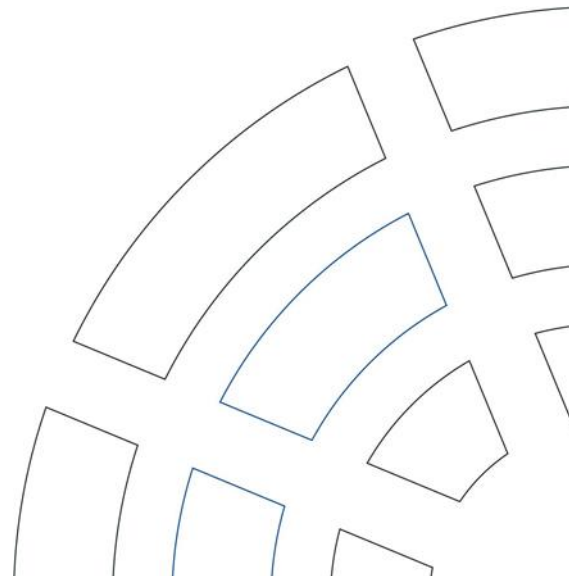




NATO PARLIAMENTARY ASSEMBLY  
ASSEMBLEE PARLEMENTAIRE DE L'OTAN

# THE NATO PARLIAMENTARY ASSEMBLY'S CONTRIBUTION TO THE NATO 2022 STRATEGIC CONCEPT



*On 22 February, the Assembly's Standing Committee unanimously adopted the NATO Parliamentary Assembly's contribution to the NATO 2022 Strategic Concept.*

*Only two days later, Russian President Vladimir Putin decided to start a war of choice against our valued partner Ukraine, triggering what is the gravest security crisis in Europe since World War II. The Assembly has condemned his actions and those of his regime in the strongest terms, and we have reaffirmed our Assembly's unwavering support for Ukraine, its sovereignty, territorial integrity and right to self-defense and self-determination. We are playing our part in mobilizing our parliaments' and citizens' support for Ukraine.*

*President Putin's actions do not invalidate any of the recommendations contained in our contribution. To the contrary, they amplify the importance of many of these recommendations. Importantly, his invasion of Ukraine only confirms the relevance and timeliness of our two key priorities: reaffirming what NATO stands for – our shared democratic values and the core principles undergirding the Alliance; and adapting NATO to a changing security environment.*

*His renewed, full-scale aggression against Ukraine is a blatant attack on the most basic principles underlying the international order since the end of World War II – principles which Moscow has freely signed on to. President Putin seeks to crush Ukraine's democracy, intimidate other countries where the embers of democratic ambition burn and, by implication, undermine democracy everywhere. We must respond by uniting around and strengthening our commitment to our shared democratic values and the rules-based order. The NATO Treaty is clear: NATO is an alliance of democracies. The commitment to shared democratic values enshrined in the Preamble and Article 2 cannot remain purely aspirational or rhetorical. Nor can it be outsourced or delegated to other institutions or bodies. This is why we recommend that NATO should establish a Democratic Resilience Center at Headquarters, to serve as a resource and a clearinghouse of best practices and cross-fertilization on democratic benchmarks available to Allies, partners and aspirants, upon request.*

*Russia's invasion, coupled with President Putin's threatening rhetoric and unacceptable nuclear escalation, once again, make crystal clear that its aggressive actions remain the principal threat to Euro-Atlantic security and, as the NATO Secretary General stated, are now "the new normal". NATO must continue to adjust its deterrence and defence posture and our countries must continue to increase defence spending accordingly. At the same time, the Alliance cannot afford the luxury of addressing one single threat at a time. We must therefore be prepared to confront threats and challenges to Euro-Atlantic security coming from all directions, using all of NATO's available tools based on its three core tasks.*

*In the coming weeks and months, Allied leaders will face the difficult task of charting the Alliance's future path, at a time when the very foundations of Europe's security are being threatened. They can count on our Assembly's full support and commitment.*



Gerald E. Connolly  
President of the NATO Parliamentary Assembly  
1 March 2022

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## I. INTRODUCTION

1. NATO must adopt a new Strategic Concept. The strategic environment has changed dramatically since the last Concept was adopted in 2010. To remain relevant and indispensable, NATO must both recommit to its founding democratic values and adapt and modernise the ways in which it provides a foundation for our collective defence. These two lines of effort will also help strengthen the Alliance internally and make NATO's purpose, intentions and ironclad commitments clearer to its own citizens, partners, and competitors.

2. The NATO Parliamentary Assembly offers 21 recommendations for how the new Strategic Concept can strengthen and future proof the Alliance. We welcome NATO's continuing engagement and consultations with the Assembly in this process. As parliamentarians, we play an active part in explaining and maintaining support for the Alliance among our populations, authorising the resources to keep our armed forces strong and effective, and overseeing the implementation of defence policies on behalf of our citizens. The success of the new Strategic Concept will depend on the political will of all Allies to continue to use NATO as the unique platform for transatlantic security consultation and joint action. The Assembly has been and remains firmly committed to ensuring that success.

## II. PRIORITY NUMBER ONE: REAFFIRM WHAT NATO STANDS FOR

3. NATO has always been defined by what it stands for, rather than by what it stands against. This sense of identity and purpose has ensured NATO's longevity and success. As made clear in the Preamble and Article 2 of the [Washington Treaty](#), NATO is an alliance of democracies. It stands for an unwavering commitment to shared values and principles: democracy, individual liberty, and the rule of law. It also rests on a belief that these values are universal and undergird the rules-based international order that has brought peace, stability, and prosperity to countries all over the world for many decades.

4. Today, these values are under attack. Democracies face their greatest challenge since the end of the Cold War, both from within and from without. As the global march of autocracy quickens its step, the new Strategic Concept must reaffirm what NATO stands for and place shared democratic values at the heart of its response to today's challenges.

5. It must also reaffirm NATO's other foundational principles, many of which are closely linked to its common democratic ideals: the unique transatlantic bond; Article 5 and the indivisibility of Allied security; the consensus principle; and the commitments to consult, to uphold the rules-based international order, to partner with other nations and organisations to foster cooperative security, and to keep NATO's door open for new members.

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### RECOMMENDATION 1:

#### PLACE SHARED DEMOCRATIC VALUES AT THE VERY HEART OF THE NEW STRATEGIC CONCEPT

6. The new Strategic Concept must clearly reaffirm NATO as an alliance of democracies. Shared democratic values are foundational. They are the basis for NATO's unity, cohesion and solidarity. The new Strategic Concept must place these values at the heart of NATO's response to the challenges of today and tomorrow, in words as well as in deeds.

## **RECOMMENDATION 2: ESTABLISH A NATO DEMOCRATIC RESILIENCE CENTRE**

7. Allies must demonstrate that they are serious about their commitment enshrined in NATO's founding treaty to "Safeguard the freedom [...] of their people" and "strengthen [...] their free institutions."

This commitment cannot just be rhetorical nor delegated to outside institutions. The new Strategic Concept must direct the establishment of an institutional architecture within NATO Headquarters to serve as a resource and a clearinghouse of best practices and cross-fertilisation on democratic benchmarks available to member, partner, and aspirant states, upon request.

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## **RECOMMENDATION 3: STRENGTHEN THE UNIQUE TRANSATLANTIC BOND**

8. NATO is and must remain a transatlantic alliance. The transatlantic relationship is unique because it is based on shared values, a shared history, and common heritage. However, it should not be taken for granted.

Recommitting NATO to its shared democratic foundations will strengthen the transatlantic bond. At the same time, Allies must reaffirm their commitment to Article 5 collective defence, make clear that their security is indivisible and that they will therefore consult and act in concert whenever that security is at stake. The new Strategic Concept should also make clear that Allied solidarity is strongest when all Allies contribute fairly and actively to transatlantic security. Lastly, it should urge NATO and Allies to step up efforts to inform their populations about NATO and the unique bond between Europe and North America, including through specific, innovative initiatives directed towards young people.

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## **RECOMMENDATION 4: MAKE CONSENSUS A STRENGTH**

9. The new Strategic Concept should reaffirm consensus as the key principle of NATO decision-making. While consensus is occasionally hard to achieve, there is tremendous power in 30 Allies uniting around common positions, speaking and acting together. However, NATO cannot let consensus decision-making turn into a weakness. Allies must refrain from using consensus as a tool in bilateral disputes. They must also increase the speed of decision-making.

## **RECOMMENDATION 5: COMMIT TO ENHANCED CONSULTATIONS**

10. Through the new Strategic Concept, Allies must recommit to using NATO as the prime venue for transatlantic security consultation and make full use of Article 4 consultations, including to prevent and address differences between them, anticipate emerging threats and challenges, address situations below the Article 5 threshold of an armed attack, and exchange views early on when fundamental values and principles may be at risk. The Strategic Concept must direct the establishment of new formal and informal consultation processes to support enhanced consultation in line with the priorities set under NATO 2030.

**RECOMMENDATION 6:  
BOLSTER THE RULES-BASED INTERNATIONAL ORDER**

11. As an Alliance of democracies, NATO is committed to upholding the rules-based international order. The rule of law must apply to citizens and to states alike. NATO must lead by example through its own policies, missions, operations, and other activities; promote respect for human rights and international humanitarian law and continue to make human security a priority; promote norms of responsible behaviour in new technologies and domains of warfare, taking inspiration from the way NATO has laid out its principles of responsible use of artificial intelligence (AI) in defence in its [first AI strategy](#); and counter attempts by autocracies to challenge existing norms and institutions and promote “alternative” ones. Allies must stand firm on their non-recognition of Russia’s illegal and forcible annexation of Crimea. This remains a primary test of support for the rules-based international order.

**RECOMMENDATION 7:  
LEVERAGE NATO’S PARTNERSHIPS TO SUPPORT THE ALLIANCE’S VALUES, GOALS AND POLICIES**

12. The Strategic Concept should make clear that NATO’s partnerships must and will promote shared democratic values and the rules-based order. They can be a powerful multiplier for NATO’s policies, missions, operations, and other activities. This applies in particular to cooperation with the European Union, which is a strategic institutional partner for NATO, with Finland and Sweden, and with other like-minded partners in the Asia-Pacific region.

**RECOMMENDATION 8:  
STAY TRUE TO THE OPEN DOOR POLICY**

13. Like its partnerships, NATO’s Open Door policy, enshrined in Article 10 of the Washington Treaty, is a clear expression of the Allies’ commitment to shared democratic values and the rules-based international order. In the new Strategic Concept, Allies should reaffirm that all states have a right to define and conduct their own foreign policy course and that NATO’s door is open to European countries which share the Alliance’s values, are able and willing to further its principles, and contribute to Euro-Atlantic security. The Open Door policy must translate into genuine prospects for aspirants committed to these standards.

**RECOMMENDATION 9:  
ENSHRINE NATO’S COMMITMENT TO THE WOMEN, PEACE AND SECURITY AGENDA**

14. The Women, Peace and Security (WPS) agenda is an essential dimension of NATO’s role and contribution as an alliance of democracies. Recognising the critical importance of women’s full, equal and meaningful participation in all aspects of peace and security, NATO must keep effective implementation of the WPS agenda at the core of its work. The new Strategic Concept should reflect not only the important progress NATO has achieved in furthering the WPS agenda but also enshrine the Allies’ commitment to continue to advance its implementation across all areas of policy and in all missions and operations so as to meet the new security challenges. NATO must do more to advance gender equality within its political and military structures, up to and including the highest levels of leadership. It should also lead by example and support broader efforts to promote greater diversity and inclusiveness in defence institutions and within the armed forces.

### III. PRIORITY NUMBER TWO: ADVANCE NATO'S ADAPTATION TO A CHANGED AND STILL EVOLVING SECURITY ENVIRONMENT

15. Today's security environment bears little resemblance to the one depicted in the 2010 Strategic Concept. NATO Allies confront a world of renewed geopolitical rivalry combined with a diverse, evolving set of complex threats and challenges, and the emergence of disruptive technologies.

16. Through its illegal and forcible annexation of Crimea and aggressive actions, Russia itself put an end to 25 years of efforts to build a genuine strategic partnership. Russia's

systematic attempts to challenge the European security order and undermine the rules-based international order represent the principal threat to Euro-Atlantic security.

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Its renewed aggression against Ukraine, combined with its aggressive rhetoric, hybrid activities, cyber operations and energy blackmail have created the gravest security crisis in Europe since the end of the Cold War.

17. China's stated ambitions and actions in turn pose a systemic challenge to the rules-based international order and challenge Allied security and interests in several areas of strategic importance.

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18. Moscow and Beijing both seek to export their autocratic model and expand their influence in key regions, including in the High North, the Black Sea, the Western Balkans and the Alliance's southern neighbourhood. They and other autocracies aim to undermine and divide democracies and weaken our citizens' faith in democracy through the use of hybrid tactics, malicious cyber activities, disinformation, propaganda, interference in democratic processes, weaponisation of migration, economic pressure and coercion, and the manipulation of energy supplies.

19. Both also invest massively in new high technologies, including nuclear weapons capabilities and Emerging and Disruptive Technologies (EDTs), which risk undermining strategic stability, challenge global norms, and test the Alliance's technological edge. Through their actions, both contribute actively to the erosion of the global arms control architecture.

20. Meanwhile, terrorism remains a persistent, direct threat to Allied security, as does the proliferation of weapons of mass destruction and their means of delivery. Ongoing instability, conflict, and poor governance in the Alliance's South and other neighbouring regions risk spilling over and threatening Euro-Atlantic security. Climate change is also increasingly acting as a threat multiplier impacting Allied security. The combined effects of instability and climate change are likely to amplify migration movements in coming years.

21. NATO has already adapted to this new environment in different ways. The new Strategic Concept should both codify this adaptation and chart the way ahead by recasting NATO's three core tasks outlined in the 2010 Strategic Concept – collective defence and deterrence, crisis management, and cooperative security. All of NATO's missions should reflect the reality of today's environment, be clearly geared towards defending Allied citizens' security, and be adequately resourced and funded.



#### **RECOMMENDATION 10:**

#### **DETER AND DEFEND AGAINST ALL THREATS TO ALLIED CITIZENS FROM ALL DIRECTIONS IN ALL DOMAINS**

22. The Strategic Concept should reaffirm that collective defence and deterrence, as enshrined in Article 5 of the Washington Treaty, remains NATO's *raison d'être* and core mission. At the same time, collective defence and deterrence concepts should be further adapted to today's strategic reality of globalised threats. NATO has already made clear that hybrid and cyber attacks as well as attacks to, from, or within space can trigger NATO's Article 5 collective defence clause. The new Strategic Concept should codify these important adaptations as well as direct NATO to refine concepts for deterring and defending below the Article 5 threshold through a combination of political and military tools. Coercion against one Ally must be recognised as coercion against all.

#### **RECOMMENDATION 11:**

#### **MAKE CLEAR NUCLEAR DETERRENCE REMAINS THE ULTIMATE GUARANTEE OF ALLIES' SECURITY**

23. As successive Strategic Concepts and Summit communiqués have stated, as long as nuclear weapons exist, NATO will remain a nuclear alliance. Nuclear deterrence remains the ultimate guarantee of Allies' security. Nuclear burden-sharing arrangements are a fundamental demonstration of Allied solidarity, resolve, and of the indivisibility of Allied security. The concepts and means of nuclear deterrence must continue to adapt to new Russian and Chinese nuclear and missile capability developments, EDTs, and the heightened risk of nuclear proliferation. At the same time, NATO should continue to contribute to arms control, disarmament, and non-proliferation, taking into account the prevailing security environment.

#### **RECOMMENDATION 12:**

#### **ENSHRINE NATO'S DUAL-TRACK APPROACH TO RUSSIA**

24. NATO's dual-track approach of strong deterrence and defence combined with openness to meaningful dialogue has been the Alliance's guiding principle in its relations with Russia since 2014. The grave crisis triggered by Russia's massive military build-up on Ukraine's borders demonstrates that it offers a sound basis both for addressing the threats posed by Russia's actions and for activating and leveraging important channels of de-escalation and engagement depending on circumstances. The Strategic Concept should make clear that Allies will take all necessary measures to deter and defend across the entire spectrum of Russia's threats to transatlantic security. Demonstrating Allied unity and resolve, guided by shared democratic values, is fundamental both to credible deterrence and defence and to effective dialogue.

#### **RECOMMENDATION 13:**

#### **CONTINUE TO DEFEND AGAINST TERRORISM**

25. Terrorism in all its manifestations remains a clear and present threat to our citizens' security. NATO invoked Article 5 for the first and only time following the terrorist attacks on the United States on 11 September 2001. Terrorist groups operate today in several parts of the Alliance's neighbourhood, particularly in Africa and the broader Middle East. The Strategic Concept must ensure that NATO continues to support Allies in defending against terrorism particularly in those areas where the Alliance can help provide enhanced capabilities in areas such as intelligence sharing, surveillance and reconnaissance, chemical biological, radiological and nuclear threats, capacity-building of partners, and the ability to project military power when needed.

#### **RECOMMENDATION 14:**

### **AGREE TO A TRANSATLANTIC CHINA POLICY BASED ON ENGAGEMENT, COMPETITION, AND THE DEFENCE OF ALLIES' SECURITY INTERESTS**

26. The Strategic Concept should, for the first time, set out a NATO policy towards China. This should build on the principles laid out in the June 2021 Brussels Summit communiqué. NATO should engage with China wherever it can and when it is in its interest to do so and use this engagement to encourage China to act as a responsible global player; working in close complementarity with the EU and other key partners, it should compete with China to maintain its scientific and technological edge and the independence and resilience of its supply chains; and it should deter China when Beijing's actions challenge Euro-Atlantic security.

#### **RECOMMENDATION 15:**

### **ELEVATE THE NEED FOR WHOLE-OF-SOCIETY RESILIENCE**

27. As hybrid warfare and threats below the Article 5 threshold become more prevalent, the new Strategic Concept should elevate the importance of Article 3 of the NATO Treaty and recognise the renewed importance of resilience as the first line of deterrence and defence. State institutions, the military, the private sector, and citizens all have essential roles to play in bolstering our nations' independence, e.g. in the fields of energy or other strategic goods and industries; in resisting attempts to undermine the foundations of our free, inclusive societies and disrupt critical infrastructure, such as energy supplies or underwater communication cables; and in recovering quickly after an attack. While resilience is first and foremost a national responsibility, NATO, including in partnership with the EU, can provide a valuable platform to support a whole-of-society, shared approach to resilience leveraging civilian and military expertise across the Alliance.

#### **RECOMMENDATION 16:**

### **INCORPORATE THE SECURITY IMPACT OF CLIMATE CHANGE**

28. The new Strategic Concept must recognise the multifaceted impact of climate change on our security and our armed forces. This is not about NATO leading the response to climate change. It is about NATO leading in its understanding of climate change as a threat multiplier, in taking into account the potential impact of climate change in its policies and activities, and in preparing Allied forces to operate in an environment impacted by climate change. It is also about NATO leading by example, whenever possible, by reducing its own carbon footprint and embracing green technologies, while ensuring uninterrupted and reliable access to supplies to military forces and operations.

#### **RECOMMENDATION 17:**

### **FURTHER REFORM AND RESOURCE NATO'S PARTNERSHIPS**

29. The new Strategic Concept should recognise NATO's partnerships as one of the Alliance's greatest success stories. Through its wide network of partners, NATO has been able to expand the area of peace and stability in its neighbourhood by supporting democratic reform and helping develop the capacity of partners, particularly in the East and in the South, to deal with security challenges in their respective regions. In a globalised world, working with partners to address shared security threats and prevent spill-over from instability is essential. NATO must continue to reform its partnerships to better match its own interests and values and better resource them to live up to the Alliance's stated level of ambition. Partners, in turn, should contribute to common security through the promotion of shared values and by projecting stability in their respective regions.

**RECOMMENDATION 18:  
ENSHRINE NATO-EU COMPLEMENTARITY**

30. Like the June 2021 Brussels Summit communiqué, the new Strategic Concept should affirm that the European Union remains a unique and essential partner for NATO, and that the NATO-EU strategic institutional partnership is essential for the security and prosperity of Allied nations and the Euro-Atlantic area as a whole. NATO has and should continue to recognise the importance of a stronger and more capable European defence. The development of coherent, complementary and interoperable defence capabilities, avoiding unnecessary duplication and ensuring the fullest involvement of non-EU Allies, is key in our joint efforts to make the Euro-Atlantic area safer.

**RECOMMENDATION 19:  
DEFINE THE FUTURE PARAMETERS OF NATO'S ROLE IN CRISIS MANAGEMENT**

31. The new Strategic Concept must incorporate the lessons learned from NATO's 20-year engagement in Afghanistan – not to weaken the Alliance, but to strengthen NATO's potential role in crisis management in the future. Through its military effectiveness and interoperability, NATO brings unique added value to crisis management in support of the United Nations. It is still successfully engaged in crisis management in the Western Balkans. NATO must be willing and able to support crisis management again in the future. However, the parameters of its engagement must be better defined so as to set clear, achievable, realistic goals, benchmarks, and timelines and to ensure political will and resources match the mission.

**RECOMMENDATION 20:  
MEET AND SUSTAIN ALLIED DEFENCE SPENDING GOALS**

32. All Allies committed to the Defence Investment Pledge in Wales in 2014. While there has been good progress, a number of Allies must still meet that pledge. In light of the unprecedented set of threats and challenges confronting Allies, the new Strategic Concept should enshrine the 2%/20% guidelines of the Defence Investment Pledge as a minimum commitment for the long term.

**RECOMMENDATION 21:  
INVEST IN INNOVATION TO KEEP THE ALLIANCE'S TECHNOLOGICAL EDGE**

33. In an age of disruption, dominance in combat will come increasingly from the ability to innovate, master emerging and disruptive technologies, and anticipate and address the impact of technological and other future challenges. The Strategic Concept must set a clear ambition to maintain NATO's edge as competition for technological preeminence increases. Ensuring that all Allies contribute to and benefit from innovation will be key to maintaining the unmatched level of interoperability of Allied forces.

**IV. CONCLUSION: BUILDING LASTING SUPPORT FOR THE ALLIANCE IN OUR SOCIETIES**

34. The new Strategic Concept will define NATO's vision and strategy to meet the challenges of today and tomorrow. The current crisis in relations with Russia vindicates our Assembly's conviction that the Strategic Concept must be rooted in NATO's enduring commitment to its foundational, immutable values. This commitment in turn must be operationalised through the creation of Democratic Resilience Centre at NATO. We will only be able to match NATO's ambitions with political will and adequate resources if they can be explained to our populations in clear and compelling terms and if we can build lasting support for the Alliance among our citizens, including our youth. As members of the Assembly, we want to continue to play our part in this process and hope the Strategic Concept will recognise the Assembly's important role and contribution. We look forward to further strengthening the cooperation between the Assembly and NATO.