

**NATO-RUSSIA  
PARLIAMENTARY  
COMMITTEE**

230 NRPC 06 E  
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**NATO Parliamentary Assembly**

**SUMMARY**

Meeting of the NATO-Russia Parliamentary Committee  
Hall 2000 D, Québec City Convention Centre, Québec City, Canada

Monday 13 November 2006

## ATTENDANCE LIST

**President** Pierre Claude Nolin (Canada)  
(Vice-President of NATO Parliamentary Assembly)

**Secretary General of the NATO PA** Simon Lunn

### MEMBERS AND ALTERNATE MEMBERS

Bulgaria	Yani Yanev
Canada	Leon Benoit
Estonia	Sven Mikser
Greece	<i>not represented</i>
Hungary	Vilmos Szabó
Iceland	Ossur Skarphedinsson
Latvia	Guntis Berzins
Lithuania	Rasa Juknevičienė
Luxembourg	Marc Angel
Netherlands	Jos van Gennip
	Bert Middel
Norway	Marit Nybakk
	Jan Petersen
Poland	Marian Pilka
Portugal	Rui Gomes da Silva
Romania	Mihail Lupoi
Russian Federation	Victor Zavarzin
	Victor A. Ozerov
Slovakia	Ján Kovarcik
Spain	Rafael Estrella
Turkey	Vahit Erdem
United States	Gordon Smith

### COMMITTEE CHAIRMEN

Civil Dimension of Security	Michael Clapham (United Kingdom)
Political	Markus Meckel (Germany)
Science and Technology	Michael Mates (United Kingdom)

### SECRETARIES OF DELEGATION

#### *Member Delegations*

Bulgaria	Borislav Penchev
Canada	Denis Robert
Denmark	Morten Roland Hansen
Estonia	Tanja Espe
France	Frédéric Taillet
Germany	Rainer Büscher
Hungary	Károly Tüzes
Latvia	Sandra Paura
Lithuania	Snieguole Ziukaite

Luxembourg  
Netherlands  
Poland  
Romania  
United Kingdom

Isabelle Barra  
Leo van Waasbergen  
Natalia Jaskiewicz  
Irina Bojin  
Libby Davidson

**Minute Writers**

Sarah Davies  
Christopher Stanton

**International Secretariat**

Isabelle Arcis  
Andrius Avizius  
Andrea Cellino  
Paul Cook  
Christine Heffinck  
David Hobbs  
Susan Millar  
Jacqueline Pforr  
Steffen Sachs  
Zachary Selden  
Svitlana Svyetova

1. The meeting opened on Monday 13 November 2006 at 1.01 pm with Mr **Pierre Claude Nolin** (Canada), Vice-President of the Assembly, in the Chair.

## I. OPENING OF THE PROCEEDINGS

2. The Vice-President said that the President of the Assembly, Mr Pierre Lellouche, would only be able to be at the session from Tuesday afternoon to Wednesday afternoon, and so the Vice-Presidents would share the responsibility of replacing him.
3. Adoption of the draft Agenda [223 NRPC 06 E]
4. The draft Agenda [223 NRPC 06 E] was adopted.
5. Adoption of the Minutes of the Meeting of the NATO-Russia Parliamentary Committee held in Paris, France, on Tuesday 30 May 2006 [132 NRPC 06 E]
6. The Minutes [132 NRPC 06 E] were adopted.

## II. NATO PA RUSSIAN PARLIAMENT COOPERATION: PROSPECTS FOR THE FUTURE [227 NRPC 06 E]

7. **The President** said that the Committee needed to take stock of relations between the Assembly and the Russian Parliament and agree future activities. He stressed that the meeting needed to reflect in its decisions the importance of the NATO-Russia relationship but to do so in a way that was realistic and manageable. He reminded participants that this relationship had been discussed by the Working Group on Assembly Reform, and recalled how relations had developed since 1990. In 1998, the Assembly had created a Joint Monitoring Group of 10 members on each side to monitor the NATO-Russia Founding Act and provide a parliamentary dimension to the NATO-Russia relationship. This Group had met in Brussels and Moscow on a regular basis and had been considered successful. When the NATO-Russia relationship was changed to a body of 27 equal members, the Assembly had adopted a parallel formula and although this had given rise to some interesting meetings it had drawbacks. It met during the already crowded plenary session and timings of the meeting were not always convenient. In addition, there was now a coordination meeting, held at the beginning of the plenary session, to be fitted in. The Working Group had therefore proposed reinstating a regular Moscow meeting for the NATO-Russia Parliamentary Committee (NRPC), possibly in the spring. In addition, it proposed a further meeting, along the lines of the former Joint Monitoring Group, for two days in Brussels. These would allow more time for focused discussions than at present. The Group also envisaged a mechanism for reporting activities to the autumn plenary sessions. There would be no effect on committee plans for visits to Russia. Mr Nolin opened these proposals for discussion, again reminding colleagues of the need to reflect the importance of the relationship in a realistic way.
8. **Mr Zavarzin** (RU) said that the relationship with NATO received close attention in the two chambers of his parliament. It was an important one for the security both of Russia and the wider European area and external security issues were important to his constituents. On the whole he had been pleased with the relationship between the Assembly and the Russian Parliament. A real partnership was developing which was in the interests of both. The quality of the political work had improved, with constructive discussions of issues such as Afghanistan, the Caucasus and Iran. On these subjects all were trying to find common ground. At the governmental level practical

cooperation and information exchange, for example, on counter-terrorism, had taken place. The parliamentary dimension of this cooperation gave it predictability and built confidence.

9. Russia wanted to make a positive contribution. He and his colleagues agreed that it was necessary to improve the quality of cooperation but the proposals had some drawbacks. He believed that an equal basis of cooperation was a fundamental point. The proposals looked like a return to the previous 19:1 formula. He wanted more dynamic cooperation with each country represented and expressing its own view, not a group of 10 members coming to Russia to bring a consolidated view of the Assembly. He accepted, however, the practical problems of meeting during plenary sessions. He wanted a way of discussing matters between delegations before the meetings in order to save time, perhaps with earlier circulation of reports and the agenda. Meetings between sessions could be organised, but these should be held in different countries, rather than solely in Russia. The experience of other organisations could be used in order to formulate ways of using time more efficiently. A few hours spent on productive negotiations were better than days spent on trips. Moreover, the fact that this meeting was taking place proved that time could be found during autumn sessions for the Committee to meet. He noted the suggestion to have a meeting with the "at 27" format in Russia. He confirmed that the Russian Delegation was willing to consider this but thought it should be a supplement to existing arrangements rather than a substitute.

10. Mr Zavarzin concluded by stating that the proposals before the Committee should not be agreed as they stood. He hoped that further dialogue could ensure a new, more efficient programme of meetings.

11. **Mr Meckel** (DE) noted Russia's status within the Assembly as an Associate Delegation. This gave the Russian Delegation important access and powers, for example, to table amendments. The question which he thought should be answered was what specific purpose the NRPC had. It should not duplicate the work or responsibility of other bodies. The Committee should be discussing key topics relating to the situation in Russia or specific matters proposed by Russian colleagues. It was important to enable other parts of Russian civil society to participate in this dialogue. He agreed with Mr Zavarzin that further discussion on the Working Group's proposals was necessary. Turning to format, he thought the current situation was broadly acceptable but noted that the discussion on substance was closely related to decisions on structure.

12. **Mr Smith** (US) began by saying that he deeply respected the views of Russian colleagues. However, he was concerned that many of the ancient tensions between Russia and its neighbours were still relevant. There was a certain amount of expansion fatigue, but NATO was a wonderful vehicle for spreading common values, and the discussions between Russia and NATO colleagues were becoming increasingly important.

13. It was imperative that Russia did all it could in relation to Iran; no country working within NATO had more influence there. Iran was the chief international sponsor of terrorism in the world today and was on a fast course to the production of fissile material which would instantly encourage nuclear proliferation in the Middle East. The United States could not be the only backstop here. Russia was needed; its might and influence should be used to stem these problems.

14. **The President** reminded the Committee that the matter in hand was a discussion of the future structure of NRPC meetings. He noted that all delegations had been consulted by the Working Group and that many had commented that the current format was unsatisfactory. It was possible to go back to the drawing board but he took the view that the five proposals set out in the report were reasonable.

15. **Mr Lunn** said that a distinction must be drawn between NATO-Russia coordination at the executive level and at the interparliamentary level. NATO was an organisation where people met

every day and official workshops could take place on a weekly basis. This was very different from the interparliamentary situation where the number of meetings was limited by the time of parliamentarians. He noted that Mr Zavarzin had spoken of his experience with past coordination arrangements within the NATO-Russia Council and the Permanent Joint Council. The NATO Parliamentary equivalent to the Permanent Joint Council, the Joint Monitoring Group, had not worked in the same way. There was never an effort on the NATO side to agree a common position in advance of meetings with the Russian delegates. The Joint Monitoring Group had not operated on the basis of "them and us" but had met as a genuine 'joint' group considering issues collectively as parliamentarians monitoring the executive. The Working Group on Assembly Reform had thought it worth recreating a body of equal participants on the lines of the old Joint Monitoring Group because that format had permitted extensive in-depth dialogue. The problem with the 27 format was that there was an inevitable tendency to wait for the Russian delegation's contribution. He concluded that any proposals would have to be acceptable to the Russian delegation.

16. **Mr Ozerov** (RU) recalled that there had been a discussion in Paris about the unsatisfactory quality of work in the NRPC. Something new was needed but there was no need to start from scratch. He agreed with Mr Meckel that discussions had to be substantive and to use the two hours available more productively. He noted that the Assembly's committees were active and there were various other meetings during the year. It was important that the dialogue did not only focus on the internal situation in Russia: Iran, for example, could be a focus at the next meeting. He also wanted to hear the views of the next President of the Assembly. He supported increasing the quality and substance of work but advised colleagues not to try something completely new.

17. **Mr Estrella** (ES) pointed out that members had spent 40 minutes discussing purely procedural matters and had not addressed political issues. The objective had to be to interact and understand each other better and to try to communicate the importance of the Assembly in members' own political environments. Everyone wanted to develop ever closer cooperation and in this the Assembly was sometimes ahead of members' governments. In energy security, for example, Russia had a different angle to other members, but Russia had an important contribution to make. He argued that if there was cooperation with Russia in all the Assembly committees and in the plenary then this sort of meeting was not necessary. NATO PA needed to be represented at meetings in Russia and the Russians needed to play a part at the Assembly.

18. **Mr van Gennip** (NL) noted that there was a broad consensus for developing dialogue between Russia and the NATO PA and a general dissatisfaction with the present format. He agreed with Mr Meckel that further discussion in the Working Group was needed to consider fully the points of view of Russian delegates and other members including the new President. He agreed with those who wondered what was left to discuss in this format given Russian involvement in the Committees.

19. **The President** asked the Deputy Secretary General what was planned for the next 12 months if things carried on as they were now.

20. **Mr Hobbs** (Deputy Secretary General) said that 40 meetings were planned in 2007. This was a big burden on parliamentarians' time. There was little scope to add more meetings because clashes would be inevitable. For this reason a coordination meeting had been added at this session but that in turn put extra pressure on the time available for the NATO-Russia meeting. The sessions in Madeira and in Reykjavik had been planned on the basis of the present format. Portugal planned to begin the session with a plenary meeting which would mean a very busy day for those attending. In Iceland, the inclusion of an NRPC meeting would probably mean that delegates wanting to attend would need to arrive on Thursday rather than Friday. He concluded by stressing that the meeting could be included in the programme if delegates wished to make the time available.

21. **The President** suggested a compromise, which was to have a meeting in Russia once a year and one meeting as part of the annual session.

22. **Mr Zavarzin** (RU) thanked colleagues for a productive dialogue. He reiterated that in his view the existing framework was a massive improvement on what had gone before. Russia wanted to promote world-wide security on an equal basis. He repeated his previous points that further work could be done to improve the productivity of meetings by sending out reports in advance. Turning to the proposal by the President, he did not understand why a meeting would have to be held in Russia annually, when it could be held in different countries. He therefore did not support the President's proposal. He concluded by confirming that the current framework should continue. He offered to give the Secretariat written proposals for improving the way work was done.

23. **Mr Smith** (US) begged the indulgence of the Committee for his earlier comments on policy; he was being called back to Washington for an important vote and would not be able to attend later meetings. In his view, the format of the meeting was immaterial as long as a constructive dialogue continued. He urged the Committee not to add meetings but add meaning to the discussions.

24. **The President** noted that many delegations had wished to change the structure of NRPC meetings but continued that there was no point in forcing changes through if there were concerns among the Russian delegation. He suggested that the current format be maintained but asked the Secretariat to consider for the next 12 months what could be done to make the NRPC's work more effective. He reminded the Committee that the key reference point remained the importance of the relationship between NATO and Russia.

25. **The meeting was closed at 2.08 pm.**

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