



NATO PARLIAMENTARY ASSEMBLY
ASSEMBLEE PARLEMENTAIRE DE L'OTAN

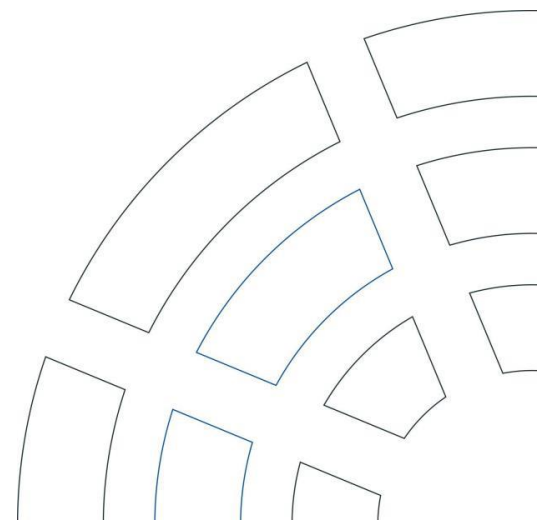
POLITICAL COMMITTEE (PC) GENERAL REPORT

NATO'S POLITICAL AND SECURITY ADAPTATION IN RESPONSE TO RUSSIA'S WAR: ASSESSING THE NEW STRATEGIC CONCEPT AND IMPLEMENTATION OF THE MADRID SUMMIT DECISIONS

General Report
Tomas VALASEK (Slovakia)
Acting General Rapporteur

020 PC 22 E rev. 2 fin – Original: English – 19 November 2022

Founded in 1955, the NATO Parliamentary Assembly acts as a consultative interparliamentary organisation which is institutionally separate from NATO. This report was adopted by the Committee at the 68th Annual Session of the NATO Parliamentary Assembly. It is based on information from publicly available sources or NATO PA meetings, which are all unclassified.



Faced with the greatest security crisis on the European continent since the end of WW2, NATO needs to recalibrate itself, and do so urgently. The new NATO Strategic Concept adopted in Madrid places a clear emphasis on defence and deterrence. This approach is also reflected in the decisions of the transformative NATO Summit in Madrid. Throughout this report, the General Rapporteur urges Allied policymakers to deliver and build on the Madrid decisions, focusing in particular on robust defence of the eastern flank and the support for Ukraine. The report stresses that US presence on the ground is crucial and sends a powerful political message to potential adversaries. At the same time, the US cannot be expected to carry more than its fair share of the burden. All European Allies need to step up and ensure the allocation of adequate resources both for the upgraded forward presence in Central and Eastern Europe and for the new Force Model.

At the same time, NATO cannot simply revert back to the Cold War posture: the world has become far more complex, and peace and stability in the Euro-Atlantic area are also affected by the persistent threat of terrorism, China's assertiveness, instability in Africa and Middle East, the erosion of arms control and other challenges such as the spread of emerging and disruptive technologies as well as climate change. The Alliance should have the capacity to conduct out-of-area missions to protect their security interests, insofar as these missions' end-goals are clearly defined and underpinned by adequate resources. NATO should continue developing partnerships, especially with like-minded nations and organisations with a view to setting global standards that are aligned with the values of liberal democracy. NATO cannot and should not compromise on potential accession to NATO of eligible democratic nations if their societies willingly choose Euro-Atlantic integration and meet membership requirements. To ensure effective decision-making, the Allies should fully use NATO as a platform for consultations on matters of security and defence, and continue cultivating their common identity as an Alliance of democracies. NATO Parliamentarians have a pivotal role to play in advancing Alliance cohesion and supporting the ongoing NATO adaptation.

I-	INTRODUCTION	1
II-	DETERRENCE AND DEFENCE	4
III-	CRISIS PREVENTION AND MANAGEMENT	9
IV-	COOPERATIVE SECURITY	10
V-	CROSS-CUTTING THEMES IN THE NEW STRATEGIC CONCEPT	15
	A. PROTECTING NATO'S VALUES	15
	B. STRENGTHENING NATO AS A POLITICAL INSTITUTION	17
	C. STRENGTHENING SOCIETAL RESILIENCE	18
	D. OTHER ISSUES	21
VI-	CONCLUDING REMARKS	22
	BIBLIOGRAPHY	24

I- INTRODUCTION

1. Between 2010 and 2022, when the two most recent NATO Strategic Concepts were adopted, the world has changed. By all accounts, the post-Cold War era has ended. An all-out war unleashed by Vladimir Putin against Ukraine has sealed the transition by openly challenging some of the most fundamental assumptions about the contemporary European, and indeed global security order. These assumptions include:

- 1) Symmetrical state-on-state warfare and the war of attrition are no longer practiced, at least in Europe. Landgrabs using military force lost their relevance in the increasingly borderless interconnected world, as nations compete in the realms of economy, technology, and soft power.
- 2) The rules-based world order is enduring, the globalisation and growing interdependency is irreversible and the number of countries embracing liberal democracy is set to grow.
- 3) The likelihood of a use of nuclear weapons in Europe is extremely low.

2. Retrospectively, the symptoms of the upcoming paradigm shift in the European (and global) strategic landscape were unmistakable: the Russian invasions of Georgia in 2008 and Ukraine in 2014, the Freedom House's reporting on the steady decline in global freedom since 2005, the increasing electoral success of populist and nationalist politicians in the West, but also elsewhere, the growing Chinese assertiveness and revisionism and the noticeable trend towards protectionism in the global economy. One can also discern the erosion of the common perception of reality as the result of the social media revolution and the proliferation of fake news and 'alternative facts'.

3. The Euro-Atlantic community has already been making adjustments to the new reality, galvanised in particular by the illegal annexation of Crimea in 2014. The milestone NATO Summits in Wales and Warsaw reversed the trend of decreasing military spending and introduced a range of initiatives to bolster the Allied defence and deterrence capabilities. The brief reference to China in the 2019 Allied leaders' meeting in London has evolved into a lengthy assessment of the Chinese challenge in the 2021 NATO Summit communiqué. The Allies have also taken important steps to boost the resilience of their societies and infrastructure. The NATO Parliamentary Assembly has been actively supporting this adaptation – and, indeed, has often been ahead of the Allied governments in its deliberations and policy recommendations.

4. In June 2022, NATO leaders in Madrid adopted the long-awaited new Strategic Concept. NATO's Strategic Concepts are highly important documents, second only to the Washington Treaty itself. They outline the Alliance's strategy to address fundamental security risks and to exploit opportunities to promote Allied interests in a changing security environment. Strategic Concepts are much more than just theoretical and rhetorical exercises – they are accompanied by guidelines for the Alliance's political and military adaptation, inform political and military planners about mid-term defence policy directions and priorities, and, in turn, translate into concrete national defence policy decisions.

5. Since its foundation in 1949, NATO has adopted seven Strategic Concepts. Four of them were adopted in the Cold War era – they were classified and were heavily focused on defence and deterrence of the Soviet threat, reflecting NATO's adaptation to the evolving nuclear weapon strategies (from 'massive retaliation' to 'flexible response'). These four Concepts were accompanied by important strategic documents such as the 1956 Report of the Committee of

Three and the 1967 Harmel Report that called for strengthening the political side of the Alliance and helped to better prepare it for the periods of détente in the later stages of the Cold War. The 1991 and 1999 Concepts were markedly different from their predecessors: they were made public (although not the key accompanying documents) and they stipulated a new vision for the Alliance based on a much broader definition of security (NATO, 2021 b).

6. The Strategic Concept adopted in 2010, in force until 2022, was very much the product of the era where Europe was fully enjoying the “peace dividend”. The description of the security environment started with a statement that “Today, the Euro-Atlantic area is at peace and the threat of a conventional attack against NATO territory is low”. Crisis management and cooperative security were identified as core tasks for NATO alongside – and ostensibly on equal footing – with collective defence. Moreover, the definition of collective defence itself was much broader – some may argue ‘diluted’ – spanning from tackling proliferation of WMD, terrorism, energy security and cyber threats to tackling emerging technologies. The document noted that NATO “does not consider any country to be its adversary” and famously called for “a true strategic partnership between NATO and Russia”. The possibility of the use of nuclear weapons was considered “extremely remote”, and Allies were urged to actively contribute to nuclear disarmament, a line possibly inspired by the Obama administration’s ‘nuclear zero’ vision. Written in the wake of the global economic downturn, the Strategic Concept was mute on the need to address the decline in defence spending, apart from the generic call to “sustain the necessary levels of defence spending”. The Concept did not contain a single reference to China. That said, the 2010 Concept made important strides in NATO’s strategic thinking on how to tackle emerging non-traditional threats such as cyber-attacks.

7. While some may argue that the 2010 Concept merely reflected the realities of its time, some contemporary strategic thinkers had been suggesting a somewhat different vision. The report of the Group of Experts,¹ appointed by then Secretary General Anders Fogh Rasmussen to lay the groundwork for a new Strategic Concept and led by former US Secretary of State Madeleine Albright, has been more direct in identifying the challenges ahead for the Alliance. The report noted that while the risk of conventional war in Europe was low, “the possibility cannot be ignored”, and that NATO must be on guard against Russia turning adversarial. It also called for collective defence to be backed up with “contingency planning, focused exercises, force readiness, and sound logistics” (NATO, 2010). The Assembly has been actively engaged in exchanges with the Group of Experts.

8. Retrospectively, the 2010 Strategic Concept assessment of the global security landscape was overly optimistic and complacent. By elevating crisis management and cooperative security to the same level as collective defence it failed to provide clear guidance for military planners at the time (though, admittedly, the very ambiguity of the 2010 Strategic Concept provided the military planners with the flexibility to make the necessary changes post-2014 without stretching NATO’s core strategic document). The subsequent Russian challenge, coupled with the rapid rise of revisionist China, the burgeoning of emerging and disruptive technologies and the increased cleavages among the Allies, all made the substantial revision of the NATO Strategic Concept an urgent task. The NATO PA has been calling for it at least since 2018.

¹ Your Rapporteur serves as an Advisor to the Group of Experts in his then capacity as Director of Foreign Policy and Defence, Centre for European Reform, London.

9. The drafting of the new Strategic Concept, launched at the June 2021 Summit, was preceded by a comprehensive report of the independent Reflection Group, appointed by Secretary General Jens Stoltenberg to present a forward-looking vision for NATO in the coming decade. The NATO Parliamentary Assembly has contributed markedly to this reflection process. The Secretary General also consulted with the representatives of the youth (“Young Leaders” report) for their input on NATO 2030 as well as with the private sector NATO-Private Sector Dialogues held in cooperation with GLOBSEC.

10. Beyond this consultation and reflection phase, the drafting of the new Strategic Concept was an internal process, with consultations taking place among Allied representatives at the level of Ambassadors and ministers. Allies organised four seminars on defence and deterrence; on future-proofing NATO; on partnerships; and on global challenges to the rules-based international order.

11. The NATO PA has contributed to this process through exchanges with senior NATO officials, including members of the North Atlantic Council, and offered 21 recommendations for how the new Strategic Concept can strengthen and future proof the Alliance (NATO PA, 2022). Parliamentarians play an active part in explaining and maintaining support for the Alliance among their populations, authorising the resources to keep Allied armed forces strong and effective, and overseeing the implementation of defence policies on behalf of their citizens. The Assembly has been particularly emphasising the need for the Allies to use the new Strategic Concept to recommit to the founding democratic values and to establish, within NATO, a Democratic Resilience Centre (NATO PA, 2021). The adopted Strategic Concept on numerous occasions echoes or seconds the spirit of the Assembly’s recommendations.

12. The new NATO Strategic Concept adopted in Madrid represents a radical departure from its predecessor. It is based on an understanding that “[t]he Euro-Atlantic area is not at peace.” The most immediate threat is posed by Russia’s aggressive actions. Article 5 of the North Atlantic Treaty is reaffirmed as “the bedrock of Allied collective defence”. At the same time, the authors of the Concept do not suggest that NATO should simply revert back to the Cold War posture: the world has become far more complex, and peace and stability in the Euro-Atlantic area are also affected by the persistent threat of terrorism, instability in Africa and Middle East, China’s assertiveness, the erosion of arms control and other challenges such as the spread of emerging and disruptive technologies as well as climate change. While placing a clear emphasis on defence and deterrence, the Concept keeps the notion of three core tasks for NATO, including crisis management and cooperative security. This approach is also reflected in the decisions of what Secretary General Jens Stoltenberg referred to as “transformative” NATO Summit in Madrid.

13. This report will be structured around the three core tasks of NATO as well as other themes that permeate these tasks, including commitment to democratic values, the notion of resilience and the strengthening of NATO as an organisation. The report will assess the strategic implications of the new Strategic Concept for the Alliance’s strategy in the foreseeable future and offer ideas of ways to implement and further elaborate the strategic decisions of the Madrid Summit.

II- DETERRENCE AND DEFENCE ²

14. As noted, the 2010 Strategic Concept was not ambitious in terms of defence and deterrence. The subsequent events have demonstrated clearly that the document would have benefited from the inclusion of more robust language on collective defence, as was suggested by Madeleine Albright's Group of Experts' report. The report called, as the paramount priority, to focus on shielding member states from armed aggression.

15. Failure to adequately invest into capabilities, preposition forces and equipment, and to prepare contingency plans could have cost the Alliance dearly. Your Rapporteur would argue that had the Russian aggression in 2014 expanded beyond parts of Ukraine, and had Vladimir Putin chosen to test NATO's capabilities and readiness at that time, these capabilities would have likely been found wanting. The lack of proper guidance for the Allied military from the Strategic Concept could have led to dire consequences.

16. Galvanised by the events in 2014, NATO has fundamentally revisited its defence and deterrence posture, and began re-learning some of the practices used in the Cold War. NATO has significantly improved force readiness, presence, and resilience across the Alliance. Thanks to defence budget increases, European Allies and Canada have contributed a cumulative extra of USD 260 billion between 2014 and the end of 2021. NATO and the EU started to address the problem of military mobility as their flagship co-operation project. It must be noted that to understand NATO's strategic priorities post-2014, one would need to turn to NATO Summit communiqués and statements by NATO Secretary General, rather than to the 2010 Strategic Concept.

17. As NATO started to seriously reflect on its strategy for the next decade, defence and deterrence have been rightfully prioritised in a series of analytical and policy documents. Notably, the Allies have adopted the NATO Warfighting Capstone Concept and the Concept for Deterrence and Defence of the Euro-Atlantic Area to further ensure the modernisation and readiness of Allied forces. They also drafted and adopted new contingency plans to defend Central and Eastern European Allies. The report of the independent Reflection Group, while focusing on the political aspects of NATO2030 agenda, nevertheless called on NATO to "maintain adequate conventional and nuclear military capabilities and possess the agility and flexibility to confront aggression across the Alliance's territory, including where Russian forces are either directly or indirectly active, particularly on NATO's eastern flank" (NATO, 2020). The NATO Parliamentary Assembly, in its contribution to the new Strategic Concept, underscored that collective defence and deterrence "remains NATO's raison d'être and core mission." In a separate resolution, NATO Parliamentarians called on Allied leaders to identify – in the new Strategic Concept – that Russia's aggressive actions pose the most immediate threat to Euro-Atlantic security and values, and to further enhance the Alliance's defence and deterrence posture by holding more frequent joint exercises, increasing rotational deployments on the eastern flank and addressing capability gaps in the region, as well as accelerating progress on military mobility to enable rapid reinforcement of NATO units on the eastern flank in case of crisis (NATO Parliamentary Assembly, 2021 (b)). The first version of this General Report, introduced at the Assembly's Spring session in Vilnius in May

² For an in-depth analysis of the military dimension of the new Strategic Concept, see the draft General report of the NATO PA's Defence and Security Committee.

2022, urged the authors of the Strategic Concept to clearly identify Putin’s Russia as posing a direct threat to NATO.

18. The Russian assault on Ukraine in 2022 has further consolidated the Allied resolve to focus on defence and deterrence. This act of unabashed aggression has prompted a large NATO Ally, Germany, to make a historic turn in its foreign and defence policy philosophy, allocating an additional 100 billion Euro for its military (and thus putting Germany on track to meeting the 2% GDP defence spending target in the upcoming years), and sending military equipment, including heavy weapons, to Ukraine. Several other Allies are considering further increases in defence spending. On the eve and in the wake of the Russian invasion, the US deployed an additional 14,000 troops to reassure European Allies, which now brings the total number of US troops in Europe to nearly 100,000 (Cooper, 2022). NATO as an organisation deployed defensive additional land and air forces in the eastern part of the Alliance, including by drawing on NATO Response Force, as well as maritime assets across the NATO area. The Allies also activated NATO’s defence plans to prepare for a range of contingencies (NATO, 2022). The extraordinary NATO Summit on 24 March 2022 approved the deployment of four additional battlegroups to the Alliance’s East (Bulgaria, Hungary, Romania, Slovakia).



Source: “NATO’s Eastern Flank: Stronger Defense and Deterrence,” NATO HQ, June 2022, https://www.nato.int/nato_static_fl2014/assets/pdf/2022/3/pdf/2203-map-det-def-east.pdf

19. The new Strategic Concept capitalised on this momentum and made it clear that collective defence is the foundation of this Alliance. While the 2010 Concept suffered from a lack of focus, and the list of priority areas was too extensive, the new Strategic Concept followed a different path. Crisis management and cooperative security remain crucial tasks for this Alliance. NATO’s engagement in these tasks is making the Euro-Atlantic community and its neighbourhood significantly safer. However, collective defence remains the sole existential task for the Alliance. Should NATO fail in building partnerships, it would face a more volatile neighbourhood and find it more difficult to safeguard the rules-based world order, but it would continue to function. If NATO

fails in a crisis management mission, it creates unnecessary suffering and loses some of its global reputation but it can recover from such a setback, as the Afghanistan experience proves. However, a failure to provide collective defence in case of an Art. V situation could prove fatal in that it would demolish NATO's ability to deter and force individual Allies to seek alternative bilateral and multilateral defence guarantees.

20. Collective defence is the sine qua non for this Alliance. The new Strategic Concept has recognised that by assigning collective defence a privileged position among NATO core tasks. The Concept declares that the Alliance's "key purpose and greatest responsibility is to ensure our collective defence". It implicitly makes other core tasks subservient to the main objective by describing them as "complementary to ensure the collective defence and security of all Allies." Moreover, the Concept makes it clear that "The Russian Federation is the most significant and direct threat to Allies' security and to peace and stability in the Euro-Atlantic area." These provisions provide a greater coherence and guidance for NATO force planning, capability development and exercises.

21. The new Strategic Concept's ambitious language on collective defence provides a basis for accompanying NATO policy documents and paves the way for the strategic realignment of NATO's defensive posture. At the Madrid Summit, Allied leaders "set a new baseline for [the Alliance's] deterrence and defence posture." More specifically, they acknowledged that the 'tripwire' capability on the eastern flank is no longer adequate: committed to "defend every inch of Allied territory", Allies will need to augment conventional capabilities significantly to be able to inflict such damage on the aggressor so as to deter an aggression in the first place. In Madrid, NATO leaders have committed "to deploy additional robust in-place combat-ready forces on [the] eastern flank", including scaling up the existing battlegroups to brigade-size units (albeit with a caveat of "where and when required") as well as working towards command and control arrangements for division-level structures. Allies also agreed to increase pre-positioned stocks of weapons and equipment in frontline states. It is notable that the Madrid communiqué includes a reference to "forward defences", a concept that was endorsed, inter alia, by the Assembly's Standing Committee in its declaration adopted on 10 April 2022.

22. While these measures to reinforce the eastern flank are ambitious and highly relevant, both the Strategic Concept and the Madrid Summit statement reflect the fact that the Alliance includes nations with a range of other security concerns. The Allies reiterated the commitment to the 360-degree approach to security. Combatting terrorism remains a top priority for the Alliance – the two documents as well as the Secretary General's statements tend to consistently mention terrorism second in the list of challenges for NATO, immediately following references to Russia's aggressive actions. In fact, Russia and terrorism are the only two explicitly identified 'threats' to Allied security. In line with this 360-degree approach, the overhaul of NATO's defence and deterrence posture is not exclusively focused on the eastern flank: NATO's intention to boost the 40,000-strong NATO Response Force by introducing the new Force Model should significantly enhance the Alliance's ability to respond to threats from any direction and across all domains. The new NATO Force Model is expected to consist of two tiers of high-readiness forces: 100,000 ready to be deployed within 10 days (compared to the previous model of 40,000 within 15 days), and 200,000 within 30 days (NATO, 2022 (d)).

23. In the months following the Madrid Summit, NATO and Allied national planners will need to address a number of important questions relating to the implementation of the Summit's decisions. In particular, what will be the exact balance between NATO's forward deployments and

pre-assigned high-readiness forces to be moved to frontline states in case of a crisis, especially in the context of NATO's commitment to defend "every inch" of its territory? Estonian Prime Minister Kaja Kallas has famously noted that small frontline Allied nations do not have the strategic depth for their armed forces to retreat. Russia's barbaric behaviour in the occupied territories of Ukraine indicates that the very existence of these nations would be jeopardised in case of Russia's invasion and protracted occupation.

24. With regards to the eastern flank, the presence of significant forward-deployed assets is crucial. The lack of strategic depth and geographic factors (such as the presence and location of the Kaliningrad enclave) could hypothetically allow Russia to hinder the arrival of reinforcements. Taken together, these elements strongly suggest that NATO, on its eastern flank, should opt for deterrence by denial, rather than deterrence by punishment (Atlantic Council, 2022). Furthermore, lessons from Russia's war against Ukraine need to be taken into account, including the importance of deploying adequate air, maritime, unmanned and artillery assets in the frontline states. The Strategic Concept implies that the Allies no longer feel constrained by the NATO-Russia Founding Act (for example, the Concept states that the two are no longer "partners"). Given Russia's flagrant and repeated violations of the Act, Allied leaders should go a step further and make clear that the document, with its provisions limiting forward deployment of NATO forces, is now null and void.

25. The actual implementation of adapted forward defence (including the component of pre-assigned forces) will require concerted efforts both from host nations and Allies contributing forces. During the recent visit of the Assembly's Defence and Security Committee to Latvia and Estonia, NATO Parliamentarians were briefed on infrastructural issues to be addressed in order to accommodate larger NATO military presence in the Baltic States. The issue of proper burden sharing between the North American and European Allies will also be pertinent: in 2022, the US has increased its military presence in Europe to about 100,000, it has decided to deploy a rotational Brigade Combat Team in Romania, to enhance rotational deployments in the Baltics, to increase maritime presence in Spain, to station two additional squadrons of F-35 fighter jets in the UK and to establish a permanent US Army headquarters in Poland (Shalal & Landauro, 2022). The US presence on the ground is crucial and sends a powerful political message to potential adversaries. At the same time, the US cannot be expected to carry more than its fair share of the burden. All European Allies need to step up and ensure the allocation of adequate resources both for the upgraded forward presence in Central and Eastern Europe and for the new Force Model, providing over 300,000 troops at high readiness.

26. The announced plans for defence spending increases in Europe suggest that meeting these commitments will be a challenge. As of the first half of 2022, only seven European Allies were meeting the 2% GDP defence spending target (two other Allies were just under it), which Secretary General Stoltenberg identified as a "floor, not a ceiling". While the new Strategic Concept includes the commitment to implement the Defence Investment Pledge "in its entirety", eleven Allies either plan to meet the 2% target later – some much later – than 2024, or have no such plans at all (NATO, 2022 (c)). Germany announced it would be spending 2% on defence, but it may take several years for Berlin to reach the mark. Germany announced it would contribute some 15,000 soldiers to NATO's high-readiness force by 2024, including additional forces to be stationed in Lithuania (Germany is the Framework Nation for the NATO battlegroup in Lithuania). Germany would also provide 65 aircraft and 20 ships (Bosen, 2022). While France, according to its recent national strategic review, will continue supporting its African partners' counter-terrorism efforts, Paris has also committed to increasing its contribution to Allied defence and deterrence in the

wake of the Russian aggression. Other Framework Nations are also boosting the level of deployment of pre-assigned troops to reinforce respective Host Nations (NATO, 2022c). That said, it will certainly be a tall order for the Allies to deliver on brigade-level deployments in the eastern flank and to significantly boost their high-readiness forces, especially since the transition to the new NATO Force Model is expected to be completed already in 2023 (NATO, 2022f). In this regard, it is commendable that Allies at the Madrid Summit agreed to increase NATO's common funding within the framework of the criteria adopted at the Brussels Summit in June 2021 of sustainability, affordability and accountability measures.³ Allied leaders adopted a trajectory of this increase up to 2030, and these additional sums will be invested in prepositioned equipment and infrastructure, command and control arrangements, supporting partners and conducting more joint exercises (NATO, 2022e).

27. The new Strategic Concept rightly pays considerable attention to CBRN threats. Since 2010, the global arms control and non-proliferation system has eroded markedly, primarily due to Russia's repeated violations of its international obligations, but also due to China's nuclear weapon and missile buildup, as well as Iran's and DPRK's continuing nuclear programmes. During the last decade, Russia has modernised and expanded systems and platforms capable of delivering nuclear weapons. Following the invasion of Ukraine, Russian leadership has threatened the use of nuclear weapons; Russian actions also jeopardised the safety of Ukrainian nuclear power plants.

28. These worrying trends have prompted the Allies to bolster the CBRN dimension of NATO's defence and deterrence. The Strategic Concept warns potential adversaries that "The Alliance has the capabilities and resolve to impose costs on an adversary that would be unacceptable and far outweigh the benefits that any adversary could hope to achieve." The document recognises the key role of NATO's strategic nuclear forces in safeguarding the Alliance (there is a strong sentiment in Ukraine that Russia's calculations to invade Ukraine would have been very different had Ukraine retained some of the Soviet nuclear weapons in the 1990s). The Strategic Concept also highlights the role of "the United States' nuclear weapons forward-deployed in Europe and the contributions of Allies concerned." The latter statement is very important in the context of the recent discussions on the future of these forward-deployed US nuclear assets. NATO would also need to consider strengthening the nuclear deterrence pillar and revitalising its integrated conventional nuclear-missile defence deterrent – the approach that was abandoned since the end of the Cold War (Schreer & Alberque, 2022).

29. While the Strategic Concept's paragraphs on CBRN strongly – and rightly – emphasise defence, deterrence and resilience, they also – equally rightly – reaffirm the Alliance's openness to "meaningful and reciprocal political dialogue" on non-proliferation and arms control. While such dialogue with the current Russian regime is unrealistic at present, the Alliance must continue to offer the vision of gradual and verifiable global reduction of CBRN capabilities, while remaining a nuclear Alliance as long as nuclear weapons exist. As former NATO Deputy Secretary General Rose Gottemoeller put it: "As difficult as such talks are to imagine at this moment, NATO will want

³ According to NATO website, NATO common-funded budgets currently equate to only 0.3% of total Allied defence spending, an equivalent of around EUR 2.5 billion. When the idea of increasing the common funding was raised in 2021, some Allies were not convinced if the increase would benefit their military priorities. The rapidly changing security environment has arguably facilitated the consensus on this issue among the Allies.

to prepare itself for an eventual return to negotiated restraint on weapons of mass destruction” (Gottemoeller, 2022). Importantly, though, the Strategic Concept places Allied efforts on arms control, disarmament and non-proliferation in the broader context of “Strategic Stability”, which also entails effective deterrence and defence, thus strongly suggesting that care must be taken not to undermine the latter.

30. Documents adopted at the Madrid Summit did not directly address the issue of bilateralisation of defence arrangements that some Allies have been negotiating and signing in recent years. While NATO is an alliance of like-minded democratic nations, it is inevitable that some of these nations tend to caucus in smaller formats owing to geographic, historical and political considerations. To the extent that these help smooth NATO’s decision-making they are a net positive. Similarly, bilateral defence collaboration is a time-honoured way to sharpen capabilities and lessen the cost of training and equipment. For instance, the UK-led Joint Expeditionary Force (JEF)⁴ is tangibly contributing to the security of the Baltic Sea region including through joint exercises and conducting, since 2021, maritime patrol missions in the Baltic Sea to reassure Allies in the region. The trouble begins when some Allied cooperation veers into the realm of bilateral or multilateral mutual defence commitments. This would imply that at least some Allies considered the NATO framework insufficient or too cumbersome to address their security interests. By implicitly questioning the power of Art. V, these groupings could undermine NATO’s deterrence. The Madrid Summit decisions touched on the subject only lightly. Allies have endorsed a double-pronged approach to defence and deterrence, combining NATO-wide measures to enhance collective defence with the notion of framework nations leading in specific sectors of adapted forward defence. Fine-tuning this balance between NATO-wide and bilateral/multilateral measures in a way that maximises efficiency while preserving the Alliance’s cohesion will be an important task for Allied policymakers in the upcoming years.

III- CRISIS PREVENTION AND MANAGEMENT

31. Involvement in crisis management has been one of NATO’s defining features in the post-Cold War era. The need for NATO to go out of area (or out of business, as US Senator Richard Lugar famously put it) was enshrined in 1991, 1999 and 2010 Strategic Concepts. Having played a crucial role in stabilising the Balkans in the 1990s, NATO has subsequently conducted a wide range of missions and operations beyond its immediate neighbourhood, from a counter-piracy operation off the Horn of Africa to its by far largest and most comprehensive mission in Afghanistan from 2003-2021. Individual Allies have also been involved in major out-of-area operations outside the NATO framework, such as France in the Sahel, with the support of the United States and several European Allies and African partners. However, if the initial – military – objective of the campaigns was achieved, the subsequent mission creep or the changing political circumstances in host nations led the Allies to redefine, collectively and individually, their approach to crisis management. Demands to wind down the involvement in “forever wars” grew. The most notable example of this trend was the transformation of NATO’s operation in Afghanistan to a train-and-

⁴ In addition to the UK, members of JEF are Denmark, Finland, Estonia, Iceland, Latvia, Lithuania, the Netherlands, Sweden and Norway.

advice mission in 2014 and the eventual withdrawal in 2021. Currently, NATO conducts two crisis management operations (in Kosovo and the Mediterranean) and three missions (training mission in Iraq, support for the African Union and air policing support to Allies who do not have fighter jets of their own).

32. The new Strategic Concept makes clear that NATO will remain in the business of crisis management, building on the vast experience gained in this area since the 1990s. More specifically, Allies expressed commitment to “ensure the resources, capabilities, training and command and control arrangements to deploy and sustain military and civilian crisis management, stabilisation and counter-terrorism operations, including at strategic distance.” At the same time, the chapter dedicated to crisis management is distinctly shorter than chapters on the other two core tasks. Its title is also changed to prioritise the prevention of crises. The entire document contains a single reference to NATO’s nearly two-decade mission in Afghanistan. Indeed, the current security environment has prompted the shift of focus from peacekeeping and counter-insurgency operations to prevention and management of higher-intensity conflicts, including conventional wars (NDC, 2022).

33. That said, NATO should certainly preserve the ability to operate out of area, especially in – or close to – its own backyard, including in the Mediterranean and the Balkans, where opponents like Russia could seek to weaken the Alliance by sowing discord through local proxies and fermenting conflict. NATO-led KFOR continues to play a crucial role in maintaining stability in Kosovo. In July-August 2022, KFOR reaffirmed its preparedness to intervene if necessary, as tensions were running high between Pristina and Belgrade (Taylor, 2022). Operation Sea Guardian in the Mediterranean is not only contributing to maritime situational awareness and counter-terrorism at sea, but it could also perform tasks such as upholding freedom of navigation and protecting critical infrastructure (NATO, 2021). As the renewed great power competition heats up, it is not unlikely that the Allies may need more crisis management missions. The Euro-Atlantic community may not have the luxury of choosing between collective defence and crisis management.

IV- COOPERATIVE SECURITY

34. The Russian invasion on 24 February has created a new environment in which Allied policy-makers need to think about NATO partnerships. One partner – Ukraine – has been attacked, and NATO’s relationship with Ukraine now is way beyond anything ever imagined in the original partnership cooperation with Kyiv. Two partners – Finland and Sweden – are about to join NATO. Other partners may well want a much more robust defence capability cooperation with NATO than ever before.

35. Historically, the focus on partnerships was one of the defining characteristics of the Alliance in the post-Cold War era. NATO’s partnership policy has been remarkably successful in promoting reforms and dialogue in partner countries, as well as helping aspirants to prepare for membership and escape from their communist past. The flagship Partnership for Peace (PfP) programme, launched in 1994, has been the primary instrument, engaging both aspirants and non-aspirants. Fourteen partners have eventually become NATO members, and the programme now includes 20

partners. Over the years, PfP members have meaningfully contributed to NATO-led missions, including in Bosnia and Herzegovina, Kosovo and Afghanistan. The PfP was complemented by the Mediterranean Dialogue,⁵ the Istanbul Cooperation Initiative,⁶ partnerships with international organisations, and other partnerships across the globe. The 2010 Strategic Concept and the follow-up Summit in Berlin in 2011 have established partnerships as a core task for NATO, while forging a flexible partnership policy. (NATO, 2021a).⁷

36. In the context of the worsening security situation in the 2010s, the Allies, at the milestone 2014 Wales Summit, decided to upgrade cooperative mechanisms with more active partners through the Partnership Interoperability Initiative (PII) and Defence and Related Security Capacity Building Initiative (DCB). The PII primarily acts to provide security with “enhanced opportunities” partners.⁸ This includes facilitating these partners’ participation in joint exercises, harmonising standards and equipment and increasing regular consultation on important security matters. The DCB, on the other hand, assists partners in enhancing their own security.⁹ It builds on NATO’s extensive experience and expertise advising, assisting, training and mentoring non-member countries requiring the unique capacity-building support of the Alliance.

37. Most recently, in the context of the pandemic and the growing global focus on the Indo-Pacific, NATO has been making significant strides to engage with “global partners”, particularly with the so-called Asia-Pacific Four (AP4) – Australia, Japan, the Republic of Korea, and New Zealand. While cooperation with these partners has originally centred on stabilising Afghanistan, the recent years saw a marked intensification of exchanges on a wide range of topics, stemming from the shared interest to safeguard the rules-based international order. In particular, NATO and AP4 countries began working together on setting international norms in space and cyberspace, and to cooperate more closely on new technologies and global arms control. Reflecting the increasing political convergence between NATO and the like-minded AP4 partners, the North Atlantic Council held its first meeting with these partners at the foreign minister level in December 2020 to discuss global power shifts and the rise of China.

38. The Madrid documents encapsulated changes prompted by Russia’s war on Ukraine and reflected a clear-eyed approach to partnerships as well as the need to prioritise. While the Summit communiqué alludes to engaging with “potential new interlocutors beyond the Euro-Atlantic area”, the Concept repeatedly emphasises that ties will be strengthened with partners that share the Alliance’s values and commitment to the rules-based order. Partnerships are not driven by mere altruism but are a tool to “enhance our security at home and support NATO’s core tasks.” This-Assembly has been supporting the view that NATO’s partnerships should better match its own interests and values.

39. Aspirant countries remain key partners for the Alliance. The Allied leaders have been consistent and steadfast in reassuring Bosnia and Herzegovina, Georgia and Ukraine that NATO’s

⁵ Current MD participants are Algeria, Egypt, Israel, Jordan, Mauritania, Morocco, and Tunisia.

⁶ Current ICI participants are Bahrain, Kuwait, Qatar, and the United Arab Emirates.

⁷ The “30+n” setting introduces flexibility between the Alliance and its partners, allowing Alliance members to form groupings with partners based on common themes and interests.

⁸ Enhanced opportunity partners so far include Australia, Finland, Georgia, Jordan, Sweden, and Ukraine.

⁹ Current DCB members include Georgia, Iraq, Jordan, Moldova, and Tunisia.

Open Door policy is not negotiable, and that no third country could have a say on the matter. The new Strategic Concept reaffirmed this principle. At the Summit, Allied leaders decided to strengthen the package of support to Ukraine, including the delivery of non-lethal defence equipment, cyber defence support and helping Ukraine to transform its defence sector to Western standards. Allies have also agreed to provide additional support to Bosnia and Herzegovina, Georgia, and the Republic of Moldova (the latter does not seek NATO membership but finds itself in a precarious security situation in the wake of Russia's attack on Ukraine).

40. The historic decision in Madrid to endorse Finland and Sweden's membership application will significantly recalibrate the Alliance's posture in Northern and North-eastern Europe and will significantly affect the calculations of a potential aggressor. Finnish and Swedish application also sends a strong political signal that NATO remains the main go-to organisation for democratic nations concerned about their security. The NATO Parliamentary Assembly, in its statements, has wholeheartedly welcomed the invitation of Finland and Sweden and supports the ratification process.

41. Finland and Sweden's fast-tracked integration into NATO is a testimony to these candidate countries' military preparedness and their political closeness to the Alliance. Credit for this goes in part to NATO's partnership policy. Finland and Sweden have long been given the opportunity to participate regularly in joint exercises; they have been contributing to NATO-led missions and applying NATO standards in their armed forces. They are exemplary liberal democracies, champions of the rules-based global order and well-established members of the "Western camp"; they have also had privileged access to the thinking and decision-making in NATO. There is a lesson in this experience to other candidates for membership. To generate unanimous Allied support for their applications, the aspirants will need to continue demonstrating unwavering commitment to democratic values and the rule of law, including the ability to fight for these values. In your Rapporteur's view, the Ukrainian people are doing just that on the battlefield, including making the ultimate sacrifice.

42. The lag between a country's announcement of its aspiration to join the Alliance and the actual accession creates a temptation for a malign actor such as Russia to engage in destabilising activities. Moreover, this lag causes frustration and disillusionment in aspirant countries, which in turn tarnishes NATO's global reputation. Aspirants can reduce this lag by accelerating the process of political and military reforms needed to meet membership standards and intensifying political consultations in order to build NATO-wide consensus on new memberships. The Allies should be open in principle to such closer consultations. Moreover, they may need to rethink the military component of membership requirements: while Ukrainian armed forces have yet to formally meet NATO standards, their remarkable ability to fight the formidable Russian army should prompt the reassessment of how aspirants actually add value to the Alliance.

43. In terms of partnerships with non-aspirants, some analysts have argued that the new Strategic Concept seems to recalibrate the balance towards the like-minded countries in the Indo-Pacific and somewhat away from the MENA region (Marrone, 2022) (NDC, 2022). NATO strategy for the South is not addressed in detail in the Strategic Concept, apart from the commitment to "work with partners to tackle shared security threats and challenges in regions of strategic interest to the Alliance, including the Middle East and North Africa and the Sahel regions". There are no references to MD nor ICI. The Madrid Summit communiqué contains one reference to enhancing the capacity-building support to partners from the South. Even if the texts adopted in Madrid are not ambitious with regard to the southern flank, Allies should continue paying close attention to it,

especially since challenges there are interlinked with other security challenges the Alliance is facing. These include Russia's direct and indirect (via the so-called Wagner Group) military involvement, China's expanding economic, technological and military leverages and the security implications of climate change that drive population movements and create instability in the Sahel and beyond.

44. The increased interest in engaging with the AP4 is reflected not only in the new Strategic Concept,¹⁰ but also in the fact that the AP4 was represented at the Madrid Summit at the level of Heads of State and Government. Despite the geographic distance, Allies' overseas engagement fatigue does not seem to apply to these countries because this partnership meets two important criteria: 1) AP4 are long-standing democracies and share similar values; and 2) some Allied policymakers might consider this partnership as helpful from security perspective in the context of the growing assertiveness of China. How exactly this partnership will develop, remains to be seen. While the NATO Secretary General has been calling for the Alliance to become "more global", NATO's role in potentially relevant tasks such as ensuring the freedom of navigation in the Indo-Pacific has never been settled and would require a massive realignment of non-US Allies' resources. For now, NATO's global partnerships are the most promising and cost-effective way for NATO to contribute to global security and to prevent spill over of security threats. Additionally, NATO's global partnerships with like-minded partners such as AP4 are a useful vehicle to augment a global coalition to promote standards and norms in emerging sectors such as cyber, artificial intelligence and autonomous systems.

45. The Russian aggression offers an opportunity for NATO and the EU, organisations that share the same values and 21 (soon to be 23) members, to forge a truly strategic partnership and work out a clearer division of labour. Since the signing of two joint declarations in 2016 and 2018, the two organisations have significantly upgraded their political dialogue and practical cooperation in areas such as military mobility, resilience and countering hybrid threats. The new Strategic Concept has recognised the EU as "a unique and essential partner for NATO." The areas of NATO-EU cooperation listed in the Strategic Concept essentially repeat what has already been identified in the joint declarations, with one notable addition, namely "addressing the systemic challenges posed by the PRC to Euro-Atlantic security." The EU already complements NATO by leading in providing security in places such as Sub-Saharan Africa, and it has made particularly valuable security contribution in areas such as energy security, economic sanctions, fighting disinformation and building infrastructure for military mobility. The EU's Strategic Compass, adopted on 21 March 2022, introduced a series of new tools in these and other areas. However, in the current security environment, the EU's potential contribution to Europe's conventional defence can no longer be neglected, especially as military capabilities of leading EU member states – notably Germany's – are set to increase. The announced increases of EU member states' defence budgets are expected to bring an additional 200 billion Euros in coming years (European Commission, 2022). The EU as an organisation has broken some earlier taboos related to military matters, including designating – as of July 2022 – some 2.5 billion Euros to buy weapons for

¹⁰ "The Indo-Pacific is important for NATO, given that developments in that region can directly affect Euro-Atlantic security. We will strengthen dialogue and cooperation with new and existing partners in the Indo-Pacific to tackle cross-regional challenges and shared security interests."

Ukraine through the new European Peace Facility (EPF).¹¹ The Commission also began assessing defence investment gaps within the EU and offering new ways for member states to step up joint procurements as well as to bolster defence industry (European Commission, 2022). The EU Rapid Deployment Capacity of up to 5,000 troops, announced in the Strategic Compass, could be an important asset if the Alliance or individual Allies are faced with several hotspots in different parts of the world. EU and NATO memberships are similar, but not identical, and the contribution of non-NATO EU members to European security should be encouraged. In the new Strategic Concept, Allies openly recognised “the value of a stronger and more capable European defence” and its positive contribution to transatlantic security, while stressing the need to avoid unnecessary duplications. This position of NATO is not new, but it continues to provide a reasonable basis for NATO-EU partnership and is largely shared by the EU leaders. Allies continue to stress that the participation of non-EU Allies in PESCO projects, such as Military Mobility, is highly valuable. The socialisation of the two organisations should continue on the staff level, as well as on the highest political level – making more frequent joint statements and joint visits, such as the visit of NATO Secretary General Jens Stoltenberg and the President of the European Commission Ursula von der Leyen to Lithuania and Latvia in November 2021 to demonstrate solidarity with NATO Allies and EU member states in the Baltic region. As this Assembly stressed in its contribution to the new Strategic Concept, the EU’s effort to develop coherent, complementary and interoperable defence capabilities while avoiding unnecessary duplication is key to making the Euro-Atlantic area safer.

46. The new Strategic Concept has made a breakthrough in defining China as a strategic competitor that poses systemic challenges to Euro-Atlantic security, interests and values. In the document, Allies express concern about Beijing’s coercive policies, opaqueness of its military programmes, malicious hybrid and cyber operations, confrontational rhetoric, its policy of leveraging economic and technological dependencies to increase political influence and collaboration with Russia in undercutting the rules-based world order. The text mentions NATO’s openness to constructive engagement with China, but the focus of NATO’s China strategy is clearly on boosting shared awareness, enhancing resilience and pushing back against China’s coercive activities. The Strategic Concept also refers to the importance of the freedom of navigation, without providing further details on NATO’s potential role in this area.

47. The clear-eyed assessment of the Chinese challenge in the new Strategic Concept is to be welcomed: it encapsulates the increasing convergence of European and North American views on Xi Jinping’s China and lends the sense of urgency to the task of reducing dependencies on China. NATO Secretary General said that NATO as an organisation does not have plans to patrol the Indo-Pacific, but the Strategic Concept does include the abovementioned reference to the freedom of navigation in the context of China. Under the current leadership in Beijing, Western-Chinese rapprochement is difficult to expect, especially as China continues to embrace, at least rhetorically, the “no-limits” partnership with Russia, to engage in serious human rights violations and to bully its neighbours as well as some NATO Allies. That said, despite autarkic tendencies, Beijing appears generally – if selectively – interested in preserving global trade and avoiding global chaos. While the US and its Allies’ competition with China is likely to be the most important feature of the 21st century’s strategic environment, it can either take place within the confines of mutually agreed

¹¹ EPF is the first EU mechanism that allows the EU to deliver weapons and other military aid to partner countries. It is an intergovernmental off-budget instrument as EU treaties prohibit funding military operations from the regular multiannual budget.

rules, or incrementally develop into a confrontation, especially if Beijing chooses to deepen its alliance with Russia. Nevertheless, as long as they exist, opportunities for dialogue with Beijing should be explored. The existing communication channels between NATO and Chinese officials should be filled with substance in areas where both parties have a stake, including climate change, counter-piracy and ensuring that Afghanistan does not become a hub for international terrorism. The Allies should also try to use their leverages to convince Beijing to commit to arms control efforts and improve military transparency and to help rectify the consequences of Russia's attack on Ukraine. A formal NATO partnership with China is out of the question at this stage but depending on Beijing's behaviour and the evolving international situation, such a possibility cannot be ruled out in the future.

V- CROSS-CUTTING THEMES IN THE NEW STRATEGIC CONCEPT

A. PROTECTING NATO'S VALUES

48. Outlining his vision for the new Strategic Concept, Secretary General Jens Stoltenberg put the reaffirmation of the Alliance's democratic values at the top of the list. NATO prides itself on being the Alliance of democracies, and the preamble of the Washington Treaty famously underlines that it is "founded on the principles of democracy, individual liberty and the rule of law". However, in practice, NATO has historically been reluctant to discuss democracy and human rights issues, maintaining that other institutions, such as the Council of Europe, are better suited for that. In 1949, NATO accepted the then authoritarian Portugal as a full-fledged member. Military coups in Türkiye and Greece in the second half of the last century barely affected their membership in NATO. That said, throughout the Cold War era, the overwhelming majority of NATO Allies had solid democratic credentials, and Franco's Spain was not admitted into the Alliance, despite its strategic location and significant military capabilities. It is notable that during the Cold War, the NATO Parliamentary Assembly – under its former name, the North Atlantic Assembly – served as an important forum to discuss cases of non-democratic governance within the Alliance, and the memberships of relevant parliamentary delegations were suspended or downgraded on several occasions.

49. In the post-Cold War era, NATO has embraced the political side of its identity and placed significant emphasis on democratic values in its rhetoric and documents. The 1999 Strategic Concept specified that NATO's doors are only open to democratic European countries that meet membership standards. The accession of Central and Eastern European countries, which in many cases preceded EU membership, helped solidify their democratic, Western future and resist temptations to move in a different direction. Commitment to democracy, human rights, and the rule of law continues to be an important prerequisite for NATO accession of three current candidate countries – undoubtedly, significant democratic backsliding in an aspirant country would essentially annul its chances to join the Alliance.

50. However, liberal democracy is now widely considered to be in retreat, especially in the context of the global economic downturn in 2008-2009, the meteoric rise of social media, and the refugee/migration crisis challenging the societal fabric of the political West. The COVID-19 pandemic has further compounded the negative trends. The latest Freedom House report "Freedom in the World 2022" recorded the 16th consecutive year of decline in global freedom, including among long-standing democracies. The vast majority of NATO countries ranked at the top of the list, but four Allies found themselves in the "partly free" category, while one Ally was

assessed as “not free” (Freedom House, 2022). According to the Economist Intelligence Unit’s Democracy Index 2021, only 6.4% of the world’s population currently lives in a “full democracy” (Economist Intelligence Unit, 2022). The 6 January 2021 storming of the United States Capitol building is an illustration of the type of challenges democracies face, and a powerful reminder that democracy is both resilient and fragile.

51. The Allies have found it difficult to address this trend collectively. This is worrying, given that a divergence in values could jeopardise the effective functioning of the Alliance. While the Russian invasion of Ukraine has caused the Allies to coalesce around the priority of collective defence, differences in approaches to key values and democracy continue to lurk in the background and, arguably, colour the Allies’ approaches to Russia itself, on issues such as sanctions. This Assembly has been consistently calling on Allied leaders to use the process of drafting the new Strategic Concept to bolster NATO’s identity as an Alliance of democracies by, among other things, establishing a Centre for Democratic Resilience at NATO Headquarters (a proposal endorsed by the NATO 2030 Reflection Group). NATO Parliamentarians specified that the Centre would 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.” When addressing Allied leaders at the Madrid Summit, Assembly President Gerald E. Connolly stressed that Allies “must move beyond the rhetorical in our commitment to democratic institutions” and “establish concrete architecture dedicated to the advancement of democracy”.

52. The new Strategic Concept has taken seriously the calls to reaffirm NATO’s democratic credentials. The Allies have not only reiterated commitment to common values of individual liberty, human rights, democracy and the rule of law, but also clearly identified authoritarian actors as a threat to NATO’s interests and values. These actors interfere in democratic processes in Allied countries and make “a deliberate effort to undermine multilateral norms and institutions”. It is significant that NATO is identified as “a bulwark of the rules-based international order”, and Allies pledged to “stand up for our shared values and the rules-based international order”. As noted, the cooperative security section prioritises partnerships with those nations that share NATO’s values. There are also numerous references to human security throughout the text, including the commitment to the protection of civilians as central to NATO’s approach to crisis prevention and management. The Strategic Concept highlights the importance of the Women, Peace and Security agenda across all NATO core tasks.

53. While the Strategic Concept does not specifically refer to a Centre for Democratic Resilience, the robust language on democratic values paves the way for future decisions in this area. The proposal to create such a centre already has an overwhelming support in the North Atlantic Council, including the backing of the US government. This Assembly is determined to continue championing the idea and helping to build a transatlantic consensus around it.

54. Other practical measures that the Allied leaders should consider in the area of promoting democratic values include:

- 1) Expanding references to democracy, human rights, and the rule of law in NATO’s external communication, including NATO Summit communiqués.
- 2) Periodically including exchanges on threats to democracy on the agenda of informal meetings of Allied ministers or political directors.
- 3) Recognising the role of the NATO Parliamentary Assembly as a democratic structure closely associated with, but formally separated from NATO. The Assembly is an appropriate venue

for Allies to exchange their views on how to defend NATO's democratic principles within the Alliance and beyond.

- 4) Increasing engagement with influential figures in politics, culture, and science to help reverse the onslaught of authoritarian narratives and to explain the benefits of the liberal democratic model, which brought unprecedented prosperity and peace to countries that adhere to its principles.
- 5) Sustaining the momentum on the Women, Peace, and Security (WPS) agenda. Full empowerment of women – half of humanity – is crucial for durable peace and security. NATO recognises the principles of WPS as forming an integral part of the Alliance's common values of individual liberty, democracy, and human rights.

B. STRENGTHENING NATO AS A POLITICAL INSTITUTION

55. The Russian aggression against Ukraine in 2014 has galvanised the Allies into a series of actions to bolster the military pillar of NATO. However, the symmetric revitalisation of the political side of NATO has been lagging behind. In fact, the post-2014 period was marked by the rise of protectionist, self-centred trends in some of the Allies' politics, raising questions about the Alliance's cohesion and its utility as the primary forum for consultation on major strategic issues in the Euro-Atlantic area, whether directly related to NATO or not. Several Allies complained about insufficient consultation in cases of withdrawal from Northern Syria and Afghanistan, the signing of the AUKUS pact as well as the EU's conclusion of negotiations on a trade and investment pact with China (in December 2020). The same year, there were considerable tensions among some Allies in the Eastern Mediterranean. The assertion of national interests has also hampered the work of the NATO-Ukraine Council and delayed the adoption of defence plans for Poland and the Baltic States. During the 2016 US presidential campaign, Donald Trump branded NATO 'obsolete', while French President Emmanuel Macron famously called NATO 'brain dead'. Senior Western politicians also repeatedly questioned the future of one Ally's membership in NATO.

56. To their credit, NATO and individual Allies understand the need to take urgent steps to bolster the political dimension of NATO. NATO officials have repeatedly told members of this Assembly that the level of coordination between North American and European Allies has improved remarkably in recent months and years. President Joseph Biden and other senior American leaders have been proactive in addressing the outstanding issues in US relations with the EU as well as individual Allies such as Germany and Türkiye. In the second half of 2020, NATO also offered a deconfliction mechanism to reduce the risks of unintended escalation in the Eastern Mediterranean and facilitated dialogue that helped to create conditions for exploratory talks between NATO Allies Greece and Türkiye, which resumed in January 2021 after a five-year hiatus. Finally, the Group of Experts' report on NATO 2030, commissioned by the NATO Secretary General, was specifically tasked to explore ways of strengthening NATO's political dimension. At the 2021 Brussels Summit, the Allies committed to intensifying political consultations "when the security or stability of an Ally is threatened or when our fundamental values and principles are at risk" as well as on a range of specific issues, such as arms control, cyber threats, energy security and NATO-EU relations. On the eve of and during the Madrid Summit, NATO has once again proven its utility as a mediator facilitating, under the leadership of the Secretary General, the memorandum signed by foreign ministers of Türkiye, Finland and Sweden, paving the way for the accession of the Nordic countries into NATO.

57. This does not mean, of course, that the current coalescence of NATO members is irreversible. When the current security crisis eventually subsides, nations may be tempted to revert back to their national agendas and focus on other geopolitical vectors. Moreover, defence budgets could be under considerable stress as national economies will suffer from inflation and the fallout of Russia's aggression. Throughout the Alliance's history, and especially in the 2010s, the perception of unfair burden-sharing has been a major factor testing the Alliance's cohesion. Furthermore, as Article 5 provisions can now potentially cover cyber and other hybrid attacks, Allies, in case of such an attack, would need to be able to swiftly reach consensus on whether or not the situation requires the activation of said Article. Such decision would be much more subjective than in the case of a traditional armed attack, and the lack of trust among certain Allies could risk paralysing Allied action (Gheciu, 2022).

58. The new Strategic Concept is laconic on strengthening NATO as a political institution, merely reaffirming the commitment "to reinforce our political unity and solidarity and to broaden and deepen our consultations to address all matters that affect our security." Allies also committed "to reinforce consultations when the security and stability of an Ally is threatened or when our fundamental values and principles are at risk." These succinct political statements nevertheless pave the way for Allies to continue elaborating concrete policies and practices enabling a more effective functioning of NATO as an organisation. In terms of practical arrangements, various stakeholders, including the NATO PA, have been calling for more frequent ministerial meetings, potentially including ministers other than those of foreign affairs and defence, in line with the whole-of-society approach to security. The Allies should take full advantage of the Assembly's role as a forum for frank political exchanges by increasing dialogue between the NAC and the NATO PA at all levels.

59. The consensus should remain the principal method of NATO decision-making. This Assembly is convinced that there is tremendous power in 30 (or more, in the future) Allies speaking with one voice and uniting around common positions. While consensus is occasionally hard to achieve, the consensus-building process is a unique vehicle to augment the Allies' understanding of each other's perspectives. Abandoning the principle and allowing some members to be outvoted on crucial issues of security could create grievances detrimental for the Alliance's cohesion. At the same time, the Strategic Concept could have been more straightforward in warning against using consensus as a tool in bilateral disputes. The Allies could also consider the possibility of derogation from the consensus principle below the ministerial level.

60. Divergencies, even disputes among the Allies are not uncommon – they have occurred in the past and will occur in the future. However, it is important to ensure that the Allies continue to consider NATO as the prime venue for transatlantic security consultation on strategic issues.

C. STRENGTHENING SOCIETAL RESILIENCE

61. Collective defence can only be effective if it is underpinned by societal resilience, i.e., the ability to resist and recover from kinetic and hybrid attacks. As this Assembly suggested in its contribution to the Strategic Concept discussions, in the new strategic environment, resilience should be considered the first line of deterrence and defence. This was clearly understood during the Cold War, where both NATO and the Soviet Union were training and educating their societies to prepare them for various contingencies, including a nuclear attack. Resilience (though of a different kind) is even more imperative now, as the extraordinary interconnectedness and digitalisation of societies have also made them more vulnerable. However, the societal reflexes to

rise to security crises have atrophied in the 1990s and 2000s, as the sense of urgency diminished. The disinformation campaigns as well as the atomisation and polarisation of societies facilitated by social media algorithms have led to increased societal confusion about what is right and wrong, exposing further vulnerabilities to be exploited by malign actors. The notion of civil preparedness was largely reduced to managing natural and technological disasters. In the 2010 Strategic Concept, there is only one reference to resilience – in the context of potential disruptions of transport routes.

62. Russia's hybrid attack on Ukraine in 2014 as well as the growing concern about political strings attached to Chinese investments prompted NATO to forge a more comprehensive policy on resilience. At the Warsaw Summit in 2016, Allied leaders adopted a Commitment to Enhance Resilience, and identified baseline requirements for resilience in seven areas: 1) assured continuity of government and critical government services; 2) resilient energy supplies; 3) ability to deal effectively with uncontrolled movement of people; 4) resilient food and water resources; 5) ability to deal with mass casualties; 6) resilient civil communications systems; and 7) resilient civil transportation systems. On the basis of these requirements, NATO has periodically assessed the resilience levels in member states, while continuing to update these requirements – for instance, by highlighting the risks in the 5G sector.

63. Since 2016, the Alliance has made notable strides in boosting societal resilience in member states. In its regular assessments, NATO has reported marked progress, while also identifying the weakest links across the Allied territory. NATO began testing resilience as part of its joint exercises, such as Trident Juncture. Various aspects of resilience are addressed by NATO's unique Euro-Atlantic Disaster Response Coordination Centre (EADRCC), which coordinates relief efforts and capabilities among member states and partner countries, helping them respond to crises such as the COVID-19 pandemic. NATO's Science for Peace and Security (SPS) Programme also contributes to the area of resilience through scientific and technological cooperation programmes between member states and partner countries. It is also notable, that groups of Allies have established Centres of Excellence dedicated to aspects such as cyber security, disaster response, civil-military cooperation and energy security. More recently, in May 2021, a Euro-Atlantic Resilience Centre (E-ARC) was inaugurated in Romania. That said, institutional arrangements and adoption of policy documents do not automatically translate into behavioural changes – for instance, in some European countries, little to no progress was achieved in recent years in reducing dependency on Russian hydrocarbons, which has limited Western options when responding to the aggression against Ukraine.

64. As the NATO Secretary General has repeatedly pointed out, NATO is only as strong as its weakest link. NATO's current approach to resilience is based on country-by-country recommendations. The new Strategic Concept did not upgrade resilience to the level of the fourth core task, as some prominent experts, such as Daniel Hamilton, have been suggesting in order to take into account a more holistic approach to deep interconnections within the Euro-Atlantic community (Hamilton, 2021). Nevertheless, resilience is referred to extensively throughout the text, stressing the need to ensure that it is fully integrated into NATO's planning or operational activities. In the Strategic Concept, Allies highlighted the importance of Article 3 of the North Atlantic Treaty (emphasising national as well as collective responsibility to develop capacity to resist attacks) and pledged to “work towards identifying and mitigating strategic vulnerabilities and dependencies, including with respect to our critical infrastructure, supply chains and health systems.” The goal is to “boost our capacity to prepare for, resist, respond to, and quickly recover from strategic shocks and disruptions, and ensure the continuity of the Alliance's activities.”

65. Fostering resilience is not a straightforward task. Sectors such as governance, energy infrastructure or healthcare remain a national responsibility. Moreover, unlike in the Cold War, critical national infrastructure has been significantly denationalised: today, some 90% of NATO's logistics are conducted by private companies, and in the cyber domain, NATO relies heavily on the telecoms sector and the internet security companies to provide services and to tackle cyberattacks. Privatisation of physical and digital infrastructure resulted in greater cost-efficiency, but also less redundancy and less resilience (Shea, 2016). It is imperative that NATO – just like during the Cold War – is able to use ports, railways, digital and other infrastructure in times of crisis. However, can access to them be assured when the West's strategic competitor China partially owns a dozen of European sea ports, while Chinese mobile phone users have been repeatedly warned about potential security flaws in their devices? In this context, having robust baseline requirements across the Alliance is essential – NATO cannot prevent member states from accepting dubious third-party investments, but members should follow NATO's guidelines and introduce relevant safeguards in investment contracts. In some cases, it would be prudent to phase out potentially risky investments, as the UK government did in 2020, when it announced that Huawei will be completely removed from British 5G networks by the end of 2027.

66. Close partnership with the EU is critical in this regard, given its mandate and vast manpower and material capacity. The potential of the EU-US Trade and Technology Council must be fully exploited in setting the standards for safe investment and addressing supply chain vulnerabilities.¹² The EU also has far better instruments to tackle the use of corruption as a foreign policy tool – the Kremlin's campaign to corrupt high-ranking politicians in NATO countries aims to undermine consensus-building among the Allies as well as the Alliance's cohesion and unity. Moreover, the EU's recent effort to phase out Europe's dependence on Russian oil and gas and to promote green energy (identified as a threat to national security in Russia's 2017 economic security strategy) is a major geostrategic game changer.

67. In addition to further honing the baseline requirements and ensuring their rapid implementation, the Allies should enhance the exchange of best practices, including with partners – and potentially future members – such as Finland and Sweden that are pioneers in developing the whole-of-society approach to resilience. NATO exercises should expand the hybrid component, including devising more realistic scenarios of cyberattacks or disinformation activities.

68. In terms of societal resilience to disinformation, the Allies have made profound progress in recent years. Nevertheless, the Kremlin's propaganda machine continues to mobilise stubbornly high levels of support for the invasion in some Allied countries, while potentially preparing a false flag operation to justify further aggression. Allied strategic communicators must remain vigilant and ready to expose disinformation, including through the use of military assets such as satellite imagery and partial sharing of intelligence information. The US proactive release of intelligence information warning about Russia's imminent invasion of Ukraine has proven effective and contributed to the swift mobilisation of global public opinion in support of Ukraine. In terms of the lessons learned from the COVID-19 pandemic, NATO has demonstrated a unique value of military logistics in support of the health authorities. However, the use of NATO's assets in health crises

¹² For more detailed analysis on addressing supply chain vulnerabilities, see the [draft report](#) of the NATO PA's Economics and Security Committee.

should not become a norm – member states should develop robust civilian contingency plans that would free the military to concentrate on its main mission. Prominent NATO expert Jamie Shea has proposed the creation of a NATO civilian response force to address these non-military challenges and to take pressure off the troops (Shea, 2022).

D. OTHER ISSUES

69. Climate change is potentially the most existential challenge for mankind. It is a threat multiplier and the root cause of a number of security challenges facing the Euro-Atlantic community. In recent years, Secretary General Stoltenberg has been repeatedly identifying climate-security nexus as a priority area for NATO, and it now prominently – and rightfully – appears on NATO’s radar screen. At the 2021 NATO Summit, Allies agreed on an Action Plan on Climate Change and Security, where they stated that extreme weather events “test the resilience of our military installations and critical infrastructure” and affirmed that “NATO will also incorporate climate change considerations into its work on resilience, civil preparedness” amongst others. In the new Strategic Concept, NATO leaders expressed an ambition to “become the leading international organisation when it comes to understanding and adapting to the impact of climate change on security.” The Alliance’s role in addressing climate change-related challenges is defined as twofold: 1) “to assess the impact of climate change on defence and security”, and 2) reduce greenhouse gas emissions, improve energy efficiency and transition to clean energy sources in the defence and security sector. Given the nature and the purpose of NATO, this level of ambition seems reasonable and feasible. In addition, NATO’s scientific arm, such as the Science and Technology Organisation and the newly established Defence Innovation Accelerator for the North Atlantic (DIANA) could consider a stronger emphasis on climate change research. NATO’s Euro-Atlantic Disaster Response Coordination Centre (EADRCC) could make a meaningful contribution to coordinating emergency responses to climate change-related crises in NATO and partner countries.

70. In the past few years, the concern that the West is losing its technological edge has been growing. Pressure on NATO’s technological edge arises both from near-peer competitors such as China and from non-state actors. This pressure is related to the growing accessibility of emerging and disruptive technologies (EDTs): because technological innovation, including in military technologies, now mainly occurs in the commercial field and is often conducted by start-ups and SMEs, it is more difficult to control the diffusion of these technologies. NATO has taken important steps in recent years to address this challenge. In February 2021, NATO Defence Ministers endorsed a strategy on EDTs. The new Strategic Concept recognises that emerging and disruptive technologies are acquiring greater strategic importance and altering the character of conflict, including by providing new opportunities for terrorists and other malign actors. For NATO, maintaining its technological edge is critical to fulfil NATO’s core tasks and to be successful on the battlefield. The Allies committed to increase investments in these technologies, including through enhanced cooperation with the private sector, and to leverage their influence to shape and promote global technology standards that reflect democratic values. The Madrid Summit officially inaugurated DIANA, which is designed to foster transatlantic cooperation on critical technologies and to engage with academia and the private sector, including start-ups. DIANA will initially have a network of more than nine Accelerator sites and 63 Test Centres across the Alliance. In addition, at the Madrid Summit, 22 Allies committed to participate in the EUR 1 billion NATO Innovation Fund, the world’s first multi-sovereign venture capital fund to provide strategic investments in start-ups developing dual-use EDTs, which will begin its investments in 2023 (NATO, 2022 (g)). NATO’s recent decisions in the technological sphere are highly timely and relevant. In the upcoming years,

Allies will need to deliver on these commitments and to intensify their efforts to regain the technological edge. It will require significant financial, intellectual, and managerial investments, while leveraging the strengths of free societies in advancing innovation vis-à-vis the authoritarian competitors.

VI- CONCLUDING REMARKS

71. Throughout the 73 years of its existence, NATO has remained indispensable to peace, prosperity, and stability in the Euro-Atlantic area. It has provided credible defence and deterrence, underpinned with shared values and unity of purpose. It learned from its experience and adapted constantly to the changing strategic environment. Today, faced with the greatest security crisis on the European continent since the end of WW2, NATO is recalibrating itself once again, and doing so rapidly.

72. The drafting of the new Strategic Concept took place during a unique window of opportunity: Allied unity is extraordinary, the threat perception is widely shared, the renewed political will to invest in defence is palpable, and the mutual trust between North Americans and Europeans is again at high levels, underpinned by the sense of being on the right side of history. The document adopted in Madrid retains a degree of continuity, but it also capitalises on this window of opportunity to make important and timely adjustments.

73. Your Rapporteur welcomes the fact that the Allied policymakers have agreed on clear and coherent principles of NATO's strategy for the upcoming years. Learning from the mistakes and experiences of the past, the priorities set out in this strategy have been streamlined and made more hierarchical. The Alliance will focus on what it does best – providing 360-degree protection of its members from WMD, conventional, and hybrid attacks. The current Russian regime was clearly identified as the main source of these threats at present. All Allies, and especially Europeans, must deliver on their commitment to adequate burden-sharing: in the increasingly volatile world, Allies may be required to deal with several crises simultaneously. The United States is Europe's crucial and indispensable Ally, and NATO is the bulwark of European security, but in the current strategic circumstances downplaying the potentially greater EU contribution to defence and deterrence would be a mistake. The Strategic Concept also made clear that, in this day and age, defence and deterrence can only be effective if backed up by robust societal resilience. To ensure effective decision-making, the Allies should deliver on their commitment fully to use NATO as a platform for consultations on matters of security and defence, and must continue cultivating their common identity as an Alliance of democracies. NATO cannot and should not compromise on potential accession to NATO of eligible democratic nations, if their societies willingly choose Euro-Atlantic integration and meet membership requirements. Full support for Ukraine is both a moral duty and a strategic necessity for the Alliance. In today's globalised world, profoundly transformed by the fourth industrial revolution, NATO should continue developing partnerships, especially with like-minded nations and organisations with a view to setting global standards that are aligned with the values of liberal democracy. The Allies must be prepared to engage in rules-based competition with China, while maintaining dialogue with Beijing wherever possible, particularly on arms control. The Alliance should have the capacity to conduct out-of-area missions to protect their security interests, insofar as these missions' end-goals are clearly defined and underpinned by adequate resources. NATO provides a valuable platform to support a whole-of-society, shared approach to

resilience leveraging civilian and military expertise across the Alliance. Allies must take into utmost account baseline requirements in cyber, anti-corruption, disinformation, energy and other sectors.

74. The new Strategic Concept provides a coherent basis for military planning and capability development. It should also be flexible enough to ensure that the Alliance is able to deal with a range of emerging security challenges, as long as it retains the ability to carry out its core mission stipulated in Article V of the Washington Treaty. NATO Parliamentarians have a pivotal role to play in advancing Alliance cohesion and ensuring legislative and public diplomacy support for the ongoing NATO adaptation with a view to keeping the Alliance fit for purpose in years to come.

BIBLIOGRAPHY

- Atlantic Council. [Defending every inch of NATO territory: Force posture options for strengthening deterrence in Europe](#). March 2022
- Bosen, Ralf. [Germany is ramping up Baltic defences – but is Bundeswehr up to the task?](#) LRT. 12 July 2022.
- Cooper, Helene. [“The Pentagon orders another 7,000 American troops to Europe”](#). The New York Times. 24 February 2022.
- Economist Intelligence Unit. [“Democracy Index 2021: the China challenge”](#). 10 February 2022.
- European Commission. [Joint Communication on the Defence Investment Gaps Analysis and Way Forward](#). 18 May 2022.
- Freedom House. [“Freedom in the World 2022. The Global Expansion of Authoritarian Rule”](#). February 2022.
- Gheciu, Alexandra. [Protecting NATO’s security community](#). NDC. May 2022.
- Gottemoeller, Rose. [Weapons of mass destruction: What will be new in the 2022 NATO strategic concept?](#) The Bulletin of the Atomic Scientists. 27 June 2022.
- Hamilton, Daniel S. [“One Plus Four: what NATO’s new Strategic Concept should say, and how to achieve it”](#). Real Instituto Elcano. 17 December 2021.
- Marrone, Alessandro. [NATO’s New Strategic Concept: Novelties and Priorities](#). IAI. 8 July 2022
- NATO. [“Statement by NATO Heads of State and Government on Russia’s attack on Ukraine”](#). 25 February 2022.
- NATO (a). [Operation Sea Guardian](#). 17 May 2021.
- NATO (b). [“Strategic Concepts”](#). 29 November 2021.
- NATO (c). [Pre-Summit press conference by NATO Secretary General Jens Stoltenberg](#). 27 June 2022.
- NATO (d). [NATO New Force Model](#). 29 June 2022.
- NATO (e). [Press conference by NATO Secretary General Jens Stoltenberg](#). 30 June 2022.
- NATO (f). [NATO’s military presence in the east of the Alliance](#). 8 July 2022.
- NATO (g). [Emerging and disruptive technologies](#). 15 July 2022.
- NATO. [“NATO 2030: United for a New Era. Analysis and Recommendations of the Reflection Group Appointed by the NATO Secretary General”](#). 25 November 2020.
- NATO. [“NATO 2020: Assured security; Dynamic engagement. Analysis and Recommendations of the Group of Experts on a new Strategic Concept for NATO”](#). 17 May 2010.
- NATO. [“Press conference by NATO Secretary General Jens Stoltenberg previewing the extraordinary Summit of NATO Heads of State and Government”](#). 23 March 2022.
- NATO Parliamentary Assembly. [“2022 - NATO PA contribution to NATO’s new Strategic Concept”](#). 3 March 2022.
- NATO Parliamentary Assembly. [“Recommitting to NATO’s Democratic Foundations: The Case for a Democratic Resilience within NATO Headquarters”](#). 9 November 2021.
- NATO Parliamentary Assembly (b). [“Resolution 470 - Maintaining NATO’s focus on the Russian Challenge”](#). 11 October 2021.
- NDC. [NATO’s New Strategic Concept](#). September 2022.
- Schreer, Ben and William Alberque. [“Russia’s war, NATO’s response”](#). IISS. 28 February 2022.
- Shalal, Andrea & Landauro, Inti. [Biden bolsters long-term U.S. military presence in Europe](#). Reuters. 29 June 2022.
- Shea, Jamie. [NATO’s New Strategic Concept: What Should We Expect?](#) Martens Centre. June 2022.
- Shea, Jamie. [“Resilience: a core element of collective defence”](#). The NATO Review. 30 March 2016.
- Taylor, Alice. [Kosovo government postpones plan for volatile north after tensions with Serbia rise](#). Euractiv. 1 August 2022.