

SPRING SESSION

19-22 MAY 2023



Speech by the President of NATO-PA
Mrs Joëlle Garriaud-Maylam
Plenary session, Monday 22 May 2023
8:30

(Original French – Check against delivery - Courtesy translation)

Mr President of the Chamber of Deputies,

Dear Prime Minister,

Mr Deputy Prime Minister,

Mr Deputy General Secretary,

Your Excellencies, Ladies and Gentlemen,

First and foremost, I would like to thank the Luxembourg authorities, and in particular the Luxembourg Chamber of Deputies, its President and the Chair of the Luxembourg delegation, our colleague Lydia Mutsch, for their warm (and sunny!) welcome throughout the weekend.

Today we are closing this spring session, a historic session for our Assembly, since it is the first in which the Finnish Parliament is taking part as a full member. On behalf of us all, I would like to welcome our Finnish friends once again, and at the same time reiterate our wish that Sweden will also be able to join us as soon as possible.

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This session also gives us the opportunity to salute Luxembourg's commitment to NATO and to our Assembly. As a founding member of NATO, despite the limitations inherent in its size and the size of its army, Luxembourg actively contributes to NATO's priorities, missions and operations, and stands out in particular for its investment and its pioneering role in the space sector.

Just as importantly, Luxembourg is deeply committed to the values that underpin our alliance of democracies.

While Russia continues its illegal, unjustifiable and brutal war of aggression, Luxembourg is also providing much-appreciated support to Ukraine in its fight for freedom.

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Let us recall the words of a visionary statesman, founding father of Europe and signatory for France of the Treaty of Washington, Robert Schuman, born here in Luxembourg. In his historic declaration on 9 May 1950, he appealed: "World peace cannot be safeguarded without creative efforts commensurate with the dangers that threaten it".

Our discussions here over these three days will have demonstrated once again the importance of parliamentary diplomacy and its contribution to these creative efforts. We must safeguard peace at this pivotal moment for Euro-Atlantic and global security at any cost, in the face of attempts to call into question the very foundations of international order.

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In these troubled times, it is useful to go back to basics: to what defines us, what unites us and what we stand for. Our identity, our DNA, is our values: democracy, individual freedom and the rule of law. Our unity finds its strength in the unique and extraordinary transatlantic link. And our mission is above all to ensure the security of our fellow citizens, in a world that we want to be governed by the rule of law and not by the law of the strongest.

These are the principles that have guided our response to Russia's aggression against Ukraine for almost a year and a half. And it is these principles that we have strongly reaffirmed during this session in Luxembourg.

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In our discussions with our colleagues from the Ukrainian parliament, whose presence here I welcome, we unanimously renewed our united and resolute support for Ukraine and the Ukrainian people.

Our Assembly was among the first to sanction Russia, back in 2014, for its illegal and illegitimate annexation of Crimea by force. Since then, we have stood resolutely by Ukraine and helped it to defend its sovereignty, independence and democracy.

And we will continue to support Ukraine for as long as it takes to win. Because it is our common security, our values and the rules-based international order that Ukraine is defending today through its courageous resistance to Russian aggression. And it is in Ukraine that the future of this international order is at stake.

I know that each and every one of you continues, on a daily basis, to mobilise the aid that Ukraine needs. We will not slacken our efforts. Russia needs to know that our determination is like that of our Ukrainian friends: unshakeable.

Russia must also know that justice will be done for all the crimes it has committed and continues to commit in Ukraine: war crimes, crimes against humanity and probably also acts of genocide. Our Assembly will continue to support the creation of a special tribunal to hold Vladimir Putin and his accomplices to account for Russia's crime of aggression.

By attacking cities and critical infrastructure, by seeking to deprive civilians of access to essential services, by regularly threatening to withdraw from the Black Sea Grain Initiative, the Russian regime continues to act like a terrorist regime, with the support of Wagner's terrorist mercenaries.

We must also continue to denounce and punish Russia's accomplices in its war of aggression, particularly the Belarusian and Iranian regimes.

While our immediate priority is to do everything in our power to help Ukraine win, we already have a duty to help Ukraine prepare for the post-war period, its future and our common future. This is why we have called for the adoption of a comprehensive reconstruction plan, inspired by the Marshall Plan.

Our Assembly will also play its part to the full. Thanks to our special fund, we can continue to support the Ukrainian parliament over the long term.

We must also state unequivocally that Ukraine belongs to our European and Euro-Atlantic family, that it will become a member of NATO and the European Union, and that we will stand by its side all the way to membership.

These are some of the key messages that I hope we will adopt in a moment thanks to the excellent resolution by our Vice President Michal Szczerba and that we will invite our Heads of State and Government to reaffirm at the Vilnius Summit.

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This summit, which will take place in just two months' time, will also be an opportunity for the Allies to further accelerate the in-depth adaptation of NATO begun at the Madrid summit last year.

We remain convinced that, in a world marked by growing strategic rivalry and a growing clash of values, NATO's adaptation must focus on two main areas.

The first is to strengthen NATO's deterrence and defence posture. This of course involves responding to the Russian threat, in particular by strengthening the presence of allied forces all along the eastern flank. All our countries are now contributing to this effort, which needs to be further strengthened and accelerated.

But it also means facing up to all the threats and challenges to our security: the persistent threat of terrorism, China's growing

assertiveness, the proliferation of advanced technologies, the undermining of non-proliferation and arms control regimes, disinformation and hybrid threats, instability in our neighbourhood and climate change.

All these complex challenges must encourage us to further strengthen our defence investment. The Vilnius Summit should therefore set an ambitious framework to take over from the commitments on defence investment made at the Wales Summit in 2014. Our Assembly recommends making the 2% of GDP devoted to defence a minimum investment threshold that should be exceeded.

We also need to work closely with our defence industries to rebuild our stockpiles as quickly as possible, to continue to lead the way in innovation and to further strengthen our defence industrial base for the future.

Russia's war in Ukraine illustrates the need to build a resilient war economy, capable of ramping up quickly and then sustaining itself over time.

At the same time, we must continue to strengthen the resilience of our societies, institutions, supply chains and critical infrastructures, in close partnership with the European Union in particular.

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But our Assembly is convinced that NATO derives its strength not only from its military power, but also from our commitment to our democratic values. That is why we have made the reaffirmation of these values a central priority for NATO.

NATO's new Strategic Concept has proved us right. It recognises the threat that authoritarianism poses to our democracies. We must be particularly vigilant in the face of attempts to strengthen destabilising cooperation between China and Russia.

The new Strategic Concept places democratic values at the heart of NATO's response to today's challenges. But to give substance to this commitment, it must now be translated into concrete action. The Vilnius Summit must set a clear course to give tangible expression to this commitment to defend our values.

This is the whole point of the proposal that our Assembly has been supporting for four years now, to create, within NATO, a centre for democratic resilience.

The Vilnius Summit should also strengthen NATO's role in defending the rules-based international order, in close cooperation with the European Union and our like-minded partners.

This morning we will adopt our recommendations for the Vilnius summit. I would like to thank our rapporteur Linda Sanchez for her excellent report. We will also be talking to Mircea Geoana, NATO's Deputy Secretary General, whom I would like to thank for always being so available and mindful of our concerns and proposals.

It will be an honour for me to represent our Assembly in Vilnius and to present our recommendations to the Allied heads of state and government.

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At this decisive moment, it is essential to continue to make the voice of our parliaments heard and to take the measure of the dangers threatening world peace, as Robert Schuman so aptly put it. The role that we play, in supporting Ukraine and in strengthening our defence, is crucial, and it is up to us to continue to explain to our fellow citizens that what is at stake in these decisions and in the efforts that we are asking them to make is the future of *our* common security and the world that we will bequeath to future generations.

So, thank you all for your commitment and attention.