

**NATO-RUSSIA  
PARLIAMENTARY  
COMMITTEE**

110 NRPC 05 E  
Original: English



**NATO Parliamentary Assembly**

**SUMMARY**

NATO-Russia Parliamentary Committee meeting  
White Hall, Grand Hotel Union Ljubljana, Slovenia

Friday 27 May 2005

## ATTENDANCE LIST

<b>President</b>	Pierre Lellouche (France)
<b>Vice-Presidents</b>	Pierre Claude Nolin (Canada) Giovanni Lorenzo Forcieri (Italy)
<b>Treasurer</b>	Lothar Ibrügger (Germany)
<b>Secretary General</b>	Simon Lunn

## MEMBERS AND ALTERNATE MEMBERS

Belgium	Daniel Bacquelaine
Canada	Jane Cordy
Denmark	Helge Adam Møller
Estonia	Sven Mikser
France	Pierre Lellouche
	Loïc Bouvard
Germany	Markus Meckel
	Karl A. Lamers
Greece	Vassilios Maghinas
Italy	Giovanni Lorenzo Forcieri
Hungary	Agnes Vadaï
Latvia	Aleksandrs Kiršteins
Lithuania	Juozas Olekas
	Rasa Juknevičienė
Luxembourg	Marc Spautz
Netherlands	Jos van Gennip
	Bert Middel
Norway	Jan Tore Sanner
Poland	Marian Pilka
Portugal	José Lello
	Rui Gomes da Silva
Romania	Tiberiu Barbulețiu
Russian Federation	Lubov Sliska
	Victor A. Ozerov
Spain	Jordi Marsal
United Kingdom	Lord Clark of Windermere
	Peter Viggers

## Committees

Civil Dimension of Security	Michael Clapham (United Kingdom), Chairperson
Political	Markus Meckel (Germany), Chairperson

**SECRETARIES OF DELEGATION*****Member Delegations***

Belgium	Frans Van Melkebeke
Canada	Denis Robert
Czech Republic	Olga Bendíková
Denmark	Morten Roland Hansen
Estonia	Tanja Espe
France	Frédéric Taillet
	Etienne Sallenave
Germany	Rainer Büscher
Greece	Roxani Xeplati
Hungary	Károly Tüzes
Italy	Alessandra Lai
Latvia	Sandra Paura
Lithuania	Snieguole Ziukaite
Luxembourg	Isabelle Barra
Netherlands	Leo van Waasbergen
Norway	Allon Groth
Poland	Mikolaj Karlowski
Portugal	Luisa Pinto Basto
Romania	Irina Bojin
Russian Federation	Oleg Melnikov
	Viacheslav Kolotvin
Spain	Mercedes Araújo
United Kingdom	Tracey Garratty

**Accompanying the member delegations**

France	Bernard Chalet
Germany	Johannes von Ahlefeldt
Greece	Vassiliki Ioannidou
Italy	Pia Califano
	Stefania Perozzi
	Laura Tabladini
Poland	Kamil Mikliszanski
Russian Federation	Yury Gorlatch
	Alexander Voronin
	Olga Yakovleva
Spain	Araceli Quintano
United Kingdom	Scott Strain

**International Secretariat**

Silje Margrethe Andresen  
Andrius Avizius  
Andrea Cellino  
Paul Cook  
Srdjan Cvijic  
Sophie Debail  
Alex Dowling  
Filippo Gamba  
Christine Heffinck  
David Hobbs  
Andrew Hubner  
Raphaëlle Mathey  
Susan Millar  
Jacqueline Pforr  
Steffen Sachs  
Zachary Selden  
Chris Shaw  
Svitlana Svetova

**Minute Writer**

Steven Mark  
Suzanne Todd

**The meeting opened on Friday 27 May 2005 at 4.10 pm with Mr Pierre Lellouche, President of the NATO PA, in the Chair.**

**1. Opening of the proceedings**

**The President** welcomed delegates and thanked the Slovenian hosts. He reminded delegates that the purpose of the Committee was the exchange of ideas of mutual concern to build mutual understanding.

**2. Adoption of the Draft Agenda [103 NRPC 05 E]**

**The draft agenda [103 NRPC 05 E] was adopted.**

**3. Adoption of the Minutes of the meeting of the NATO-Russia Parliamentary Committee held in Venice, Italy on Friday 12 November 2004 [222 SCRF 04 E]**

**The Minutes [222 SCRF 04 E] were adopted.**

**The President** thanked Mr Forcieri and the Italian delegation for hosting the last annual session in Venice. He reminded the Committee of the issues that it had previously considered, including the Caucasus. Lord Clark had proposed that the Russian delegation should prepare a report on Russia's role in the South Caucasus. The President congratulated Mrs Sliska on the report that she had produced [085 NRPC 05 E] and invited her to take the floor.

**4. Presentation by Mrs Lubov Sliska, Head of the Duma Delegation of the Russian Federation, on *The Role of Russia in resolving regional security problems in the South Caucasus* [085 NRPC 05 E]**

**Mrs Sliska** delivered a prepared text which summarized the report.

**The President** thanked Mrs Sliska for providing this presentation. There were a number of frozen conflicts in the Caucasus region. However, there was a possibility of a settlement of the conflict in Nagorno-Karabakh. The economic situation in Azerbaijan was also of concern as was the continued presence of four Russian military bases in Georgia. However, negotiations were under way to withdraw these bases by 2008 and he invited Mrs Sliska to comment on this timetable. He also asked for views on the situations in South Ossetia and Abkhazia which featured in Mrs Sliska's report. He himself had heard Georgian concerns about illegal activities in these enclaves and about Russian involvement there. The stabilisation of the region was of considerable interest to Assembly and he called on colleagues to comment on the presentation and report by Mrs Sliska.

**Lord Clark (UK)** said the presentation was a helpful step in taking things forward. It was important to hold these meetings where all delegations had equal status, and he felt that they helped to build trust. He thanked Mrs Sliska for drawing the meeting's attention to the issues of drug and human trafficking as well as the fight against terrorism. He welcomed progress being made in negotiations between Russia and Azerbaijan to improve the refugee situation in Azerbaijan. This was especially important given that the country had borders with Iran and the Middle East.

He disagreed, however, with the suggestion that OSCE monitors should pull out of the Georgian-Russian border. It was important that international border measures should remain in place.

**Mr Barbuletiu** (RO) said that NATO already played a strong role in the South Caucasus region. NATO's support for defence and security control helped stabilise the region and was also beneficial to the Russian Federation. NATO played an important role in improving dialogue, cooperation and reform. The EAPC framework provided the opportunity to address such issues as frozen conflicts.

**Mr Olekas** (LT) agreed that it was a very interesting report, if a little optimistic. Georgia was a prosperous and democratic state and he called for more representation of Georgia's views. He recognised that Georgia was not a member of this committee but he considered it important to hear their point of view. He mentioned a recently adopted European Parliament resolution which referred to the Baltic States.

**Mrs Sliska** (RU) responded that talks were under way to withdraw Russian military bases from Georgia. Progress would take place during 2006 with withdrawals timetabled for 2008-2010. All that would remain would be an anti-terrorism centre. Such withdrawals would not impact upon the security of Lithuania.

**The President** asked Mrs Sliska to clarify the timetable for closing the military bases.

**Mrs Sliska** (RU) replied that the proposed date was the end of 2008.

**The President** asked whether the proposed anti-terrorism centre would imply the presence of Russian military forces on Georgian soil.

**Mrs Sliska** (RU) replied that the precise form of the centre would depend on the outcome of negotiations which were not yet completed. However, agreement in principle on a centre had already been reached.

**Mr van Gennip** (NL) said that the Committee on Economics and Security had been delighted by the recovery in the Russian economy, but asked Mrs Sliska whether perhaps her remarks about Azerbaijan had been a little too positive, given the unpredictable effect of the Baku-Ceyhan pipeline on Russian energy interests.

**Mr Bouvard** (FR) thanked Mrs Sliska for the quality of her presentation, but asked her to expand on the remarks in paragraph 49 about "the region's strategic balance", and about "forcing" the Russian Federation out of the region.

**Mr Meckel** (DE) asked Mrs Sliska for her assessment of the mood in the Russian Federation about negotiating with sovereign states in the South Caucasus. He wondered whether Russia actually accepted the sovereignty of the states of the South Caucasus. He also asked why the Russian Federation had no longer wanted the OSCE to maintain its border mission, and who the third party involved in the anti-terrorism centre was intended to be, given that Abkhazia, part of the sovereign State of Georgia, was presumably not intended. He suggested that perhaps the third party might be NATO.

**Mr Mikser** (EE) noted that the report referred to Abkhazia and South Ossetia as "sides" but in her oral presentation, Mrs Sliska had referred to them as "countries" which was clearly incorrect in terms of law. He asked how Mrs Sliska viewed the status of these two places, and in what way their status was different from Russian regions with separatist ambitions, such as Chechnya.

**Mrs Juknevičienė** (LT) asked Mrs Sliska what her view was on the return of the body of Aslan Maskhadov to his family and whether she could influence the authorities of the Russian Federation to ensure that it was returned.

**Mr Clapham** (UK) said that during its visit to the South Caucasus, the Committee on the Civil Dimension of Security had been told by the US Ambassador to Georgia that there had been terrorists in the Pankisi gorge. Noting that Mrs Sliska's paper was very positive in tone, and helped to identify areas where progress might be made, he asked Mrs Sliska to elaborate paragraph 11 of her document which said that it was very important that co-operation with NATO in the region be "transparent and predictable".

**Mr Kirsteins** (LV) asked Mrs Sliska how it would be possible to transform military bases into an anti-terrorism centre, and just how large it was envisaged that this centre would be. He also stressed that Russia should observe the commitments that it made at the Istanbul OSCE summit.

**Mr Forcieri** (IT) said that the report offered an exhaustive view of Russia's perception of this sensitive issue. He was, however, concerned by Mrs Sliska's view that NATO's participation in the situation might complicate the negotiations. He asked Mrs Sliska to explain how NATO might make the situation more difficult and what actions NATO should take to help the negotiating process.

**The President** summed up the discussion. He asked the Committee whether they would agree to ask Georgia, which was a NATO partner country, to present its views at a future meeting of the NATO-Russia Parliamentary Committee.

**Mr Ozerov** (RU) asked the President to clarify what subject Georgia would be asked to submit views on.

**The President** said it was important to discover Georgia's views on enclaves and the situation in Abkhazia and South Ossetia. Such clarification would aid the Committee's discussions on this issue.

**Mr Forcieri** (IT) said that members of the Committee could legitimately present papers. However, it would not be procedurally correct for an external country to present a point of view at the Committee. He suggested a rapporteur from the Committee could be asked to ascertain Georgia's point of view, but he objected to Georgia presenting its opinions directly to the Committee. This could set a precedent for other external countries to present opinions.

**The President** recognised this procedural point but emphasised that Georgia had a partnership agreement with NATO and the Ossetia-Georgian conflict was of concern to the security of the Alliance and the Russian Federation.

**Lord Clark** (UK) shared the views of Mr Forcieri. He suggested an alternative way forward would be for the Committee officers to meet privately with the Russian Delegation to discuss the issue.

**Mrs Jukneviene** (LT) said that she understood the sensitivities involved but if a third party was being discussed, it was important to have them present.

**Mrs Sliska** (RU) reminded colleagues that the purpose of the report had been to examine the role of the Russian Federation in resolving regional problems in the South Caucasus. Her report discussed the situation in Armenia and Azerbaijan as well as in Georgia. She was not against hearing the views of these countries but she agreed with Lord Clark that discussions should be held in a different locality and forum.

**The President** said it was imperative to find solutions for Abkhazia and Ossetia and an exchange of views with the relevant country would aid this process.

**The Secretary General** reminded the meeting that the NATO-Russia Parliamentary Committee comprised 27 equal countries. Therefore if the 27 countries agreed to a presentation of views from an external country this would be facilitated.

**Mrs Sliska** (RU) said that discussions could be held with Georgia, but she did not consider it appropriate for their views to be heard in the framework of the NATO-Russia Parliamentary Committee.

**The President** said dialogue was essential and agreed to take forward the discussion in order to hear Georgia's views at the autumn session, and that security in the South Caucasus would be addressed during the Assembly's Rose-Roth seminar in Yerevan later in the year. He invited Mrs Sliska to clarify Russia's view on the role of the OSCE in the South Caucasus; the status of Abkhazia and South Ossetia; US military bases in Azerbaijan; and the demilitarisation of the Caspian Sea region. He reiterated that everyone wished the Russian Federation to be a democratic and prosperous country.

**Mrs Sliska** (RU) confirmed that Russian military bases in Georgia would be withdrawn in 2006-2008. She said that Russia had ensured a peaceful transfer of power in Ajaria and that the Russian Federation played a key role in Abkhazia where 50 per cent of the population held Russian passports. Abkhazia had never voluntarily joined Georgia; it had been incorporated into Georgia with the formation of the Soviet Union.

She did not object to the role of the OSCE in working to settle conflicts in the South Caucasus, but its main task was to work on the problems between South Ossetia and Georgia, not to report on Russia. She also expressed concern about the presence of terrorists in the Pankisi Gorge. She welcomed progress on the oil pipeline through Azerbaijan which would provide economic prosperity for that country. The issue of the South Caucasus region was very delicate and it was important to pursue all diplomatic avenues and only take a decision on inviting NATO into that region as a last resort. She felt that NATO was seeking to "squeeze" Russia out of the region, and that the presence of the Alliance there could destabilize an already very delicate situation.

Regarding the proposed anti-terrorism centre in Georgia, this would be manned by experts and not military forces. She also pointed out that Russia had no military bases in Azerbaijan.

The Russian Federation had never displayed a neo-imperial status following the dissolution of the Soviet Union. It recognised the independence of the new states. In reply to Mrs Jukneviciene's remarks, she stated that Mr Maskhadov had been recognised as a criminal and under Russian law the bodies of eliminated terrorists were buried in secret locations known only to those who had eliminated them.

She concluded that the situation in the Caucasus region was very sensitive, as known to those who had been involved in working to resolve it, and she wanted to see something like KFOR in the South Caucasus.

**The President** thanked the Russian delegation for their enlightening contribution, which had led to a very interesting discussion. In his own personal opinion, the Committee had made useful progress in some areas, even if there was not agreement on everything. Proposals would be brought forward to make sure that this progress continued.

**The meeting was closed at 5.35 pm.**

---