

**Report of the Canadian NATO Parliamentary Association
respecting its participation in the Joint Meeting of the
Defence and Security, Economics and Security, and Political
Committees**

Canadian NATO Parliamentary Association

**February 18-20, 2019
Brussels, Belgium**

REPORT

Context

The Canadian NATO Parliamentary Association, Canada's delegation to the North Atlantic Treaty Organization Parliamentary Assembly (NATO PA), has the honour to present its report on the Joint Meeting of the Defence and Security, Economics and Security, and Political Committees, held in Brussels, Belgium from 18–20 February 2019. Canada was represented by the Chair of the Canadian delegation to the NATO PA, Mr. Borys Wrzesnewskyj, M.P., the Honourable Pierre J. Dalphond, Senator, the Honourable Joseph Day, Senator, the Honourable Nicole Eaton, Senator, and Mr. Darren Fisher, M.P. The Delegation was accompanied by Ms. Constance Naud-Arcand, Association Advisor, and Mr. Jean-François Pagé, Association Secretary.

The objective of the annual joint committee meeting in Brussels, which also includes officers of the Committee on the Civil Dimensions of Security and the Science and Technology Committee, is to provide delegates with an update on Alliance activities and operations as well as a forum to discuss key issues that NATO will face throughout 2019. Delegates were briefed by NATO Secretary General Jens Stoltenberg as well as senior NATO and EU officials. Canadian delegates also met with Canada's Permanent Representative to NATO, Ambassador David Angell.

The proceedings of the joint meeting were conducted under the Chatham House Rule.

Summary of Discussion

This year's joint meeting took place less than two weeks after the signature of the Accession Protocol of the Republic of North Macedonia ("North Macedonia") to NATO. During the meeting, several participants congratulated North Macedonia and Greece for resolving their long-standing name dispute and expressed their hope that North Macedonia will officially become NATO's 30th full-fledged member in the near future. All 29 NATO member countries must now ratify the Accession Protocol, according to national procedures

As part of this joint meeting, delegates attended six sessions where they heard from senior civilian officials and senior military personnel from NATO headquarters, senior officials from the European Union (EU), and various Permanent Representatives to NATO. Topics discussed at these sessions included: current NATO operations; NATO-EU cooperation; strategic communication within the Alliance; burden sharing; and arms control.

In addition to those specific topics, three main themes were addressed during the two days of meetings: NATO-Russia relations; NATO-U.S. relations; and NATO-EU relations. The following sections summarize the discussions on these themes.

NATO-Russia Relations

Delegates were reminded that, prior to 2014, NATO-Russia relations were relatively positive and productive. At that time, NATO was looking to deepen its relationship with Russia. However, the situation changed significantly following the Russia's illegal

annexation of Crimea in 2014, its ongoing destabilization of eastern Ukraine, and its moves to block the passage of Ukrainian ships and seize Ukrainian sailors in the Kerch Strait. Russia's non-compliance with the Intermediate-Range Nuclear Forces (INF) Treaty was also identified as a source of increasing tensions.

Moving forward, delegates were told that NATO would continue to engage in dialogue with Russia, notably through the NATO-Russia Council. At the same time, NATO will continue to uphold its values and assist Allies in deterring and defending against threats to their territorial integrity and political independence.

Defence and deterrence on NATO's eastern flank will be achieved through multiple initiatives, including the enhanced Forward Presence (eFP) mission. The Alliance is working to counter Russian disinformation campaigns and respond to Russian provocations in the air and at sea. Canadian delegates intervened in discussions focused on identifying the ways in which additional pressure could be applied to Russia. They also took part in exchanges regarding interoperability.

NATO-U.S. Relations

The 2019 joint meeting was marked by the presence of a large U.S. delegation and that of the Speaker of the House of Representatives, Nancy Pelosi, who addressed the plenary on two separate occasions. U.S. delegates reiterated that there is strong bipartisan Congressional support for NATO. A copy of the NATO Support Act – a bill whose purpose is to prohibit the use of funds to withdraw the U.S. from NATO, which was passed by the House of Representatives on 22 January 2019 – was also circulated to all participants.

Delegates were reminded by various panelists of the importance of unity within the Alliance and of projecting stability on the world stage. Burden sharing and risk sharing – the principles that the same Allied members should not consistently shoulder the burden of difficult missions – were also raised by a number of interlocutors. Some speakers underscored that deterrence is not only about military capabilities, but also a function of political will and unity. Others mentioned that the overall rise in Allied defence spending is a positive indicator of the membership's commitment to collective defence.

NATO-EU Relations

NATO-EU cooperation was a recurrent theme of the 2019 joint meeting. Federica Mogherini, High Representative of the European Union for Foreign Affairs and Security Policy and Vice-President of the European Commission, addressed the plenary. Other EU officials also briefed the delegates.

A number of NATO officials said that the development of new defence initiatives, such as the EU's Permanent Structured Cooperation, are welcome, but stressed that these efforts should be complementary to, and not duplicative of, NATO. EU officials reassured delegates that EU defence initiatives are beneficial to Alliance members, and that certain actions that are better suited to the EU should be led by it.

In her [address](#) to the plenary, High Representative Federica Mogherini mentioned that, given the extent to which the partnership between the EU and NATO has grown, she believes it is now firmly entrenched. She reassured all participants that EU defence initiatives would not weaken NATO's defence and security efforts.

Conclusion

The Joint Meeting of the Defence and Security, Economics and Security, and Political Committees in Brussels allows Canadian delegates to hold in-depth discussions with senior NATO and EU officials, as well as NATO parliamentarians, on defence, economic, and political issues of concern to the Alliance. More generally, NATO PA activities help Canadian parliamentarians to deepen their understanding of the strategic issues facing the Alliance, all of which have an impact on Canada's national security and defence. As a result of their participation, Canadian parliamentarians are also able to convey a Canadian perspective during the debates.

Canada continues to have significant interests in the issues that were discussed at this meeting, including the situation in Ukraine, the NATO Training Mission in Iraq, and the situation in Latvia, where Canada leads a multinational battle group as part of NATO's eFP.

Respectfully submitted,

Borys Wrzesnewskyj, M.P.,
Chair of the Canadian NATO Parliamentary Association

Travel Costs

ASSOCIATION	Canadian NATO Parliamentary Association
ACTIVITY	Joint Meeting of the Defence and Security, Economics and Security, and Political Committees
DESTINATION	Brussels, Belgium
DATES	February 18-20, 2019
DELEGATION	
SENATE	Hon. Pierre J. Dalphond, Hon. Joseph Day, Hon. Nicole Eaton
HOUSE OF COMMONS	Borys Wrzesnewskyj, Darren Fisher
STAFF	Jean-François Pagé, Constance Naud-Arcand
TRANSPORTATION	\$ 35,882.41
ACCOMMODATION	\$ 9,982.16
HOSPITALITY	\$ 0
PER DIEMS	\$ 3,775.57
OFFICIAL GIFTS	\$ 0
MISCELLANEOUS	\$ 19.99
TOTAL	\$ 49,660.13