



NATO PARLIAMENTARY ASSEMBLY

SUMMARY

OF THE MEETING OF THE

COMMITTEE ON THE CIVIL DIMENSION OF SECURITY (CDS)

Wednesday 1 July 2020

By video conference

ATTENDANCE LIST

Chairperson	Joëlle GARRIAUD-MAYLAM (France)
General Rapporteur	Ulla SCHMIDT (Germany)
Secretary General	Ruxandra POPA
Member Delegations	
Belgium	Rodrigue DEMEUSE
Bulgaria	Milen MIHOV
Canada	Jane CORDY
Estonia	Leo KUNNAS
France	Anissa KHEDHER
Italy	Emanuele PELLEGRINI
Latvia	Aleksandrs KIRSTEINS
Turkey	Osman Askin BAK Muhammet CINISLI
United Kingdom	Baroness Denise KINGSMILL Heather WHEELER
United States	Gerald E. CONNOLLY Brett GUTHRIE Gregory MEEKS Linda SANCHEZ
Associate Delegations	
Georgia	Irakli BERAIA
Ukraine	Liudmyla BUIMISTER
International Secretariat	Nathan Robinson GRISON, Director, Committee on the Civil Dimension of Security Paul COOK, Director, Economics and Security Committee Sarah-Claude FILION, Coordinator, Committee on the Civil Dimension of Security Jailee RYCHEN, Coordinator, Defence and Security Committee Sarah AVER, Research Assistant

I. Opening remarks by [Joëlle GARRIAUD-MAYLAM](#) (France), Chairperson

1. Chairperson **Joëlle Garriaud-Maylam** (FR) thanked members for joining the first online meeting of the Committee. She also thanked Clare Hutchinson, the NATO Secretary General's Special Representative for Women, Peace and Security for attending.

II. Adoption of the draft Agenda [111 CDS 20 E]

2. **The draft agenda [111 CDS 20 E] was adopted.**

III. Consideration of the draft General Report [Advancing the Women, Peace and Security Agenda](#) [027 CDS 20 E] presented by [Ulla SCHMIDT](#) (Germany), General Rapporteur

3. **Ulla Schmidt** (DE) noted that 2020 marks the 20th anniversary of the unanimous adoption by the United Nations Security Council (UNSC) of Resolution 1325 on Women, Peace and Security (WPS). It constitutes, therefore, an opportunity to reflect on the progress achieved and to identify remaining challenges. The resolution was the first document to recognise women as active agents of change in the peace and security sphere. As a result, women are no longer considered passive players, but are now seen as actors in the peace and security sphere. Today, they not only can play a role in this area but should. The four pillars of the resolution -participation, protection, prevention, and relief and recovery- are based on this central idea.

4. Addressing the implementation of the first pillar, which calls for increased involvement of women at all levels of decision making in the peace and security sphere, Ms Schmidt emphasised that the equal participation of women and men is crucial to preserving peace and is intrinsic to NATO's shared values. Member states, including parliaments, should lead by example in this area and work towards greater participation of women in the armed forces and military operations. The General Rapporteur reminded participants, however, that women remain largely underrepresented at negotiating tables, in decision making processes and in the armed forces, including those of NATO member states. This lack of equal participation persists despite numerous studies having showed that operations are more effective and peace agreements longer lasting when women are involved.

5. Turning to the second and third pillars of Resolution 1325, which call for the protection of women against conflict-related sexual violence and for the prevention of such violence, Ms Schmidt pointed out that sexual violence has increasingly been used, over the past decade, as an instrument of terror – particularly by Daesh and Boko Haram. This kind of violence poses a significant threat to international peace and stability. Ms Schmidt urged member countries to act decisively against this threat by providing support to survivors and ensuring that perpetrators face justice. Discussing the importance of the resolution's fourth pillar, relating to the mainstreaming of gender in relief and recovery efforts, Ms Schmidt observed that repairing the social fabric of fractured societies requires that the specific needs of women and girls be addressed in all stages of post-conflict reconstruction. As such, gender equality is a pre-condition for lasting peace and economic development.

6. Ms Schmidt welcomed the progress achieved in the implementation of Resolution 1325 and the advancement of the WPS agenda in the past decade, both at NATO and in other fora. However, a wide gap remains between the ambitions set out in the WPS resolutions and the results achieved thus far. She warned that populist forces, which have been on the rise recently in many NATO member states and in other countries, wish to turn back the clock on the advancement of women's rights and pose a risk for the implementation of the WPS agenda and for gender equality more broadly. In addition, in the context of the Covid-19 crisis, progress towards

gender equality is largely being reversed, as women bear the brunt of the pandemic and its consequences.

7. To ensure the implementation of Resolution 1325, Ms Schmidt recommended undertaking several steps. Firstly, NATO should double down on its efforts to streamline gender equality into all its policies, programmes and projects, and encourage greater representation of women both in the organisation and in national forces, including in leadership positions. Secondly, member states should increase their financial contributions to meet the level of their commitments to the implementation of the WPS agenda, both in the NATO context and outside of it. Finally, she advocated for greater cooperation between international institutions and with civil society organisations to further develop the exchange of information and best practices.

8. Ms Schmidt concluded by highlighting three key points. Firstly, although far-reaching progress has been achieved in the past two decades with respect to women's role in the peace and security sphere, Ms Schmidt expressed her concern that this progress could be easily reversed, if not defended and promoted. Secondly, she pointed out that advancing the WPS agenda, and more broadly gender equality and women's rights, should not be at the top of the international community's agenda only when the anniversary of the adoption of Resolution 1325 is celebrated, but should rather be a constant preoccupation for policymakers in all aspects of their work. Finally, Ms Schmidt called for increased participation and involvement of women at the NATO PA itself.

9. **Jane Cordy** (CA) suggested adding information in the report about the adoption of a legislated gender quota in Rwanda in 2003, during the country's post-conflict reconstruction effort. As a result, the proportion of women in Rwanda's Lower House reached 61.3% as of 2020, the highest percentage worldwide. She also proposed adding to the report a mention of the Elsie Initiative on Women in Peace Operations, a Canadian initiative -supported by a number of NATO allies- which aims to overcome the barriers to women's meaningful participation in peace operations. The General Rapporteur acknowledged Canada's efforts in this domain and agreed to include both points in the report.

10. **Ruxandra Popa** (NATO PA) asked how to ensure that the WPS agenda will be fully included in NATO's reflection process "NATO 2030". She also asked the General Rapporteur and the Chairperson whether they had already been in contact with the NATO Secretary General's group of experts, established as part of this reflection process, to make sure that this issue will be taken into account in their discussions. Joëlle Garriaud-Maylam said that she had not yet been in contact with the expert group. Ulla Schmidt answered that for "NATO 2030" to be a success, gender perspectives would have to be taken into account by the group of experts. She added that the German delegation had not yet been able to discuss with the group of experts but wishes to do so in the near future.

IV. Consideration of the draft Special Report [The Impact of the COVID-19 Crisis on the Civilian Dimension of Security](#) [088 CDS 20 E] presented by Joëlle GARRIAUD-MAYLAM (France), Chairperson

11. Joëlle Garriaud-Maylam stressed that the Covid-19 pandemic is an extraordinary global health crisis both in terms of its scale and its impact on countries and populations. As such, the development of this crisis directly affects most aspects of the civil dimension of security.

12. Firstly, Ms Garriaud-Maylam highlighted the link between restrictions on fundamental freedoms and the pandemic. The lack of respect for fundamental freedoms by the Chinese authorities and their tendency to censor information prevented them from responding rapidly and effectively in the first stages of the coronavirus outbreak. Later on during the pandemic, the repressive policies and lack of transparency of the authorities in China, as well as in other

authoritarian countries such as Iran and Russia, rendered difficult the development of an informed and effective international response to the crisis. Legitimate measures restricting some fundamental freedoms were adopted by public authorities in most countries, including in democracies, to slow the spread of the coronavirus. Although these measures were justified, their application has led in some countries to unacceptable human rights abuses that must be denounced. Ms Garriaud-Maylam called for such derogating measures to be proportional in their scope and limited in time. She warned that, otherwise, the health crisis would have a negative long-term impact on fundamental freedoms in the world.

13. Secondly, Ms Garriaud-Maylam emphasised the threat posed by the increased dissemination of misinformation and propaganda during the Covid-19 crisis, both in the traditional media and online. Disinformation and propaganda are emanating from a growing number of actors, state and non-state, some based abroad and others operating within our borders. Among these actors, Russia and China in particular are seeking to take advantage of the pandemic to delegitimise the authorities in NATO member states and promote their own authoritarian model of governance. In response to the growing spread of misinformation and propaganda, NATO has doubled down on its communications efforts to better inform the public about its role in the response to the crisis and the support it provides to the populations of Allied and partner countries. In addition, NATO is working closely with the European Union to identify, monitor and expose disinformation. Allies have also strengthened their national efforts to counter propaganda and disinformation.

14. Thirdly, Ms Garriaud-Maylam stressed that the Covid-19 crisis has further complicated and accentuated pre-existing societal challenges such as migration, women's rights, and the protection and education of children. Regarding travel and migration, NATO Allies must do their utmost to limit the spread of Covid-19 to which they contribute while not jeopardising their positive effects on our societies. Concerning women's rights, the measures adopted in response to the pandemic have exacerbated inequalities between women and men and have led to an increase in violence against women. These risks must be better integrated into the design of future measures and the implementation of current ones. As for the impact of the crisis on children and youth, the pandemic has dramatically affected their current education and future opportunities, which could have negative long-term consequences, including in terms of security.

15. Ms Garriaud-Maylam concluded that the Covid-19 pandemic calls for an extraordinary, global and coordinated response. International coordination and multilateral cooperation are essential to respond to this historic challenge and its tragic consequences. She underlined that, once the pandemic will have been brought under control, lessons will have to be learned from the various national responses and their effects. She argued that NATO should reach out to countries beyond its borders, including in Asia, that have successfully responded to the crisis to exchange lessons learnt and be better prepared for similar threats in the future.

16. Jane Cordy noted that the terms "fake news", "disinformation" and "misinformation" were used interchangeably in the English version of the report and suggested providing definitions for each of these terms in the report. She added that the term "fake news" is increasingly used to reject a true fact, falsely present such a fact as untrue or counter it with alternative facts.

17. **Linda Sanchez** (US) agreed with Jane Cordy that the expression "fake news" has been used to discredit valid reports and documents grounded in truth and suggested only using the terms "disinformation" or "misinformation" in the report. Concerning a recommendation in the report for member states to provide NATO with additional financial and human resources to increase its ability to respond to disinformation and propaganda, Ms Sanchez suggested adding an assessment of NATO's current means and their efficiency.

18. Ruxandra Popa stressed the importance of ensuring the resilience of NATO nations and their populations. She added that on a joint visit to Sweden in 2019, Committee members had learnt

about measures taken by the civil protection authorities in Sweden to ensure that residents were fully prepared to face most potential man-made or natural crises.

19. Joëlle Garriaud-Maylam thanked Ms Cordy, Ms Sanchez and Ms Popa for their contributions and said that their suggestions would be integrated into the revised version of the draft report.

V. Any other business

20. No other business was raised.

VI. Date and place of the next meeting

21. The Chairperson announced that the next meeting will take place online on 9 September 2020.

VII. Closing remarks

22. The Chairperson closed the meeting of the Committee on the Civil Dimension of Security.
