



NATO PARLIAMENTARY ASSEMBLY

# SUMMARY

OF THE MEETINGS OF THE

## POLITICAL COMMITTEE (PC)

Thursday 19 and Friday 20 November 2020

*By videoconference*

212 PC 20 E | Original: English | December 2020

## ATTENDANCE LIST

### NATO PA BUREAU MEMBERS

President	Gerald E. CONNOLLY (United States)
Vice-President	Mimi KODHELI (Albania)
Vice-President	Karen MCCRIMMON (Canada)
Vice-President	Joëlle GARRIAUD-MAYLAM (France)
Vice-President	Marietta GIANNAKOU (Greece)
Former Vice-President	Karl A. LAMERS (Germany)
Former Vice-President	Osman Askin BAK (Turkey)
Former Vice-President	Lord CAMPBELL OF PITTENWEEM (United Kingdom)
Former Vice-President	Michael R. TURNER (United States)
Secretary General	Ruxandra POPA

### MEMBER DELEGATIONS

Albania	Xhemal QEFALIA
Belgium	Peter BUYSROGGE Philippe Didier G. COURARD Wouter DE VRIENDT Rodrigue DEMEUSE Theo FRANCKEN Annick PONTHER Orry VAN DE WAUWER
Bulgaria	Plamen MANUSHEV Simeon SIMEONOV
Canada	Peter BOEHM Pierre-Hugues BOISVENU Cheryl GALLANT Marilou MCPHEDRAN
Croatia	Ante BACIC Miroslav TUDJMAN
Czech Republic	Jan FARSKY Josef HAJEK Helena LANGSADLOVA
Denmark	Mads FUGLEDE
Estonia	Leo KUNNAS Kerstin-Oudekki LOONE
France	Marianne DUBOIS Françoise DUMAS Sonia KRIMI Gilbert ROGER
Germany	Dagmar FREITAG Alexander S. NEU Boris PISTORIUS Ulla SCHMIDT
Greece	Anastasios DIMOSCHAKIS Marios KATSIS Theodora TZAKRI Manousos Konstantinos VOLOUDAKIS
Hungary	Mihaly BALLA Zsolt NEMETH
Iceland	Njall Trausti FRIDBERTSSON Willum Thor THORSSON
Italy	Massimo CANDURA

	Paolo FORMENTINI
	Luca FRUSONE
	Luigi IOVINO
	Alessandra MAIORINO
	Riccardo NENCINI
	Fabrizio ORTIS
Latvia	Ojars Eriks KALNINS
	Aleksandrs KIRSTEINS
Luxembourg	Gilles BAUM
	Jean-Marie HALSDORF
	Lydia MUTSCH
Netherlands	Toine BEUKERING
	Sjoerd SJOERDSMA
Norway	Marianne MARTHINSEN
	Liv Signe NAVARSETE
Poland	Joanna KLUZIK-ROSTKOWSKA
	Czeslaw MROCZEK
	Rafal SLUSARZ
Portugal	José Luis CARNEIRO
	Ana MIGUEL SANTOS
	Marcos PERESTRELLO DE VASCONCELLOS
Romania	Ben-Oni ARDELEAN
Slovakia	Jan SZOLLOS
	Tomas VALASEK
Slovenia	Branko GRIMS
Spain	Javier ANTON
	Ruth GONI
	César MOGO
	Luis RODRIGUEZ-COMENDADOR
Turkey	Muhammet Naci CINISLI
	Ahmet Berat CONKAR
	Ilhan KESICI
	Ahmet YILDIZ
United Kingdom	Lord ANDERSON
	Jeffrey DONALDSON
	Lord HAMILTON OF EPSOM
	Lord JOPLING
	Heather WHEELER
United States	Brendan Francis BOYLE
	Brett GUTHRIE
	Rick LARSEN
	Gregory Weldon MEEKS
	Filemon VELA

#### **ASSOCIATE DELEGATIONS**

Armenia	Andranik KOCHARYAN
Austria	Reinhold LOPATKA
	Andreas MINNICH
Azerbaijan	Kamran BAYRAMOV
	Siyavush NOVRUZOV
Bosnia and Herzegovina	Nikola LOVRINOVIC
Serbia	Dragan SORMAZ
Sweden	Karin ENSTRÖM
	Kenneth G. FORSLUND
	Laila NARAGHI
Switzerland	Werner SALZMANN

Ukraine  
 Solomiia BOBROVSKA  
 Liudmyla BUIMISTER  
 Yehor CHERNIEV

### **EUROPEAN PARLIAMENT**

European Parliament  
 Kris PEETERS  
 Mounir SATOURI

### **REGIONAL PARTNER AND MEDITERRANEAN**

Algeria  
 Youcef MESSAR  
 Israel  
 Andrey KOZHINOV

### **PARLIAMENTARY OBSERVERS**

Australia  
 Andrew WALLACE  
 Kazakhstan  
 Nurzhan NURSIPATOV

### **SPEAKER**

Nikos DENDIAS  
 Minister of Foreign Affairs of the Hellenic Republic

### **INTERNATIONAL SECRETARIAT**

Andrius AVIZIUS  
 Director, Political Committee  
 Nathan Robinson GRISON  
 Director, Committee on the Civil Dimension of Security  
 Sarah-Claude FILION-  
 COORDINATOR, Committee on the Civil Dimension of Security  
 PROVENCHER  
 and Science and Technology Committee  
 Jailee RYCHEN  
 Coordinator, Defence and Security Committee  
 Alissa PAVIA  
 Research Assistant  
 Sofiia SHEVCHUK  
 Research Assistant

**Thursday 19 November 2020**

## **Joint Speaker: Committee on the Civil Dimension of Security and Political Committee**

### **I. Opening remarks by Lord CAMPBELL OF PITTENWEEM (United Kingdom), Chairperson of the Political Committee**

1. In his opening remarks, Chairperson **Lord Campbell of Pittenweem** (UK) thanked the Greek delegation for its outstanding job in preparing for the 2020 Annual Session. Lord Campbell noted that this meeting is co-chaired by Senator **Joëlle Garriaud-Maylam** (FR), Chairperson of the Committee on the Civil Dimension of Security.

2. **Marietta Giannakou** (GR) welcomed the meeting's guest speaker, Nikos Dendias, Minister of Foreign Affairs of the Hellenic Republic. Ms Giannakou called for unity and dialogue among Allies when addressing common concerns and threats, including the ones unravelling in the Eastern Mediterranean.

3. Lord Campbell introduced Mr Dendias and invited him to share the Greek perspective on how NATO can adapt to today's changing strategic environment.

### **II. Presentation by Nikos DENDIAS, Minister of Foreign Affairs of the Hellenic Republic, on *The Greek Perspective on the Alliance's Adaptation to the Changing Strategic Environment*, followed by a discussion**

4. Nikos Dendias began by thanking the President and Member States of the NATO PA for their important work and reiterated the importance of the Assembly as the link between the Alliance and the citizens of Member States.

5. Mr Dendias remarked that NATO's role in countering evolving threats, specifically on its Eastern and Southern flanks, is of paramount importance. The Alliance, he continued, is not only a military organisation, but one based on shared values, enshrined in the UN Charter, in human rights instruments and in international law. Mr Dendias also explained that Greece has welcomed the NATO 2030 Reflection Process and stressed that the Alliance must strike a balance between responding to global challenges, while also avoiding becoming overstretched.

6. Mr Dendias reminded the audience of the importance of sustained defence spending. Given the persistent challenges posed by state and non-state actors, NATO must maintain its technological edge. For that, Member States must act on the commitment to invest 2% of their GDP in defence. Despite tight budgetary constraints, Greece maintains and even surpasses the 2% threshold. Greece is also working towards meeting the target of spending at least 20% of defence budget on military equipment and research and development. However, the Foreign Minister warned that technological innovations may also lead to new threats in the international security environment. In the context of these threats, Mr Dendias called for concerted responses in the fields of arms control, disarmament, and non-proliferation.

7. Mr Dendias proceeded by expressing his concern over the demise of the Intermediate-Range Nuclear Forces (INF) Treaty. The Greek Foreign Minister expressed support for a dual track approach (collective defence and dialogue) with countries such as Russia, including continued dialogue on arms control. He also noted that China's growth as a military power has implications for NATO and called on the international community to redouble efforts to include China in international arms control efforts.

8. Mr Dendias stressed that the Alliance must strive to continuously adapt its defence and deterrence postures. In particular, Mr. Dendias noted that the adaptations must take into account challenges on NATO's Southern flank, as well as new sources of instability. The migration flow, he

noted, is one of them. The Greek Foreign Minister highlighted the importance of NATO's operation in the Aegean Sea. Mr Dendias noted that an increase in Allied contributions to this operation would send a long overdue signal of solidarity to Greece.

9. The Greek Foreign Minister reiterated the importance of investing in multilateralism and multilateral institutions. In particular, the Alliance should focus on building a strong relationship with the European Union (EU) because of shared security threats. Together, NATO and the EU can mobilise a broad range of tools to increase security for their citizens. He praised the joint NATO and EU declarations of 2016 and 2018, along with the 74 common action areas. However, Mr. Dendias stressed the need to further develop practical means of cooperation on issues such as conflicts in Libya and Syria, and the ensuing migration flows. NATO's engagement with Egypt and Israel provides excellent examples. Moreover, the Greek Foreign Minister called for greater NATO collaboration with important partners beyond the immediate neighbourhood, such as India and the UAE.

10. Mr Dendias said that Greece pursues responsible policies that promote peace, security, and development. More specifically, he noted that Greece has signed two delimitation agreements, and agreed to defer to the International Court of Justice regarding delimitation matters with Albania. The Greek Foreign Minister proceeded by urging NATO not to tolerate practices undertaken by some NATO Allies that undermine the integrity and unity of the Alliance. He explained that NATO witnesses time and time again the violation of international law by certain member states that continue pursuing unilateral actions against other NATO allies. In order to maintain transatlantic stability and security, NATO must address these situations in the spirit of its core values. Mr Dendias concluded by reiterating Greece's commitment to the values and principles that both the EU and the transatlantic Alliance stand for, and that his country will continue to keep its national forces, capabilities and structures at NATO's disposal in order to help the Alliance maintain its objectives in the years ahead.

### **III. Discussion chaired by Joëlle GARRIAUD-MAYLAM (France), Chairperson of the Committee on the Civil Dimension of Security**

11. Chairperson Garriaud-Maylam thanked Mr Dendias for his remarks and asked him to detail the measures taken by Greece in response to the pandemic. At the onset of the crisis, based on epidemiological data, Greece developed a coherent set of rules restricting access to its territory for citizens of each country, Mr Dendias said. Its implementation helped slow the spread of COVID-19 in the country. The next challenge, however, will be the distribution of vaccines. The EU must play a central role in ensuring that all citizens of member countries have access to the vaccine.

12. The Chairperson also enquired about Greece's relationship with China, more specifically about Chinese investments in strategic sectors and infrastructure, such as in the Piraeus port. The Minister said that when Greece had privatized part of the port, and later on the remainder of it, only Chinese investors had shown an interest in acquiring it. As a result, Greece had no choice but to sell the infrastructure to China. Ms Garriaud-Maylam subsequently invited Mr Dendias to present Greece's position on Taiwan's request to integrate the WHO as an observer state. The Minister explained that Greece recognises the People's Republic of China and therefore has no diplomatic relations with Taiwan.

13. The Chairperson asked the Minister to share his views on illegal migration and Greece's response to this phenomenon. Mr Dendias stated that irregular migration is a major issue for Europe, and for Greece in particular. Collective efforts are crucial in this area, as the migrants that arrive in Greece generally do not wish to stay in the country, but rather are trying to reach Western Europe. The protection of refugees, Mr Dendias stressed, is a core principle of the EU that must be upheld. At the same time, the current asylum process is outdated and must be made more efficient. The Minister praised NATO's role in monitoring irregular migration in the Aegean Sea but called on the Alliance to increase its cooperation with the EU in this area. Finally, he pointed out

that the issue of irregular migration can only be solved in the long term by addressing the difficulties faced by countries of origin.

14. **Ahmet Yildiz** (TR) expressed his hope that Greece and Turkey will find a way to move forward through the resumption of exploratory talks. He noted, however, that, during the opening meeting of this Annual session, the Greek Minister for the Environment and Energy suggested that these exploratory talks should focus on the delimitation of the continental shelf and the exclusive economic zone. Mr Yildiz expressed the Turkish position that the scope of such talks should be broader than this and that other issues relating to the Aegean and Mediterranean Seas should be discussed as well, such as the delimitation of territorial waters and the status of certain contested islands. **Ahmet Berat Conkar** (TR) added that the Greek Cypriots had previously carried out drilling and seismic activities in the Mediterranean, while Turkey had long attempted to find a negotiated solution to avoid escalation in the region. He also emphasized the importance of not using the term 'radical Islam' when referring to 'violent extremism', to not associate a specific religion with such a negative phenomenon.

15. Concerning hydrocarbon exploration in the Eastern Mediterranean, Mr Dendias expressed his hope that talks can be resumed after they were halted in 2016. Greece, however, cannot resume negotiations with Turkey unless the latter ceases all research on the Greek continental shelf in the southern Mediterranean, he insisted. In his view, if Greece and Turkey cannot reach a bilateral agreement, they should defer the matter to the International Court of Justice. Cyprus, he said, had only conducted such activities in accordance with international law, unlike Turkey. On the distinction between radical Islam and violent extremism, the Minister defended the use of the term 'radical Islam' when referring to radicalised factions and individuals that claim to base their actions on their Islamic faith.

16. **Françoise Dumas** (FR) expressed her concerns over the situation on NATO's southern flank, particularly with regard to the spread of radical Islam, and asked Mr Dendias whether additional cooperation mechanisms between the EU and NATO could contribute to strengthening security in the region. She also asked the Minister to share his perspective on the recent developments in the Western Balkans, particularly in Kosovo and Bosnia-Herzegovina. Lastly, Ms Dumas enquired about the Minister's opinion on China's Belt and Road Initiative and the ensuing economic impact on the region. Mr Dendias responded that increased cooperation between the EU and NATO is paramount to address the issues stemming from the conflicts and crises in the Middle East, particularly in Syria, Libya, and Lebanon. On the Western Balkans, Greece is of the opinion that all countries of the Western Balkans should join the EU, he stated. The EU must not let the region become a black hole in its neighbourhood. Finally, Mr Dendias emphasised the importance of integrating China, as a major producer and market, into the global system. This will only be possible, he pointed out, if Western companies are given the same opportunities in China that Chinese companies enjoy in the West.

17. Lord Campbell (UK) invited Mr Dendias to give his opinion on the recent developments in the Middle East and the Gulf, and the evolving relationship between Israel and some Arab nations. The Minister underlined the important role played by Gulf countries in promoting peace and prosperity in the Mediterranean. The lines that once divided Israel from the Arab world no longer exist, he said. They have been replaced by an opposition between those who believe in peace, prosperity, and human rights, and those who do not.

18. **Lord Jopling** (UK) asked the Minister to provide information on Greece's effort to restore the strength of its economy since the financial crisis. Mr Dendias explained that the decade-long crisis that rocked Greece's economy had resulted from two main factors: firstly, Greece's budget had not been properly balanced; secondly, the measures imposed on Greece in exchange for financial support had been too drastic. This resulted in the country's GDP decreasing by about 30%, and the unemployment rate of Greeks under 30 reaching approximately 50%. The Minister pointed out, however, that after a decade of suffering, the country's economy was now stronger and more efficient.

19. Ms Garriaud-Maylam thanked the Foreign Minister for his remarks and answers and closed the meeting.

## **Political Committee: Meeting 1**

### **IV. Opening remarks by Lord CAMPBELL OF PITTENWEEM (United Kingdom), Chairperson**

20. Lord Campbell of Pittenweem (UK) opened the meeting of the Political Committee. He provided practical information on the conduct of the meeting and explained the agenda. He also referred to the amendments for the Draft Resolution and explained the voting procedure.

### **V. Adoption of the draft Agenda [184 PC 20 E]**

21. **The draft Agenda [184 PC 20 E] was adopted.**

### **VI. Adoption of the Summary of Previous Meetings of the Political Committee:**

- [Meeting held in London, United Kingdom](#), on 12 and 13 October 2019 [207 PC 19 E]
- [Meeting held online](#) on 15 July 2020 [127 PC 20 E]
- [Meeting held online](#) on 31 August 2020 [146 PC 20 E]

22. **The summaries [207 PC 19 E], [127 PC 20 E], and [146 PC 20 E] were adopted.**

### **VII. Consideration of the Comments of the Secretary General of NATO, Chairman of the North Atlantic Council, on the Policy Recommendations adopted in 2019 by the NATO Parliamentary Assembly [056 SESP 20 E]**

23. Lord Campbell reminded members the NATO's Secretary General provided comments on the policy recommendations adopted by the Assembly in 2019.

### **VIII. Consideration of the Revised Draft Report of the Sub-Committee on NATO Partnerships [The NATO-EU Partnership in a Changing Global Context](#) [037 PCNP 20 E rev.1] presented by Sonia KRIMI (France), Rapporteur**

24. In her introductory remarks, **Sonia Krimi** (FR) informed members about the changes that were made in the draft report since the Committee meeting on 31 August. In particular, these included updates on the defence spending of the European Allies, as well as on third states' access to EU defence projects. She also emphasised that NATO and the EU are natural partners that share the same values, 21 members and face the same strategic challenges and threats. Ms Krimi then stressed that today's COVID-19 crisis showed a true value of EU-NATO complementarity and coordination, especially in tackling disinformation and hybrid threats. Despite the fact that cooperation between NATO and the EU has indeed deepened considerably since 2016, this synergy is still handicapped by institutional flaws and sometimes by mutual suspicion. She raised concerns about the informal nature NATO-EU meetings that poses challenges to the sharing of classified information.

25. Ms Krimi mentioned that the European efforts in the field of defence and security should be welcomed as they also augment NATO's capabilities. She stressed that defence spending by European Allies and also by Canada has been increasing since 2015, and should increase further by 4.3% in 2020. She highlighted the importance of a recent agreement reached among EU member states that paves the way for third-state participation in Permanent Structured Cooperation (PESCO) projects, allowing the access for likeminded states to the EU defence capability development projects.



26. The Rapporteur concluded her presentation with three proposals. She stressed out the importance of formalisation of EU-NATO relations, which would facilitate the exchange of information and re-activation of the Berlin Plus arrangements. Additionally, she suggested creating a platform for NATO and the EU to better understand the consequences of China's rising power on the international scene and better assess the opportunities and challenges resulting from it. Finally, she suggested fostering closer cooperation on technological challenges, such as artificial intelligence, potentially following the model of the European Centre of Excellence for Countering Hybrid Threats in Finland.

27. During the ensuing debate, a representative of European Parliament (EP) stressed the importance of deepening cooperation between the EP and the NATO PA and upgrading the status of the EP delegation within the Assembly. Ms Krimi emphasised that the EP is an important partner for the NATO PA parliamentarians but suggested that this question has to be discussed by the leadership of the NATO PA.

28. Another key area of focus was on the EU's ability to become an independent security actor, given that, for example, Germany and France have somewhat different perceptions on this matter. Ms Krimi replied that the EU is trying to evolve in order to respond to its strategic goals, and that France's and Germany's positions are not incompatible. Additionally, a Turkish representative expressed concerns about the emerging EU's defence and security architecture, especially due to existing obstacles to include non-EU members which might complicate NATO's collective defence arrangements. Besides, the Turkish representative raised questions about the legality of Cyprus accession to the EU. A Greek representative said that Cyprus accession did not violate any international law and noted that Turkey should also be welcomed as a member of the EU once membership criteria are met.

29. Other questions focused on the EU strategic autonomy debates in the context of the new administration in the United States. In response, Ms Krimi said that the EU defence development is a response to calls for fairer burden sharing. Lastly, a Slovak delegate highlighted the importance of deepening the EU-NATO cooperation in protecting critical infrastructure against cyber threats.

30. **The draft Report [037 PCNP 20 E rev.1], as amended, was adopted.**

**IX. Consideration of the Revised Draft Report of the Sub-Committee on Transatlantic Relations [Security and Political Dynamics in the Gulf](#) [038 PCTR 20 E rev.1] presented by Ahmet YILDIZ (Turkey), Rapporteur**

31. **Ahmet Yildiz** (TR) introduced his draft Report which aims to explain the intricacies of the regional political and security dynamics and the different agendas that countries of the Gulf region pursue. He underlined that the Gulf is divided along several fault-lines: rivalry between Saudi Arabia and Iran, the conflict within the Gulf Co-operation Council over Qatar's independent policies, and the different views on Israel among the Gulf Arab states. Mr Yildiz highlighted the effect of the US-Iranian confrontation that escalated in 2019 and the beginning of 2020, as well as the conflicts in Syria and Yemen, which are far from over. The Rapporteur noted, however, that despite the menacing web of tensions and animosities, the Gulf countries have so far managed to avoid a full-fledged war. Every opportunity should be used to break existing stalemates and launch new diplomatic and cooperative initiatives in the Gulf, Mr Yildiz said, noting that stability and peace in the region is intrinsically linked with stability and security of the Alliance.

32. Mr Yildiz listed the updates in the report, including a better explanation of differences and similarities between the EU and the US approach towards the Iranian nuclear programme. He also expanded references to the role of China in the Gulf. Further details were provided as to the war in Yemen and potential post-war reconstruction in Syria. Regarding the latter, the Rapporteur regretted that the policies of the Assad regime make hopes of post-war reconstruction rather illusionary in the foreseeable future. He also expressed diverging points of view as to the Israel-

UAE-Bahrain “normalisation agreements” (the Abraham Accords). Finally, the Rapporteur emphasised the need to redouble NATO’s attention to Iraq. The Rapporteur concluded by stressing that the NATO 2030 reflection process is an opportunity to renew the attention of the Alliance to the Gulf region.

33. Following Mr Yildiz’s presentation, members mainly debated about the Abraham Accords. An Israeli representative argued that the Accords eliminate the divisions between the Middle East, the Gulf states and the State of Israel, as well as enhance security in the region. Several members supported this statement noting that the Abraham Accords are a game-changer in the region and urged the Palestinians and the Iranian government to use this opportunity. Mr Yildiz replied that he respects the optimism of his colleagues but cannot share it. He noted that the draft report reflects both points of view on the Abraham Accords.

34. A representative from Azerbaijan highlighted the importance of the Azerbaijani hydrocarbon resources as a key contributor to Europe’s energy security. A Ukrainian delegate suggested making a change in the report clarifying that the missile with which Iran mistakenly downed a Ukrainian civil airliner in January 2020 was of Russian production, as reported by the US intelligence. The Rapporteur agreed that if this information is provided by reliable sources, he would make a relevant change in the report.

35. Other members inquired about Turkey’s decision to procure Russian air defence systems. Mr Yildiz confirmed that Turkish strategic interests are aligned with the Euro-Atlantic Alliance. He added that, nevertheless, cooperation with Russia in Syria is a necessity, especially regarding terrorism, military deconfliction and the future post-conflict arrangements. It was also expressed and agreed by the Rapporteur that the Biden administration might give a new impetus to engage with Iran on the nuclear deal.

36. **The draft report [038 PCTR 20 E rev.1], as amended, was adopted.**

## X. Closing remarks

37. The Chairperson adjourned the meeting of the Political Committee.

## **Friday 20 November 2020**

### **Political Committee – Meeting 2**

#### **XI. Opening remarks by Lord CAMPBELL OF PITTENWEEM (United Kingdom), Chairperson**

38. Lord Campbell of Pittenweem (UK) opened the second meeting of the Political Committee.

#### **XII. Vote on the Revised Draft Special Report [COVID-19 and Transatlantic Security](#) [105 PC 20 E rev.1] presented by Lord CAMPBELL OF PITTENWEEM (United Kingdom), Chairperson**

39. Lord Campbell, in his capacity as Special Rapporteur, asked the Committee to adopt the Special Report *COVID-19 and Transatlantic Security*, which was presented during the COVID-19 Special Meeting on 18 November 2020. He also thanked the Turkish and Ukrainian delegates for their helpful amendments that he agreed to accept.

40. **The Draft Special Report [105 PC 20 E rev.1], as amended, was adopted.**

**XIII. Consideration of the Revised Draft General Report [The Rise of China: Implications for Global and Euro-Atlantic Security](#) [036 PC 20 E rev.1] presented by Gerald E. CONNOLLY (United States), General Rapporteur**

41. The General Rapporteur, **Gerald E. Connolly** (US), presented his updated draft Report, underscoring that the unrelenting rise of China has altered the geopolitical landscape not only in China's neighbourhood but also closer to the Alliance. The draft report urges the creation of a joint China strategy for the Euro-Atlantic nations. Mr Connolly argued that the Allies should prepare for an increasingly assertive, if not aggressive, China – in terms of economic and military power, as well as technological leadership and cultural reach. The General Rapporteur discussed China's rise in three contexts: military, economic and technological. He China's crackdown on Hong Kong's democratic movement and expressed concern over Chinese vetoing for the Taiwanese membership in the World Health Organisation as well as China's assertiveness in the South and East China Seas and the Arctic.

42. The General Rapporteur proposed several recommendations as to how to adapt the Alliance to the new geopolitical realities marked by the rise of China. He urged Allies to act on the London Declaration and to recalibrate NATO's strategic documents – such as the Strategic Concept – as well as its defence planning, training, and capability development priorities. He also called for stronger ties with NATO's partners such as the EU, but also Australia, Japan, New Zealand and South Korea. While acknowledging that there is scope for dialogue with China, the General Rapporteur stressed that NATO must develop the capabilities needed to monitor, engage and – when necessary – counter the threats posed by China.

43. In the discussion following the General Rapporteur's presentation, members supported Mr Connolly's position that Allies should take the Chinese challenge seriously, including the assessment of Chinese investments, such as in 5G networks, and its growing military and technological clout. Members also agreed on the importance of North American-European strategy towards China, especially with regards to new technologies. A representative from the European Parliament said that the Euro-Atlantic community's agenda on China must include topics such as human rights and climate change. Mr Connolly agreed that it is impossible to tackle global warming without China's input.

44. **The Draft General Report [036 PC 20 E rev.1], as amended, was adopted.**

**XIV. Consideration of amendments and vote on the Draft Resolution *A Transatlantic Strategy on China* [168 PC 20 E] presented by Gerald E. CONNOLLY (United States), General Rapporteur**

45. Following the introduction by Gerald E. Connolly (US), the Committee discussed and voted on the Draft Resolution *A Transatlantic Strategy on China* [168 PC 20 E].

46. Eight amendments were presented; all were accepted.

47. **The Draft Resolution [168 PC 20 E], as amended was adopted unanimously.**

**XV. Future activities of the Political Committee, the Sub-Committee on NATO Partnerships and the Sub-Committee on Transatlantic Relations**

48. The Chairperson said that report topics in 2021 will focus on the challenges to the Alliance's eastern and southern flanks, as well as on the state of the transatlantic relationship. More specifically, the General Report will examine how the challenge posed by Russia has evolved in the context of the COVID-19 pandemic, the upheaval in Belarus, the poisoning of Mr. Navalny and other internal and external developments. The Sub-Committee on Transatlantic Relations is planning to examine ways of further strengthening the unique link between North America and

Europe as well as ways of further improving burden sharing. Finally, the Sub-Committee on NATO Partnerships intends to discuss NATO's partnerships in the Mediterranean, especially due to the mounting political and security pressures in this very sensitive region directly adjacent to Europe's southern flank.

49. When it comes to visits, the Sub-Committee on Transatlantic Relations is planning visits to the Netherlands (postponed from 2020) and Canada. The Chairperson proposed to explore the possibility of expanding the latter to include meetings in Washington, D.C. The Sub-Committee on NATO Partnerships intends to visit Poland and a destination in the Mediterranean yet to be determined. The Chairperson noted that these plans are tentative as they will depend on the situation with the COVID-19 pandemic.

## **XVI. Election of Committee and Sub-Committee Officers**

50. The newly elected officers of the Political Committee were as follows:

### ***Political Committee***

Vice-Chairperson	<b>Cheryl Gallant</b> (Canada)
General Rapporteur	<b>Brendan Boyle</b> (United States)

### ***Sub-Committee on NATO Partnerships***

Chairperson	<b>Karl Lamers</b> (Germany)
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For the three positions of the Vice-Chairpersons, four candidates were proposed. The following three candidates received the highest number of votes:

**Theo Franken** (Belgium)  
**Paolo Formentini** (Italy)  
**Marcos Perestrella** (Portugal)

### ***Sub-Committee on Transatlantic Relations***

Chairperson	<b>Lord Hamilton of Epsom</b> (United Kingdom)
Vice-Chairperson	<b>Lidya Mutsch</b> (Luxembourg)

### ***Ukraine-NATO Interparliamentary Council (UNIC)***

Full member	<b>Ojars Kalnins</b> (Latvia)
Alternate member	<b>Karl Lamers</b> (Germany)

51. No other business was raised.

## **XVII. Date and Place of the Next Meeting**

52. The Chairperson announced that the next meeting of the Committee will take place in the framework of the Joint Committee meetings in February 2021, most likely online.

## **XVIII. Closing remarks**

53. Concluding the meeting, the Chairperson thanked all members and speakers for their participation, as well as interpreters and the NATO PA staff.

54. The Chairperson adjourned the meeting of the Political Committee.