NATO
Ukraine
A Distinctive Partnership
In 2007, NATO and Ukraine are celebrating the tenth anniversary of the Charter on a Distinctive Partnership. The Charter was signed by Allied and Ukrainian leaders at a summit meeting in Madrid in July 1997. It identified areas for consultation and cooperation, and established the NATO-Ukraine Commission to take work forward.

Since then, the relationship has developed progressively and a pattern of dialogue and cooperation has become well-established in a wide range of areas. In particular, Ukraine has proved to be an important contributor to Euro-Atlantic security in the framework of NATO-led operations.

An important aspect of relations is the support given by NATO and individual Allies for Ukraine’s ongoing reform efforts, particularly in the defence and security sectors. These reforms are vital for the country’s democratic development and the realisation of its goal to become more integrated with Euro-Atlantic structures. A useful tool in this process is the NATO-Ukraine Action Plan, adopted in November 2002, which sets long-term objectives in key areas and provides a framework for deepened and broadened cooperation. Annual Target Plans support the implementation of the Action Plan’s objectives.

NATO and Ukraine are also engaged in an Intensified Dialogue on Ukraine’s membership aspirations and related reforms. This Dialogue does not guarantee an invitation to join the Alliance, nor does it prejudice any eventual Alliance decision. Such an invitation would be based on Ukraine’s performance in the implementation of key reform goals. Ultimately, however, it is up to Ukrainian people and their elected leaders to determine the country’s future path with NATO.
1991
- Formal relations between NATO and Ukraine begin when Ukraine joins the North Atlantic Cooperation Council (later renamed the Euro-Atlantic Partnership Council), immediately upon achieving independence following the break-up of the Soviet Union.

1994
- Ukraine is the first member state of the Commonwealth of Independent States (CIS) to join the Partnership for Peace (PfP).

1996
- Ukrainian soldiers deploy as part of the NATO-led peacekeeping force in Bosnia and Herzegovina.

1997
- The NATO Information and Documentation Centre opens in Kyiv to provide information about NATO’s activities and evolving mandate, and to promote the benefits of NATO-Ukraine cooperation.
- In July, at a summit meeting in Madrid, Spain, the Allies and Ukraine formally sign the Charter on a Distinctive Partnership, establishing the NATO-Ukraine Commission (NUC).
- Ukraine establishes a diplomatic mission to NATO.
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<tr>
<th>Year</th>
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<td>1998</td>
<td>• The NATO-Ukraine Joint Working Group on Defence Reform is established.</td>
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| 1999 | • The NATO Liaison Office opens in Kyiv to facilitate Ukraine’s participation in the PfP programme and support its reform efforts, by liaising with the Ministry of Defence and other Ukrainian agencies.  
  • The Polish-Ukrainian battalion deploys as part of the NATO-led peacekeeping force in Kosovo. |
| 2000 | • The Ukrainian parliament ratifies the PfP Status of Forces Agreement. |
| 2002 | • In May, President Leonid Kuchma announces Ukraine’s goal of eventual NATO membership. At a NUC meeting in Reykjavik, Iceland, foreign ministers underline their desire to take their relationship forward to a qualitatively new level.  
  • This leads to the development of a NATO-Ukraine Action Plan, adopted at a NUC meeting of foreign ministers in November in Prague, the Czech Republic. |
| 2004 | • The Ukrainian parliament ratifies an agreement with NATO on Host Nation Support.  
  • Ukraine signs an agreement with NATO on Strategic Airlift.  
  • In the autumn, the Allies closely follow political developments surrounding the presidential elections in Ukraine and the “Orange Revolution”. They stress the importance of respect for free and fair elections and postpone a NUC ministerial-level meeting scheduled for December. |
2005
- In February, the Allies invite newly-elected President Viktor Yushchenko to a summit meeting at NATO Headquarters. They express support for his ambitious reform plans and agree to refocus NATO-Ukraine cooperation in line with the new government’s priorities.
- In April, at the NUC meeting of foreign ministers in Vilnius, Lithuania, the Allies and Ukraine launch an Intensified Dialogue on Ukraine’s aspirations to NATO membership and a package of short-term actions to strengthen support for key reforms.
- An exchange of letters between NATO and Ukraine agrees procedures to prepare the way for Ukraine’s support for the NATO-led maritime counter-terrorist operation in the Mediterranean, Operation Active Endeavour.
- In September, a series of staff-level expert discussions is initiated under the Intensified Dialogue.
- In October, the North Atlantic Council visits Kyiv to discuss the Intensified Dialogue with Ukraine’s foreign and defence ministers.
- In December, at a NUC meeting at NATO Headquarters, Allied foreign ministers stress that further progress towards Ukraine's Euro-Atlantic integration, including possible participation in NATO’s Membership Action Plan, would depend on concrete, measurable progress in the implementation of key reforms and policies.

2006
- In March, NATO’s Secretary General welcomes the conduct of free and fair parliamentary elections as contributing to the consolidation of democracy in Ukraine.
- In September, during a visit to NATO, Prime Minister Viktor Yanukovych reassures Allies of Ukraine’s commitment to ongoing cooperation with NATO but says the Ukrainian people are not yet ready to consider possible NATO membership.

2007
- First Ukrainian ship deploys in support of Operation Active Endeavour.
- Ukraine sends medical personnel to support a Provincial Reconstruction Team in Afghanistan.
- 10th anniversary of the NATO-Ukraine Distinctive Partnership.
Member availability and key reforms

NATO’s door remains open to any European democratic country which demonstrates a firm commitment to the common values that underpin the Alliance and can contribute to NATO’s security missions. The launch of the Intensified Dialogue with Ukraine in April 2005 in the wake of the “Orange Revolution” was a clear signal from NATO Allies that they supported Ukraine’s membership aspirations. While it does not guarantee an invitation to join the Alliance, NATO and individual Allies are committed to providing assistance and advice on key reforms. These reforms are in Ukraine’s national interest, whether or not Ukraine chooses to become a NATO member. The pace of progress remains in Ukraine’s hands.

The Intensified Dialogue addresses issues specifically related to Ukraine’s possible NATO membership. The first concrete step in the Intensified Dialogue process was taken in June 2004, during a visit by the NATO Secretary General to Kyiv, when the Ukrainian government formally presented an initial discussion paper. The paper addressed key issues set out in a 1995 Study on NATO Enlargement (see box), including domestic and foreign policy, defence and security sector reform as well as legal and security issues. This provided the basis for the launch, in September 2005, of a series of structured expert discussions. These staff talks give Ukrainian officials the opportunity to learn more about what would be expected from Ukraine as a potential member of the Alliance, and also allow NATO officials to examine in greater detail Ukrainian reform policy and capabilities. This helps identify key areas where Ukraine needs to focus its reform efforts and where NATO-Ukraine cooperation could be better targeted to facilitate progress.

The Intensified Dialogue does not guarantee an invitation to join the Alliance

In parallel with the Intensified Dialogue, a package of short-term actions was launched to focus practical cooperation in support of urgent reform goals. The actions highlight five priority areas: strengthening democratic institutions, enhancing political dialogue, intensifying defence and security sector reform, improving public information, and managing the social and economic consequences of reform. These are vital to the success of Ukraine’s democratic transformation and are also areas where NATO can offer specific expertise and, in some cases, material assistance.
What is expected of a candidate country?

According to the 1995 Study on NATO Enlargement, which was carried out in the run-up to NATO’s first post-Cold War round of enlargement, any country seeking to join the Alliance must meet key requirements. These include:

- a functioning democratic political system based on a market economy;
- the treatment of minority populations in accordance with guidelines established by the Organization for Security and Co-operation in Europe;
- a commitment to peaceful resolution of disputes with neighbours;
- the ability and willingness to make a military contribution to the Alliance and to achieve interoperability with other members’ forces; and
- a commitment to democratic civil-military relations and institutional structures.

Information issues; security, defence and military issues; information protection and security; and legal issues.

Prime Minister Yanukovych (left) visits NATO Headquarters in September 2006. He reassured Allies that Ukraine remained committed to developing closer relations with NATO through ongoing cooperation under the NATO-Ukraine Action Plan and the Intensified Dialogue. He said the Ukrainian people were not yet ready for the country to consider joining the NATO’s Membership Action Plan, but announced that the government would launch a public information campaign about NATO-Ukraine relations.

To support the implementation of the Action Plan’s objectives, Annual Target Plans are agreed in which Ukraine sets its own targets in terms of the activities it wishes to pursue both internally and in cooperation with NATO. These Annual Target Plans are developed jointly by Ukraine and NATO and approved at the highest level, with the Ukrainian President being the final authority to approve the plan. Once approved, these plans are published on the NATO and Ukraine web sites. Officials meet twice a year to assess progress, and NATO prepares an annual report on implementation. This process of fixing benchmarks and assessing progress annually will continue to serve as the backbone for NATO-Ukraine cooperation as the Intensified Dialogue is carried forward.

NATO-Ukraine Action Plan

Both the Intensified Dialogue and the short-term actions are intended to complement and reinforce existing cooperation in the framework of the 2002 NATO-Ukraine Action Plan. Building on the Charter for a Distinctive Partnership, which remains the basic foundation underpinning NATO-Ukraine relations, the Action Plan identifies a set of long-term strategic objectives designed to bring Ukraine closer to its Euro-Atlantic integration goals and provides a framework for existing and future NATO-Ukraine cooperation. It sets out jointly agreed principles and objectives covering political and economic issues.
Areas of cooperation

Consultations and cooperation between NATO and Ukraine cover a wide range of areas, including peace-support operations and security, defence reform, military-to-military cooperation, armaments, civil emergency planning, and science and environment. The NATO-Ukraine Commission (NUC) directs cooperative activities and provides a forum for consultation between the Allies and Ukraine on security issues of common concern.

The NUC meets regularly at the level of ambassadors and military representatives, and periodically at the level of foreign and defence ministers and chiefs of defence staff as well as at summit level. It adopts the Annual Target Plans that are developed with Ukraine to implement the objectives of the 2002 NATO-Ukraine Action Plan, and monitors progress. Joint working groups have been set up under the auspices of the NUC to take work forward in specific areas, namely defence reform, armaments, economic security, and scientific and environmental cooperation.

Peace-support and security cooperation

Ukraine has a proven track record of actively contributing to Euro-Atlantic security by deploying troops to work together with peacekeepers from NATO and Partner countries. As of spring 2007, it was the only Partner country contributing actively to the four main ongoing NATO-led operations and missions.

Ukraine contributed an infantry battalion, a mechanised infantry battalion and a helicopter squadron to the NATO-led peacekeeping force in Bosnia and Herzegovina. Deployments to the NATO-led operation in Kosovo have included...
a helicopter squadron as well as some 300 peacekeepers, who continue to serve in the US-led sector as part of the joint Polish-Ukrainian battalion.

The country is further contributing to international stability and the fight against terrorism by providing over-flight clearance for forces deployed in Afghanistan as part of the NATO-led International Security Assistance Force, or as part of the coalition forces under the US-led Operation Enduring Freedom. In 2007, arrangements were made for Ukrainian medical personnel to support the Lithuanian-led Provincial Reconstruction Team in Afghanistan.

Some 1600 Ukrainian troops were deployed to Iraq, as part of a Polish-led multinational force in one of the sectors of the international stabilisation force, which includes peacekeepers from several NATO and Partner countries. Ukraine has, since March 2005, also contributed officers to the NATO Training Mission in Iraq.

Moreover, the Allies have welcomed Ukraine’s offer to support Operation Active Endeavour, NATO’s maritime operation in the Mediterranean aimed at helping deter, disrupt and protect against terrorism. The Ukrainian frigate URS Ternopil was the first ship to be deployed in support of the operation in June 2007. It is due to be followed by a corvette, the URS Lutsk, in autumn 2007 and a frigate, the URS Sagaidachnyi, in 2008.

**Defence and security sector reform**

Cooperation with Ukraine in the area of defence and security sector reform is more extensive than with any other of NATO’s Partner countries. It has been crucial to the ongoing transformation of Ukraine’s security posture and remains an essential part of its democratic transition. Ukraine has sought NATO’s support in efforts to transform its Cold War legacy of massive conscript forces into smaller, professional and more mobile armed forces, able to meet the country’s security needs and to contribute actively to stability and security in the Euro-Atlantic area and beyond. Another overarching objective of NATO-Ukraine cooperation in this area is to strengthen democratic and civilian control of Ukraine’s armed forces and security institutions.
A Joint Working Group on Defence Reform (JWGDR), established in 1998, directs cooperation in the area of defence and security sector reform. It is a forum for discussions between experts from NATO member states and Ukraine about issues relevant to implementing defence and security sector reforms. The JWGDR allows Ukraine to draw on Allied expertise and serves as a channel through which NATO countries can provide and coordinate concrete support to Ukraine. Since 2002, it has organised annual high-level informal consultations on defence reform and defence policy involving Ukrainian and NATO defence ministers and defence and security experts. It also regularly organises roundtable discussions with the Ukrainian parliament on issues related to defence and security sector reform. Initially, the JWGDR’s activities focused on information exchange among experts on topics such as democratic control over armed forces, professionalisation, reservist concepts and defence budgeting. As the group evolved, it expanded the scope of its activities to include wider security sector reforms in Ukraine.

A key area of cooperation under the JWGDR has been to help Ukraine draw up a road map for defence reform. In 2003, NATO staff and individual Allies advised and assisted Ukraine in the conduct of a defence review – a complex process aimed at identifying the country’s defence requirements, balancing these against available resources, and preparing proposals for forces and capabilities to provide the best value for taxpayers’ money. This helped Ukraine define the direction of its defence reforms up to 2015. Today, NATO and the Allies are supporting the implementation of this defence review and are also advising Ukraine on the conduct of a comprehensive national security sector review, which goes beyond the Ministry of Defence and the armed forces to address all structures and policies related the security of the state. Support is also being given for the demilitarisation of Ukraine’s security sector, including through cooperation with the troops of the Ministry of the Interior and with the Ministry of Emergencies.

Ukraine’s drive to reform its defence and security sector also benefits from participation in the Partnership for Peace (PfP). In particular, the PIP Planning and Review Process enables joint goals to be developed for shaping force structures and capabilities to help develop Ukraine’s forces to be better able to work with NATO forces.

Of fundamental importance for Ukraine’s development as a democratic country and its progress towards further Euro-Atlantic integration is the strengthening of civil control over security and defence structures, including the intelligence sector, and improving the capacities of these structures. As part of wider cooperation in this area, a professional development programme for civilians working in Ukraine’s defence and
security institutions was launched in October 2005. This initiative, which is being conducted under the auspices of the JWGDR with the support of 15 Allies, is important not only in terms of strengthening the role of civilians but also in view of developing the personnel needed to improve the ability of the government to introduce systemic changes in these institutions.

Two other initiatives aimed at promoting democratic control were taken in 2006. A NATO-Ukraine Working Group on Civil and Democratic Control of the Intelligence Sector was established. And a Partnership Network for Civil Society Expertise Development was launched to promote the sharing of experience on the role of civil society in defence and security affairs among civil society groups and security practitioners in NATO member countries and Ukraine.

A number of initiatives are also underway to help Ukraine retrain and resettle former military personnel made redundant as a result of the progressive downsizing of the Ukrainian armed forces and plans to move towards an all-volunteer service by 2011.

NATO-Ukraine cooperation in this field is being developed along three main axes. First, a NATO-funded retraining programme focuses on linguistic and specialised professional courses for some 200 former military personnel per year. Second, a project for the retraining and resettlement of 600 redundant military personnel at a centre in Khmelnytskyi, western Ukraine, is being supported through a PFP Trust Fund (a mechanism that enables individual NATO and Partner countries to pool voluntary financial contributions in support of specific projects).

And third, expert help is being given to help Ukraine develop a comprehensive resettlement programme. One key recommendation is that resettlement should become an integral part of the personnel policy of the Ukrainian armed forces and be managed in a decentralised way. A first step in this direction was the opening, with NATO support, of a Resettlement Information and Consultation Point at the Ukrainian naval headquarters at Sebastopol, Crimea, in December 2006, to help former navy personnel find jobs in the civilian sector.
Much-needed assistance is also being channelled towards demilitarisation projects to help Ukraine address the problems posed by its huge stockpiles of surplus and obsolete munitions (see box). Planned reforms of the armed forces will add to these stockpiles in the coming years. Finding safe ways to destroy these stockpiles is a priority since much of the materiel is stored in the open, posing a major security threat to local populations and infrastructure as well as a potential risk to the wider region should it fall into the wrong hands.

Dialogue and exchanges of experience with experts also take place with Ukraine on the economic aspects of defence. Issues covered include security aspects of economic development and economic matters related to Euro-Atlantic integration, as well as topics specifically related to defence economics such as defence budgets, the management of defence resources and restructuring in the defence sector. Courses are also organised for Ukrainian staff, covering the whole budgetary process from financial planning to financial control.

**Demilitarisation projects**

Support for Ukraine’s efforts to destroy stockpiles of landmines, munitions and small and light weapons has been channelled through two Partnership for Peace Trust Fund projects.

The first project involved the safe destruction of 400 000 landmines at a chemical plant in Donetsk, eastern Ukraine, over a 15-month period in 2002-2003. It was the first step in destroying Ukraine’s stockpile of almost seven million anti-personnel mines. The landmines were disassembled, the explosives extracted and recycled into commercial explosives, the metal used for scrap, and the plastic of the mine casings used to make plastic children’s toys.

Launched in 2005, a second project aims to destroy 133 000 tons of conventional munitions, 1.5 million small arms and 1000 man-portable air defence systems. With projected total costs of some €25 million, the project will be carried out over an estimated twelve years. It is the largest single demilitarisation project of its kind in the world. The first phase, started in January 2007, aims to destroy 400 000 small and light weapons by end 2008. The project will create more than 60 jobs for local people.
Military-to-military cooperation

Helping Ukraine implement its defence reform objectives is also a key focus of military-to-military cooperation, complementing the work carried out under the JWGDR with military expertise. Another important objective is to develop interoperability through a wide range of PfP activities and military exercises, sometimes hosted by Ukraine, which allow military personnel to train for peace-support operations and gain hands-on experience of working with forces from NATO countries and other partners. Senior Ukrainian officers also regularly participate in courses at the NATO Defense College in Rome, Italy, and the NATO School at Oberammergau, Germany. Contacts with these establishments have been instrumental in setting up a new multinational faculty at the Ukrainian Defence Academy.

The military side has also taken the lead in developing a legal framework to enable NATO and Ukraine to further develop operational cooperation. These include the PfP Status of Forces Agreement, which entered into force in May 2000 and facilitates participation in PfP military exercises by exempting participants from passport and visa regulations and immigration inspection on entering or leaving the territory of the country hosting the event. Another key document is the agreement on Host Nation Support, ratified in March 2004, which addresses issues related to the provision of civil and military assistance to Allied forces located on, or in transit through, Ukrainian territory in peacetime, crisis or war. And an agreement on Strategic Airlift, ratified by the Ukrainian parliament in October 2006, enables Ukraine to make a substantial contribution to NATO’s capability to move outsized cargo by leasing Antonov aircraft to Allied armed forces – an arrangement which also brings economic benefits to Ukraine.
Armaments cooperation

Technical cooperation between Ukraine and NATO in the field of armaments focuses on enhancing interoperability between defence systems to facilitate Ukrainian contributions to joint peace-support operations. Cooperation in this area started when Ukraine joined the PfP programme and began participating in an increasing number of the armaments groups, which meet under the auspices of the Conference of National Armaments Directors (a NATO body which identifies opportunities for cooperation between countries in defence equipment procurement processes, focusing in particular on technical standards).

Science and environmental issues

Ukraine’s participation in NATO science programmes began in 1991 and intensified following an exchange of letters on cooperation in the area of science and the environment in 1999. Over the years, Ukraine has been second only to Russia in terms of NATO grants for scientific collaboration. In addition to applying science to defence against terrorism and new threats, Ukraine’s priority areas for cooperation include information technologies, cell biology and biotechnology, new materials, the rational use of natural resources and cooperation focused on defence-related environmental problems. NATO has also sponsored several projects to provide basic infrastructure for computer networking among Ukrainian research communities and to facilitate their access to the internet. Although the focus of past collaboration has been in the area of physical sciences, project proposals are now also being considered which deal with security issues from a social science perspective.
Disaster-preparedness

NATO and Ukraine have developed practical cooperation on civil emergency planning and disaster-preparedness, since the signing of a memorandum of understanding in 1997. Ukraine’s western regions are prone to heavy flooding and NATO countries and other partners have provided assistance after severe floods in 1995, 1998 and 2001. A key focus of cooperation has therefore been to help Ukraine to prepare better for such emergencies and to manage their consequences more effectively. PfP exercises also help develop plans and effective disaster-response capabilities to deal with other natural emergencies such as avalanches and earthquakes, or man-made accidents or terrorist attacks involving toxic spills or chemical, biological, radiological or nuclear agents – Ukraine hosted one such exercise in 2005 (see box).

Emergency-response exercise

In October 2005, Ukraine hosted a major exercise, called Joint Assistance 2005, involving simulated terrorist action at a chemical plant. According to the exercise scenario, significant amounts of chlorine agent were released and factory staff, several nearby communities and the first emergency responders were exposed to the chemicals. The Ukrainian authorities asked for international assistance to help respond to the emergency and called in the Organisation for the Prohibition of Chemical Weapons (OPCW) to investigate the incident.

The exercise allowed Ukrainian experts and consequence-management teams from 11 NATO and Partner countries to perform chemical reconnaissance and decontamination measures as well as to organise the temporary evacuation of the local population and to provide life support and medical care to those affected. Over 1000 personnel were involved in the exercise, which took place at the Yavoriv Partnership for Peace Training Centre near the city of Lviv in western Ukraine. The Euro-Atlantic Disaster Response Coordination Centre planned the exercise together with Ukraine and the OPCW. The United Nations Office for the Coordination of Humanitarian Affairs also participated.

A key focus of NATO-Ukraine cooperation in the area of disaster-preparedness is to help Ukraine prepare better for heavy floods.

Life support and medical care are given to those affected by chemical agents in Exercise Joint Assistance, which was hosted by Ukraine in October 2005.
Prospects for the future

The main goal of ongoing cooperation between NATO and Ukraine is a more democratic, prosperous Ukraine with a modern, accountable security sector. Ukraine needs to concentrate its efforts on pushing this process forward to ensure the practical implementation of reform commitments in key areas such as strengthening democracy, the rule of law, human rights and the market economy, fighting corruption and transforming the defence and security sector. Through advice and practical assistance, NATO and individual Allies are supporting Ukraine’s efforts to achieve its ambitious reform agenda, however, the responsibility for implementation falls primarily on Ukraine.

It is also important for the Ukrainian administration to convince the Ukrainian people that its ambitious reform programme and its Euro-Atlantic integration course, including possible NATO membership, are in the country’s interest. Many people in Ukraine are still suspicious of NATO and associate the Alliance with Cold War stereotypes. More needs to be done to increase awareness among the Ukrainian public of the mutual benefits that are already being generated by ongoing dialogue and practical cooperation between NATO and Ukraine in a wide range of areas.

The Allies have offered, as part of the short-term actions agreed at Vilnius, to cooperate with the Ukrainian authorities in raising awareness about what NATO is today and in better explaining the NATO-Ukraine relationship. This will allow people to discover for themselves how NATO has transformed itself since the end of the Cold War. An important part of its transformation is the new partnerships it has developed throughout the Euro-Atlantic area to meet new security challenges, including strategic partnerships with both Ukraine and Russia. The strengthening of NATO-Russia relations in recent years also shows that Ukraine’s membership aspirations do not run counter to its desire to maintain a strong relationship with Russia.

Much work has already been undertaken since the launch of the Intensified Dialogue. The Allies have learned more about Ukraine’s priorities and Ukraine has learned more about what would be expected of it as an aspirant for membership. As the Intensified Dialogue process moves forward, the shared experience of cooperation that NATO and Ukraine have gained over the past decade will provide a solid foundation for the further deepening of the NATO-Ukraine relationship in the years to come.
“Our commitment to the Intensified Dialogue underscores that NATO’s door remains open and that Ukraine’s aspirations are achievable. ... But ultimately, the primary responsibility for success rests with the Ukrainian people and their elected leaders.”

NATO Secretary General Jaap de Hoop Scheffer at the meeting of the NATO-Ukraine Commission at the level of foreign ministers in Sofia, Bulgaria, 28 April 2006
Further information

More information on NATO-Ukraine relations is available at:
www.nato.int/issues/nato-ukraine

The NATO Information and Documentation Centre (NIDC) strengthens public awareness of NATO by co-sponsoring conferences, seminars and roundtable discussions, as well as organising visits to and from NATO Headquarters, liaising with journalists and distributing NATO publications. The NIDC also supports the activities of non-governmental organisations, particularly in information and security-related fields, and supports NATO scientific cooperation with Ukraine.
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