fastest growing and most stable economy in the EU. This Central European country that has received from the UE the largest amount of UE’s cooperation funds, which has remarkably contributed towards its economic growth, development and the creation and modernization of its obsolete ex socialist infrastructure in the last decades. Likewise, the European cooperation funds have contributed to the increase of Poland’s international economic competitiveness. On the other hand, after being a peripheral ex-socialist country and years of economic growth, Poland has entered to the privileged group of high-income countries with a GDP per capita of 24 thousand dollars (Wojna: 2017). Poland's main trading partners are the EU’s members states, which absorb more than 80 percent of its foreign trade and 90 % of FDI which arrives to this Central European country comes from Germany and others developed EU’s members. As all V4 members, Poland and Mexio base their relations on the Global Agreement, as well as, on bilateral cooperation agreements. Poland is Mexico's 19th trading partner worldwide y and the thirteenth among the EU’s 27 members states (Serwis Rzeczypospolitej Polskiej, 2025). In 2023, Mexico became Poland's first trading partner in Latin America and second in the Americas, just after the United States. The increase in bilateral trade between Mexico and Poland is also reflected in the in Polish tourism towards Mexico, which is growing more. On the other hand, bilateral trade multiplied by more than 10 times from 2004 to 2024, from 109 million dollars to 1,444. million dollars. It is important to mention that in 2023 bilateral trade grew more than 50 percent. Since Poland joined the EU trade relations between the two parties have increased by 247%. However, this trade in absolute figures is not very relevant. Furthermore, trade relations between Mexico and



Poland are far below from potential of both parties' economies and their importance that have today on the global economic stage (Wojna, 2018 and Negrin, 2017).

In April 22-25, 2017, ex former prime minister of Poland, Andrzej Dudas paid an official visit to Mexico. In the context of this visit, he stated that Poland had chosen Mexico as one of its fifth priority markets outside Europe and identifies this North American country, as one of the most attractive economies in the world to invest (Znojek, 2022). However, until today this goal has not yet become a reality. In the same year, the Mexico-Poland Business Committee was inaugurated. In November 2016, the report entitled: "Recommendations for strengthening relations between Poland and Mexico" was published. Government institutions, the private sector, academics and researchers, and parts of civil society participated in the creation of the report. This report has been of utmost importance, as it has served as a guide for the development of relations between Poland and Mexico (Centro de Estudios Internacionales Gilberto Bosques e Instituto Matías Romero, 2016).

There are sectors and clusters in both countries whose growth should be promoted by both parties, particularly the automotive sector. This sector is one of the fastest growing in both countries and is one of the most complementary between both economies. Poland exports to Mexico alcoholic beverages, mechanical and electrical devices for recording and receiving sound, automotive parts, vehicles, aircrafts, ships and related devices, products of non-precious metals, products of industrial chemical, plastics and vegetable products. Mexico exports to Poland similar products and goods, such as mechanical and electrical devices for recording and receiving sound, vehicles, non-precious metal products. Today more than 53 companies with Polish capital operate in Mexico and in Poland there are several Mexican companies, such us: CEMEX, Katcon, Nemak, Mexichen and Saltillo Industrial Group.

In March 2017, Poland-Mexico friendship groups were established in both chambers of the Polish Parliament. In terms of scientific cooperation, there is a bilateral and old agreement which is crucial to modernizing to increase scientific cooperation between both parties. Like other members of the V4, paradiplomacy has joined cooperative relations between both parties, therefore, there are a considerable number of public and private universities, which have established bilateral cooperation agreements whose purpose is the mobility between students, academics and researchers. It is worth mentioning that probably the weakest area in the context of cooperative relations between Mexico and Poland is the academic and scientific



cooperation. Despite the fact, that Poland is the sixth largest economy of the UE and Mexico the twelfth largest economy of the world (Martinez, 2023).

Hungary

Relations between Mexico and Hungary are based on the Global Agreement, as well on bilateral cooperation agreements. Mexico is Hungary's first trade partner in Latin America, and second in America, after the United States (Embajada de Hungría en Mexico, 2024). Among the 27 members of the EU, Hungary is Mexico's eighth largest trading partner. Trade between Hungary and Mexico exceeds 55.8 percent of the value of Budapest's trade with other Latin American trading partners. In 2022, the volume of bilateral trade reached a historic level: 1.430 billion US dollars. Hungarian imports from Mexico were 309.9 million US dollars, while Mexican exports to Hungary reached 1.12 billion US dollars (El Economista, 2019). Hungary exports to Mexico: machines, transport equipment, power-generating, road vehicles, and electrical appliances. Mexico exports to Hungary machinery and transport equipment, office machines, data processing equipment, industrial equipment for general use, electrical machines, devices and instruments, alcoholic beverages, electrical accessories, telephone devices, as well as devices for receiving, converting and transmitting sound. On December 6, 2013, the Mexico-Hungary Chamber of Commerce was established in Budapest.

9 SCIENTIFIC COOPERATION:

Perhaps the most successful bilateral cooperation areas between both parties take place in the scientific field due to scientific and academic cooperation agreements which have been established between two parties, that promote bilateral mobility of students, academics and researchers. In 2015 Mexico began to be a part of the Hungarian government scholarship program known as: *Stipendium Hungaricum*. It is important to mention, like in other countries of Central Europe, paradiplomacy is playing an important role, as there are a considerable number of bilateral agreements that have been established between public and private universities, which promotes the mobility between students, academics and researchers from both sides.

The Czech Republic Mexico and the Czech Republic base their relations in the context of the Global Agreement, as well as on bilateral cooperation. The Czech



Republic is Mexico's tenth largest trading partner among the 27 members states of the UE. The Mexican market absorbs 50% of Czech exports towards Latin America (El Economista, 2019). In 2023, bilateral trade between the two nations amounted to 1.3 US billion dollars Mexico's main exports to the Czech Republic include: machine parts and accessories, electrical equipment, copper pipes, motor vehicle parts and accessories, food-based products, and alcohol. The Czech Republic's main exports to Mexico include telephones and mobile phones, machinery, electrical wires and cables, automobiles and other vehicles, iron, steel, and glass. Some Mexican multinational companies such as Cemex, Bimbo, and Nemak, among others., operate in the Czech Republic. In Mexico, dozens of companies with Czech capital participation are registered.

10 SCIENTIFIC COOPERATION:

Each year the Czech Republic and Mexico exchange students, academics and researchers, in the context of scientific cooperation agreements, as well as through agreements which has been established by public and private universities. Like the rest of V4 countries, paradiplomacy is also playing an important role as public and private universities have established cooperation agreements which promotes the mobility between students, academics and researchers from both sides.

11 THE SLOVAK REPUBLIC

Probably the weakest relations that Mexico has with V4 members are with the Slovak Republic. Mexico established bilateral relations with The Slovak Republic immediately after the breakup of Czechoslovakia on January 1, 1993. Initially, Mexico maintained its Embassy in the Czech Republic as concurrent with the Slovak Republic. However, since 1996, Mexico's diplomatic mission in Austria has been concurrent with the Slovak Republic. During this time, the Slovak Republic established an Embassy in Mexico City. Unfortunately, Mexico does not have an Embassy in Bratislava. However, it has an Honorary Consulate in Bratislava. Like the rest of the V4 members, relations between Mexico and the Slovak Republic are based on the Global Agreement and bilateral cooperation agreements. Among the products exported by the Slovak Republic to Mexico stand out: motors and compressors, auto parts, tractors, electrical



appliances and components, tools and tires. Mexico exports to the Slovak Republic: auto parts, machinery, electrical appliances and components, computer product, copper and derivative products. The Slovak Republic is Mexico's eighteenth largest trading partner in the EU and Mexico is the Slovak Republic's main trading partner in Latin America and the second in the America, after the United States (El Economista: 2017). In 2023, trade between Slovakia and Mexico amounted 540.8 million dollars (Secretaría de Relaciones Exteriores. (2022)). Like the rest of V4, there are scientific cooperation agreements that have been established at the governmental level, as well as by private universities, which promotes the mobility between students, academics and researchers from both sides.

12 CONCLUSIONS

Although Mexico is the main economic partner in Latin America and second in the Americas for the members of the V4, in real terms economic relations between both parties are of little relevance, particularly if this foreign trade is compared with the most important economic partners of Mexico from the USMCA and Central European most important trading partners from the UE. Despite that the UE has 27 members; Mexico concentrates its foreign trade with just 7 members of this organization and with the United Kingdom. The most important trading partners of Mexico from the old continent are France, Italy, Belgium, Spain, Germany, the Netherlands and recently with one member of the V4: Hungary. The European countries absorb more than 93% of Mexico's exports to the EU and the UK. For Mexico, the EU and its 27 members constitute one of its highest foreign policy priorities. This priority responds to the objective of diversifying Mexico's foreign relations, which are highly concentrated with the United States that concentrated more than 85% of this North American country foreign trade. The UE represents one the of the most important priorities for Mexico's foreign policy. Since the Global Agreement was established in 2000, economic relations between Mexico and the EU have tripled and radical changed. The UE was for decades Mexico's second most important trading partner. However, in recent years China took this place. Hence today the UE is Mexico's third most important trading partner, while Mexico is the EU's fourteenth largest trading partner. The Global Agreement radically transformed Mexico-UE relations. From 1999 to 2021, trade relations between Mexico and the UE amounted to €177.3 billion. However, these



flows decreased by 17.6%, after 2021. The Global Agreement established closer cooperation between Mexico and the 27 members of the UE and since 2008 Mexico was considered as one of the ten top strategic partners of the EU. In 2016 Mexico and the EU began negotiations to modernize the Global Agreement, these negotiations ended in 2025. However, the new version of the Global Agreement has not been ratified by both parties and therefore, it has not entered force. It is expected that the new version of the Global Agreement will radically transform economic and political relations, as well as scientific cooperation between Mexico and the European Unión 27. and that Europe will regain its position as Mexico's second most important trading partner. Therefore, it is expected that with the new and modernize Global Agreement, the UE will once again take its place as Mexico's second most important trading partner. Undoubtedly, the new version of the agreement expands the possibilities for Mexico and the members of the V4 to deepen their economic relations, as well as scientific cooperation on the multilateral and bilateral way. On the other hand, it will also help both parties to diversify their international relations, beyond North America and Europe. Concerning relations among Mexico and the members of the V4, when Central European countries joined the EU in 2004, they adopted the Global Agreement and relations between both parties were radically transformed, particularly in economic terms. In this sense, as mentioned in this article, Mexico is today, after the United States, the second most economic partner for Poland, Hungary, the Czech Republic and the Slovak Republic. However, much remains to be done for these relations to reach their full potential. Among the obstacles facing cooperation relations between Mexico and V4 are what hypothesis of this article trys to illustrate. In this context, Mexico and the V4 are highly dependent on their neighbors who are economic, political and technological superpowers. Understandably, these countries represent the highest foreign policy priority for both parties. Another great obstacle that exists is the lack of knowledge in Mexico's and Central European political and economic leaders, in the public opinion and even in the scientific community, regarding the enormous potential that exists *vis-á-vis* the great benefits that both parties can obtain, if they increase their economic, political and scientific relations.

As is well known, international relations have been radically transformed in the present century. In this sense, both Mexico and the Central European countries are no longer peripheral countries on the international scenario. On the contrary, today they belong to the most important emerging economies in the world, and their geographical



location provides them with unique economic and geopolitical opportunities in the world. Hence, Mexico and V4 members can further expand their political and economic relations and promote academic, scientific exchange in greater depth. Undoubtedly, both parties have all the potential to achieve these objectives. However, to achieve this goal, it is necessary to increase the interest to enlarge political, academic, businessman and public opinion interest in Mexico and in the Central European countries, concerning the benefits that could have both parties if they increased their cooperative relations.

As former ambassador of Poland mention (2017) “in times of crisis, economic wars between trade blocks, economic protectionism and threats towards the liberalization of international trade, particularly from the president of the United States, Donald Trump, it is necessary to look beyond the traditional and nearest markets and look forward for new markets”. Finally, as the theory of complex interdependence illustrate, Mexico, the UE and the V4 members should seek a new approach and develop new strategies, which will would allow them to diversify their international relations and be able to make a common front against the threats and challenges that currently exist towards free international trade and the multipolar order.

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