



NATO Parliamentary Assembly focuses on NATO Summit in July: A review of the NATO Parliamentary Assembly Spring Session, Warsaw, 25-28 May 2018

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The Polish Parliament hosted the [NATO Parliamentary Assembly's Spring Session](#) from 25-28 May 2018, which brought together some 260 parliamentarians from the 29 NATO member countries as well as delegates from partner countries and observers to discuss current international security issues and the draft reports prepared by the Assembly's five Committees: Civil Dimension of Security; Economics and Security; Political; Defence and Security; and Science and Technology.

In their final plenary session the parliamentarians adopted a [declaration](#) appealing for alliance leaders to show unity at the Summit in July and demonstrate that the organisation remains credible in the face of security threats headed by Russia and terrorism. The declaration also contains recommended courses of action in the five areas that are expected to dominate the NATO Summit in July: deterrence and defence, and dialogue with Russia; projecting stability in the South and combatting terrorism; NATO-EU cooperation; Modernising the alliance; and burden sharing.

Addressing the Assembly, NATO Secretary General Jens Stoltenberg played down tensions over climate change, trade and the Iran nuclear deal, [saying](#) the alliance has overcome divisions before: "It's nothing new that there are disagreements. The strength of NATO is that we have been able to manage those disagreements without weakening the core responsibility of NATO. We are standing united

around our core task that we defend and protect each other", he said.

The Committees presented 16 draft reports for discussion and amendment (as discussed below). The final reports will be adopted at the 64th Annual Parliamentary Session in November.

Civil Dimensions of Security

Members of the Committee on the Civil Dimension of Security discussed efforts to foster democracy and human rights in the Black Sea Region, the activities of the border guard agency Frontex and civil protection in the Mediterranean region. A panel discussion was devoted to countering Russia's hybrid threats.

In the discussion on Russia's alleged hybrid warfare attacks on the West, a tougher response was called for, including a clampdown on money laundering and the international financial interests of the pro-Kremlin elite. A [draft report](#) by Lord Jopling (UK) called on the upcoming NATO summit in July to consider updating the alliance's Strategic Concept to better deter hybrid actions. The report specifically calls for the modification of NATO's Article 5 collective defence provision (and proposes a new Article 5B) to trigger a response in the event of 'hybrid warfare' attacks. Other possible counter-measures against Russian hybrid actions included restrictions on anonymous social media attacks; improved education to tackle

Russian disinformation campaigns; improved intelligence cooperation; and enhanced cyber defences, especially those protecting electoral systems.

Western governments were also urged to implement restrictions on the overseas assets of ultra-wealthy individuals close to the Russian leadership. “The pro-Kremlin plutocrats and corrupt officials can freely keep their dirty money and buy luxury property in the West,” Jopling said. “These privileges need to be re-examined and we need better scrutiny of the Russian money that is coming to our countries”.

In March, US Gen. Curtis Scaparrotti, the commander of NATO forces in Europe, said that NATO countries were working to determine when a cyberattack would trigger the alliance’s Article 5 collective defence provision. He told a US Senate committee that the alliance “recognizes the difficulty in indirect or asymmetric activity that Russia is practicing, activities below the level of conflict,” Scaparrotti said.

In her [draft report](#) on NATO and civil protection, Jane Cordy (Canada) urged the allies to do more to support development of adequate search and rescue capabilities in the Mediterranean.

CDS Committee reports 2018:

059 CDS 18 E - Draft General Report - [Fostering Democracy and Human Rights in the Black Sea Region](#)

060 CDS 18 E - Draft Report - [Civil Protection in the High North and the Mediterranean regions](#)

061 CDS 18 E - Draft Special Report - [Countering Russia’s Hybrid Threats: an Update](#)

Economics and Security Committee

The Economics and Security Committee discussed EU issues and its future after Brexit, energy security in Eastern and Central Europe, the future of the international trading system, and the future of the space industry.

In the discussion on energy security, the parliamentarians were told that that Russia

continues to wield its energy resources as a political weapon against the West, despite successful recent efforts to reduce European dependence on Russian oil and gas imports. Ausrine Armonaitė (Lithuania), who presented a [draft report on energy security](#) to the Assembly, [said](#) “We should not consider Russia a normal energy market actor [...] we need to understand the links between Russia’s energy business and its aggressive geopolitical posture and the threat that this poses to all of us”. Several speakers criticised the proposed Nord Stream 2 pipeline project designed to take Russian gas under the Baltic Sea to Germany and beyond, and the draft report recommends that it not be built. The draft report also recommends: European nations work to negotiate gas contracts collectively with Russia; EU competition rules to be strictly applied on Russian energy company Gazprom; greater development of infrastructure facilitating alternative supplies; and greater transparency and openness in energy markets to prevent corruption in the sector.

In the discussion on trade, NATO nations were [urged](#) not to fall into the trap of trade protectionism amid warnings that the alliance’s long-term success depends on the ability of member states to maintain vibrant economies and calmly resolve commercial disputes. With global trade talks stalled, and countries stepping back from multinational trade agreements, Faik Öztrak (Turkey) argued in a [draft report](#) that trade remains a win-win proposition. Allies were urged to focus on more pressing challenges and work towards common policies to issues like China’s violation of intellectual property norms.

Economics and Security Committee reports 2018:

068 ESC 18 E - Draft General Report - [The Future of the Space Industry](#)

069 ESCTER 18 E - Draft Report of the Sub-Committee on Transatlantic Economic Relations - [The International Trading System at Risk and the Need to Return to First Principles](#)

070 ESCTD 18 E - Draft Report of the Sub-Committee on Transition and Development - [The Energy Security Challenge in Central and Eastern Europe](#)

Political Committee

The members of the Political Committee were given an overview of Poland's foreign and security priorities. They also heard the reports on North Korea's challenge to international security and its implications for NATO, and on security in the Western Balkans. During the discussions, they tried to find an answer to the question whether it is possible to work with Russia despite persistent tensions and rivalry.

"NATO must be determined," Polish Foreign Minister Jacek Czaputowicz [told](#) the Assembly's Political Committee. "The nature of today's threats from Russia is such that inadequate actions can only expose allies to threats." Czaputowicz urged NATO leaders to build up allied defence and deterrence capabilities when they meet in Brussels, especially on NATO's eastern flank.

Progress in North Korean nuclear talks was welcomed in a debate on a [draft report](#) on the security challenge of Pyongyang's programme by Gerald Connolly (USA). Noting that Pyongyang has walked away from previous deals, Connolly [said](#) "We need to manage expectations. If we're going to rip up the Iran agreement because it was inadequate, though working, then the goals for North Korea must be absolute. That means absolute denuclearisation". The report argues that even though NATO is not oriented toward Asia, "North Korea's steady advance towards a nuclear-armed intercontinental ballistic missile constitutes a global threat that demands the engagement of NATO and its member states".

Presenting a [draft report](#) on instability along NATO's southern flank Julio Miranda Calha (Portugal) told the Committee that both the training effort in Iraq, and a Middle East monitoring hub in southern Italy "need to be sufficiently resourced". The draft report also draws attention to the main factors of instability in North Africa and the Sahel, which are driving migration of many thousands of people to Europe.



Trafficking through the Western Balkans was raised in a [draft report](#) by Raynell Andreychuk (Canada), which also noted the considerable progress made by countries in the region towards integration into Euro-Atlantic institutions. However, her draft report notes that reform moves, driven by the prospect of closer Euro-Atlantic ties, cannot be taken for granted, as anti-democratic forces could fill any leadership vacuum. She stressed that both NATO and EU must show that their doors remain open.

Political Committee reports 2018:

072 PC 18 E - Draft General Report - [Instability in the South](#)

073 PCNP 18 E - Draft Report of the Sub-Committee on NATO Partnerships - [Security in the Western Balkans](#)

074 PCTR 18 E - Draft Report of the Sub-Committee on Transatlantic Relations - [North Korea's Challenge to International Security: Implications for NATO](#)

Defence and Security Committee

The Defence and Security Committee focused on transatlantic cooperation and reinforcing NATO's Eastern Flank. The problems of regional security in Afghanistan, the challenges of radicalisation to the alliance, and the role of special operations forces in the modern security environment were also discussed.

In a [draft report](#) Attila Mesterhazy (Hungary) underlined that the alliance requires more spending as it adapts its defence and deterrence posture to respond to Russian assertiveness and rapidly evolving security threats. "All of these tasks, missions and ambitions are, to say the least, resource intensive. They require significant financial investment in the personnel and equipment necessary to execute them correctly", Mesterhazy [told](#) his colleagues.

NATO Secretary General speaking at the NATO Parliamentary Assembly, Warsaw, 28 May 2018 – photo credit: NATO

The Assembly also debated calls for stronger defences on the alliance's eastern borders to counter a Russian military buildup. "The reason we must consider the further reinforcement of the eastern flank is simple: Russia's brinkmanship continues and is escalating", [said](#) Joe Day (Canada), author of a [draft report](#) on the issue. Polish Defence Minister Mariusz Blaszczak told the Committee that Russia "now has a certain advantage over the allies" and "is better prepared to wage conventional warfare". NATO has deployed four battlegroups to Poland and the Baltic States and additional multinational brigades to Romania. NATO's Readiness Action Plan bolsters the number of forces deployable in an emergency to over 40,000 and establishes a spearhead Very High Readiness Joint Task Force which is positioned to deploy a 5,000-troop brigade anywhere in the alliance in 2 to 7 days. The Committee debated a number of potential additional measures, including rotating more troops and equipment into the eastern region, notably air defence systems; reversing decades of defence cuts to counter Russia's investments in force modernisation; building better infrastructure and removing bureaucratic barriers to facilitate the rapid movement of troops within Europe.

The Committee also debated the need to invest more in special operations forces. "Our special forces are increasingly overtasked, under-resourced, or insufficiently built up for today's requirements," said Madeleine Moon (UK) and author of a [draft report](#) on Special Forces in the modern security environment. The draft report notes that Special Forces are better adapted to deal with asymmetrical threats from Russia or Jihadist-inspired extremist groups and unpredictable lone-wolf attacks in the Euro-Atlantic area. Ms Moon said NATO must "pay far more attention to how our governments are funding, outfitting, and structuring our armed forces" in light of these challenges.

The need to stay the course in Afghanistan was discussed in the context of a [draft report](#) by Wolfgang Hellmich (Germany) on the nexus between local and regional security. The report emphasises the crucial role played by neighbours like Pakistan, which is under

pressure from the United States to stop providing a safe haven for the Taliban and other extremists from which to launch attacks over the border.

Defence and Security Committee reports

2018:

063 DSC 18 E - Draft General Report - [Reinforcing NATO's Deterrence in the East](#)

064 DSCFC 18 E -Draft Report of the Sub-Committee on Future Security and Defence Capabilities - [NATO Special Operations Forces in the Modern Security Environment](#)

065 DSCTC 18 E - Draft Report of the Sub-Committee on Transatlantic Defence and Security Cooperation - [Burden sharing : Refocusing the Debate](#)

066 DSC 18 E - Draft Special Report - [Afghanistan: The Nexus of Local and Regional Security](#)

Science and Technology

The Science and Technology Committee discussed how terrorists use encrypted messaging, and also cyber threats in a wider context. They also discussed defence innovation and Russian cyber meddling in elections and referenda in the alliance.

NATO was [said](#) to be lagging about a decade behind Russia and China in some areas of military technology development and must put research into cutting-edge equipment high on its agenda to have any hope of keeping up with competitors, according to a [draft report](#) on defence innovation by Leona Alleslev (Canada). One piece of key military equipment set to become obsolete in coming years are NATO's AWACS aircraft, and NATO official Robert Murray, said that important political decisions are needed now to ensure there is no vacuum when the life of the planes runs out in 2035.

The parliamentarians called for strong measures to counter emerging information technology threats that range from Russian election meddling to terrorist activity on the Dark Web and cyberattacks on critical infrastructure. "The malicious use of cyber tools imperils almost all our countries. Our political processes have been assaulted. Our voters have been manipulated," [cautioned](#) Susan

Davis (USA), author of a [draft report](#) on Russian election meddling. Her draft report recommended strengthening cyber-defences for electoral systems; faster mechanisms to block and respond to attacks; and efforts to build resilience to disinformation. She also urged stronger sanctions to deter election meddling.

A [draft report](#) by Matej Tonin (Slovenia) warned that cryptotechnologies are used by terrorists for command and control, recruitment, acquiring weaponry and financial transactions. He proposed a number of counter measures including: increased cooperation between government agencies and the private sector to track illicit online operations;

stepped-up law enforcement and intelligence operations; and more research into enhanced policing of cryptotechnologies.

Science and Technology Committee reports 2018:

076 STC 18 E - Draft General Report - [Russian Meddling in Elections and Referenda in the Alliance](#)

077 STCTTS 18 E - Draft Report of the Sub-Committee on Technology Trends and Security - [Dark Dealings: How Terrorists Use Encrypted Messaging, the Dark Web and Cryptocurrencies](#)

078 STC 18 E - Draft Special Report - [Defence Innovation: Capitalising on NATO's Science and Technology Base](#)