

HIGH-LEVEL MEETING OF SPEAKERS OF THE NATO PARLIAMENTS

1-3 June 2023

Vilnius, Lithuania

CHAIR CONCLUSIONS

Introductory remarks

The High-Level Meeting of Speakers of Parliaments of NATO countries was held in Vilnius on 1-3 June 2023 and was attended by Speakers and Presidents or their representatives from 26 Parliaments/Chambers of 31 NATO Allies, as well as by the Chairman of the Verkhovna Rada of Ukraine, the First Deputy Speaker of the Parliament of the Kingdom of Sweden, the President of the NATO Parliamentary Assembly, the NATO Assistant Secretary General for Public Diplomacy. The High-Level meeting was chaired by Ms Viktorija Čmilytė-Nielsen, Speaker of the Seimas (Parliament) of the Republic of Lithuania.

The Speakers and other high-level participants of the event commended the initiative of the Speaker of the Seimas (Parliament) of the Republic of Lithuania to convene the High-Level Meeting of the Speakers of parliaments of NATO countries ahead of a NATO Summit in Vilnius on 11-12 July 2023 as an expression of the willingness of parliaments to contribute to important decisions that could determine the future of NATO and the security of all its members.

The following are the conclusions of the Chair of the event, based on the presentations made, the views expressed and the discussions held. The conclusions are grouped according to the three thematic sessions in the High Level Meeting program. It is recognized that due to their constitutional position, certain Parliaments and Chambers cannot directly associate themselves with substantive political statements expressed in these conclusions, and therefore should not be seen as indicating specific support for all sections.

I. Global challenges, global partners, global NATO

On global challenges:

1. The Speakers and other participants noted that today, NATO is confronted by two defining threats and several challenges. From Russia's war of aggression against Ukraine and terrorism in all its forms and manifestations, to challenges such as China's coercive policies, conflict and instability in Africa and the Middle East, human security, malign actors targeting cyberspace and critical infrastructure, emerging and disruptive technologies, erosion of arms control and the impact of climate change to security.
2. It was underlined that today Euro-Atlantic area is not at peace, as Russia's war against Ukraine, has radically changed the strategic security environment in Europe. Russia bears full responsibility for deteriorating global security and stability and the rules-based international order, not least by employing the irresponsible nuclear rhetoric.

3. It was widely emphasized that brutal assault on Ukraine by the Russian Federation which continues a military aggression and illegal annexation of the Crimean Peninsula in 2014, is a flagrant violation of the UN Charter that codifies the major principles of the international law, including the prohibition of the use of force in international relations
4. It was recognized that Russia has acted in contradiction with the principles and commitments in the Euro-Atlantic Partnership Council Basic Document, the NATO-Russia Founding Act, and the Rome Declaration. It has gravely breached the trust upon which our cooperation must be based, thus rendering the NATO-Russia Founding Act no longer valid.
5. There can be no impunity for the war crimes, crimes against humanity, genocide and the crime of aggression committed by Russia in Ukraine - all those responsible must be held accountable through international and national investigations and prosecutions for abuses and violations of human rights and international humanitarian law, particularly against Ukraine's civilian population, including the deportation of children and conflict-related sexual violence. Further stress the need for reparations arising from the internationally wrongful acts of Russian in or against Ukraine.
6. Many delegates also noted that Lukashenka regime in Belarus continues to enable and be a part of Russia's unjustified war of aggression against Ukraine, stressing that Europe would be much safer if Belarus is free and democratic.
7. It was stated that terrorism, in all of its forms and manifestations and instability in NATO's southern neighborhood directly affects our security, security of our partners and international peace.
8. It was noted that increasing China's coercive policies, malicious hybrid and cyber operations, deepening strategic alignment between China and Russia undermine the international rules-based system.

On global partners:

9. The Speakers and other participants underlined that NATO Partnerships, based on common values, reciprocity and mutual respect are beneficial to all involved and contribute to improved security and stability for the broader international community.
10. Many emphasized the NATO-EU strategic partnership and mutually reinforcing roles in supporting international peace and security to address growing global competition.
11. It was noted that NATO needs to strengthen partnerships beyond the Euro-Atlantic area in the light of changed security environment, implementing a 360 degree approach to global security, including an increased attention to the South.
12. It was noted that NATO needs global like-minded partners to tackle shared security challenges, including defending the rules-based international order and international institutions.
13. A support was expressed to engage politically with its partners in the Indo-Pacific region – Australia, Japan, the Republic of Korea and New Zealand to build resilience against economic coercion, cooperate on new technologies and cybersecurity and counter hybrid threats.

II. NATO's internal transformation: increasing defense spending, strengthening deterrence and defense

Taking into account the above statements, the Speakers and other participants supported NATO's transformation goals and hope for further positive progress during the NATO summit in Vilnius.

Especially the Speakers and other high-level participants,

On increase defense spending:

14. recognized the importance of adequate defense funding for achieving NATO's goals and ensuring the security of its members.
15. supported the efforts to increase defense funding, speed up defense modernization and reinvigorate defense industries
16. emphasized the need to agree in NATO Summit in Vilnius on an ambitious renewal of Defense Investment Pledge beyond 2024 with two per cent of gross domestic product as a minimum, while taking into account national specificities.

On strengthening deterrence and defense:

17. Concerns were expressed that Russia continues its aggression in Ukraine, is planning to significantly increase its military presence along the eastern flank of NATO, in particular the Baltic region, and has announced plans to deploy nuclear weapons on the territory of its ally Belarus.
18. It was therefore recognized that Russia is and will remain long term the most significant and direct threat to Allies' security and peace and stability in Euro-Atlantic area and its aggressive posture necessitate for visible increased collective deterrence measures.
19. The efforts of NATO to strengthen defense capabilities on NATO's eastern flank, particularly in the Baltic region, in order to create a credible NATO forward defense were noted and welcomed.
20. However, it was stressed that additional efforts are needed to significantly strengthen NATO's forward defense and deterrence posture to be fully prepared to defend every inch of Alliance's territory from day zero.
21. Many also stressed the necessity to fully implement the NATO Madrid Summit decisions on the new baseline for deterrence and defense posture including the scaling up of Allied battlegroups to an in-place combat-ready brigade-size units, underpinned by credible rapidly available reinforcements, prepositioned equipment, and enhanced command and control.
22. The Speakers and other participants welcomed Finland's accession to NATO and reiterated the importance to complete the ratification process of Sweden's NATO membership at the NATO Summit in Vilnius.
23. It was emphasized that Finland's and Sweden's membership of NATO will strengthen the Alliance and the security of Europe as a whole.

III. Strong and independent Ukraine: a long-term support plan for Ukraine

The Speakers and other high-level participants held an exchange of views on Ukraine's membership in NATO.

24. It was recognized that Ukraine fully shares values, enshrined in the North Atlantic Treaty, and is committed to the Euro-Atlantic integration and extensive democratic reforms based on Charter of Distinctive Partnership between NATO and Ukraine

25. It was emphasized that NATO's Open Door Policy has contributed substantially to security on the European continent and should be continued.
26. It was stressed the importance of fully implementing 2008 NATO Summit in Bucharest decisions and permanently eradicating grey security areas in Europe.
27. It was emphasized that third countries, including the Russian Federation, has not and will not have veto right on strategic NATO decisions, including on NATO enlargement, and that Ukraine is free to choose the security and defense organizations to align with.
28. Some drew attention to the fact that Ukraine's complete victory over Russia's aggression and Ukraine's NATO membership will consolidate lasting and sustainable peace not only in Ukraine but in Europe as a whole was drawn.
29. It was noted that Ukraine is a security provider and that its accession to NATO would strengthen the Alliance, be much more effective and less costly than the support currently provided to Ukraine to defend itself.
30. Many underlined the need at NATO Vilnius Summit to increase NATO's short to medium and long term practical and military support to Ukraine; institutionally bring Ukraine closer to NATO by establishing NATO-Ukraine Council and including Ukraine into NATO's structures and processes and address Ukraine's Euro-Atlantic aspirations by upgrading Alliance's political partnership with Ukraine.
31. Many appealed to NATO Leaders in Vilnius Summit to reaffirm unwavering support for Ukraine and send a unified signal of Alliance's commitment to Ukraine's future in NATO by inviting Ukraine to join NATO, as a strategic solution by NATO to achieve peace in Ukraine and Europe.