



NATO PARLIAMENTARY ASSEMBLY

# SUMMARY

OF THE MEETING OF THE

## POLITICAL COMMITTEE

9-10 October 2021

*Morus III+IV*, Epic Sana Hotel, Lisbon,  
Portugal

164 PC 21 E | Original: English | 10 November 2021

## ATTENDANCE LIST

<b>Committee Chairperson</b>	Lord CAMPBELL OF PITTENWEEM (United Kingdom)
<b>General Rapporteur</b>	Brendan Francis BOYLE (United States)
<b>Rapporteur of the Sub-Committee on NATO Partnerships</b>	Sonia KRIMI (France)
<b>Rapporteur of the Sub-Committee on Transatlantic Relations</b>	Ahmet YILDIZ (Turkey)
<b>President of the NATO PA</b>	Gerald E. CONNOLLY (United States)
<b>Member delegations</b>	
Albania	Mimi KODHELI
Belgium	Peter BUYSROGGE Wouter DE VRIENDT Theo FRANCKEN
Bulgaria	Dzheyhan IBRYAMOV Atanas ZAFIROV
Canada	Cheryl GALLANT
Croatia	Ante BACIC
Czech Republic	Josef HAJEK
Denmark	Peter SKAARUP
Estonia	Kerstin-Oudekki LOONE
France	Françoise BALLETT-BLU Gilbert ROGER Laurence TRASTOUR-ISNART
Germany	Marcus FABER Karl A. LAMERS Alexander S. NEU Jürgen TRITTIN
Greece	Marietta GIANNAKOU Theodora TZAKRI Manousos Konstantinos VOLOUDAKIS
Hungary	Mihaly BALLA Zsolt NEMETH
Iceland	Njall Trausti FRIDBERTSSON
Italy	Luca FRUSONE Luigi IOVINO Paolo FORMENTINI Alberto PAGANI
Lithuania	Audronius AZUBALIS
Montenegro	Danilo SARANOVIC

Netherlands	Ruben BREKELMANS Rudolf KOOLE
North Macedonia	Arta BILALLI-ZENDELI
Norway	Harek ELVENES
Poland	Waldemar ANDZEL Czeslaw MROCZEK Bogdan ZDROJEWSKI
Portugal	Marcos PERESTRELLO DE VASCONCELLOS Adao SILVA
Romania	Sorin Mihai GRINDEANU Stefan-Radu OPREA Vlad-Mircea PUFU
Slovenia	Branko GRIMS
Spain	Miguel Angel GUTIÉRREZ César MOGO Maria Teresa RUIZ-SILLERO
Turkey	Ahmet Berat CONKAR Ilhan KESICI Zehra TASKESENLIOGLU
United Kingdom	Lord ANDERSON Lord HAMILTON OF EPSOM John SPELLAR
United States	Collin ALLRED John GARAMENDI Jenniffer GONZALEZ-COLON Sara JACOBS Susan WILD

### **Associate delegations**

Armenia	Vahagn ALEKSANYAN Arusyak JULHAKYAN
Azerbaijan	Kamran BAYRAMOV
Georgia	Irakli BERAIA Vladimer CHACHIBAIA
Serbia	Dragan SORMAZ
Sweden	Karin ENSTRÖM Kenneth G. FORSLUND
Switzerland	Werner SALZMANN
Ukraine	Solomiia BOBROVSKA Yehor CHERNIEV

### **Parliamentary Observers**

Assembly of Kosovo	Driton HYSENI
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## **Speakers**

### **Augusto SANTOS SILVA,**

Minister of State for Foreign Affairs of Portugal

### **Jamie SHEA,**

Professor of Strategy and Security at University of Exeter

### **Vladimir KARA-MURZA,**

Russian opposition politician, former deputy leader of the People's Freedom Party

### **Lucy KURTZER-ELLENBOGEN,**

Director, Israeli-Palestinian Conflict Program, USIP

## **International Secretariat**

Andrius AVIZIUS

Karolina LEWANDOWSKA

Julien STRANDT

Director, Political Committee

Coordinator, Political Committee

Research Assistant

**Saturday, 9 October 2021**

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

1. In his opening remarks, **Chairperson Lord Campbell of Pittenweem (UK)** welcomed all members, associates and speakers of the Political Committee and thanked the Portuguese delegation for the preparation and hosting the 2021 Annual Session. The chairperson also welcomed delegations joining online over the KUDO platform. The chairperson noted four administrative points: the modalities of access to the Committee documents and speaker biographies; the official hashtag of the Session for social media; the meetings' schedules and breaks; the procedure of the Committee and Subcommittee officers' elections, with the possibility of both online and in-person voting.

**II. Adoption of the Draft Agenda [[126 PC 21 E](#)]**

2. **The Draft Agenda [[126 PC 21 E](#)] was adopted.**

**III. Adoption of the Summary of previous Committee meeting held on 14 May 2021 [[095 PC 21 E](#)]**

3. **The Summary of the previous Meeting of the Political Committee held in Sweden (online), on Friday 14 May 2021 [[095 PC 21 E](#)] was adopted.**

**IV. Presentation by H.E. Augusto SANTOS SILVA, Minister of State for Foreign Affairs of Portugal on *The Portuguese perspective on key political and security challenges facing our Alliance***

4. The Head of the Portuguese delegation, **Adaõ Silva (PT)**, thanked every present member and welcomed them to Portugal.

5. **H.E. Augusto Santos Silva** introduced the Committee to the Portuguese perspective on key political and security challenges facing the Alliance, especially in face of the upcoming revision of NATO's Strategic Concept. The Minister stressed six political messages in this realm: he reaffirmed the fact that NATO should be both a military and political alliance, emphasising the need to take its democratic nature, regional focus and ability to integrate lessons learnt into account; he reminded the audience of the importance of EU-NATO cooperation, wherein the EU security policy should improve and strengthen NATO; he pointed to the need to define current threats and risks with clarity to achieve good results; he recalled the pressing nature of new challenges, such as climate change or China's new assertiveness; he highlighted the cruciality of NATO's political advantage as an alliance of democracies as well as its technological edge, and the need to nurture both of these factors; finally, he made a point of strengthening NATO's political foundations, through public diplomacy and communication toward citizens.

6. Chairperson Lord Campbell of Pittenweem inquired about the Minister's sentiments toward the potentially strategic dimension of Chinese investments into Portugal. H.E. Augusto Santos Silva noted that the economic ties with China, that materialised due to the privatisation of some public sector assets after the financial crises in 2009-2010, do not signify political alignment, as Portugal remains committed to the European Union and NATO. **Sonia Krimi (FR)** emphasised her support regarding the overlapping views of France and

Portugal toward European defence. **Zsolt Nemeth** (HU) also lauded the proximity of Portuguese and Hungarian security interests despite their geographical distance and asked the Minister about the secret of the success of the Portuguese vaccination campaign against COVID-19. H.E. Augusto Santos Silva replied that despite some ups and downs, important factors of success were the structural advantage of Portuguese people being used to vaccines as well as the use of the military to steer the campaign, relying on their logistical expertise. According to him, the programme also gave new legitimacy to the armed forces, showing their capacity to protect. **Mikko Savola** (FI) expressed his worries about the EU's capacity to engage in meaningful and open dialogue with other powers such as China, Russia, or the United States. H.E. Augusto Santos Silva stated he agrees with Mr. Savola about the importance of political dialogue and that he regrets the current nadir of relations between Russia and NATO. **Ojārs Ēriks Kalniņš** (LV) pointed to hybrid threats, especially the weaponisation of migrants turned against the Baltics by Belarus. H.E. Augusto Santos Silva acquiesced, noting that the weaponisation of migration is one of the most important threats of the moment and not unique to NATO's eastern flank, but also present at its southern borders. **Miguel Angel Gutiérrez** (ES) queried about the Minister's view regarding the threats emanating from NATO's southern flank. H.E. Augusto Santos Silva stated that the region is of high importance for European Mediterranean countries, but also first and foremost for the EU and its security. He added that, similarly to the lessons learnt process for Afghanistan, there should be an assessment made for the EU's and NATO's engagement at the southern flank, especially for Libya and the Sahel. **Ruben Brekelmans** (NL) asked about how to improve current sanctions mechanisms against Belarus. H.E. Augusto Santos Silva answered by saying that the political isolation of the Lukashenko regime was already significant, and that pressure should be sustained until Belarus could prove their ability to abide by basic international rules. A closer dialogue with Russia, a partner of Belarus, should also be crucial to achieve this. **Paolo Formentini** (IT) asked the Minister whether he had experienced any restraints in his ability to criticise Chinese human rights violations. H.E. Augusto Santos Silva stressed the fact that Portugal was able to have an independent voice on these matters, as pictured by its condemnations of the shrinking democratic space in Hong Kong, the Chinese assertiveness vis-à-vis Taiwan and the human rights situation in Xinjiang.

#### **V. Presentation by Jamie SHEA, Professor of Strategy and Security at University of Exeter on *What should be in NATO's new Strategic Concept?***

7. **Jamie Shea** presented his views on NATO's upcoming Strategic Concept, the first update after 11 years. According to him, the need for a new Strategic Concept has six underlying reasons: the need to reaffirm core values and objectives in an age of fragmentation and acceleration; the fact that NATO enters a new phase of its evolution after Afghanistan; to refocus on China while the Russian threat does not wane; the need to focus on new threats and security challenges; to verify that NATO's agenda is fully aligned with strategic thinking and priorities in national capitals; and to serve as a public document or mission statement that convinces external audiences of NATO's continuing relevance. According to him, the time for a new Strategic Concept is ripe due to the need to re-establish confidence in the transatlantic security relationship; the need to balance European priorities with the Indo-Pacific; and to deal with the risk of fragmentation and fraying of political relations inside of NATO. According to Mr Shea, the new Concept will, first, serve to reaffirm old, foundational concepts of NATO (such as the transatlantic link; the principle of consensus and equality; the core task of collective defence; the burden-sharing and Defence Investment Pledge; the commitment to consult; NATO's role in nuclear deterrence; its commitment to non-proliferation, arms control and disarmament; and its open door policy, especially vis-à-vis Ukraine & Georgia, that should be granted a roadmap to membership). Second, the NATO-EU relationship should be better defined to help making both organisations more complementary. Third, new and emerging security challenges should be

taken into account, including climate change, counterterrorism, resilience, cyber defence, space and disruptive technologies. Fourth, Mr. Shea stressed the importance of highlighting partnerships in the new Strategic Concept, including other regional security organisations, as well as strengthened exchanges with civil society. Fifth and finally, he recommended the revision of the Strategic Concept should help finding common language to describe the challenge posed by China, as well as identifying areas where cooperation could be possible, such as Afghanistan or terrorism.

8. **Lord Hamilton of Epsom** (UK) asked Mr. Shea about how NATO would have developed if Russia had not taken an autocratic turn. Jamie Shea argued that the end of the Cold War and the turn of the century, when the threat perception toward Russia was low, were in fact productive decades, as NATO proactively shaped its environment and engaged in new endeavours, such as defending human rights in the Balkans. **Lord Anderson** (UK) inquired about the contemporary meaning of out-of-area operations for NATO, to which Mr. Shea responded that the potential threat posed to Europe by terrorism in the Sahel might be just as large as the threat from Afghanistan, explaining the sustained French presence in the region. He reiterated that NATO should try to draw from these lessons too and seek to be represented at relevant forums, such as the European Intervention Initiative. Ojārs Ēriks Kalniņš stated that expenditures on military mobility are not always included in the general defence expenditures, posing the risk of distorting the actual contributions of member states, especially Eastern European ones. He also asked about the EU's place in the new Strategic Concept, to which Jamie Shea answered that the issuing of a third EU-NATO declaration should be welcomed, and that there is a significant number of areas where both organisations can cooperate. **Mimi Kodheli** (AL) posed a question of whether NATO had developed an efficient strategy against COVID-19 that could inform the Strategic Concept development process. Jamie Shea pointed out that COVID-19 fit into NATO's focus on chemical, biological, radiological, and nuclear (CBRN) threats, yet that it would be impossible to continuously use highly trained soldiers on issues related to the pandemic, as their main focus remains first and foremost defence. He thus pointed to the need to develop more reserve forces across NATO. **Ahmet Yildiz** (TR) queried about the lessons to be drawn from the Syrian war for NATO. Mr Shea invited NATO Allies, including Turkey, to introduce their own lessons learnt and operational experience into NATO. **Collin Allred** (US) asked about the role of democratic values for the future of NATO. Jamie Shea declared that these issues should be an important part of the next Strategic Concept, as if there was to be a democratic backsliding within NATO, it would undermine NATO's collaboration with all other democratic partners around the world.

#### **VI. Presentation by Vladimir KARA-MURZA, Russian opposition politician, former deputy leader of the People's Freedom Party on *Russia between Parliamentary and Presidential "Elections": Putin, Protests, and Prospects for Change***

9. Mr. **Vladimir Kara-Murza** presented his views on what he described as "the so-called Parliamentary 'elections'" that took place in Russia on the 19<sup>th</sup> of September 2021. He stated that there had been no election dubbed as entirely "free and fair" by the OSCE since December 1999, the duration of a generation. He noted that the OSCE observer missions to Russia had been recently restrained, using the pretext of the COVID-19 pandemic. Mr Kara-Murza denounced the fact that all main opposition candidates were not allowed to run in the first place for these elections, and that he found the language of the Council of Europe regarding the unfolding of the process as insufficiently strong, as it had "noted some concerns with the elections". In his view, there was a clear rejection by Russian citizens of these elections, as he noticed inconsistencies with the usage of electronic votes, probably resulting in a form of digital ballot stuffing in favour of United Russia, the ruling party. He thus decried the decline of Russia from an imperfect democracy into a perfect authoritarian system, due to Putin's governance over the course of the early twenty-first century. He

quoted the Russian NGO Human Rights Centre “Memorial” in saying that currently hundreds of people were recognised under OSCE and Council of Europe criteria as political prisoners in Russia, a number that could be much larger. On the other hand, he stressed the fact that there is also a less noticed reality about Russian society and that too many people fail to see the difference between the Russian people and the Kremlin regime. He concluded by criticising Vladimir Putin’s revision of the constitution in 2020, including a provision to personally waive his term limit, potentially allowing him to stay in power beyond 2024. He thus predicted that 2024 will become a big political year for Russia, with Putin crossing the line from illegitimacy de facto to illegitimacy de jure.

10. Ojārs Ēriks Kalniņš, speaking as the Co-Chairman of the Ukraine-NATO Interparliamentary Council (UNIC), stressed that Allies should make sure that none of the NATO countries recognise the elected officials from the Russian occupied territories in Ukraine. Ahmet Yildiz noted that the Parliamentary Assembly of the Council of Europe had just sent an observation mission to assess the latest Russian parliamentary elections, which would document the events through a detailed report. **Audronius Azubalis** (LT) warned against expressing too lenient attitudes towards the Kremlin. Lord Hamilton of Epsom congratulated Mr Kara-Murza for standing up for democracy while putting his life at risk. **Solomiia Bobrovska** (UA) queried about Mr Kara-Murza’s perspective on the Spring 2021 escalations near the Russian-Ukrainian border. Vladimir Kara-Murza stated his support for Ukraine and emphasised that many Russian opposition politicians continuously denounce the annexation of Eastern Ukraine and Crimea. Tax havens used by Russian oligarchs to own and hide large sums of money and capital could be used to put additional pressure through updated Magnitsky sanctions.

## **VII. Consideration of the Revised Draft General Report on *Confronting Russia’s Continuing Political and Ideological Challenge* [020 PC 21 E rev. 1] by Brendan Francis BOYLE (United States), General Rapporteur**

11. General Rapporteur **Brendan Boyle** (US) introduced the Revised Draft General Report on *Confronting Russia’s Continuing Geopolitical and Ideological Challenge* by reminding the audience that relations between Russia and the West are currently at a new post-Soviet low due to Russia’s authoritarian regime. This shows that Russia constitutes both a geopolitical and an ideological challenge. The General Rapporteur highlighted the need to take this into account for the review of the Strategic Concept. According to Mr Boyle, Russia should not be dismissed as a declining global actor despite economic and technological stagnation, because of its ongoing hostile activities. Through provocation and hybrid warfare techniques, the country attempts to destabilise NATO Allies and partners and undermine democratic institutions. This is shown in the illegal occupation of Crimea; its power projection in Syria; its large-scale exercises along NATO’s eastern flank; and through the violation of NATO air space and harassment of Allied ships. NATO has responded by deploying forces to its eastern flank through the enhanced Forward Presence and tailored Forward Presence, and the NATO Force Integration Units as well as the increased NATO support to Allies and partners in the Black Sea region. Mr Boyle further stressed the need to counter hybrid threats such as disinformation, cyber-attacks or the weaponisation of migrants, and welcomed the decision of the 2021 Brussels Summit to declare hybrid warfare a possible trigger for Article 5 of the Washington Treaty. He also warned that synergies between Russia and China are growing but cautioned to not try to appease Russia in an attempt to disrupt those synergies. Instead, NATO should remain invested in its dual-track approach to Russia – investing in strong defence and deterrence while remaining open to political dialogue, cooperating where possible, yet remaining realistic regarding Russia’s intentions. According to the General Rapporteur, one of the main reasons why the scope for dialogue is so limited has to do with the hard-line ideological turn the Kremlin has taken in recent years. The relative pragmatism of the early Putinism has been gradually replaced by



the regime embracing an ideology which combines far-right populism with Soviet nostalgia. He thus called for strategic patience, emphasising the need for strong defence and deterrence, including pursuing a green transition to maximise energy security and supporting Ukraine and Georgia in their Euro-Atlantic aspirations. Finally, Allies should also explore ways to support Russian civil society and those facing repressions by the current regime for their political and civic activities.

12. NATO Parliamentary Assembly President **Gerald E. Connolly** (US) thanked Brendan Boyle for the report. He added that one of the keys to respond to Russia and China is disenthraling oneself from wishful thinking and that this report constitutes a clear call to action. Ojārs Ēriks Kalniņš commended the General Rapporteur on the Report and added that he appreciated the space given to Ukraine. He also asked the rapporteur on his sentiment regarding the leveraging of far-right movements by Russia. Brendan Boyle agreed with Mr Kalniņš' views, adding that Vladimir Putin is taking advantage of his opponents through the other – far-right – end of the political spectrum compared to the past, where it was the far-left. **Kamran Bayramov** (AZ) also commended the report, yet also proposed to rephrase the paragraph on the conflict between Armenia and Azerbaijan. The General Rapporteur, Brendan Boyle, answered that the wording present in the report is in line with other NATO and NATO PA statements. **Irakli Beraia** (GE) said he was highly appreciative of the support to Georgia in the report and proposed amendments to further enrich the report on sections pertaining to Georgia. Solomiia Bobrovska queried about the General Rapporteur's opinion on misinformation originating from Russia and about the perspectives of NATO Membership for Ukraine and Georgia. Brendan Boyle stated that he saw, from his American perspective, trust in media dropping and called for governments to strengthen their local news ecosystems. He then added that he looks forward to the day when Ukraine and Georgia would join NATO. Ahmet Yildiz expressed the sentiment that he would have liked to see more high-level representatives from NATO countries represented at the Crimean Platform.

13. **The Draft General Report [\[020 PC 21 E rev. 1\]](#) was adopted.**

**VIII. Consideration of the Draft Resolution *Maintaining NATO's Focus on the Russian Challenge* [\[127 PC 21 E\]](#) by Brendan Francis BOYLE (United States), General Rapporteur**

14. General Rapporteur Brendan Boyle introduced the draft resolution titled "Maintaining NATO's Focus on the Russian Challenge". He stated that the key messages of the draft resolution are the fact that the growing complexity of the global strategic environment should not obscure the fact that Russia's aggressive actions continue to pose the most immediate threat to Euro-Atlantic security; that NATO's dual-track approach towards Russia remains valid yet with a current emphasis on strong defence and deterrence; that a clear distinction should be made between the current regime and the people of Russia.

15. Twenty-five amendments were submitted to the draft Resolution. Twenty of them were adopted, some with slight alterations. Five were retracted.

16. **The Draft Resolution [\[127 PC 21 E\]](#), as amended, was adopted.**

**Sunday, 10 October 2021**

**IX. Presentation by Lucy KURTZER-ELLENBOGEN, Director, Israeli-Palestinian Conflict Program, USIP on *Old Conflict, New Dynamics: The Israeli-Palestinian Conflict and the Road Ahead***

17. **Lucy Kurtzer-Ellenbogen** started her address by reminding the delegates that although the Israeli-Palestinian conflict is among older global concerns, there is a risk of dismissing current escalatory dynamics as business as usual. The last round of fighting in May 2021 showed that the subtext and context of the conflict narratives are changing. Ms. Kurtzer-Ellenbogen then explained the five factors bringing novel challenges to the ongoing conflict: First, a weakened Palestinian president has set the stage for more divisions inside of the Palestinian political factions and the rise of popularity of Hamas; second, the Israeli side has been struggling with the consequences of long coalition negotiations and frail political majorities; third, there is also an ongoing pressure tactic driven by both sides, with a more escalatory Hamas on the Palestinian side and less restrained anti-Palestinian acts of intimidation on the Israeli side; fourth, there is a growing shift in discourse of local grass roots actors and international activists as they increasingly focus on relitigating the 1948 situation rather than on solving 1967; fifth, the surrounding regional context is changing as a result of signing normalisation agreements between two Gulf states and Israel.

18. Ms. Kurtzer-Ellenbogen noted that both Israeli and Palestinian communities are becoming more hard-line, particularly among the youth. Young Palestinians feel that diplomacy does not yield progress and start seeing the possibility of some leverage through Hamas' actions. Compared to the past, the notion of a two-state solution has lost some credibility and popularity. She argued that the heterogeneity of the current Israeli ruling coalition could severely limit the government's ability to make progress on the conflict resolution.

19. Ms. Kurtzer-Ellenbogen highlighted the implications of the conflict for the international community. From a regional security perspective, Jordan might be most impacted by the ongoing conflict, with potentially more Palestinian migrant flows. She reminded the audience that the Israeli-Palestinian issue will keep putting itself on the international agenda through violence. The Taliban takeover of Afghanistan has struck Israelis as a potential parallel of what could happen if they were to withdraw from Palestinian territories. She stated that so far, the international community has been in a "reactive mode of firefighting crises" only to turn away once the immediate crisis subsides. She called for sustained international commitment and urged to work through grass-roots engagement of civil society toward a two-state solution. Even though support for it has faltered, two-state solution remains the most viable option to solve the conflict, she argued. If diplomacy is not working, however, she also highlighted the need to invest in enhancing the wellbeing in Palestinian territories in order to mitigate tensions.

20. Lord Campbell of Pittenweem asked Ms. Kurtzer-Ellenbogen about the current attitude of the Saudi Arabian government toward Israel and whether the implementation of the Saudi-led Arab Peace Initiative was still on the agenda. Lucy Kurtzer-Ellenbogen replied that the two-state solution still constitutes the official objective of the Saudi government, although there is a generational struggle between the Saudi King and the Crown Prince. The Arab Peace Initiative still has resonance but the order in which its end goal is to be achieved has been torn asunder, she argued. Lord Hamilton of Epsom enquired about the future of Israeli settlement politics and the shrinking space for the demographically stronger Palestinian population. Lucy Kurtzer-Ellenbogen stated that there was increasingly less space for Palestinians, thus reiterating the importance of the two-state solution. She emphasised the need to be clear about the definition of what the two-state solution entails, including the

issue of ongoing settlement building. **Gilbert Roger** (FR) told the Political Committee that he had helped pass a resolution asking for the recognition of Palestine as a state at the French Senate, yet that he remained open to other solutions that might bring peace to the region. Lucy Kurtzer-Ellenbogen replied that the two-state solution should remain the priority as it still holds more appeal than other options. Miguel Angel Gutiérrez wanted to know about the current role of Lebanon in the Israeli-Palestinian conflict. Lucy Kurtzer-Ellenbogen pointed to the fact that the situation in Lebanon constitutes a security concern for Israel. She argued that this security context disincentivises Israel from making concessions on other issues, such as reducing its presence in the West Bank. Lord Anderson argued that the Abraham Accords constituted a defeat for the Palestinians, as more Arab countries dropped their unwavering support for Palestine. He asked Ms. Kurtzer-Ellenbogen whether she sees any other Arab states normalising relations with Israel in the nearer future. Lucy Kurtzer-Ellenbogen answered that these developments are difficult to predict. The Palestinian cause is still sensitive among Arab countries, yet initiatives like the Arab Peace Initiative are driving change. The current agreements in place were forged under the Trump administration and are very bilateral and transactional in nature. Under the Biden administration, the potential new agreements might be closer linked to a broader goal of making progress on the resolution of the Israeli-Palestinian conflict, she argued. **César Mogo** (ES) said that decades have elapsed since the Madrid accords on the Israeli-Palestinian conflict (1975). He thus questioned whether there might be a global solution to the conflict or if it would go on forever. Lucy Kurtzer-Ellenbogen agreed that the journey of normalisation started in Madrid, a ground-breaking accord in this regard. She continued by stating that the conflict will need to be resolved at some point, and that the Israelis and the Palestinians “will have to do the heavy-lifting themselves”. The international community however should act as a support, even though there are many other global priorities. **Wouter De Vriendt** (BE) queried about the legal differentiation between Israel and its settlements and whether this is something defined in international law. Lucy Kurtzer-Ellenbogen replied by saying that the UN Resolution 2334 (2016) lays out a series of steps for the international community regarding both sides in their path toward a two-state solution – including the question of settlements. Paolo Formentini asked about the current role of Iran in the Israeli-Palestinian conflict. Lucy Kurtzer-Ellenbogen acquiesced that Iran looms large in the conflict. It contributes to the radicalisation in the region and plays a role in helping extremist groups in the region to acquire advanced weapons. She expressed concern about the radicalisation of attitudes towards each other in Israel and Iran, and urged the international community to keep an eye on these trends.

**X. Consideration of the Revised Draft Report of the Sub-Committee on NATO Partnerships on *The NATO Agenda for Security in The Mediterranean* [021 PCNP 21 E rev.1], presented by Sonia KRIMI (France), Sub-Committee Rapporteur**

21. Sonia Krimi introduced her revised draft report of the Sub-Committee on NATO Partnerships titled *The NATO Agenda for Security in The Mediterranean* and stressed that the Mediterranean is of exceptional strategic importance to NATO. She summarised the most pressing Mediterranean security issues: Libya, where elections are due to take place on 24 December 2021, although mercenaries remain in the country and the arms embargo stays porous; the Eastern Mediterranean, with disputes between Greece and Turkey and the necessity for NATO to remain engaged on this matter; the 2021 flare-ups in the Israeli-Palestinian conflict and the potential window of opportunity following the change of government in Israel; the security and humanitarian threats in the Central Mediterranean, triggering migration throughout the 2010s; and the growing involvement of external actors filling the vacuum left by Allied nations, such as Russia in Libya and Syria, the political and military operations of the Gulf monarchies, or China’s increasing economic involvement. Sonia Krimi described the Alliance’s political and operational engagement in this complex

and evolving security context, including through partnerships, the Mediterranean Dialogue framework, NATO's Strategic Direction South, and several operations – alone or in partnership with the European Union – aimed at combating terrorism, strengthening partners' maritime security capabilities, and supporting situational awareness. She offered three options to improve NATO's engagement with its southern flank ahead of the revision of the Strategic Concept: first, NATO should intensify political consultations among Allies to define and frame the Alliance's role in the South, as well as resolve current disputes; second, NATO should improve the Allies' understanding of the region by making better use of the expertise provided by the Regional Hub for the South, revitalising and bolstering the Mediterranean Dialogue, and expanding contacts, sharing information and pooling actions and funding with other regional actors – in particular the European Union; third, the Alliance's collective defence and crisis management capabilities in the Mediterranean should become more robust, by continuing to contribute forces to standing maritime groups and other NATO assets in the region and to participate more actively in regional exercises and partnership projects. Sonia Krimi concluded by reminding the audience that the Middle East/North Africa region is currently undergoing great change presenting both opportunities and challenges to NATO.

22. Lord Hamilton of Epsom stated that regarding the issue of migrants and refugees from conflict zones in the Middle East/North Africa, there was a need to redefine entry criteria in Europe to not be overwhelmed. Sonia Krimi said that migrants are only a problem when migratory flows are not managed and that there is a responsibility to welcome distressed human beings. As France will be chairing the next European Council, it will be working toward managing migration in a more harmonised way in Europe. **Manousos Konstantinos Voloudakis** (GR) said that regarding the tensions between Greece and Turkey in the Mediterranean, the report could contain more accurate description of the provisions of the United Nations Convention on the Law of the Sea (UNCLOS). Ahmet Yildiz made three remarks regarding the report: Turkey does not leverage migrants but simply asks for better burden sharing; Turkey is not responsible for the tensions in the Eastern Mediterranean; and that the delimitation issues in the Mediterranean require serious negotiations. César Mogo (ES) asked the rapporteur if more direct investment in the African continent might be a viable way to stymie the migration issue at its roots. Sonia Krimi gave the example of the French Development Agency, which works with different French ministries. She made the point that there is a need to have a true inter-ministerial cooperation on dismantling the networks that funnel migrants and international cooperation to help all nations to implement efficient development policies in their own states. She reiterated that development aid should go hand in hand with policy work on migration. **Ahmet Berat Conkar** (TR) questioned the rapporteur on the new Greece-France defence pact and how it might affect the cohesion inside of NATO. Sonia Krimi observed that this will have a direct positive impact for Allies in the South, as it might improve NATO's image with southern partner nations. Lord Anderson deplored that demographics figure so seldomly in the attempts to understand and quell migration flows. The rapporteur agreed that demographics are indeed a big issue that needs to be considered more often. **Luca Frusone** (IT) queried about the perspectives for renewed EU-NATO cooperation in the Middle East/North Africa. Sonia Krimi noted that there is a common responsibility to tackle this issue and that there is a lot to learn from Italy with its work in Lampedusa, but that the EU's response should be strengthened first before involving NATO. Ruben Brekelmans asked the rapporteur about the role she would envision for NATO regarding border security. Sonia Krimi stated the necessity to manage the situation at the EU level, which has the concurrent effect of also strengthening NATO's work.

## **XI. Summary of Committee and Sub-Committee activities for 2021 and 2022**

23. The Chairperson Lord Campbell of Pittenweem presented the upcoming activities of the Political Committee. He announced that the General Report in 2022 would focus on the

political aspects of the upcoming revision of NATO Strategic Concept, whereas the military aspects would be addressed by the Defence and Security Committee. Additionally, he reminded the audience that the full Committee is, as usual, invited to the traditional February meetings in Brussels, currently scheduled for 21-23 February 2022. The Chairperson gave the floor to the Sub-Committee chairs, while thanking **Karl A. Lamers** (DE) for his long-standing engagement and wishing him farewell after his last session at the NATO Parliamentary Assembly.

24. Karl A. Lamers presented the upcoming visits of the Sub-Committee on NATO-Partnerships (PCNP): a seminar of the Ukraine NATO Interparliamentary Council (UNIC) in Odessa, from 25-28 October 2021 and the Mediterranean and Middle East Special Group (GSM) event in Barcelona, taking place from 17-19 November. He also announced the title of next report of the Sub-Committee, namely on the role of NATO in the Indo-Pacific, with Sonia Krimi as the rapporteur. A visit to South Korea is planned for 2022 as well as a visit to the Republic of Moldova, to study Eastern European security matters.

25. Lord Hamilton of Epsom, Chairperson of the Sub-Committee on Transatlantic Relations (PCTR) announced an upcoming Committee visit from 8-10 November 2021 to Lithuania, to discuss the Russian challenge, hybrid warfare and energy security in the Baltics. For 2022 he noted that Ahmet Yildiz would produce a report on Afghanistan. In terms of visits in 2022, he announced a visit to the Netherlands, as well as a visit to the United States, prospectively in Washington DC and San Francisco.

26. Audronius Azubalis took the floor to note that he was very pleased to host the upcoming visit to Lithuania, on which him and his delegation were working very hard.

## **XII. Consideration of the Revised Draft Report of the Sub-Committee on Transatlantic Relations on *Transatlantic Link and Burden Sharing in the Changing Strategic Environment* [022 PCTR 21 E rev. 1] by Ahmet YILDIZ (Turkey), Sub-Committee Rapporteur**

27. Rapporteur Ahmet Yildiz introduced his report on the *Transatlantic Link and Burden Sharing in the Changing Strategic Environment* and stated that numerous challenges – including the rise of China, the lessons to be learned from Afghanistan, the devastating global impact of the COVID-19 pandemic, Russia's hybrid warfare, the continuing instability in the Middle East, the proliferation of emerging disruptive technologies and the effects of the changing climate – make it necessary for the Allies to revisit their visions of the Transatlantic Link and Burden Sharing ahead of the revision of the Strategic Concept. To tackle these challenges while economies recover from the pandemic, the rapporteur reminded that more would have to be done with scarce resources, making political consultation and cooperation all the more crucial. A new US administration and its declared commitment to multilateralism also presents important opportunities to reinvigorate transatlantic relations. The revision of NATO's Strategic Concept provides an opportunity to keep the Alliance fit for the changing global environment and to shore up the transatlantic link with a jointly agreed agenda, based on shared democratic values.

28. Mr. Yildiz then presented five avenues for advancing transatlantic cooperation: first, the essentiality that Allies reinforce their commitment to transatlantic solidarity based on NATO's three core tasks and their shared democratic values, for instance by considering establishing a centre on democratic resilience within its institutional structure, as proposed by the NATO PA President Gerald E. Connolly; second, ensuring adequate levels of defence funding, in line with the 2% and 20% targets reaffirmed at the Brussels Summit, for a fairer burden sharing; third, China's growing influence and increasingly assertive recent actions have led to growing convergence of European and North American views on China, as

reflected in the 2021 Brussels Summit conclusions and the relevant post-Summit G7 communique, which presents an opportunity to develop a joint, more coherent transatlantic strategy on China, focusing on “competition” rather than “confrontation”; fourth, NATO should continue its efforts to develop a meaningful partnership with the European Union; fifth and finally, the principle of joint engagement of transatlantic partners should be applied across all NATO missions and operations, by recommitting to the “in together, out together” approach to operations. Mr. Yildiz concluded by saying that despite some diverging interests and priorities, including on defence and security, NATO continues to demonstrate its ability to find consensus among 30 Allies and to deliver on the core tasks of collective defence, crisis management and cooperative security. The upcoming revision of the NATO Strategic Concept would thus be an opportunity to seal a new transatlantic strategy that is tailored to the changing security environment, using the full potential of NATO.

29. Lord Hamilton of Epsom highlighted the critical role of NATO as a forum to organise coalitions of the willing. Ahmet Yildiz replied by saying that consensus in the North Atlantic Council still constituted the best approach to decision-making in NATO, but that it could sometimes indeed be useful to build coalitions.

### **XIII. Vote on the Revised Draft Report of the Sub-Committee on NATO Partnerships and the Revised Draft Report of the Sub-Committee on Transatlantic Relations**

30. **The Revised Draft Report of the Sub-Committee on NATO Partnerships [021 PC 21 E rev. 1] was adopted, with the Turkish delegates voting against and a Greek delegate abstaining.**

31. **The Revised Draft Report of the Sub-Committee on Transatlantic Relations [022 PC 21 E rev. 1] was adopted.**

### **XIV. Consideration of the Draft Resolution *Reaffirming Transatlantic Cohesion and Implementing 2021 Brussels Summit Decisions* [141 PC 21 E] by Brendan Francis BOYLE (United States), General Rapporteur**

32. Brendan Boyle introduced the resolution to the Political Committee by reminding the audience of the importance of the past 2021 Brussels Summit for NATO, as the Alliance faces many daunting challenges. He stressed that the upcoming revision of the Strategic Concept will thus be extremely timely and that it would be the role of legislators to turn proposals stemming from it into reality. Mr Boyle then presented six main ideas from his resolution: first, that Allies need to identify practical ways in which NATO can help promote and defend shared democratic values; second, that Allies should act on their declared commitment to expand political consultations within the NATO framework on a range of issues affecting our security; third, that in line with the increased focus on collective defence, Allies should modernise the NATO Force Structure, to ensure the implementation of defence spending commitments and to invest in maintaining NATO’s technological edge; fourth, that there is a need to further strengthen strategic partnership with the EU, especially on projects such as Military Mobility and setting global technology standards; Fifth, that NATO Allies should demonstrate consistency in their approach to Russia and China and to stand firmly against attempts to undermine the rules-based world order; sixth and finally, that NATO should be ambitious in its partnership policy, to engage more with democratic nations in the Indo-Pacific region, and to step up its support for Ukraine, Georgia, and Bosnia and Herzegovina on their path towards Euro-Atlantic integration.

33. Nineteen amendments were submitted to the draft Resolution. Seventeen of them were adopted, some with slight alterations. Two were retracted.



34. The Draft Resolution [[141 PC 21 E](#)], as amended, was adopted.

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

35. The Chairperson announced the procedure for election of Committee and Sub-Committee Officers for 2021-2022. All re-eligible Committee and Sub-Committee Officers were re-elected, and the following candidates were elected by acclamation:

##### ***Political Committee***

Chairperson	<b>Brendan Francis Boyle (United States)</b>
Vice-Chairperson	<b>Ahmet Berat Conkar (Turkey)</b>
General Rapporteur	<b>Ojārs Ēriks Kalniņš (Latvia)</b>

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

Chairperson	<b>Marcos Perestrello De Vasconcellos (Portugal)</b>
Vice-Chairperson	<b>Marcus Faber (Germany)</b>

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

Vice-Chairperson	<b>Alberto Pagani (Italy)</b>
Vice-Chairperson	<b>Austin Scott (United States)</b>

##### ***Ukraine-NATO Interparliamentary Council***

Member	<b>Audronius Azubalis (Lithuania)</b>
Alternate Member	<b>Theo Francken (Belgium)</b>

#### **XVI. Any other business**

36. No other business was raised.

#### **XVII. Date and place of next meeting**

37. The Chairperson reminded the audience that the Political Committee would gather again in February 2022 in Brussels.

#### **XVIII. Closing remarks**

38. The Chairperson closed the meeting of the Political Committee.

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