



## **NATO Parliamentary Assembly**

# **DECLARATION ON TRANSATLANTIC RELATIONS\***

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\* Presented by the Standing Committee and adopted by the Plenary Assembly on Friday 30 May 2014, Vilnius, Lithuania

**A common history, a common future:  
A renewed transatlantic partnership for a strong Alliance**

1. The transatlantic bond is and remains the central and fundamental pillar of the Alliance. The strength of this bond lies in Europe and North America's common history, in our enduring shared values and common interests. In the face of a constantly evolving and increasingly complex security environment, Europe and North America are confronted with a common set of challenges. NATO provides a unique forum where Europeans and North Americans can consult and coordinate on any and all of these challenges; this extensive, comprehensive, permanent consultation process helps maintain and reinforce our political cohesion. The ultimate expression of the transatlantic bond is the steadfast commitment to collective defence under Article 5 of the Washington Treaty.
2. The transatlantic bond, however, predates and transcends NATO. It is rooted in Europe and North America's historic alliance for a Europe free and at peace, and in our shared commitment to promoting an international order which guarantees the freedom, inalienable rights and economic opportunity of all people.
3. Building on these two fundamental pillars, Europe and North America must redefine a modernised and strengthened transatlantic partnership, which will continue to serve as the fundamental bedrock of NATO for the future. We share a proud common history. Now is the time to define our common future.
4. Below is the vision that we, members of parliament from Europe and North America, elected representatives of the citizens of the Alliance, would like to submit to the consideration of our governments ahead of the NATO Summit in Wales in September 2014:

**1. Build a citizens' Alliance today and tomorrow**

5. However strong, the transatlantic bond should not be taken for granted. We must ensure that new generations – our youth and our future leaders – understand the unique character of the transatlantic link and the value of the Alliance.
6. In all our countries, memories of the extraordinary commitment and sacrifice of our forefathers for peace and liberty in Europe are slowly fading away. In a globalised and interconnected world, our citizens also feel less directly bound together as part of a distinctive transatlantic community. We need active efforts across all fields of culture, education, media, diplomacy and economy to **create a renewed transatlantic culture**, and dedicate resources to these efforts. As a first step, we should introduce new transatlantic scholarships for future leaders in the fields of foreign policy, defence, economics and science.
7. The goals and missions of our defence have also become more diverse and complex, and thus more difficult for our citizens to understand and to support. Yet, the future strength of the Alliance and of the transatlantic bond depends on public support and trust. Our citizens must feel and take ownership of their own security. For this, we must **encourage even greater transparency and involve our publics more in discussions and decisions over our common defence**.
8. **Greater financial transparency will increase public trust.** The Alliance needs to explain the rationale behind its work, and account for the way in which this work is carried out.
9. Working hand in hand with NATO, academic institutions, national chapters of the Atlantic Treaty Association and other civil society organisations, our governments and parliaments must develop **annual national action plans to inform the public about the requirements of 21<sup>st</sup> century defence and promote the values and aims of the transatlantic security partnership**. These should include regular public information campaigns on national defence

priorities and the benefits and added value of NATO; regular public consultations on defence strategies and priorities and greater visibility of defence institutions on social media.

10. We should **redouble efforts to promote the representation and full participation of women in defence and security institutions.**

11. As we build the basis for effective defence and seek to reconcile the need for expediency with the requirement of democratic legitimacy, **parliamentary support is essential.** The NATO Parliamentary Assembly and its members play a fundamental role in promoting the transparency of, and winning public support for, NATO policies, and furthering the transatlantic bond among current and future decision-makers.

## **2. Reaffirm transatlantic cohesion and solidarity**

12. The test for the Alliance is not the absence of differences – these will continue to exist – but the ability to cope with them in ways that pull our respective strengths and perspectives together and point to a common direction. To achieve this, we must ensure that **individual or regional interests take into account collective interests, and that economic or other considerations do not jeopardize security interests.**

13. Our priority should be to preserve and strengthen transatlantic cohesion and solidarity and demonstrate it in new and visible ways.

14. The Transatlantic Trade and Investment Partnership (TTIP) and the Canada-EU Comprehensive Economic and Trade Agreement (CETA) provide a historic opportunity to **reaffirm our commitment to, and faith in, the political and economic values** that form the basis of the transatlantic link, and **which we pledged to promote in Article 2 of the Washington Treaty.**

## **3. Strengthen the transatlantic energy security partnership**

15. Ongoing events in Ukraine provide a stark reminder that energy security must be a key mission of the Alliance.

16. Europe and North America should facilitate access to each other's energy resources in order to reduce their reliance on imports from third countries. We should aim to establish a genuine transatlantic energy community.

17. Europe and North America must continue to work together to create a more competitive, transparent and diversified natural gas marketplace, through initiatives such as US LNG exports and the Southern Gas Corridor, which will help strengthen the independence of the Alliance.

## **4. Make clear that the Alliance continues to stand for a Europe whole and free, for universal values and a rules-based international system**

18. The recent crisis in Ukraine should lead us to reaffirm our shared commitment to a Europe whole and free, to fundamental human and political rights and to a rules-based international system, a commitment which forms the very foundation of the transatlantic partnership.

19. A Europe whole, free and at peace remains a central goal for Allies on both sides of the Atlantic. The Alliance acts as a symbol of the free, democratic choice of all nations. We should continue to affirm and support the right of nations to choose their foreign policy course, free from outside interference and destabilisation.

20. The Alliance provides a pillar of stability which has continued to attract new members which share the commitment to collective defence and to common values of democracy, individual liberty and rule of law. **NATO's door remains open to all European nations which are ready and able**

**to further its values, aims and principles, and in a position to contribute to Euro-Atlantic security.** The Alliance fully supports the aspirant countries, Bosnia and Herzegovina, Georgia, the former Yugoslav Republic of Macedonia\*\* and Montenegro, in their quest to become members of NATO.

21. As provided in the Washington Treaty, NATO must also continue to **defend effective multilateralism based on the aims and principles of the United Nations Charter.**

#### **5. Reaffirm the centrality of Article 5**

22. **Collective defence** enshrined in Article 5 of the Washington Treaty is and remains the Alliance's main purpose and the ultimate expression of the transatlantic bond. **There can be no doubt about Allies' determination and ability to exercise their Article 5 obligations.** We must continue to take effective and visible measures to demonstrate our resolve and readiness.

#### **6. Provide common responses to common challenges**

23. In a constantly evolving security environment, **NATO provides the unique transatlantic framework for Europe and North America to develop common responses to common challenges:** terrorism, cyber-threats, the proliferation of weapons of mass destruction and their means of delivery. NATO's Ballistic Missile Defence is one of the most significant transatlantic undertakings in this field.

24. **Food, energy and environmental security, and economic and conflict-driven migration** will also pose new challenges in the future. **NATO** need not be the primary institution for averting, addressing or responding to problems in these areas, but it **must be able to act in concert with other bodies.**

#### **7. Strengthen the Alliance's contribution to crisis prevention and management**

25. Allies will continue to call on NATO to manage crises, particularly in the Euro-Atlantic neighbourhood.

26. There is no contradiction between the aspiration to prevent and resolve conflicts by diplomatic means and the necessity to maintain strong military capabilities. **To reach political solutions, we need a credible defence and credible deterrence and to show our will and readiness to use it.**

27. NATO should **stand ready to provide military, as well as non-military, assistance in the event of natural, industrial or humanitarian disasters.** For this, we must **strengthen our capacity to anticipate future crises,** particularly in the neighbourhood.

28. NATO should act in these fields in **co-ordination with the European Union, as agreed, and with other international or regional organisations,** respecting each organisation's specific area of responsibility and expertise.

29. Allies should consider how they **support future UN stabilisation and peacekeeping missions** which directly involve collective security interests, in the framework of the Washington Treaty, for instance by designating specific assets or units which could be used together as part of a co-ordinated NATO contribution to UN operations.

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\*\* Turkey recognises the Republic of Macedonia with its constitutional name.

30. NATO members face an array of challenges emanating from the Middle East and North Africa (MENA) comprised of the protracted war in Syria, the continuing instability of Libya, the stalled transition in Egypt, and governance challenges exacerbated by the disintegration of government control in various countries, which has created ungoverned spaces where terrorist groups and traffickers can thrive. Therefore, the Alliance must be prepared to act in case of regional instability. Weak governance, the absence of the rule of law, and arms trafficking in large parts of the MENA region are a perfect breeding ground for groups like al-Qaeda in the Islamic Maghreb. There are already indications that extremists have coalesced with criminal groups in Mali and Libya.

#### **8. Preserve the credibility and strength of our transatlantic defence**

31. The threats we face today are increasingly diverse, complex, and unpredictable. To preserve our ability to protect our citizens, we must continue to invest in a strong, credible defence and deterrence.

32. Unfortunately, many capability commitments made in the past have not been fully followed through in practice. Disinvestment in defence has now reached a point where it threatens our ability to respond adequately to today's and tomorrow's threats. We must **abide by the commitment embodied in Article 3 of the Washington Treaty**, to "maintain and develop [our] individual and collective capacity to resist armed attack (...) separately and jointly, by means of continuous and effective self-help and mutual aid".

33. The current economic context has imposed severe strains on our defence budgets. We must **ensure that future decisions** about our national and collective defence, while taking into account available resources, **are first and foremost policy-driven**. Failure to fund adequate defence comes with a high political and security cost. Defence spending cannot be turned on or off at will because of the long lead times needed to recruit, train and exercise personnel, acquire complex and costly defence capabilities, and achieve interoperability of personnel and equipment.

34. NATO must **remain the world leader in military effectiveness**. The Alliance must preserve its technological edge, by investing in the capabilities needed for the future. To that end, it should **stress research and development, and the importance of a strong industrial base** on both sides of the Atlantic.

35. **Increased co-operation on capability development** through Smart Defence will help us get better value for the money we put into our defence, but will not substitute for inadequate defence expenditure.

36. **Enhanced investment in peacetime interoperability** will help our troops preserve the habit of working together they have developed in operations over the past 20 years.

#### **9. Define the terms of a new compact between European and North American Allies**

37. We must define the terms of **a new compact between European and North American Allies**. The current perception of an imbalance in the sharing of the burden for our security should be redressed.

38. **The European Allies should contribute more to NATO and to their own security**. NATO should not serve as a pretext or vehicle for European Allies to delegate the responsibility for their security to the United States. A stronger Europe in NATO will mean a stronger NATO. **In turn, North America should be more open to co-operation with European Allies in research and innovation and to defence industrial partnerships**.

39. European Allies should understand and recognise the growing significance of political, economic and security interests in Asia. **North American and European Allies** will continue to

remain each other's partner of choice, and **should work together to develop common approaches in dealing with regional and global security challenges.**

40. As a matter of urgency, NATO and the European Union must develop a plan for ensuring that each organisation's unique strengths and abilities are employed coherently to best address the challenges their member nations face.

#### **10. Engage partner countries in support of our shared security**

41. Engagement with partner countries has been one of NATO's success stories, and contributes to the vitality of the Alliance. Partnerships cannot be a substitute for a strong transatlantic Alliance, but they can complement it. We must **continue to work with partners to address common security challenges and build partners' capacity to deal with their own security challenges.**

#### **11. Reassess the NATO-Russia partnership**

42. When partnerships are based on agreed common values and principles in addition to common interests, any violation of these values and principles must have consequences. Russia's aggression against Ukraine, illegal and illegitimate seizure of Crimea and a concerted campaign of violence by pro-Russian separatists, aiming to destabilise Ukraine as a sovereign state, have called into question the basis for our partnership. We must now define the new terms of this relationship. Any further Russian military interference, under any pretext, will only deepen Russia's international isolation.

43. Russia's military intervention, first in Georgia and now in Ukraine, represents a historic turning point and demonstrates that the European security environment is both fragile and unpredictable.