



NATO PARLIAMENTARY ASSEMBLY

SUMMARY

OF THE MEETING OF THE

COMMITTEE ON DEMOCRACY AND SECURITY

9 - 10 October 2021

Lisbon, Portugal

161 CDS 21 E | Original: English | 21 October 2021

ATTENDANCE LIST

Committee Chairperson	Angel TILVAR (Romania)
Vice-Chairpersons	Rodrigue DEMEUSE Brett GUTHRIE
General Rapporteur	Joëlle GARRIAUD-MAYLAM (France)
Special Rapporteur	Linda SANCHEZ
Member delegations	
France Jérôme LAMBERT	Anissa KHEDHER
Germany	Dagmar FREITAG Anita SCHÄFER Ulla SCHMIDT Roland WÖLLER
Latvia	Aleksandrs KIRSTEINS
Luxembourg	Nancy ARENDT KEMP Lydia MUTSCH
Montenegro	Predrag BOSKOVIC
Netherlands	Rudolf KOOLE
Poland	Pawel ARNDT
Portugal	José Luis CARNEIRO
Spain	Javier ANTON Javier MAROTO Carlos ROJAS
Turkey	Muhammet Naci CINISLI
United Kingdom	Lord ANDERSON Lord JOPLING Heather WHEELER
Associate delegations	
Azerbaijan	Kamran BAYRAMOV
Speakers	Vice Admiral Henrique GOUVEIA E MELO, Coordinator for the Task Force for the Vaccination Plan in Portugal Dr Stéphane LACROIX, Associate Professor, CERi Science Po Professor Remus PRICOPIE, Rector of the National University of Political Studies and Public Administration (SNSPA) David VAN WEEL, NATO Assistant Secretary General for Emerging Security Challenges

International Secretariat

Nathan GRISON
Anne-Laure BLEUSE
Patricia JAWOREK

Committee Director
Coordinator
Research Assistant

Saturday 9 October 2021**I. Opening remarks by Angel TILVAR (Romania), Chairperson of the Committee on Democracy and Security**

1. Chairperson **Angel Tilvar** (RO) thanked the Portuguese delegation for its outstanding job in preparing for and hosting the 2021 Annual Session under challenging circumstances. He further expressed his sincerest gratitude for their outstanding contributions and engagement to two long-standing members of the Committee, **Lord Jopling** (UK) and **Ulla SCHMIDT** (DE), who were attending their last session.

II. Adoption of the draft agenda

3. **The draft agenda [119 CDS 21 E] was adopted.**

III. Adoption of the Summary of the Meeting of the Committee on Democracy and Security held online on Friday 14 May 2021

4. [The summary \[088 CDS 21 E\] was adopted.](#)

IV. Presentation by Vice Admiral Henrique GOUVEIA E MELO, Coordinator of the Task Force for the Vaccination Plan in Portugal on *Portugal's Fight against Covid-19*

5. As Coordinator of the Task Force, **Vice Admiral Henrique Gouveia E Melo** defined four objectives: improving the governance of the vaccination process; investing in the state's continued responsiveness; maintaining clear communication about the initiative to the public; and clearly defining the processes and priorities of the vaccination plan. He highlighted several factors that contributed to the success of the vaccination program. The execution of the plan was founded on observation, decision-making, and adjustments based on continuous monitoring. Military leadership brought added value to the civilian structure and supported the planning and organisation of the vaccination campaign. To counter anti-vaccination and conspiracy theories, the Task Force established a narrative built around the dichotomy between the community and the virus. The Vice Admiral highlighted that his military affiliation enabled him to be perceived as a neutral leader and avoid the politicisation of the vaccination campaign. Lastly, he insisted on the moral responsibility and strategic necessity of pursuing vaccination efforts globally.

6. Asked by a member about the strategy used by the Task Force to convince harder to reach communities in Portugal, including migrants, to take the COVID-19 vaccine, the Vice Admiral explained that the vaccination process allowed undocumented persons to receive the vaccine without fear of identification by immigration authorities. Referring to a question by another member about the role of the media in the vaccination effort, he stressed that the media had supported the vaccination effort and rarely provided a platform for anti-vaccination rhetoric.

V. Panel: MENA Societies 10 Years after the Uprisings

- **Presentation by Dr Stéphane LACROIX, Associate Professor, CERI Science Po on *Social movements and prospects for political evolution in the MENA region***

7. **Dr Stéphane Lacroix** stated that the 2011 uprisings were originally rooted in a loosening of the Arab authoritarian regimes in the 1990s and 2000s caused by outside democratic pressures. Economic inequality, a lack of youth inclusion in political and economic systems, and widespread corruption, among other factors, contributed to the triggering of the protests. Three scenarios played out during the Arab uprisings: the regimes' attempt to cling to power failed due to internal defections or succeeded through either concessions or the use of force. The Arab uprisings left behind fragile democracies as the revolutions were not accompanied by transitional justice and economic support. Political infighting became prevalent, while the socio-economic needs of the populations remained neglected. Poverty and inequality increased, resulting in disillusionment in democracy among citizens. Dr Lacroix regretted the absence of support for the region from Western nations in the aftermath of the Arab uprisings. Authoritarian countries, such as the United Arab Emirates and Saudi Arabia, filled the gap and promoted their model of governance. Today, the repressive regimes that survived or remerged after the Arab uprisings in the MENA region leave far less room for political opposition and civil society development than before 2011. Dr Lacroix expressed his concern that the lack of credible democratic representation, combined with dire economic conditions in the region, could fuel social and political tensions and benefit extremists.

- **Consideration of the Revised Draft Report of the Sub-Committee on Resilience and Civil Security on *Ten Years after the Arab Uprisings: Democratic Expectations and Disillusions* [\[012 CDSRCS 21 E rev. 1\]](#) by Anissa KHEDHER (France), Sub-Committee Rapporteur**

8. Sub-Committee Rapporteur **Anissa Khedher** (FR) stressed that the expectations of the Arab uprisings have largely not been met. The momentum that followed the protests rapidly gave way to democratic backsliding. The new wave of protests seen in 2019, however, has showed that the same frustrations continue to be felt today, even more so in the context of the COVID-19 pandemic. The Arab uprisings have brought about positive evolutions, such as the development of a growing civil society and the flourishing role of youth as a force for change. However, difficult socio-economic conditions, the lack of respect for human rights and freedom of speech, as well as the continued role of the military in political affairs impede the democratisation process. Tunisia, for instance, has continuously made progress in its democratic transition but has failed to modernise its socio-economic model. In July, the country's President took a series of temporary measures suspending the normal functioning of the institutions, including the Parliament. In Tunisia as well as throughout the region, Ms Khedher stressed the importance of protecting the progress achieved after the Arab uprisings. Stability in the MENA region is crucial to Allied security and cooperation with the region should therefore be strengthened. This stability, however, greatly depends on the ability of MENA authorities to meet the democratic and socio-economic expectations of their populations.

9. Asked by a member about the prospect of elections being held in December in Libya, Ms Khedher said that they could provide an opportunity to relaunch the democratisation process in the country. Dr Lacroix agreed and stressed that Libya, in the past decade, had been affected by internal instability and foreign interference. In response to questions on the efficacy of sanctions in Syria, Dr Lacroix said that scrapping the sanctions would not necessarily alleviate the suffering of the Syrian population and would only lead to progress if such a move were preceded by an agreement between all stakeholders on a political solution. At the same time, he acknowledged that sanctions can be counterproductive and

provide regimes with a justification for their nationalist discourses. Asked about the lack of support offered to the region by Western countries in the aftermath of the Arab uprisings, Dr Lacroix stated that the support for democratic forces in the Arab world should be reinforced. On the situation in Tunisia, he expressed his concern that public disillusionment with democracy could undermine the progress achieved since the Arab uprisings.

10. [The revised draft report \[012 CDS DG 21 E rev. 1\] was adopted.](#)

VI. Presentation by David VAN WEEL, NATO Assistant Secretary General for Emerging Security Challenges on *The Impact of Climate Change on the Security and Resilience of the Alliance*

11. **David Van Weel** stated that climate change has become the primary challenge facing humanity. The risks that climate change poses to our security and resilience are immense. In response, NATO has recently adopted a Climate Change and Security Action Plan which focuses on four strands of work: awareness, adaptation, mitigation, and outreach. NATO plans to undertake a comprehensive Climate Security Impact Assessment and will include climate change considerations in defence planning, civil emergency planning, and disaster relief. NATO also aims to help Allies in formulating voluntary national goals and implementing best practices to reduce military greenhouse gas emissions (GHG). Mr Van Weel concluded by identifying three major areas that require particular attention: the reduction of military GHG to work towards developing a “green military”; the strengthening of NATO’s resilience, including through investments in the protection of critical infrastructure; and a reflection on the implications of climate change for NATO’s future military operations.

12. Asked how NATO nations can assist the Alliance to reduce CO2 emissions and how the Alliance could contribute to the COP26, Mr Van Weel pointed out that part of NATO’s strategy to address climate change will be to identify vulnerabilities and respond to the impact of climate change in member states. He added that the NATO Secretary-General will attend the COP26 and that, by the next Summit, NATO aims to establish a dialogue with other international organisations focused on climate change and security issues. In response to a question on tensions over water resources, Mr Van Weel said that such tensions could not only affect NATO’s neighbourhood but also Allied member countries. NATO will need to adopt a whole-of-society approach to this threat and monitor the effects of climate change to maintain its capacity to react early and efficiently to crises. Referring to a question on the adaptation of military forces to climate change, Mr Van Weel noted that the defence sector has long been a driver of innovation and that lengthy procurement processes require swift action to ensure that NATO combines military superiority with a green approach. Asked about ways in which NATO member countries can strengthen the resilience of their critical infrastructure to climate change, he emphasised that efforts in member states should start with creating public awareness about the risks and introducing measures that strengthen both physical and societal resilience.

VII. Consideration and vote on the Draft General report *Enhancing the Resilience of Allied Societies through Civil Preparedness* [011 CDS 21 E rev. 1] presented by Joëlle GARRIAUD-MAYLAM (France)

13. General Rapporteur **Joëlle Garriaud-Maylam** (FR) emphasised that Allied nations need to develop a whole-of-society approach to the complex and varied challenges of today’s security environment. Such an approach would ensure that civilian and military actors can act in a coordinated manner. She noted that the privatisation of critical infrastructure and the interconnectedness of contemporary societies and economies have increased the vulnerability of Allied societies to shocks. She presented four recommendations to strengthen the civil preparedness of the Alliance: allocating sufficient

financial and human resources to meet Allied ambitions in the area of resilience; intensifying cooperation with partner countries and organisations through regular exercises and cross-assessments; stepping up communication efforts to raise awareness; and streamlining resilience into the NATO 2030 process and the update of the Strategic Concept.

14. Asked about the compatibility of a whole-of-society approach with the rise in internal socio-political tensions within some Allied countries, Ms Garriaud-Maylam stated that NATO member states need to overcome such tensions and foster cohesion and cooperation to achieve progress in the areas of resilience and civil preparedness. She agreed with a member who stressed the importance of Allied preparedness to CBRN attacks and emphasised the key role played by the Euro-Atlantic Disaster Response Coordination Centre in reinforcing Allied resilience. Referring to a question on the need for greater civil-military cooperation and better protection of critical infrastructure, Ms Garriaud-Maylam noted that increased efforts and investments are required in these areas to ensure that Allied countries have the ability to prevent and respond to any type of crisis. Questioned on the importance of integrating diasporas in these efforts, she insisted that they should be included and mentioned the repatriation of EU citizens from abroad at the beginning of the COVID-19 pandemic as a positive example. Asked about the need for private companies to develop contingency plans to reduce risks associated with cyberattacks on critical infrastructure, Ms Garriaud-Maylam said that such plans are essential, and companies should be encouraged and supported by states to reinforce their resilience.

15. [The draft General Report \[011 CDS 21 E rev. 1\] was adopted.](#)

VIII. Consideration of amendments and vote on the draft Resolution *Developing a Pan-Societal, Integrated and Coordinated Approach to Resilience for Allied Democracies* by Joëlle GARRIAUD-MAYLAM (France), General Rapporteur

16. Joëlle Garriaud-Maylam stressed that national and collective resilience must be strengthened through the adoption of a whole-of-society approach based on civil-military cooperation. She pointed out that the advanced expertise already developed by some NATO countries in this area should be better shared within the Alliance. She also urged governments and NATO institutions to allocate sufficient financial and human resources to meet the Alliance's needs and ambitions in the area of resilience; to create effective early warning systems; and to further raise awareness among citizens about their role in crisis prevention and response. She concluded that the resilience of Allies also depends on that of partners and that deeper cooperation between NATO and partner countries should therefore be a priority.

17. Four amendments were submitted to the draft Resolution. All were adopted, some with slight alterations.

18. [The draft Resolution \[120 CDS 21 E rev. 1 fin\], as amended, was adopted.](#)

IX. Election of Committee and Sub-Committee Officers

19. The Committee and Sub-Committee officers eligible for re-election were re-elected by acclamation. The following candidates were elected by acclamation:

Subcommittee on Resilience and Civil Security
Vice-chairperson **Susan Wild (United States)**

Ukraine-NATO Interparliamentary Council

Member **Monika Falej (Poland)**
 Alternate **Aleksandrs Kiršteins (Latvia)**

Sunday 10 October 2021

X. Summary of Committee and Sub-Committee activities for 2021 and 2022

20. The Chairperson announced that, in 2022, the Committee's General Report would address the importance of protecting Allied critical infrastructure against cyber threats. The Special Report will focus on better understanding, mitigating, and adapting to the impact of climate change on the civil security of the Alliance; and the report of the Sub-Committee will discuss the role of Allies and NATO in protecting and promoting the humanitarian space in conflict situations.

21. Concerning visits, the Chairperson mentioned that the Sub-Committee would travel to the United States on 25-29 October 2021. He noted that a visit to the Republic of Korea originally planned for November 2021 had been postponed to 2022 due to COVID 19-related restrictions. In addition, in 2022, the CDS intends to visit the Netherlands and Denmark, including Greenland.

XI. Presentation by Professor Remus PRICOPIE, Rector of the National University of Political Studies and Public Administration (SNSPA) from Bucharest, Romania, on *Public Awareness on Security Issues and the Role of Education*

22. **Professor Remus Pricopie** explained that 65 percent of Romanians hold a positive view of NATO and the EU. He noted, however, that variations exist between age groups, with the younger generation being more receptive to the narratives disseminated by foreign news channels such as the Russian channel Sputnik. Mr Pricopie highlighted that security-related events such as NATO exercises held in Romania are usually accompanied by increased dissemination of propaganda and disinformation in the online space. To avoid a decline in public trust in Romanian foreign and security policy, such negative narratives must be countered through strategic communication efforts on various levels. These efforts should particularly target the most exposed population groups, such as youth.

XII. Consideration of the Revised Draft Special Report on *Bolstering the Democratic Resilience of the Alliance against Disinformation and Propaganda* by Linda SANCHEZ (United States), Special Rapporteur

23. **Linda Sanchez** (US) noted that the line between fact and fiction is becoming increasingly blurred in Allied societies. This has been visible throughout the COVID-19 pandemic and culminated in the January 6 attack on the United States Capitol. Various foreign and domestic actors are involved in the dissemination of disinformation. The malevolent efforts of authoritarian states – particularly Russia, China, and Iran – to undermine Allied democratic resilience by spreading false information are further reinforced by the actions of non-state groups and individual citizens. Ms Sanchez mentioned some of the measures that individual Allies and partners have taken over the last years to counter this threat, including legislative and regulatory action to hold social media companies accountable and the development of media literacy programs. NATO has also stepped up its efforts to fight disinformation about the Alliance by reinforcing its strategic communications. Ms Sanchez presented several recommendations for the Alliance and member countries to efficiently tackle disinformation: e.g. the establishment of a Centre for Democratic Resilience within NATO that would assist member states in identifying vulnerabilities; at the national

level, the development of communication campaigns focused on the groups most vulnerable to disinformation with a view to strengthening societal cohesion; and the adoption of a whole-of-society approach engaging all stakeholders, including educational institutions and civil society organisations.

24. In response to questions on the importance of sharing best practices against disinformation, Ms Sanchez underlined that the envisioned Centre for Democratic Resilience within NATO would provide a platform for such internal sharing. She added that cooperation in this area with non-NATO democratic countries should be encouraged, including through the development of common curricula, lessons learnt, and tool kits. Mr Pricopie said that increased cooperation between institutions in the education sector would also contribute to these efforts. Asked about the role of education in countering disinformation, Ms Sanchez emphasised the need to teach children how to fact-check information. Referring to an inquiry about ways to prevent the mutual amplification of false narratives between state and/or non-state actors as well as individuals, Ms Sanchez reiterated that information recipients must be taught how to fact-check information and analyse it critically. Mr Pricopie highlighted the importance of better understanding the networks through which disinformation spreads in order to tackle it. Asked about the vulnerabilities to disinformation of minority groups, Ms Sanchez affirmed that sowing dissent among communities in a society is one of the most potent tools at the disposal of malign actors using disinformation and propaganda. These harmful tactics are oftentimes exacerbated because fact-checking tools do not pick up on disinformation in minority languages. Queried on the efforts made by the Moldovan authorities to counter Russian disinformation, Mr Pricopie shared that Romanian and Moldovan universities have increased their interaction with a view to strengthen their ability to monitor this common threat.

25. [The draft report \[013 CDS 21 E rev. 1\] was adopted.](#)

XIII. Any other business

26. No other business was raised.

XIV. Date and place of next meeting

27. The next meeting of the Committee will take place at the Spring Session on 27-30 May 2022 in Kyiv, Ukraine.

XV. Closing remarks

28. The Chairperson closed the meeting of the Committee on Democracy and Security.

29. A recording of the meeting is available on the NATO PA YouTube Channel. [\(add link\)](#)
