



For immediate release
11 July 2018

PRESS RELEASE
PR/CP(2018)074

BRUSSELS SUMMIT DECLARATION

**Issued by the Heads of State and Government
participating in the meeting of the North Atlantic Council in Brussels
11-12 July 2018**

1. We, the Heads of State and Government of the 29 member nations of the North Atlantic Alliance, have gathered in Brussels at a time when the security of our nations and the rules-based international order are being challenged. NATO will continue to strive for peace, security, and stability in the whole of the Euro-Atlantic area. We are united in our commitment to the Washington Treaty, the purposes and principles of the Charter of the United Nations (UN), and the vital transatlantic bond. We are determined to protect and defend our indivisible security, our freedom, and our common values, including individual liberty, human rights, democracy, and the rule of law. NATO remains the foundation for strong collective defence and the essential transatlantic forum for security consultations and decisions among Allies. The Alliance will continue to pursue a 360-degree approach to security and to fulfil effectively all three core tasks as set out in the Strategic Concept: collective defence, crisis management, and cooperative security. NATO is a defensive Alliance. NATO's greatest responsibility is to protect and defend our territory and our populations against attack. Any attack against one Ally will be regarded as an attack against us all, as set out in Article 5 of the Washington Treaty. We will continue to stand together and act together, on the basis of solidarity, shared purpose, and fair burden-sharing.
2. We face a dangerous, unpredictable, and fluid security environment, with enduring challenges and threats from all strategic directions; from state and non-state actors; from military forces; and from terrorist, cyber, and hybrid attacks. Russia's aggressive actions, including the threat and use of force to attain political goals, challenge the Alliance and are undermining Euro-Atlantic security and the rules-based international order. Instability and continuing crises across the Middle East and North Africa are fuelling terrorism. They also contribute to irregular migration and human trafficking. The ongoing crisis in Syria has a direct effect on the stability of the region and the security of the Alliance as a whole. We face hybrid challenges, including disinformation campaigns and malicious cyber activities. The proliferation of weapons of mass destruction and advanced missile technology also continues to threaten the security of our nations. In light of all this, our unity and solidarity are stronger than ever; we will take all necessary steps to ensure our collective defence.

3. We reaffirm our unwavering commitment to all aspects of the Defence Investment Pledge agreed at the 2014 Wales Summit, and to submit credible national plans on its implementation, including the spending guidelines for 2024, planned capabilities, and contributions. Fair burden sharing underpins the Alliance's cohesion, solidarity, credibility, and ability to fulfil our Article 3 and Article 5 commitments. We welcome the considerable progress made since the Wales Summit with four consecutive years of real growth in non-US defence expenditure. All Allies have started to increase the amount they spend on defence in real terms and some two-thirds of Allies have national plans in place to spend 2% of their Gross Domestic Product on defence by 2024. More than half of Allies are spending more than 20% of their defence expenditures on major equipment, including related research and development, and, according to their national plans, 24 Allies will meet the 20% guideline by 2024. Allies are delivering more of the heavier, high-end capabilities we require and are improving the readiness, deployability, sustainability, and interoperability of their forces. The number of activities in which we are engaged has increased, and Allies continue to make valuable force and capability contributions that benefit the security of the Euro-Atlantic area through NATO's operations, missions, and other activities, as well as through the operations and missions conducted under national authority and the authority of other organisations. As we take stock of the national plans that exist today, we appreciate the unprecedented progress and recognise that much work still remains. We are committed to improving the balance of sharing the costs and responsibilities of Alliance membership.
4. For over two decades, NATO has worked to build a partnership with Russia, including through the mechanism of the NATO-Russia Council (NRC). Russia's recent activities and policies have reduced stability and security, increased unpredictability, and changed the security environment. While NATO stands by its international commitments, Russia has breached the values, principles and commitments which underpin the NATO-Russia relationship, as outlined in the 1997 Basic Document of the Euro-Atlantic Partnership Council, the 1997 NATO-Russia Founding Act, and 2002 Rome Declaration, broken the trust at the core of our cooperation, and challenged the fundamental principles of the global and Euro-Atlantic security architecture. Decisions we have taken are fully consistent with our international commitments, and therefore cannot be regarded by anyone as contradicting the NATO-Russia Founding Act.
5. We reaffirm our decisions towards Russia agreed at the Wales and Warsaw Summits. We continue to respond to the deteriorated security environment by enhancing our deterrence and defence posture, including by a forward presence in the eastern part of the Alliance. We have also suspended all practical civilian and military cooperation between NATO and Russia, while remaining open to political dialogue. NATO does not seek confrontation and poses no threat to Russia.
6. The Euro-Atlantic security environment has become less stable and predictable as a result of Russia's illegal and illegitimate annexation of Crimea and ongoing destabilisation of eastern Ukraine; its military posture and provocative military activities, including near NATO borders, such as the deployment of modern dual-capable missiles in Kaliningrad, repeated violation of NATO Allied airspace, and the continued military build-up in Crimea; its significant investments in the modernisation of its strategic forces; its irresponsible and aggressive nuclear rhetoric; its large-scale, no-notice snap exercises; and the growing number of its

exercises with a nuclear dimension. This is compounded by Russia's continued violation, non-implementation, and circumvention of numerous obligations and commitments in the realm of arms control and confidence- and security-building measures. Russia is also challenging Euro-Atlantic security and stability through hybrid actions, including attempted interference in the election processes, and the sovereignty of our nations, as was the case in Montenegro, widespread disinformation campaigns, and malicious cyber activities. We condemn the attack using a military-grade nerve agent in Salisbury, United Kingdom and note the independent confirmation by the Organisation for the Prohibition of Chemical Weapons (OPCW) of the nerve agent used. The UK assesses that it is highly likely that the Russian Federation was responsible for the attack and that there is no plausible alternative explanation. We stand in solidarity with the UK in its assessment.

7. We reiterate our support for the territorial integrity and sovereignty of Ukraine, Georgia, and the Republic of Moldova within their internationally recognised borders. In accordance with its international commitments, we call on Russia to withdraw the forces it has stationed in all three countries without their consent. We strongly condemn Russia's illegal and illegitimate annexation of Crimea, which we do not and will not recognise. The discrimination against the Crimean Tatars and members of other local communities must end. International monitoring structures must be allowed to carry out their essential work in view of the protection of human rights. We call for the full implementation of the Minsk Agreements by all sides, and support the efforts of the Normandy format and the Trilateral Contact Group. NATO's response is in support of this overall effort, which includes sanctions as decided by the European Union (EU), the G7, and others, to promote a peaceful solution to the conflict and to address Russia's actions. We urge Russia to cease all political, financial, and military support to militant groups and stop intervening militarily in the Donetsk and Luhansk regions and to withdraw troops, equipment, and mercenaries from the territory of Ukraine, and return to the Joint Centre for Control and Coordination. We are deeply concerned by the use of torture and the transfer of Ukrainian citizens to prisons in Russia. We stress the importance of the safety and full and unhindered access for the Organisation for Security and Cooperation in Europe (OSCE) Special Monitoring Mission, up to and including the Russia-Ukraine border. We call on Russia to reverse its recognition of the Abkhazia and South Ossetia regions of Georgia as independent states; to implement the EU-mediated 12 August 2008 ceasefire, particularly the withdrawal of Russian forces from the territory of Georgia; to end its militarisation of these regions; and to stop the construction of border-like obstacles. We also call on Russia to withdraw its troops from the territory of the Republic of Moldova, and to continue to engage constructively in the Transnistria Settlement Process. We are committed to supporting the Republic of Moldova's democratic reforms and defence capacity building efforts.
8. We remain open to a periodic, focused, and meaningful dialogue with a Russia willing to engage on the basis of reciprocity in the NRC, with a view to avoiding misunderstanding, miscalculation, and unintended escalation, and to increase transparency and predictability. We will continue to seek to substantiate our dialogue with Russia to address the critical issues that we face. Since 2016, we have held seven NRC meetings at Ambassadorial level that helped us communicate clearly our positions. The conflict in and around Ukraine is, in current circumstances, the first topic on our agenda. We remain committed to the

current practice of reciprocal briefings in the NRC on military exercises before they take place, as well as on posture. However, while welcome, voluntary transparency provided in the course of such briefings does not substitute for mandatory transparency under existing arms control agreements, in particular the Vienna Document in the OSCE framework. We welcome that Russia is again using the military lines of communication with NATO. We remain committed to making good use of these channels to promote predictability and transparency and reduce risks, and call on Russia to do so as well.

9. We continue to believe that a partnership between NATO and Russia, based on respect for international law and commitments, including as reflected in the NATO-Russia Founding Act and the Rome Declaration, would be of strategic value. But we cannot and will not compromise on the principles on which our Alliance and security in Europe and North America rest. Under current circumstances, we regret that despite repeated calls by Allies and the international community for Russia to change course, the conditions for that relationship do not exist. There can be no return to “business as usual” until there is a clear, constructive change in Russia’s actions that demonstrates compliance with international law and its international obligations and responsibilities. We will continue our strategic discussion on Euro-Atlantic security and our approach to Russia. NATO will continue to be transparent, predictable, and resolute.
10. Terrorism, in all its forms and manifestations, continues to pose a direct threat to the security of our populations, and to international stability and prosperity more broadly. We categorically reject terrorism as it directly challenges the values that unite the Alliance. Our solidarity and determination will prevail. We are committed to continue the fight against terrorism, which has to be tackled through a coherent, significant, long-term effort by the international community as a whole, involving a wide range of instruments and actors. While nations retain the primary responsibility for their domestic security and their own resilience, NATO adds value and has a role to play, in complementarity with wider international efforts and in accordance with international law and the purposes and principles of the UN Charter. Cooperation within the Alliance can enhance Allies’ national efforts and capacity to prevent, mitigate, respond to, and be resilient against acts of terrorism. We condemn all financial support of terrorism. We are also mindful of the need to address the conditions conducive to the spread of terrorism. NATO’s role in the fight against terrorism is an integral part of the Alliance’s 360-degree approach to deterrence and defence and projecting stability; as such, it contributes to all three core tasks: collective defence, crisis management, and cooperative security. Our approach to terrorism, and its causes, upholds all relevant United Nations Security Council Resolutions (UNSCRs) on the fight against terrorism.
11. We are committed to NATO’s enhanced role in the international community’s fight against terrorism, including through awareness and analysis, preparedness and responsiveness, capabilities, capacity building and partnerships, and operations. We will fully implement the Action Plan we agreed at our meeting in May 2017 and will update it by the end of 2018 to adapt to evolving priorities and to counter emerging terrorist threats. NATO’s enhanced contribution to fighting terrorism must continue to be supported by adequate and sustainable human and financial resources, as agreed. Building on our Defence Against Terrorism Programme of Work, we will continue to improve our capabilities and technologies, including to defend against improvised explosive devices and chemical, biological, radiological,

and nuclear (CBRN) threats, and to counter terrorist misuse of technology. We have agreed a new biometric data policy which, consistent with applicable national and international law and subject to national requirements and restrictions, will further support our ability to identify returning foreign terrorist fighters and other threat actors, and to comply with UNSCR 2396. NATO is part of the Global Coalition to Defeat ISIS/Da'esh, and has enhanced its AWACS and air-to-air refuelling support. NATO will also continue to engage, as appropriate, with partner countries and other international actors, in particular the EU and the UN, to ensure added value and complementarity. In this regard, our capacity building and other partnership activities help partner countries fight terrorism themselves and deny terrorists safe haven, which in turn strengthens NATO's own security. NATO can also complement international efforts by drawing on Allied expertise. Mapping of counter-terrorism capacity building activities in partner countries, in cooperation with the partner country concerned, would help NATO to better determine where it can best add value.

12. We welcome the considerable progress made in strengthening our posture, delivering on Wales and Warsaw commitments. While we have placed renewed emphasis on deterrence and collective defence, we have also ensured that NATO retains its ability to project stability and fight against terrorism. We are united and resolute in our ability and willingness to defend one another, and are determined to maintain the full range of capabilities necessary to provide the Alliance with a range of options to be able to continue to tailor our response to specific circumstances and to respond to any threats from wherever they arise, potentially from multiple directions in more than one region. As we continue to ensure that the Alliance's deterrence and defence posture remains credible, coherent, and resilient, and that the Alliance can continue to safeguard the freedom and security of all Allies, it is of strategic importance to increase responsiveness, heighten readiness, and improve reinforcement. We will continue to assess the relevant military elements of the Alliance's strengthened deterrence and defence posture to ensure its effectiveness.
13. We continue to ensure the Alliance's political and military responsiveness, including through more regular exercises. To this end, we will continue to actively and coherently manage the Alliance's overall posture, and to enhance our intelligence, strategic awareness, advance planning, and decision-making. To face evolving security challenges, we have taken steps to ensure that NATO can continue to act at the speed required. We welcome the progress in intelligence reform made since our decision in Warsaw to create an Assistant Secretary General position and a NATO Intelligence Division. We will continue to optimise NATO intelligence to facilitate timely and relevant support to Allied decision-making and operations, including through improved warning and intelligence sharing, particularly on terrorism, hybrid, and cyber.
14. We also continue to reinvigorate our culture of readiness. As part of our efforts, Allies continue to ensure that NATO has the full range of capabilities and forces that are trained, interoperable, deployable, and ready to meet all Alliance requirements. Furthermore, today, we have agreed to launch a NATO Readiness Initiative. It will ensure that more high-quality, combat-capable national forces at high readiness can be made available to NATO. From within the overall pool of forces, Allies will offer an additional 30 major naval combatants, 30 heavy or medium manoeuvre battalions, and 30 kinetic air squadrons, with enabling forces,

at 30 days' readiness or less. They will be organised and trained as elements of larger combat formations, in support of NATO's overall deterrence and defence posture. The NATO Readiness Initiative will further enhance the Alliance's rapid response capability, either for reinforcement of Allies in support of deterrence or collective defence, including for high-intensity warfighting, or for rapid military crisis intervention, if required. It will also promote the importance of effective combined arms and joint operations.

15. Our deterrence and defence posture is underpinned by viable military reinforcement, including from across the Atlantic. Looking in all directions and at all potential challenges and threats, we will continue to strengthen and regularly exercise the Alliance's ability to rapidly reinforce any Ally that comes under threat. We will not accept to be constrained by any potential adversary as regards the freedom of movement of Allied forces by land, air, or sea to and within any part of Alliance territory. Alliance capabilities, training, and exercises contribute to our ability to operate freely.
16. Since Warsaw, we have taken a number of steps to support the deployment and sustainment of Allied forces and their equipment into, from, and within the entire Alliance territory. To that end, we welcome the Enablement Plan for SACEUR's Area of Responsibility and we will give its implementation the highest priority at the national level. We have agreed to improve the necessary legislation and procedures, enhance command and control, and increase transport capabilities, and we have also recognised the need to upgrade infrastructure in Europe. In addition, today we have declared the initial operational capability of Rapid Air Mobility aimed at allowing short notice, cross-border air movement in Europe.
17. We are committed to strengthening our ability to deploy and sustain our forces and their equipment, throughout the Alliance and beyond, and aim to improve military mobility by land, air, or sea as soon as possible, but no later than 2024. This requires a whole-of-government approach, including through national plans, with cross-government cooperation of civil and military actors, in peacetime, in crisis, and in conflict. Defence Ministers will review progress annually. As a priority, we aim to:
 - Shorten border crossing times and, to that end, provide diplomatic clearances for land, sea, and air movement within five days by the end of 2019, and will consider bringing this period further down for rapid reinforcement;
 - Identify main and alternative supply routes capable of handling military transport by the end of 2018;
 - Use suitable existing exercises to practise more regularly military mobility;
 - Set up a network between NATO, national entities, civil and military, including the single National Points of Contact, by the end of 2019, to facilitate and speed up communications and coordination with regard to border crossing.
18. We reiterate that NATO's efforts to ensure a coherent approach and synergies with the EU in the area of military mobility should be pursued, including with regard to military mobility related procedures that should apply to all Allies equally.

19. We have agreed to strengthen the Alliance's deterrence and defence posture in all domains. We are reinforcing our maritime posture and have taken concrete steps to improve our overall maritime situational awareness. We have prepared strategic assessments on the Baltic and Black Seas, the North Atlantic, and the Mediterranean. Through an enhanced exercise programme, we will reinvigorate our collective maritime warfighting skills in key areas, including anti-submarine warfare, amphibious operations, and protection of sea lines of communications. The posture will also ensure support to reinforcement by and from the sea, including the transatlantic dimension with the North Atlantic being a line of communication for strategic reinforcement. In the air domain, we have agreed a Joint Air Power Strategy, which is a key enabler for NATO's peacetime Air Policing and Ballistic Missile Defence missions. It will strengthen our Integrated Air and Missile Defence, and guide our aerospace capabilities to operate together jointly, more swiftly, and effectively in peacetime, crisis, and conflict. We also face new threats from cruise missiles and the proliferation of related technology as well as from new challenges, such as unmanned aerial vehicles, and will monitor developments that could affect Alliance security. Recognising that space is a highly dynamic and rapidly evolving area, which is essential to a coherent Alliance deterrence and defence posture, we have agreed to develop an overarching NATO Space Policy.

20. Cyber threats to the security of the Alliance are becoming more frequent, complex, destructive, and coercive. NATO will continue to adapt to the evolving cyber threat landscape, which is affected by both state and non-state actors, including state-sponsored. Cyber defence is part of NATO's core task of collective defence. We must be able to operate as effectively in cyberspace as we do in the air, on land, and at sea to strengthen and support the Alliance's overall deterrence and defence posture. We therefore continue to implement cyberspace as a domain of operations. We have agreed how to integrate sovereign cyber effects, provided voluntarily by Allies, into Alliance operations and missions, in the framework of strong political oversight. Reaffirming NATO's defensive mandate, we are determined to employ the full range of capabilities, including cyber, to deter, defend against, and to counter the full spectrum of cyber threats, including those conducted as part of a hybrid campaign. We need to bolster our intelligence-led situational awareness to support NATO's decision-making and action. We continue to work together to develop measures which would enable us to impose costs on those who harm us. Individual Allies may consider, when appropriate, attributing malicious cyber activity and responding in a coordinated manner, recognising attribution is a sovereign national prerogative. We are determined to deliver strong national cyber defences through full implementation of the Cyber Defence Pledge, which is central to enhancing cyber resilience and raising the costs of a cyber attack. We reaffirm our commitment to act in accordance with international law, including the UN Charter, international humanitarian law, and human rights law, as applicable. We also support work to maintain international peace and security in cyberspace and to promote stability and reduce the risk of conflict, recognising that we all stand to benefit from a norms-based, predictable, and secure cyberspace. We will further develop our partnership with industry and academia from all Allies to keep pace with technological advances through innovation.

21. Our nations have come under increasing challenge from both state and non-state actors who use hybrid activities that aim to create ambiguity and blur the lines between peace, crisis, and conflict. While the primary responsibility for responding to hybrid threats rests with the targeted nation, NATO is ready, upon Council decision, to assist an Ally at any stage of a hybrid campaign. In cases of hybrid warfare, the Council could decide to invoke Article 5 of the Washington Treaty, as in the case of armed attack. We are enhancing our resilience, improving our situational awareness, and strengthening our deterrence and defence posture. We are also expanding the tools at our disposal to address hostile hybrid activities. We announce the establishment of Counter Hybrid Support Teams, which provide tailored, targeted assistance to Allies, upon their request, in preparing for and responding to hybrid activities. We will continue to support our partners as they strengthen their resilience in the face of hybrid challenges.
22. We fully support UNSCR 2166 concerning the downing of civilian flight MH-17 and call on the Russian Federation to accept its responsibility and to fully cooperate with all efforts to establish truth, justice, and accountability.
23. Assurance measures continue to provide the fundamental baseline requirement for assurance and deterrence. In addition, tailored assurance measures for Turkey to respond to the growing security challenges from the south contribute to the security of the Alliance as a whole, and will be fully implemented. We have increased the strength of the NATO Response Force, and the Very High Readiness Joint Task Force (VJTF) is ready to deploy on short notice.
24. We have established a forward presence in the eastern part of the Alliance which is now operational and its full implementation will continue.
25. As part of this, in line with our decision at Warsaw, the enhanced Forward Presence of four multinational combat-ready battalion-sized battlegroups in Estonia, Latvia, Lithuania, and Poland includes altogether over 4,500 troops from across the Alliance, able to operate alongside national home defence forces. The Multinational Division North East Headquarters has been established and will achieve full capability by December 2018.
26. We have also developed tailored Forward Presence in the Black Sea region. In Romania, a multinational framework brigade for training Allies' land forces is now in place, and work is underway to further develop the brigade's capacity to contribute to the Alliance's strengthened deterrence and defence posture. A number of air and maritime measures in the Black Sea region have led to a substantial increase in NATO's presence and maritime activity in the Black Sea. We welcome progress towards the full implementation of the agreed measures, and particularly in the maritime domain, while noting that further work is required.
27. We are determined to complete, including through the full capability of the Regional Hub for the South, the additional work required to implement all elements of our Framework for the South, namely the ability to anticipate and respond to crises emanating from the south, improved capabilities for expeditionary operations, and enhancing NATO's ability to project stability through regional partnerships and capacity building efforts. These efforts include advance planning and conducting more exercises with scenarios reflecting the strategic environment in the south. In this vein, we are committed to NATO's cooperation with selected

partners requesting our support, by enhancing our ability to provide training, advising, and mentoring activities. National forces and headquarters will be offered by Allies to conduct and coordinate these activities. This will consolidate NATO's contribution to the international community's efforts to project stability beyond our borders.

28. As part of a broader approach and the concerted efforts of the international community, we will continue to deter and defend against non-state actors that have state-like aspirations, capabilities, and resources, and that threaten or affect the security of Allied populations and the integrity of Allied territory.
29. We have also taken far-reaching decisions to adapt and strengthen the NATO Command Structure, the military backbone of the Alliance. It will enable our Supreme Commanders to command and control forces to deal with any military challenge or security threat at any time, from any direction, including large-scale operations for collective defence, as well as ensure adequate transformation and preparation for the future, in particular through capability development, education, and training. We will establish a Cyberspace Operations Centre in Belgium to provide situational awareness and coordination of NATO operational activity within cyberspace, a Joint Force Command Norfolk headquarters in the United States to focus on protecting the transatlantic lines of communication, and a Joint Support and Enabling Command in Germany to ensure freedom of operation and sustainment in the rear area in support of the rapid movement of troops and equipment into, across, and from Europe. We look forward to establishing the two multi-corps capable Land Component Commands as soon as possible. The adapted NATO Command Structure enhances and strengthens the relationship to the NATO Force Structure headquarters and national headquarters, and this also improves the Alliance's regional understanding. We have agreed an implementation plan, and we will substantially increase our military personnel contribution to set up the adapted NATO Command Structure.
30. Allied contributions to command and control through the NATO Force Structure remain essential. We note offers by Romania to develop land command and control capacity at corps-level on its territory to contribute to reinforcement planning in the region, as well as by Denmark, Estonia, and Latvia to further strengthen the command and control in the Baltic region through the establishment of a complementary Multinational Divisional Headquarters. We note the Italian offer, on a rotational basis, of a Divisional Headquarters in support of activities envisaged by the enhanced Framework for the South.
31. Our ability to meet the challenges of a changing security environment is underpinned by an array of robust, sophisticated, and evolving capabilities across all domains, including heavier, more high-end, fully-supported and deployable, sustainable, and interoperable forces and capabilities that are held at high readiness to perform the whole range of Alliance tasks and missions. We will ensure the availability of these forces and capabilities through the full and timely implementation of the requirements identified by NATO. In delivering these capabilities, we are committed to: Alliance and multinational cooperation to address our shared needs; necessary increases in defence spending, including on research and development; maximising the effective use of resources; increasing our interoperability; and working to address, as appropriate, existing dependencies on Russian-sourced legacy military equipment through national efforts and

multinational cooperation. We will continue to foster innovation to maintain our technological edge.

32. We welcome the many concrete multinational, bilateral, and national initiatives, which contribute to our strengthened posture. By signing Letters of Intent and Memoranda of Understanding for multinational and bilateral cooperation in capability domains, Allies also demonstrate in concrete terms their intent to contribute to fair burden sharing.
33. The greatest responsibility of the Alliance is to protect and defend our territory and our populations against attack, as set out in Article 5 of the Washington Treaty. No one should doubt NATO's resolve if the security of any of its members were to be threatened. Faced with a highly diverse, complex, and demanding international security environment, NATO is determined to maintain the full range of capabilities necessary to deter and defend against any threat to the safety and security of our populations, wherever it should arise.
34. As a means to prevent conflict and war, credible deterrence and defence is essential and will continue to be based on an appropriate mix of nuclear, conventional, and missile defence capabilities. A robust deterrence and defence posture strengthens Alliance cohesion and provides an essential political and military transatlantic link, through an equitable and sustainable distribution of roles, responsibilities, and burdens. NATO continues to adapt in order to ensure that its deterrence and defence posture remains credible, coherent, resilient, and adaptable to a changing security environment. This includes an effective response to changes in the posture and doctrine of potential adversaries, and their significant investments to modernise and expand capabilities.
35. Allies' goal is to continue to bolster deterrence as a core element of our collective defence and to contribute to the indivisible security of the Alliance. Following changes in the security environment, NATO has taken steps to ensure its nuclear deterrent capabilities remain safe, secure, and effective. As long as nuclear weapons exist, NATO will remain a nuclear alliance. The strategic forces of the Alliance, particularly those of the United States, are the supreme guarantee of the security of Allies. The independent strategic nuclear forces of the United Kingdom and France have a deterrent role of their own and contribute significantly to the overall security of the Alliance. These Allies' separate centres of decision-making contribute to deterrence by complicating the calculations of potential adversaries. NATO's nuclear deterrence posture also relies on United States' nuclear weapons forward-deployed in Europe and the capabilities and infrastructure provided by Allies concerned. National contributions of dual-capable aircraft to NATO's nuclear deterrence mission remain central to this effort. Supporting contributions by Allies concerned to ensure the broadest possible participation in the agreed nuclear burden-sharing arrangements further enhance this mission. Allies concerned will continue to take steps to ensure sustained leadership focus and institutional excellence for the nuclear deterrence mission, coherence between conventional and nuclear components of NATO's deterrence and defence posture, and effective strategic communications.

36. The fundamental purpose of NATO's nuclear capability is to preserve peace, prevent coercion, and deter aggression. Given the deteriorating security environment in Europe, a credible and united nuclear Alliance is essential. Nuclear weapons are unique. The circumstances in which NATO might have to use nuclear weapons are extremely remote. NATO reiterates that any employment of nuclear weapons against NATO would fundamentally alter the nature of a conflict. If the fundamental security of any of its members were to be threatened, however, NATO has the capabilities and resolve to impose costs on an adversary that would be unacceptable and far outweigh the benefits that any adversary could hope to achieve.
37. Missile defence can complement the role of nuclear weapons in deterrence; it cannot substitute for them. At the 2010 Lisbon Summit, we agreed to develop a NATO Ballistic Missile Defence (BMD) capability to pursue our core task of collective defence and to provide full coverage and protection for all NATO European populations, territory, and forces against the increasing threat posed by the proliferation of ballistic missiles. NATO BMD is purely defensive. It is based on aims and political principles that have not changed since 2010, including reasonable challenge, affordability, technical feasibility, and the latest common threat assessment. Should international efforts reduce the threats posed by ballistic missile proliferation, NATO missile defence can and will adapt accordingly. Full Allied political control and oversight are essential, and full implementation will be ensured and monitored.
38. NATO BMD is based on voluntary national contributions, mainly US European Phased Adaptive Approach assets in Romania, Turkey, Spain, and Poland. Additional voluntary national contributions will provide robustness.
39. NATO BMD Initial Operational Capability was declared in 2016 and the next major milestone is the completion of the core element of the NATO BMD Command and Control, the only component eligible for common funding. We continue to look for opportunities to quickly and effectively improve delivery of NATO's BMD Command and Control, overall completion of which is necessary to reach system maturity and Full Operational Capability.
40. We will continue to engage with third states on a case-by-case basis to enhance transparency, build mutual confidence, and increase ballistic missile defence effectiveness.
41. NATO BMD is not directed against Russia and will not undermine Russia's strategic deterrence. NATO BMD is intended to defend against potential threats emanating from outside the Euro-Atlantic area. We have explained to Russia many times that the BMD system is not capable against Russia's strategic nuclear deterrent and there is no intention to redesign this system to have such a capability in the future. Hence, Russian statements threatening to target Allies because of NATO BMD are unacceptable and counterproductive. Should Russia be ready to discuss BMD with NATO, and subject to Alliance agreement, NATO remains open to discussion.

42. Arms control, disarmament, and non-proliferation have made and should continue to make an essential contribution to achieving the Alliance's security objectives and for ensuring strategic stability and our collective security. NATO has a long track record of doing its part on disarmament and non-proliferation. After the end of the Cold War, NATO dramatically reduced the number of nuclear weapons stationed in Europe and its reliance on nuclear weapons in NATO strategy. We regret that the conditions for achieving disarmament have not become more favourable since the 2016 Warsaw NATO Summit. Allies remain collectively determined to uphold existing disarmament, arms control, and non-proliferation agreements and commitments. Allies remain open to further arms control negotiations, with the aim of improving the security of the Alliance, taking into account the prevailing international security environment. We acknowledge the United States' and Russia's reductions in strategic nuclear weapons and applaud their meeting the central limits of the New Strategic Arms Reduction Treaty (New START) as of 5 February 2018. The new START Treaty contributes to international stability, and Allies express their strong support for its continued implementation and for early and active dialogue on ways to improve strategic stability.
43. We remain deeply concerned by the proliferation of nuclear weapons and other weapons of mass destruction (WMD), as well as their means of delivery and related materials, by states and non-state actors, which represents a growing threat to our populations, territory, and forces. Addressing this threat remains an urgent international priority. In recent years, the international non-proliferation regime has been challenged, in particular due to the use of chemical weapons in Syria by the Syrian regime and ISIS/Da'esh, intensive development of illicit programmes, and political obstruction to the enforcement of non-proliferation norms. Continued use of chemical weapons in Syria, as well as use in Iraq, Malaysia, and the United Kingdom, which we condemn unreservedly, underscore the evolving and increasing WMD threat to the Alliance. It underlines the importance of effective multilateralism and international cooperation, including through the Chemical Weapons Convention and the OPCW, in addressing WMD threats. In that spirit, we welcome the decision by the June 2018 OPCW Conference of States Parties, in particular to ask the independent experts of the OPCW Technical Secretariat to put in place arrangements to identify the perpetrators of the use of chemical weapons in Syria. We demand that all perpetrators of chemical weapons attacks worldwide be held accountable and we call upon all countries to join the International Partnership Against the Impunity for the Use of Chemical Weapons. NATO will ensure that Allies can protect their populations, forces, and territories by deterring, defending against, responding to, and mitigating the consequences of the full spectrum of the chemical, biological, radiological, and nuclear threats, including with trained and rapidly-deployable forces.
44. Fifty years since the Treaty on the Non-Proliferation of Nuclear Weapons (NPT) opened for signature, it remains the cornerstone of the global non-proliferation regime and has an essential role in the maintenance of international peace, security and stability. Allies are strongly committed to full implementation of the NPT in all its aspects, including nuclear disarmament, non-proliferation, and the peaceful use of nuclear energy. NATO's nuclear arrangements have always been fully consistent with the NPT. Consistent with the Statement by the North Atlantic Council of 20 September 2017, which we reaffirm, NATO does not support the

Treaty on the Prohibition of Nuclear Weapons that is at odds with the existing non-proliferation and disarmament architecture, risks undermining the NPT, is inconsistent with the Alliance's nuclear deterrence policy and will not enhance any country's security. This treaty will not change the legal obligations on our countries with respect to nuclear weapons. The Alliance reaffirms its resolve to seek a safer world for all and to take further practical steps and effective measures to create the conditions for further nuclear disarmament negotiations and the ultimate goal of a world without nuclear weapons in full accordance with all provisions of the NPT, including Article VI, in an ever more effective and verifiable way that promotes international stability, and is based on the principle of undiminished security for all.

45. We call on all states to enhance efforts to effectively combat the proliferation of WMD through the universalisation and full implementation of the Chemical Weapons Convention and the Biological and Toxin Weapons Convention, the NPT, and through the Proliferation Security Initiative, the UNSC resolutions 1540 and 2325, and initiatives on nuclear disarmament verification. We call on all states to declare and to maintain a voluntary moratorium on nuclear weapon test explosions or any other nuclear explosion, pending the potential entry into force of the Comprehensive Nuclear-Test-Ban Treaty. We welcome the contribution that the Comprehensive Nuclear-Test-Ban Treaty Organization Preparatory Commission makes to nuclear non-proliferation and disarmament, in particular through its work to establish the International Monitoring System and the International Data Centre. The Alliance welcomes the soon-to-be-published report adopted by the High-Level Fissile Material Cut-off Treaty Expert Preparatory Group and urges the immediate commencement of treaty negotiations in the Conference on Disarmament. In the meantime, the Alliance calls on all states to declare and maintain moratoria on the production of fissile material for nuclear weapons or other nuclear explosive devices.
46. The Intermediate-Range Nuclear Forces (INF) Treaty has been crucial to Euro-Atlantic security and we remain fully committed to the preservation of this landmark arms control treaty. Full compliance with the INF Treaty is essential. The United States is in compliance with its obligations under the INF Treaty and continues to provide substantial transparency on its programs while pursuing a diplomatic dialogue with Russia. At the same time, Allies have identified a Russian missile system, the 9M729, which raises serious concerns. After years of denials and obfuscation, and despite Allies repeatedly raising their concerns, the Russian Federation only recently acknowledged the existence of the missile system without providing the necessary transparency or explanation. A pattern of behaviour and information over many years has led to widespread doubts about Russian compliance. Allies believe that, in the absence of any credible answer from Russia on this new missile, the most plausible assessment would be that Russia is in violation of the Treaty. NATO urges Russia to address these concerns in a substantial and transparent way, and actively engage in a technical dialogue with the United States. Allies will continue their efforts to engage Russia on this issue in bilateral and multilateral formats.
47. We remain committed to conventional arms control as a key element of Euro-Atlantic security. Russia's ongoing selective implementation of the Vienna Document and Open Skies Treaty, and its long-standing non-implementation of the Conventional Armed Forces in Europe Treaty, combined with its aggressive

military posture, have undermined our security. Allies call on Russia to return to full implementation and compliance with the letter and spirit of all of its commitments, which is essential to rebuild military transparency and increase predictability in the Euro-Atlantic region. Allies are determined to preserve, strengthen, and modernise conventional arms control in Europe, based on key principles and commitments, including reciprocity, transparency, and host nation consent. Allies underscore the importance of modernising the Vienna Document, maintaining and strengthening the Open Skies Treaty, and actively supporting ongoing discussions at the OSCE, including the Structured Dialogue on the current and future challenges and risks to security in the OSCE area. We call on Russia to engage constructively in these efforts in Vienna.

48. We reiterate the Alliance's full support to the goal of complete, verifiable, and irreversible denuclearisation of the Korean Peninsula. We welcome the recent meetings and declarations between the leaders of the Republic of Korea and the Democratic People's Republic of Korea (DPRK), and between the leaders of the United States and the DPRK, as a contribution towards reaching the final fully verified denuclearisation of the DPRK in a peaceful manner. We strongly condemn the DPRK's nuclear tests and ballistic missile launches in violation of numerous United Nations Security Council resolutions, and call upon the DPRK to suspend such tests, consistent with its commitment and international obligations. We also condemn the DPRK's use of the VX nerve agent in an assassination in Malaysia. We call upon the DPRK to fully implement its international obligations; to eliminate its nuclear, chemical, and biological warfare capabilities and ballistic missiles, and abandon all related programmes; to return to the Treaty on Non-Proliferation of Nuclear Weapons (NPT) and its Comprehensive Safeguards Agreement with the International Atomic Energy Agency (IAEA); to comply with the Biological and Toxin Weapons Convention (BWC); and to accede to the Chemical Weapons Convention (CWC). We call on all nations to maintain decisive pressure on the DPRK, including by fully implementing existing UN sanctions. We reiterate our full solidarity with our partners in the region -- Australia, Japan, New Zealand, and the Republic of Korea -- with whom we have had multiple consultations on this issue.

49. We are concerned by Iran's intensified missile tests and the range and precision of its ballistic missiles and by Iran's destabilising activities in the wider Middle East region. We call upon Iran to refrain from all activities which are inconsistent with UNSCR 2231 -- including all annexes. We are committed to permanently ensuring that Iran's nuclear programme remains peaceful, in line with its international obligations and commitments to never seek, develop, or acquire a nuclear weapon. We underscore the importance for Iran to continue to fully cooperate in a timely manner with the IAEA. We condemn all financial support of terrorism, including Iran's support to a variety of armed non-state actors. We also call upon Iran to play a constructive role by contributing to efforts to counter terrorism and achieve political solutions, reconciliation and peace in the region.

Syria has a significant inventory of short range ballistic missiles whose range covers part of NATO's territory and some of our partners' territories. Syria has used these missiles extensively against its own population. We remain concerned that Turkey has been hit three times in the last four years by missiles launched from Syria. We continue to monitor and assess the ballistic missile threat from Syria.

The increasing threat posed by the proliferation of ballistic missiles in the vicinity of the south-east border of the Alliance has been, and remains a driver in NATO's development and deployment of a ballistic missile defence system, which is configured to counter threats from outside the Euro-Atlantic area.

50. Today, the Alliance remains an essential source of stability in an increasingly unpredictable world. The Alliance's long-standing efforts at ensuring security for its members and contributing to stability beyond its borders are related to its three essential core tasks and its 360-degree approach. Based on a broad and strengthened deterrence and defence posture, the Alliance seeks to contribute to projecting stability and strengthening security outside its territory, thereby contributing to Alliance security overall. We will continue to strengthen NATO's role in this regard, helping partners, upon request, to build stronger defence institutions, improve good governance, enhance their resilience, provide for their own security, and more effectively contribute to the fight against terrorism. This investment in partners' security contributes to our security. We, including with partners where appropriate, will continue to help manage challenges – before, during, and after conflict – where they affect Alliance security, in accordance with NATO policies and procedures and with consideration of political implications.
51. NATO's partnerships are, and will continue to be, essential to the way NATO works. The success of NATO's partnerships is demonstrated by their strategic contribution to Alliance and international security. Through our structured partnerships and engagement with other international actors and organisations, including the UN, the EU, the OSCE, and the African Union (AU), we maintain a broad cooperative security network, deepen political dialogue, and foster practical cooperation. Partners have made and continue to make substantial contributions to Alliance operations, missions, and practical cooperation activities. We reaffirm our commitment to expand political dialogue and practical cooperation with any nation that shares the Alliance's values and interest in international peace and security and will further develop our partnerships so that they continue to meet the interests of both Allies and partners.
52. The Alliance has developed mutually beneficial security cooperation with Finland and Sweden on a broad range of issues. We remain dedicated to further strengthening our cooperation, including through close political consultations, shared situational awareness, and joint exercises, in order to respond to common challenges in a timely and effective manner.
53. We reaffirm our commitment to ensure long-term security and stability in Afghanistan. Our Resolute Support Mission is achieving success in training, advising, and assisting the Afghan National Defence and Security Forces. As the Afghan government continues to work towards peace and reconciliation, we will continue our assistance by extending our financial sustainment of the Afghan forces through 2024 and by pledging to fill staffing shortfalls, especially in priority areas. Regional actors have an important role to play in support of peace and stabilisation in Afghanistan, and we call on them to cooperate more closely on fighting terrorism, to improve the conditions for economic development, to support the Afghan government's peace and reconciliation efforts, and to prevent any form of support to the insurgency. In this regard, we encourage Pakistan, Iran, and Russia to contribute to regional stability by fully supporting an Afghan-led and Afghan-owned peace process.

54. We commend the Iraqi security forces and the Government of Iraq for their recent success against ISIS/Da'esh and the restoration of sovereign control over all Iraqi territory. We are launching a non-combat training and capacity building mission in Iraq, at the request of the Government of Iraq for additional support in its efforts to stabilise the country and fight terrorism in all its forms and manifestations. Building upon our current training activities, NATO will advise relevant Iraqi officials, primarily in the Ministry of Defence and the Office of the National Security Advisor, and train and advise instructors at professional military education institutions to help Iraq develop its capacity to build more effective national security structures and professional military education institutions. A professional and accountable security sector is key to the stability of the country and the wider region, as well as our own security. The continued inclusivity of the Iraqi Security Forces and Iraqi security institutions will remain of key importance. Without prejudice to NATO's decision-making autonomy, and in close concert with the overall framework of the efforts of the Global Coalition to Defeat ISIS/Da'esh, the NATO mission will maintain a modest and scalable footprint, and complement the ongoing and future efforts of the Coalition and other relevant international actors, such as the UN and the EU, as appropriate. The NATO mission in Iraq will rely primarily on Coalition enabler support, within means and capabilities. We thank Australia, Finland, and Sweden for their early commitments as operational partners in this mission. NATO's support to Iraq's efforts will be founded on a basis of partnership and inclusivity, and with full respect for the sovereignty, independence, and territorial integrity of the Republic of Iraq.
55. We have today endorsed a Package on the South, which includes a range of political and practical cooperation initiatives towards a more strategic, focused, and coherent approach to the Middle East and North Africa, a region facing a multitude of complex threats and challenges, which in turn affect our security. Within that overall strategic aim, we are pursuing three main objectives: to strengthen NATO's deterrence and defence against threats emanating from the south; to contribute to international crisis management efforts in the region; and to help our regional partners build resilience against security threats, including in the fight against terrorism. We are committed to building a stronger and more dynamic relationship with our Mediterranean Dialogue and Istanbul Cooperation Initiative partners, including to help them modernise their defence and security institutions. Today, we declared Full Capability of our Regional Hub for the South in Naples. The Hub will contribute to our situational awareness and understanding of regional challenges, threats, and opportunities; support the collection, management, and sharing of information; coordinate NATO's activities in the south; and reach out to partners. Enhanced planning and exercises will help improve our ability to anticipate and respond to crises in the region. The NATO-ICI Regional Centre in Kuwait allows us to work more closely with partners in the Gulf region to enhance regional security and counter shared threats. We are also working to further develop our relations with the League of Arab States and the Gulf Cooperation Council, and look forward to strengthening our cooperation with the AU, so we are better able to respond to common threats and challenges.
56. We remain committed to our longstanding partnership with Jordan in the framework of the Mediterranean Dialogue. We look forward to building on the successful implementation of our Defence and Related Security Capacity Building (DCB) assistance to Jordan in such priority areas as cyber defence; counter-improvised explosive devices; and civil preparedness and crisis management. We

are grateful to Jordan, an enhanced opportunities partner, for its valuable contributions to NATO-led operations and for hosting our DCB training activities for Iraq.

57. Tunisia is another key partner in the framework of the Mediterranean Dialogue. We are committed to further developing our cooperation with Tunisia. We have today approved new DCB assistance measures designed to help the Tunisian authorities to further develop their defence capacities, in response to their request. Our support will complement existing international efforts and will include cyber defence, counter-improvised explosive devices, and the promotion of transparency in resource management. This DCB package will be implemented mainly through education and training activities and the exchange of expertise and best practices, in line with NATO standards.
58. We support a Libyan-led and Libyan-owned political process, aimed at promoting national political reconciliation and strengthening state institutions. In line with the statement made by the President of the UN Security Council on 6 June 2018, we welcome the commitment made by the Libyan parties to work constructively with the UN to hold inclusive, secure, and credible elections, most recently at the 29 May 2018 Paris Conference. In accordance with our Wales and Warsaw Summit decisions, we remain committed to providing advice to Libya in the area of defence and security institution building, in response to the request by the Prime Minister of the Government of National Accord to assist the GNA to strengthen its security institutions. NATO's support will take account of political and security conditions. Any assistance to Libya would be provided in full complementarity and in close coordination with other international efforts, including those of the UN and the EU, as appropriate. We also stand ready to develop a long-term partnership, possibly leading to Libya's membership in the Mediterranean Dialogue.
59. The Western Balkans is a region of strategic importance, as demonstrated by our long history of cooperation and operations in the region. We remain fully committed to the stability and security of the Western Balkans, as well as to supporting the Euro-Atlantic aspirations of countries in the region. We will continue to work closely with the Western Balkans to maintain and promote regional and international peace and security. Democratic values, rule of law, domestic reforms, and good neighbourly relations are vital for regional cooperation and for the Euro-Atlantic integration process, and we welcome progress in this regard. We also welcome recent progress on border demarcation in the region.
60. NATO's presence in Kosovo, mainly through the NATO-led Kosovo Force (KFOR), contributes to a safe and secure environment, working in close cooperation with the Kosovo authorities and the EU. It also contributes to wider stability in the Western Balkans. Any changes to NATO's force posture will remain conditions-based and not calendar-driven. We will continue to support the development of the security organisations in Kosovo through the NATO Advisory and Liaison Team within the current mandate. The implementation of the enhanced interaction with Kosovo is progressing well in terms of dialogue and practical cooperation. We welcome Kosovo's aspirations to improve its ability to ensure safety and security for all its inhabitants, as well as to contribute to security in the Western Balkans.

61. Strengthening NATO-Serbia relations are of benefit to the Alliance, to Serbia, and to the whole region. We welcome the continued progress made in building the NATO-Serbia partnership and support further political dialogue and practical cooperation to this end. We reiterate the need for continued progress in the EU-facilitated Belgrade-Pristina dialogue, which should lead towards a comprehensive normalisation of relations, including in the form of a legally binding agreement. We encourage both parties to accelerate efforts to normalise relations and fully implement prior agreements.
62. We reaffirm our commitment to the Alliance's Open Door Policy under Article 10 of the Washington Treaty, which is one of the Alliance's great successes. Montenegro's accession last year and our invitation today to the former Yugoslav Republic of Macedonia¹ are a tangible demonstration of this commitment. Successive rounds of enlargement have enhanced our collective security and the security of the entire Euro-Atlantic region. Euro-Atlantic integration advances democratic values, reform, and respect for the rule of law. NATO's door is open to all European democracies which share the values of our Alliance, which are willing and able to assume the responsibilities and obligations of membership, which are in a position to further the principles of the Treaty, and whose inclusion can contribute to the security of the North Atlantic area. Decisions on enlargement are for NATO itself; no third party has a say in that process. We remain fully committed to the integration of those countries that aspire to join the Alliance, judging each on its own merits. We encourage those partners who aspire to join the Alliance to continue to implement the necessary reforms and decisions to prepare for membership. We will continue to offer support to their efforts and look to them to take the steps necessary to advance their aspirations.
63. At our 2008 Bucharest Summit, we decided that NATO will extend an invitation to the former Yugoslav Republic of Macedonia to join the Alliance as soon as a mutually acceptable solution to the name issue has been reached within the framework of the UN. We welcome the historic agreement between Athens and Skopje on the solution of the name issue. In line with our policy, we have decided to invite the government in Skopje to begin accession talks to join our Alliance. Full implementation of all prescribed internal procedures with respect to the agreement on the solution of the name issue is a condition for a successful conclusion of the accession process. We commend the government for significantly strengthening good neighbourly relations, including the entry into force of the Treaty on Friendship, Good Neighbourliness, and Cooperation with Bulgaria. We welcome the determined efforts by the new government over the past year and the substantial progress that has been achieved on a number of urgently needed reforms and encourage further efforts on reform before and after accession in order to enhance the country's contribution to the Alliance. We also note continued efforts to build a functional multi-ethnic society based on full implementation of the Ohrid Framework Agreement and encourage further efforts in this area. We call upon all political leaders in the country to play a constructive role in these processes and in the speedy implementation of the agreement on a solution to the name issue. We appreciate Skopje's steadfast support for NATO's operations and missions and ongoing contributions to international security.

¹ Turkey recognises the Republic of Macedonia with its constitutional name.

64. We fully support Bosnia and Herzegovina's NATO membership aspiration, and are committed to the territorial integrity and sovereignty of a stable and secure Bosnia and Herzegovina. We commend Bosnia and Herzegovina for its contributions to NATO-led operations and for its commitment to regional cooperation and security. We call upon the country's leaders to work constructively and demonstrate political will for the benefit of all citizens of Bosnia and Herzegovina in pursuit of political, economic, and defence reforms. We look forward to the general elections in October to be held fully in line with international standards. We welcome the substantial progress in the registration of immovable defence property made by the state authorities of Bosnia and Herzegovina to meet the requirements, set by NATO Foreign Ministers in Tallinn in April 2010, for submitting the first Annual National Programme. Since then, Bosnia and Herzegovina constitutional and state court decisions have made clear that all former Yugoslav defence properties in the country are property of the state of Bosnia and Herzegovina. Therefore, the registration of immovable defence property located in the entity of Republika Srpska should proceed without delay. We are committed to maintaining strong political dialogue with Bosnia and Herzegovina and offer our continued support to the implementation of the Defence Review and other reform efforts, including through NATO HQ Sarajevo. We encourage the leadership of Bosnia and Herzegovina to take full advantage of the breadth of NATO cooperative security tools.
65. We reiterate the decision made at the 2008 Bucharest Summit that Georgia will become a member of the Alliance, with MAP as an integral part of the process; we reaffirm all elements of that decision, as well as subsequent decisions. We welcome the significant progress realised since 2008. We welcome the central role played by the NATO-Georgia Commission and the Annual National Programme over the past decade in deepening political dialogue and cooperation between NATO and Georgia. We recognise the significant progress on reforms which Georgia has made and must continue, which are helping Georgia, an aspirant country, progress in its preparations towards membership, and which strengthen Georgia's defence and interoperability capabilities with the Alliance. Georgia's relationship with the Alliance contains all the practical tools to prepare for eventual membership. We welcome the developing cooperation between NATO and Georgia, an enhanced opportunities partner, on Black Sea security, and the considerable progress in implementing a number of initiatives under the umbrella of the Substantial NATO-Georgia Package. We highly appreciate Georgia's significant and steadfast contributions to the NATO Response Force and the Resolute Support mission. These efforts, along with Georgia's participation in EU-led operations, demonstrate Georgia's commitment and capability to contribute to Euro-Atlantic security. We stand ready to enhance further our support to Georgia, including in the areas of counter-mobility, training and exercises, and secure communications, and we look forward to the next NATO-Georgia exercise in 2019.
66. An independent, sovereign and stable Ukraine, firmly committed to democracy and the rule of law is key for Euro-Atlantic security. We stand firm in our support for Ukraine's right to decide its own future and foreign policy course free from outside interference. In light of Ukraine's restated aspirations for NATO membership, we stand by our decisions taken at the Bucharest Summit and subsequent Summits. The success of wide-ranging reforms, including combatting corruption and promoting an inclusive electoral process, based on democratic values, respect for

human rights, minorities and the rule of law, will be crucial in laying the groundwork for a prosperous and peaceful Ukraine firmly anchored among European democracies committed to common values. We welcome significant reform progress already made, in particular with the recent adoption of the Law on the High anti-Corruption Court and the Law on National Security. At the same time, we look forward to further progress in Ukraine's efforts to overcome significant remaining challenges and ensure the full implementation and sustainability of ambitious but necessary reforms, which should be fully in line with Ukraine's international obligations and commitments. With regard to the Law on Education adopted by the Rada in September 2017, Allies urge Ukraine to fully implement the recommendations and conclusions of the Opinion of the Venice Commission. Ukraine should make full use of all instruments available to it under the NATO-Ukraine Commission (NUC), in particular the Annual National Programme, to reach its objective of implementing NATO principles and standards. We remain committed to providing continued support to Ukraine's reform agenda in the security and defence sector, including through the Comprehensive Assistance Package, so that Ukraine can better provide for its own security. We welcome the developing cooperation between NATO and Ukraine on Black Sea security. We will also support Ukraine's efforts to strengthen its resilience against hybrid threats, including through intensifying activities under the NATO-Ukraine Platform on Countering Hybrid Warfare. We highly value Ukraine's significant contributions to Allied operations, the NATO Response Force, and NATO exercises, and welcome the contribution made by the NATO-Ukraine partnership to providing security and stability in the Euro-Atlantic area and beyond. Those contributions increase the level of interoperability of the Armed Forces of Ukraine with NATO. We acknowledge Ukraine's interest in the enhanced opportunities within the Partnership Interoperability Initiative. NATO will consider this in view of the decisions taken at the Wales and the Warsaw Summits. We will continue to work with Ukraine, a longstanding partner of the Alliance, based on the principles and values enshrined in the Charter on a Distinctive Partnership between NATO and Ukraine.

67. We continue to support the right of all our partners to make independent and sovereign choices on foreign and security policy, free from external pressure and coercion. We remain committed in our support for the territorial integrity, independence, and sovereignty of Armenia, Azerbaijan, Georgia, and the Republic of Moldova. In this context, we continue to support efforts towards a peaceful settlement of the conflicts in the South Caucasus, as well as in the Republic of Moldova, based upon these principles and the norms of international law, the UN Charter, and the Helsinki Final Act. We urge all parties to engage constructively and with reinforced political will in peaceful conflict resolution, within the established negotiation frameworks.
68. In light of NATO's operational experiences and the evolving complex security environment, a comprehensive political, civilian, and military approach is essential in crisis management and cooperative security. Furthermore, it contributes to the effectiveness of our common security and defence, without prejudice to Alliance collective defence commitments. In line with our Comprehensive Approach Action Plan, we will continue to pursue coherence within NATO's own tools and strands of work, concerted approaches with partner nations and organisations such as the UN, the EU, and the OSCE, as well as further dialogue with non-governmental organisations.

69. The European Union remains a unique and essential partner for NATO. The cooperation between NATO and the EU has substantially developed and is particularly important in the face of common security challenges in our shared eastern and southern neighbourhoods. We reaffirm in their entirety all the decisions, principles, and commitments with regard to NATO and EU cooperation. We will continue to further strengthen our strategic partnership in a spirit of full mutual openness, transparency, complementarity, and respect for the organisations' different mandates, decision-making autonomy and institutional integrity, and as agreed by the two organisations. This cooperation will serve to enhance the security of our citizens and promote peace and stability in the Euro-Atlantic area and beyond.
70. We have achieved tangible results in a range of areas, including countering hybrid threats, operational cooperation including maritime issues, cyber security and defence, defence capabilities, defence industry and research, exercises, and defence and security capacity building. Political dialogue between NATO and EU remains essential to advance this cooperation. We also welcome the commitments of both organisations to improve military mobility. We will continue to develop and deepen our cooperation by fully implementing the common set of 74 proposals, which contribute to the coherence and complementarity of our efforts.
71. NATO recognises the importance of a stronger and more capable European defence. The development of coherent, complementary and interoperable defence capabilities, avoiding unnecessary duplication, is key in our joint efforts to make the Euro-Atlantic area safer. Such efforts, including recent developments, will lead to a stronger NATO, help enhance our common security, contribute to transatlantic burden sharing, help deliver needed capabilities, and support an overall increase in defence spending. We welcome the call for further deepening of NATO-EU cooperation in the European Council Conclusions of June 2018. We note the EU is considering the conditions for like-minded third state participation in its new initiatives where appropriate and would encourage potential further steps in this regard.
72. Non-EU Allies continue to make significant contributions to the EU's efforts to strengthen its capacities to address common security challenges. For the strategic partnership between NATO and the EU, non-EU Allies' fullest involvement in these efforts is essential. We look forward to mutual steps, representing tangible progress, in this area to support a strengthened strategic partnership.
73. We welcome the recent signature of the Brussels Joint Declaration by the NATO Secretary General, the President of the European Council, and the President of the European Commission.
74. NATO leads by example in upholding the principles of democracy and human rights; doing so increases our operational effectiveness. We continue to promote robust policies to advance the Women, Peace and Security (WPS) agenda, and in the areas of Children and Armed Conflict and Protection of Civilians. We remain committed to good governance of the defence sector and promoting transparent and accountable defence institutions under democratic control, including through our Building Integrity Policy. In these areas, we value civil society's important role

as a forum for dialogue, advice, and ideas, as well as our cooperation with international organisations.

75. NATO and its partners are committed to showing the leadership required to promote the full implementation of UNSCR 1325 and the subsequent WPS resolutions. Today we have endorsed our renewed WPS policy and action plan, which are integral to NATO's three core tasks. Gender mainstreaming and increased representation of women in NATO civilian and military structures and in Allied and partner forces improve our effectiveness and contribute to a more modern, agile, ready, and responsive Alliance.
76. NATO's robust framework for the protection of children in armed conflict directs troops deployed in NATO-led operations and missions to strengthen the implementation of UNSCR 1612 and other relevant resolutions. The Alliance will continue to update its policy and broaden its operationalisation, taking into account best practices of the Resolute Support Mission.
77. NATO and partners are committed to ensuring that all efforts are made to avoid, minimise, and mitigate the negative effects on civilians arising from NATO and NATO-led military operations and missions, as underscored in our new military concept for the Protection of Civilians.
78. Energy security plays an important role in our common security. A stable and reliable energy supply, the diversification of routes, suppliers and energy resources, and the interconnectivity of energy networks are of critical importance and increase our resilience against political and economic pressure. While these issues are primarily the responsibility of national authorities, energy developments can have significant political and security implications for Allies and also affect our partners. Consequently, we will continue regular Allied consultations on issues related to energy security. We believe it is essential to ensure that the members of the Alliance are not vulnerable to political or coercive manipulation of energy, which constitutes a potential threat. Allies will therefore continue to seek diversification of their energy supplies, in line with their needs and conditions. We will refine NATO's role in energy security in accordance with established principles and guidelines, and continue to develop NATO's capacity to support national authorities in protecting critical infrastructure, including against malicious hybrid and cyber activity. We will continue to enhance our strategic awareness, including through sharing intelligence and expanding our links with relevant international organisations, such as the International Energy Agency, the International Renewable Energy Agency, and the European Union, as appropriate. We will also further improve the energy efficiency of our military forces, including through the use of sustainable energy sources, when appropriate.
79. NATO is an alliance that constantly modernises and adapts to new threats and challenges. Today, we have taken important decisions to further adapt NATO to the more challenging security environment. We have agreed a new, strengthened NATO Command Structure that meets the requirements of today and tomorrow. As part of our ongoing institutional adaptation, we have also agreed a new model to deliver shared NATO capabilities faster. We also continue to improve our strategic communications. We are pleased to meet in NATO's new headquarters building and are grateful for the hospitality extended to us by Belgium. We look forward to the Secretary General's Functional Review of the Headquarters to

ensure it has the structures, expertise, effectiveness, and efficiency to be even more responsive and adaptable to changing circumstances. All the decisions we have taken today demonstrate our unity, solidarity, and strength. We have decided to meet again next year to review progress and to mark the 70th anniversary of our enduring Alliance.