

Mme **Joëlle Garriaud-Maylam**, speech at the NATO Summit, Vilnius, 11 July 2023.

Distinguished Heads of State and Government,

Mr Secretary General,

Last year, in Madrid, you initiated an in-depth adaptation of the Euro-Atlantic Alliance. This adaptation rises to the challenge of the electroshock of Russia's aggression against Ukraine. It is also rooted – as it should be – in the defence of the fundamental values enshrined in the Washington Treaty: democracy, freedom, and the rule of law.

Our Parliamentary Assembly applauds the reaffirmation of these values in the new Strategic Concept. This is something we strongly advocated for, and we believe that these values should guide every decision you take at this Summit.

These values are what make NATO a unique alliance. These values are our strength; they unite us and inspire all those who wish to join us. In this respect, we welcome yesterday's agreement on Sweden's accession. We will ask our Turkish and Hungarian parliamentary colleagues to proceed as quickly as possible to ensure that we can welcome Sweden as the 32nd member of NATO as soon as possible.

Today it is in Ukraine that the defence of our values and the international rules-based order is at stake.

Ukraine will prevail. Thanks to the resolve and the courage of its people. But also as a result of the assistance we have been able – and are continuing – to provide together. This Summit should strongly reaffirm that we will stand with Ukraine for as long as it takes.

But we must go further and chart a clear path which will lead Ukraine towards NATO membership. Ukraine's place is here, amongst us. Until then, we must provide firm security guarantees to Ukraine.

This Summit must also demonstrate through robust commitments our unwavering determination to defend every inch of NATO territory.

Our Assembly fully supports the reinforcement of our capabilities and of NATO's deterrence and defence posture, especially on the eastern flank. Moreover, we are calling for a new, ambitious commitment on defence spending, with 2% of GDP as a minimum threshold, which should be exceeded.

But NATO's adaptation will not be complete until we have effectively given substance to the Alliance's commitment, as enshrined in its founding treaty and now in the Strategic Concept, to defend democratic values. This is precisely the purpose of our proposal to create a Centre for Democratic Resilience at NATO Headquarters, available to Allies and partners as a resource in the face of threats to the very essence of our democracies. Our Assembly unanimously supports this recommendation, and we would be very grateful for you to endorse it here in Vilnius, a country whose history is a model of democratic resilience.

The day before yesterday in Riga, during a festival honouring Latvian culture and unity, in the presence of Ruslan Stefanchuk, President of the Rada, the newly elected Latvian President told us that songs can work miracles, they can win wars. In Ukraine, like in Latvia, there are hymns expressing the resilience of an

entire population, voicing its faith in a democratic ideal that can change the course of history. During my visits to Kyiv and the martyr town of Borodyanka, I found the same determination in the eyes of the inhabitants. Democracy and freedom are irrepressible values.

Ladies and gentlemen, we must do all we can to help Ukraine. Now. This is a matter of urgency, and I trust that the example of Ukrainian courage and faith in our democratic values will inspire your debates and that this Summit will strongly demonstrate our determination to defend our democracies in the face of imperialism and autocracies. You can be confident that, at this crucial time, our parliaments will continue to work with you to bolster our unity, our solidarity, and our common security. You can be assured that, at this decisive moment, our parliaments, united in support of Ukraine, will work alongside you to reinforce our solidarity, strengthen our common security and uphold our values. Long live Ukraine, long live our Euro-Atlantic Alliance.