

Canadian NATO
Parliamentary Association



Association parlementaire
canadienne de l'OTAN

Report of the Canadian NATO Parliamentary Association

Bureau Meeting and Spring Standing Committee Meeting

Oslo, Norway

From March 25 to 26, 2023

Report

Introduction

The Canadian delegation to the North Atlantic Treaty Organization Parliamentary Assembly (NATO PA, or the Assembly) has the honour to present its report on the meetings of the Bureau and of the Standing Committee, held in Oslo, from 25 to 26 March 2023. The Canadian NATO Parliamentary Association (CANAPA) was represented by Ms. Julie Dzerowicz, MP, NATO PA Vice-President (ex-officio) and Head of the Canadian Delegation, and Ms. Cheryl Gallant, MP.

Meeting of the NATO PA Bureau

Ms. Dzerowicz participated in the meeting of the Bureau in her capacity as NATO PA Vice-President (ex-officio). Items discussed included a review of the Assembly's partnerships, the Assembly's relationship with the new Tunisian Parliament, the draft declaration *A New NATO in an Age of Strategic Competition: Accelerating NATO's Adaptation at the Vilnius Summit*, updates on the activities for the remainder of 2023, and of the Assembly's finances.

Standing Committee meeting

Ms. Julie Dzerowicz and Ms. Cheryl Gallant participated in the Standing Committee sessions.

During the opening of the proceedings, the President of the NATO PA, Senator Joëlle Garriaud-Maylam of France, presided over the meeting, thanked the Norwegian delegation for hosting the Standing Committee meeting in Oslo, and acknowledged the presence of the heads of delegation, including the Head of the Swedish Delegation. Moreover, Trond Helleland, the Head of the Norwegian delegation to the NATO PA, welcomed the participants of the Standing Committee sessions.

The Standing Committee then proceeded with the adoption of two documents: the meeting's draft agenda and the summary of the Standing Committee meeting held on 20 November 2023 in Madrid, Spain, before moving to the next points on the agenda.

Consideration of the draft declaration *A New NATO in an Age of Strategic Competition: Accelerating NATO Adaptation at the Vilnius Summit* presented by Linda Sánchez (United States), Vice-President of the NATO PA

NATO PA Vice-President Linda Sánchez of the United States introduced a draft declaration, entitled *A New NATO in an Age of Strategic Competition: Accelerating NATO's Adaptation at the Vilnius Summit*, that contained proposed recommendations for the July 2023 Vilnius NATO Summit. She emphasized the Assembly's desire to contribute to NATO's adaptation in a world that is increasingly shaped by the struggle between autocracies and democracies. According to Ms. Sánchez, the declaration seeks to ensure that the renewed commitment to shared democratic values in NATO's (or the Alliance's)

2022 Strategic Concept becomes operationalised, including through the establishment of a Centre for Democratic Resilience at NATO Headquarters.

Building on the Assembly's strong and steadfast support for Ukraine, the draft declaration urged NATO member states to take further political and practical steps at the July 2023 Vilnius Summit to demonstrate continued political, economic, and military support for Ukraine, as well as to deter Russian aggression in the future. Referencing Finland's impending accession to the Alliance, the Rapporteur urged NATO member states to complete Sweden's accession as soon as possible before the NATO summit.

Delegates, including Ms. Dzerowicz and Ms. Gallant, then discussed 44 proposed amendments to the declaration. Indicating her support for an amendment that calls for the need to continue the implementation of arms control measures, Ms. Dzerowicz drew attention to Russia's announcement regarding the potential deployment of tactical nuclear weapons in Belarus. Ms. Dzerowicz also underscored the need to include stronger language around arms control within the declaration. Moreover, Ms. Gallant spoke about the need for NATO member states to increase their defence spending, underscoring the need for all member states to meet NATO's defence spending target of 2% of national gross domestic product (GDP). She also mentioned that, as of March 2023, NATO member states do not have enough resources to increase their production of ammunition.

Following the amending of the declaration, it was adopted unanimously by the Standing Committee. The declaration is expected to be considered again at the NATO PA's 2023 Spring Session.

Assembly Activities and subjects in 2023

Those in attendance were reminded that the Assembly had put forward recommendations for the NATO 2030 agenda. It had also proposed a clear vision for NATO's 2022 Strategic Concept, with two main priorities: to place shared democratic values at the heart of NATO's response to today's challenges, and to strengthen NATO's deterrence and defence posture and measures. The Assembly had also pushed NATO to do more in support of Ukraine. Finally, it had actively supported Sweden's and Finland's accession to NATO.

Update on Presidential Priorities

NATO PA President Garriaud-Maylam noted that two priorities were at the top of the Assembly's agenda for 2023, with Ukraine remaining the foremost priority. She told those present that, in February 2023, she travelled to Kyiv and Borodianka, Ukraine to demonstrate the Assembly's support for Ukraine. The President also stated that the Bureau had issued a statement of support for Ukraine on the first anniversary of Russia's February 2022 invasion. In the coming months, she vowed that the Assembly would continue to both express its support for Ukraine and consider further ways to translate it into practical measures. The President also announced that members of the Ukrainian delegation would attend the upcoming 2023 Spring Session in Luxembourg, where the Standing Committee would hold a joint meeting with the Ukraine-NATO Interparliamentary Council.

The Standing Committee accepted the NATO PA Bureau's proposal to consider a declaration in support of Ukraine at its meeting in Luxembourg and asked NATO PA Vice-President Michal Szczerba of Poland to serve as the new declaration's rapporteur.

Turning to the Assembly's practical assistance, the President noted that the Treasurer would, later in the day, present a series of new potential uses for the Assembly's special fund to support Ukraine. She also urged members to reach out to their governments to help fill the current gap in unfunded projects for NATO's Comprehensive Assistance Package, for example for fuel, bridging equipment, uniforms, winter equipment, and medical equipment.

The Assembly's second top priority, NATO PA President Garriaud-Maylam noted, was to help accelerate NATO's adaptation. This was the main purpose of the draft declaration, entitled *A New NATO in an Age of Strategic Competition: Accelerating NATO's Adaptation at the Vilnius Summit*. She also commented that she looked forward to presenting the Assembly's recommendations at the NATO summit in Vilnius.

The President expressed gratitude to the Lithuanian Parliament for hosting a meeting of Speakers of Allied parliaments in early June 2023, which, she said, she would be pleased to attend. She concluded by saying that ahead of the NATO Summit in Vilnius, she would continue to press NATO to operationalise the commitment to shared democratic values, which are referenced in the 2022 Strategic Concept.

Review of the Assembly's Partnerships

Ms. Garriaud-Maylam recalled that during 68th Annual Session in Madrid, the Standing Committee initiated a comprehensive review of partnerships, and added that Marcos Perestrello de Vasconcellos of Portugal and Lord Campbell of Pittenweem from the United Kingdom were appointed as co-rapporteurs for this task. The review aimed to align the partnership framework with the Assembly's goals and values, support NATO's "Open Door" policy, and enhance flexibility in engagement.

Lord Campbell acknowledged the complexity of the review and emphasized the need to align partnerships with Allied shared values, increase flexibility in engagement, and establish a more formal and streamlined relationship with partners. He highlighted that a comprehensive review of partnerships had not taken place since the 1990s and estimated that a comprehensive proposal could be submitted by the early spring meeting of the Standing Committee in 2025.

Mr. Perestrello highlighted the need for the NATO PA to decide new and current partnerships. He also observed that NATO has identified Bosnia and Herzegovina, Georgia, Moldova and Ukraine as "vulnerable partners," and suggested that the Assembly could strengthen its ties with those countries.

Ms. Dzerowicz participated in the discussions on the review of the NATO PA's partnerships, thanking Mr. Perestrello and Lord Campbell for carrying out such a review. She underlined the importance of engaging with countries in Africa, Asia and East Asia to strengthen ties with like-minded partners in those regions, and the need to address the dissemination of Chinese and Russian messaging, including disinformation, about the Alliance that could affect the NATO PA's partnerships. Moreover, Ms. Dzerowicz drew

attention to the resource implications for carrying out the review – both in terms of budget as well as staff time – stating that such implication should be fully explored before options are brought forward for discussion on NATO PA’s partnership. She also spoke about the difficulties in defining the parameters of a Charter of Values as well as the mechanisms for exclusion of partners as well as their readmission, based upon such a charter.

Finally, Mr. Perestrello and Lord Campbell expressed gratitude for the support from the International Secretariat for their review and indicated their intention to engage with former NATO PA staff, NATO staff, institutional partners, and partner delegations. They proposed a Charter of Values to reflect the privileges and responsibilities associated with partnership, seeking feedback on its scope.

Finland and Sweden’s accession to NATO: an update

NATO PA President Garriaud-Maylam was pleased to report that Finland had completed its ratification process on 1 March 2023, while Sweden finished theirs on 22 March 2023. She also noted that the Hungarian parliament was scheduled to vote on Finland's accession the following week but added that Hungary’s ratification of Sweden's accession was to be delayed. She also commented that the Parliament of Türkiye was expected to ratify Finland's accession protocol soon.

In relation to Sweden, the President was hopeful that Türkiye’s ratification of Sweden’s accession would go smoothly, emphasizing that Sweden’s membership would strengthen NATO. Furthermore, she stated that she met the Swedish defence minister recently and expressed her support for Sweden’s NATO membership.

Hans Wallmark of Sweden discussed his country’s ratification process, as well as the Swedish population’s support for NATO membership, while Lord Campbell highlighted the advantages of Finland's and Sweden's membership for collective defence.

Finally, President Garriaud-Maylam sought support from the delegation from Türkiye regarding Finland’s and Sweden’s accession to NATO. Osman Aşkın Bak emphasized his country’s support for NATO’s “Open Door policy,” while urging solidarity in combating terrorism. He then provided an update on Türkiye’s ratification process of Finland’s accession.

Review of the Assembly’s Consideration of Gender in 2022

NATO PA President Garriaud-Maylam observed that delegations would soon receive the call for nominations for the 2023 edition of the Women for Peace and Security Award. She encouraged all delegates to submit candidacies for the award.

Delegates were then reminded that, on mainstreaming gender perspectives in the Assembly’s work and supporting the implementation of UN Security Council Resolution (UNSCR) 1325, the Assembly had adopted recommendations on gender, and the Women, Peace and Security agenda for the 2022 NATO Strategic Concept. The Assembly was heard, as the new Strategic Concept mentioned the Women, Peace and Security agenda for the first time. The Assembly also included a gender perspective in several reports, including on climate change. Moreover, there were gender-focused

discussions in several Committee activities. At the Annual Session in Madrid, Ukrainian Deputy Prime Minister Stefanishyna was awarded the Assembly's 2022 Women for Peace and Security Award.

On gender balance within the NATO PA, the NATO PA Secretary General, Ruxandra Popa, noted that the Assembly's Rules of Procedure encouraged delegations to seek gender diversity. According to Ms. Popa, over the 2022 to 2023 period, the Assembly reached several milestones: 20% of Assembly members are women – although the share of women in 21 delegations was still lower than in the respective parliaments. Moreover, she mentioned that the enlarged Bureau still had a very high share of women and indicated that two out of the five NATO PA committee chairpersons were women. However, Ms. Popa estimated that other gender balance indicators had remained stable or gone down slightly, including participation of women in NATO PA sessions (23%) and the number of women delegation leaders (6). Finally, she commented that the percentage of Committee and Sub-Committee officers who were women stood at 23.6%.

Exchange with the Ukrainian Speaker on Russia's ongoing war in Ukraine

NATO PA President Garriaud-Maylam thanked Verkhovna Rada Chairman Ruslan Stefanchuk for his video message and Yehor Cherniev, the Head of the Ukrainian delegation, for participating remotely. Chairman Stefanchuk highlighted Russia's ongoing aggression against Ukraine, emphasizing the need for continued and increased military support from NATO member states, including air and missile defence systems, fighter jets, and long-range missiles. He urged the NATO PA to continue supporting Ukraine's pursuit of peace and called for a new security architecture to be established, with Ukraine playing a significant role.

Chairman Stefanchuk urged the Assembly to demonstrate its leadership concerning the implementation of the 2008 Bucharest decision on Ukraine's membership. He also advocated for the imposition of further economic sanctions, the establishment of a special tribunal for aggression crimes committed by Russia, the creation of a reparation mechanism, and the recognition of the 1932-1933 Holodomor as genocide. He then proposed that the NATO PA consider organizing a spring session in Ukraine in 2024 if security conditions allowed.

NATO PA President Garriaud-Maylam thanked Chairman Stefanchuk for his intervention and echoed the call for recognizing the Holodomor as genocide and supporting a special tribunal. She then expressed solidarity with Ukraine, and referenced the recent pledges made by Allies for key equipment at the Ramstein meeting.

Mr. Cherniev expressed gratitude for the NATO PA's support of Ukraine. He provided an update on the situation in Bakhmut and Vuhledar, Ukraine. Mr. Cherniev then characterized the next four to six months as crucial in terms of Ukraine carrying out its counteroffensive against Russian military forces. He also drew attention to Russia's strategic goal of occupying Ukraine's Donetsk and Luhansk regions.

Finally, Mr. Cherniev dismissed Russia's plan for tactical nuclear weapons in Belarus and highlighted the global impact of the war in Ukraine. He then reiterated Ukraine's stance on NATO membership, and the importance of having the country accede to the Alliance.

Address by Jonas Gahr Støre, Prime Minister of Norway

NATO PA President Garriaud-Maylam invited the Prime Minister of Norway, Jonas Gahr Støre, to address the delegates. Norwegian Prime Minister Støre mentioned that Norway will host an NATO Foreign Ministers' meeting in late May 2023. He then highlighted the significance of the war in Ukraine, and Norway's increased assistance to Ukraine through the 5-year Nansen Support Programme. According to the Prime Minister, the current focus of this programme is on military aid, with ongoing coordination between NATO and Ukraine.

Speaking about High North (or European Arctic), Norwegian Prime Minister Støre emphasized Norway's motto of "High North, low tension." However, in response to Russia's aggression against Ukraine, he stated that Norway had increased its defence infrastructure, and increased its surveillance in the region. He also mentioned Norway's role as a major supplier of gas to Europe, and alluded to joint efforts that both NATO and the European Union have carried out to protect energy infrastructure.

Norwegian Prime Minister Støre then discussed Finland's and Sweden's accession to NATO, highlighting its importance for Norway and Nordic security. He also outlined plans for defence collaboration among Finland, Norway and Sweden.

Regarding China's presence in the High North, the Prime Minister acknowledged the need to closely monitor China's activities in the region, and referenced Russia's growing cooperation with China. The Prime Minister noted that in the Arctic, Russia would like China to develop and invest in the infrastructure to make the Northwest Passage operational. However, he also commented that Russia wants to keep China out of certain areas of the Russian Arctic to maintain its unique advantages of being an Arctic power.

The Prime Minister addressed concerns about protecting critical undersea infrastructure and supported the 2% of GDP defence spending goal, considering it a target to strive towards. He emphasized the importance of increasing defense spending and improving its quality.

Regarding Russia's nuclear weapons deployment in Belarus, the Prime Minister criticized Russia's rhetoric as irresponsible and viewed it as a sign of weakness. He acknowledged challenges in the Global South but noted that NATO's primary focus was the defence of Allied territory.

During the opportunity for questions, Ms. Dzerowicz asked the Prime Minister about China's growing interest and potential threat in the High North, and whether Russia would grant China with more access to the region. The Prime Minister underlined that Norway was tracking China's activities in the High North very closely. According to the Prime Minister, Russia-China relations were complex and had become unbalanced and asymmetric, with Russia being extremely dependent on China in a variety of ways.

Financial documents

NATO PA Secretary General, Ruxandra Popa began the discussion by noting that further detailed information had been added to the financial statements for transparency and

ease of use. She reminded the Standing Committee that the 2022 budget had been flat in a year marked by record high inflation, the ongoing impact of the COVID-19 pandemic, and the start of Russia's war against Ukraine.

Ms. Popa then invited the Chairperson of the International Board of Auditors for NATO (IBAN), Daniela Morgante, to present a report on the audit of the NATO PA's financial statements and the NATO PA contingency fund for the fiscal year ending on 31 December 2022. Ms. Morgante said that IBAN had issued an unqualified opinion on the NATO PA's financial statements and the NATO PA Provident Fund, meaning that IBAN judges that the financial statements are stated fairly and that nothing has come to IBAN's attention that causes it to believe that funds have not been properly used for the settlement of authorised expenditure or are not in compliance with the rules and regulations.

Ms. Morgante thanked the NATO PA staff for their excellent cooperation on the audit. She explained that IBAN was the independent external audit body of NATO, composed of six independent board members appointed by the North Atlantic Council for a non-renewable four-year term and paid by their national administrations. Their work is supported by NATO staff and NATO common funding.

Finally, NATO PA Treasurer, Wolfgang Hellmich of Germany, said that the 2022 financial year had concluded with a small surplus of just under € 7,000 over a total budget of € 4.1 million, and suggested that the Assembly allocate this surplus to the new provision in support of Ukraine.

Future Sessions and Meetings

President Garriaud-Maylam reviewed upcoming sessions and meetings with the Standing Committee.

The President reminded the Standing Committee that the Chairman of Ukraine's Verkhovna Rada had referred in his video message the possibility of Ukraine hosting an Assembly session in 2024. She also supported this optimistic outlook, while noting that Mr. Stefanchuk himself recognized it was impossible to plan such an event at this stage.

Lydia Mutsch of Luxembourg took the floor and mentioned that her country will host the NATO PA's 2023 Spring Session in May 2023. She was then followed by Matej Tonin of Slovenia, who announced that Slovenia would offer to host the 2025 Annual Session.

Finally, Raimonds Bergmanis of Latvia announced that the early spring Standing Committee session would be held in Riga in 2026.

Miscellaneous

Mr. Bak from Türkiye took the floor to note that he and other members of his political party would likely not be able to run again in the 14 May 2023 Turkish elections, due to party limitations on term limits. He thanked everyone for their friendship and the very good memories which he would keep of his time with the Assembly. Mr. Bak remarked that he and his colleagues would continue supporting NATO.

The President thanked the head of the Norwegian delegation once more for the hospitality and thanked all members for their active participation.

Other delegation meetings

While in Oslo, the delegates met with Deirdre Kent, Canada's Ambassador to Norway. The delegates and the Ambassador discussed Canada-Norway bilateral relations and areas of mutual interest, such as trade, energy, and environmental sustainability.

Respectfully submitted,

Julie Dzerowicz, M.P.,
Chair of the Canadian NATO Parliamentary Association

Travel Costs

ASSOCIATION	Canadian NATO Parliamentary Association
ACTIVITY	Bureau and Standing Committee Meetings
DESTINATION	Oslo, Norway
DATES	From March 25 to 26, 2023
DELEGATION	
SENATE	
HOUSE OF COMMONS	Ms. Julie Dzerowicz Ms. Cheryl Gallant
STAFF	
TRANSPORTATION	\$ 17,402.53
ACCOMMODATION	\$ 1,376.46
HOSPITALITY	\$ 0.00

PER DIEMS	\$ 909.76
OFFICIAL GIFTS	\$ 0.00
MISCELLANEOUS	\$ 0.00
TOTAL	\$ 19,688.75