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Policy Brief

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I. INTRODUCTION

1. The recent NATO Summit in Vilnius took place at a critical moment for Allied security as well as international peace and stability, as “[p]eace in the Euro-Atlantic area has been shattered”, as the Summit Communiqué underlines.¹ The Summit **demonstrated the Alliance’s “enduring transatlantic bond, unity, cohesion, and solidarity”** and was a **“milestone in strengthening [NATO]”**. Finland participated for the first time as NATO’s 31st member.

2. The Summit followed up on the transformative decisions taken at the 2022 NATO Madrid Summit, where leaders adopted [NATO’s new Strategic Concept](#). In Vilnius, **Allied leaders took further important steps** to demonstrate support for Ukraine and reinforce the Alliance. **The two main achievements were:**

- **the expansion of political and practical support to Ukraine**
- **the strengthening of NATO’s deterrence and defence**

3. The issue of **Sweden’s accession to NATO** was an important topic ahead of the Summit, culminating with an agreement on Monday 10 July between President Erdogan, Swedish Prime Minister Kristersson and the NATO Secretary General. The agreement reached on several points meant that Türkiye committed to moving Sweden’s accession process forward in its parliament.

4. The Summit further highlighted the importance of **strengthening dialogue and cooperation with key partners to address global challenges and defend the international rules-based order**. A particular focus was put on the **Indo-Pacific** as Heads of State and Government from NATO’s four partners in the region joined Allies and leaders of the European Union (EU) for a dedicated session during the Summit.

5. **Some of the other key topics in Vilnius included:**

- **Reaffirming the commitment to protecting shared democratic values**
- **Taking a strong stance on Russia’s threat**
- **Continuing the fight against terrorism in all its forms and manifestations**
- **Addressing challenges in the South**
- **Rising to China’s challenge**
- **Strategic stability, arms control, disarmament and non-proliferation**
- **Reinforcing Allied resilience**
- **Emerging and disruptive technologies**
- **Tackling cyber challenges**
- **Understanding and adapting to climate change**
- **Intensifying NATO-EU relations**
- **Challenges and opportunities in the Western Balkans**
- **Enhancing the focus on the Black Sea region**
- **Supporting Vulnerable partners**

6. As per tradition, the [NATO PA President, Joëlle Garriaud-Maylam](#) (France), **addressed the first meeting of the North Atlantic Council at Heads of State and Government level** in Allies-only format on 11 July (read [the full speech](#)). She stressed three key Assembly recommendations:

- **to increase both practical and political support for Ukraine;**

¹ Unless otherwise noted, all quotes refer to the [Summit Communiqué](#).

- to promptly implement all aspects of NATO's enhanced deterrence and defence posture and agree an ambitious target for future defence spending; and
- to operationalise NATO's recommitment to shared democratic values, notably by establishing a Democratic Resilience Centre at NATO HQ.

7. The President was accompanied by a delegation from the Bureau including three of the five Vice-Presidents - [Zaida Cantera](#) (Spain), [Kevan Jones](#) (UK) and [Nicu Falcoi](#) (Romania) - and Treasurer [Wolfgang Hellmich](#) (Germany). The delegation's participation in the Summit and the [NATO Public Forum](#), running in parallel, was extensive (see below).

8. Ahead of the Vilnius Summit, the Assembly had detailed its priorities in **two declarations** (adopted at the Spring Session in Luxembourg): Declaration 481 on [NATO adaptation for a new strategic era](#), presented by Vice-President [Linda Sanchez](#) (United States), and Declaration 482 on [support for Ukraine](#), presented by Vice-President [Michał Szczerba](#) (Poland).

9. As this policy brief will illustrate, **the decisions taken at the Summit** – which are outlined in a long [90-paragraph Communiqué](#) - and those agreed in the margins are generally in line with Assembly recommendations.

II. PROGRAMME

10. During the two-day [programme](#), **two meetings of the North Atlantic Council took place at the level of Heads of State and Government**. The first of these was held in a format of Allies and invitee Sweden. The second was held with Allies, Sweden, the four Indo-Pacific Partners and the European Union (EU). **Foreign and Defence Ministers also held separate NAC meetings**.

11. **The inaugural meeting of the new [NATO-Ukraine Council](#)** was held on the second day, at the level of Heads of State and Government.

12. After the conclusion of the NATO Summit, **the leaders of the Group of Seven (G7) and President Zelenskyy also signed a [Joint Declaration of Support for Ukraine](#)**.

13. As in previous years, a high-level public conference – [the NATO Public Forum](#) – was held in parallel to the Summit. The programme featured addresses by a range of Heads of State, Ministers and NATO top officials.

III. KEY MESSAGES IN THE NATO PA PRESIDENT'S ADDRESS AND NATO PA PARTICIPATION IN OTHER SUMMIT-RELATED EVENTS

14. In her [address to the Summit](#), the NATO PA President called on NATO's Heads of State and Government **to accelerate NATO's ongoing adaptation – anchored in the Alliance's founding values – and to firmly reiterate Allies' resolute support for Ukraine**.

15. **The President praised NATO's ongoing in-depth adaptation**, which “rises to the challenge of the electroshock of Russia's aggression against Ukraine”. **However, “NATO's adaptation will not be complete until we have effectively given substance to the Alliance's commitment, as enshrined in its founding treaty and now in the Strategic Concept, to defend democratic values.”** She therefore urged leaders to endorse the Assembly's proposal for the establishment of a **Centre for Democratic Resilience at NATO Headquarters**.

16. The President underlined that **"this Summit should strongly reaffirm that we will stand with Ukraine for as long as it takes."** She added that **"we must go further and chart a clear path which will lead Ukraine towards NATO membership. Ukraine's place is here, amongst us. Until then, we must provide firm security guarantees to Ukraine"**.

17. The President also reiterated the Assembly's support for the strengthening of NATO's capabilities and deterrence and defence posture, particularly on the eastern flank: **"This Summit must also demonstrate through robust commitments our unwavering determination to defend every inch of NATO territory"**. She also called for **"a new, ambitious commitment on defence spending, with 2% of GDP as a minimum threshold, which should be exceeded."**

18. She moreover **welcomed the agreement reached the previous day on Sweden's accession** and called for swift ratification by the Turkish and Hungarian parliaments.

19. In addition to the President's address, the NATO PA delegation was involved in a range of other Summit-related events. On the first evening, **the NATO PA President attended the dinner for the Heads of State and Government, and the other members of the Bureau attended the dinner for the Foreign and Defence Ministers.** On the second day, **a high-level women's breakfast** was organised with ministers and invited guests, **including the NATO PA President.**

20. President Garriaud-Maylam also presented the Assembly's priorities during **a panel of the [NATO Public Forum](#) on parliamentarians and grassroots support for NATO**, where she joined Viktorija Čmilytė-Nielsen, Speaker of the Seimas of the Republic of Lithuania, and US Senators Jeanne Shaheen and Thom Tillis.

21. In addition to informal exchanges, the delegation also had bilateral meetings with **Klaus Iohannis, President of Romania**, and **Boris Pistorius, Minister of Defence of Germany.** Moreover, the delegation engaged with **Audronius Azubalis, Head of the Lithuanian Delegation**, and **Yehor Cherniev, Head of the Ukrainian Delegation.**

IV. KEY OUTCOMES OF THE SUMMIT

1. Expanding political and practical support to Ukraine

22. Once again, Allied Heads of State and Government **demonstrated their "unwavering solidarity"** with Ukraine and **stepped-up support through a new substantial package of expanded political and practical support** including **three key elements: a new multiyear assistance programme, a new NATO-Ukraine Council and a consolidated path towards Ukraine's membership** in NATO.

23. **Several Allies also announced further, major increases in military support** ahead of or during the Summit, including long-range cruise missiles, munitions, armoured vehicles and advanced air defence systems. **Moreover, eleven Allies² pledged to start training Ukrainian pilots on F-16 aircraft soon**, first in Denmark and then in a new centre in Romania.

24. After the conclusion of the NATO Summit, **the leaders of the Group of Seven (G7) and President Zelenskyy signed a Joint Declaration of Support for Ukraine.** Importantly, they notably launched negotiations to formalise support through bilateral security commitments and arrangements.

² Belgium, Canada, Denmark Luxembourg, the Netherlands, Norway, Poland, Portugal, Romania, Sweden and the UK.

Building out the Comprehensive Assistance Package

25. Allies agreed to **further develop the Comprehensive Assistance Package (CAP)**, which provides non-lethal assistance to Ukraine. **The CAP will now be developed into a multi-year programme, funded “in a sustained and predictable way”** by Allies and partners willing to contribute. Building out the CAP **“will help rebuild the Ukrainian security and defence sector and transition Ukraine towards full interoperability with NATO”**, thus enhancing Ukraine’s deterrence and defence over the short, medium and long term.

26. **This Summit decision is fully in line with NATO PA recommendations**, notably the calls to strengthen the CAP and putting together a strategic multi-year NATO assistance programme.

NATO-Ukraine Council

27. **Allies and Ukraine established the NATO-Ukraine Council** to supplant the NATO-Ukraine Commission (formed in 1997). **The Council’s goal is to “advance political dialogue, engagement, cooperation, and Ukraine’s Euro-Atlantic aspirations for membership in NATO”**. The Council allows for **joint consultations, decision-making and activities**, including sub-committees. Any Ally or Ukraine can request crisis consultations.³ The Council can meet at different political or military levels.

28. The new Council marks **“a significant step to move Ukraine closer to NATO”**, according to the NATO Secretary General. In contrast to the previous Commission, all Allies and Ukraine sit around the table as equals. The Council is thus **“a much stronger, much more important political entity than to just have a partnership”**, he stressed, calling it **“an instrument of integration”** rather than an **“instrument of participation”**.

29. **On the second day of the Summit, the Council met for the first time**, gathering all Allied leaders, the Swedish Prime Minister and Ukrainian President Zelenskyy. After joining the 2022 NATO Madrid Summit by video link, this was his first-ever in-person participation in a NATO Summit since being elected President.

30. While the Assembly did not specifically call for such a new Council, **the decision is very much in line with the Assembly’s wishes** to send **“a clear political signal to Ukraine”** and increase political support for Kyiv.

Ukraine’s membership path

31. Addressing Ukraine’s future in NATO, Allied leaders clearly spelled out a number of key points:

- As any sovereign and independent nation, **Ukraine has the right to choose its own security arrangements.**
- **Ukraine’s future is in NATO**, and **it will become a member of NATO**, as already agreed at the 2008 NATO Summit in Bucharest.
- Allies felt that **Ukraine has made sufficient enough strides to obviate the need for a Membership Action Plan** ahead of its membership. This was otherwise a key part of the 2008 decision.
- **Allies committed to continue to bring Ukraine closer to NATO membership**, including on interoperability and further necessary democratic and defence and security

³ On 26 July 2023, Ukraine called the [second Council meeting](#) for crisis consultations following Russia’s unilateral termination of the Black Sea Grain Initiative.

sector reforms. NATO Foreign Ministers will regularly assess progress, based on Ukraine's adapted Annual National Programme.

- **Allied leaders lastly noted that they would “be in a position to extend an invitation to Ukraine to join the Alliance when Allies agree and conditions are met”.** This marks the first time a Summit Communiqué includes a reference to a future invitation and outlines two elements which would allow such an invitation to be extended.

32. **The decisions and statements on Ukraine's membership path are broadly in line with the Assembly's recommendations to strengthen Ukraine's membership path and agree on the next significant steps towards membership.**

G7 Joint Declaration of Support for Ukraine

33. On 12 July, the G7 leaders and President Zelenskyy signed a **Joint Declaration of Support for Ukraine**.⁴ The Declaration launched negotiations to formalise support through **“specific, bilateral, long-term security commitments and arrangements”**.

34. These commitments and arrangements will have three aims:

- **make sure Ukraine has sustainable forces to defend itself now and deter any future Russian aggression** by providing security assistance and modern military equipment, supporting the defence industry, conducting training and exercises, increasing intelligence sharing and cooperation and aiding cyber, security and resilience efforts;
- **strengthen Ukraine's economic stability and resilience and enable future prosperity**, including through reconstruction and recovery efforts; and
- **provide technical and financial support for urgent needs as well as Ukraine's reform agenda.**

35. **In case of a future Russian armed attack**, the G7 leaders stated their intention **“to immediately consult with Ukraine”** on appropriate steps. They would also intend to **supply “swift and sustained security assistance, modern military equipment [...], and economic assistance, to impose economic and other costs on Russia, and to consult with Ukraine on its needs”**. The G7 countries would also work with the country **“on an enhanced package of security commitments and arrangements in case of future aggression”**.

36. In turn, **Ukraine committed to “contributing positively to partner security and to strengthen transparency and accountability measures”** on assistance it receives and to **continue its wide-ranging reform agenda**, including in the rule-of-law, defence and security sectors.

37. **The EU and its member states “stand ready to contribute” and will soon consider how to do so.** Moreover, **other nations can join this Declaration at any time.**

38. **In declaration 482, the NATO PA had recommended that Allied leaders would “highlight [...] the need for firm future security guarantees for Ukraine until acquiring NATO membership”**. The G7 declaration, signed by six Allies, is a significant step which opens for a broader network of bilateral commitments and arrangements in support of Ukraine.

39. **Other commitments in the G7 Declaration are also generally in line with NATO PA recommendations**, including on short- and long-term humanitarian, financial and material assistance and on reconstruction and aid.

⁴ The G7 consists of six Allies (Canada, France, Germany, Italy, the UK and the United States), NATO partner Japan and the EU (a 'non-enumerated' member).

Other Ukraine-related issues

40. Allied leaders made clear that **“Russia bears full responsibility”** for the aggression against Ukraine and **“must be held fully accountable”**, with **no impunity** for war crimes and other atrocities.

41. **Belarus and Iran, the Communiqué notes, “must end their complicity with Russia and return to compliance with international law.”** Leaders also **urged China “to play a constructive role”**, condemn the war, abstain from supporting Moscow and from amplifying its false narratives, adhere to the purposes and principles of the UN Charter as well as “act responsibly and refrain from providing any lethal aid to Russia”.

42. **G7 leaders generally echoed these sentiments but went further, given the G7’s different mandate.** They underlined that Russian **sovereign assets would “remain immobilized** until Russia pays for the damage it has caused to Ukraine”. They recognised that an **international mechanism for reparation of damages, loss or injury** is necessary and expressed their readiness to explore options. They also made clear that **costs from sanctions, export controls and other measures must continue to increase.** They would moreover continue **“supporting efforts to hold to account those responsible** for war crimes and other international crimes”, including by aiding “efforts of international mechanisms, such as the International Criminal Court”.

43. **Allies also welcomed and supported President Zelenskyy’s commitment in setting out the principles for “a comprehensive, just, and lasting peace” through his Peace Formula.**

44. **These outcomes are in line with the NATO PA recommendations,** notably on holding accountable the Russian regime, its co-aggressors in the Belarusian regime and other supporters, including through national and international courts; on supporting reparation and compensation mechanisms and considering the use of frozen Russian assets; on keeping up the pressure of sanctions; and on support Ukraine’s efforts to promote its plan for a comprehensive, just and sustainable peace.

2. Strengthening NATO’s deterrence and defence

45. In Vilnius, Allies reaffirmed that **“[d]eterrence and defence are at the heart of the Alliance**, underpinned by Article 5 of the Washington Treaty and an enduring transatlantic bond.”. They committed to **“modernising NATO for a new era of collective defence.”** Consequently, Allies took **important decisions to strengthen NATO’s deterrence and defence.** Notably, they agreed on the **“most detailed and robust defence plans since the Cold War”** and **reinforced their “commitment to defence investment”**, as the NATO Secretary General noted.

Stepping up NATO’s deterrence and defence posture in all domains

46. Notably, Allied leaders agreed on or reaffirmed **six decisions and measures to further enhance NATO’s deterrence and defence posture in all domains:**

1. **Three regional defence plans have been put into place** to complement NATO’s existing strategic and domain-specific plans. These Regional Plans outline how NATO forces would defend different areas of the Alliance. **Regional Plan - High North and the Atlantic** is led by Joint Force Command (JFC) Norfolk; **Regional Plan Central** (from Baltic to the Alps) by JFC Brunssum; and **Regional Plan – South-East** (from the Mediterranean Sea to the Black Sea) by JFC Naples. Forces will now be able to train how

to execute them. This new family of strategic, domain-specific and regional plans “significantly improve our ability and readiness to deter and defend against any threats”.

2. **NATO’s defence plans “are the main driver for the organization” of Allied forces and their specific military requirements.** The new NATO Force Model is already delivering, the Communiqué notes, and leaders also agreed to set up “a **new multinational and multi-domain Allied Reaction Force**” to “provide more options to respond swiftly to threats and crises in all directions”.
3. **NATO’s command and control will be strengthened** to enable greater agility, resilience and capacity to execute Allied plans.
4. Leaders also reaffirmed decisions “to put in place **additional robust in-place combat-ready forces on NATO’s Eastern Flank**, to be scaled up from the existing battlegroups to brigade-size units where and when required”.⁵
5. **The readiness, preparedness and interoperability of NATO’s Integrated Air and Missile Defence will be further improved**, especially through regular training and rotational presence of systems and capabilities in SACEUR’s Area of Responsibility.
6. **Work on multi-domain operations, enabled by NATO’s Digital Transformation, will continue.** To that end, Allies adopted a new **Digital Transformation Implementation Strategy**.

47. Allies took **further decisions and made commitments** to strengthen NATO’s deterrence and defence posture, including to:

- **significantly increase stockpiles of a number of battle-decisive munitions;**
- **reinforce training and exercises which simulate conventional and, in certain cases, a nuclear dimension of crises and conflicts;**
- **make progress on fuel supply distribution arrangements; and**
- **fully develop NATO Ballistic Missile Defence.**

48. **Allies also reaffirmed the fundamentals of NATO’s nuclear deterrence**, noting that “the fundamental purpose of NATO’s nuclear capability is to preserve peace, prevent coercion and deter aggression. Nuclear weapons are unique. As long as nuclear weapons exist, NATO will remain a nuclear alliance.” Allies recommitted to “tak[ing] all necessary steps to ensure the credibility, effectiveness, safety and security of the nuclear deterrent mission”. They also affirmed that “NATO is ready and able to deter aggression and manage escalation risks in a crisis that has a nuclear dimension.”

49. **NATO’s deterrence and defence decisions correspond very well to the Assembly’s call** “to accelerate the full implementation of the new baseline for NATO’s enhanced deterrence and defence posture” (Declaration 481) and related recommendations.

A new defence investment commitment

50. Allies also **took important decisions on defence investment** (see here for the [latest figures](#)).

- Leaders “[made] an **enduring commitment to invest at least 2% of our Gross Domestic Product (GDP) annually on defence**”. This commitment supplants the vow to “aim to move towards the 2% guideline” until 2024, under the 2014 Defence Investment Pledge. The Communiqué also affirms that, **often, expenditure beyond 2% of GDP will be necessary**, both to make up current shortfalls and to meet other military requirements.

⁵ Ahead of the Summit, Germany pledged to upgrade its presence in Lithuania to a robust brigade of about 4,000 (up from a reinforced brigade of 1,000). On 10 July, Canada pledged to more than double its troop deployment in Latvia (from c. 800 to c. 2,000). Both countries each lead a battlegroup under NATO’s enhanced Forward Presence in Lithuania and Latvia respectively.

- They also stepped up their commitment on major equipment investments, including related Research and Development. **Allies have now committed to invest at least 20% of total defence expenditures on major equipment**, instead of merely aiming to do so under the 2014 Pledge.
- They also committed “to **contribute the necessary forces, capabilities and resources to the full range of NATO operations, missions and activities**”.

51. **The new defence investment commitment is fully in line with the NATO PA’s recommendation** “to agree new defence spending and investment commitments beyond 2024, exceeding a minimum investment level of 2% of GDP for defence” (Declaration 481).

A new Defence Production Action Plan

52. To deliver on strengthening defence and deterrence, **a strong, capable and resilient defence industry is needed**. Allies therefore endorsed **a new Defence Production Action Plan to leverage NATO’s “role as a convener, standard-setter, requirement setter and aggregator, and delivery enabler to promote sustainable defence industrial capacity”**. Improving interoperability and materiel standardisation will be critical. Moreover, the plan enhances visibility of the Allied defence industry, increases aggregation of demand, promotes cooperation and more agile procurement as well as increases transparency vis-à-vis industry. The Communiqué also notes that **intra-Alliance obstacles to defence trade and investment should be reduced and eliminated**.

53. The new Defence Production Action Plan and other defence industry efforts outlined in the Communiqué **correspond very well with the Assembly’s recommendations** to “adopt a NATO defence industrial pledge” and “continue to invest in innovation and maintain NATO’s technological edge” (Declaration 481).

3. Accelerating Sweden’s accession to NATO

54. On the eve of the Summit, **Turkish President Erdogan, Swedish Prime Minister Kristersson and the NATO Secretary General reached an agreement** on several points, which meant that Türkiye committed to send the accession protocol to the Turkish parliament and work closely with it to ensure ratification:

- Recognising that counter-terrorism cooperation is a long-term effort, **Sweden and Türkiye will continue their cooperation beyond the moment Sweden will join NATO**. For one, cooperation will continue **under the existing Trilateral Permanent Joint Mechanism** (which includes Finland). In addition, **a new bilateral Security Compact** will be set up, under which ministers will meet annually and working groups can be created. Sweden has committed to present a counter-terrorism roadmap at the Compact’s first meeting.
- **The NATO Secretary General** reaffirmed NATO’s commitment to its counter-terrorism efforts and **announced the establishment of a new position of Special Coordinator for Counter-Terrorism**.
- All three parties underlined that “there should be **no restrictions, barriers or sanctions to defence trade and investment among Allies**” and committed to strive to eliminate such obstacles.
- The two countries also agreed to **increase economic cooperation** through the recently established Türkiye-Sweden Joint Economic and Trade Committee.
- **Sweden, moreover, committed to actively support efforts to reinvigorate Türkiye’s EU accession process**.

- The agreement also recognises that **Türkiye will move on Sweden’s ratification, “given the imperatives of the deterrence and defence of the Euro-Atlantic area”.**

55. Allied leaders welcomed this agreement and noted that they “look[ed] forward to welcoming Sweden as a full member of the Alliance”. The NATO President also [welcomed](#) the agreement. She has since **written to the Heads of the Hungarian and Turkish delegations to the NATO PA to support the prompt scheduling of relevant parliamentary procedures**, in line with the Assembly’s recommendation “to finalise as soon as possible the ratification of Sweden’s accession” (Declaration 481).

4. **Highlighting partnerships with the Indo-Pacific and the EU to address global challenges**

56. On the Summit’s second day, **Allies and invitee Sweden met with the Alliance’s four Indo-Pacific partners (Australia, Japan, New Zealand and the Republic of Korea) and the European Union.** The NATO Secretary General stressed that “Beijing’s global assertiveness and Moscow’s war against Ukraine require even closer coordination between NATO, the EU and our Indo-Pacific partners” and that Allies and these partners, “will work even more closely together, standing strong for the rules-based international order”.

57. The NATO Secretary General further stressed that “NATO is a regional Alliance between Europe and North America”, but “[w]hat happens in the Euro-Atlantic region matters for the Indo-Pacific, and what happens in the Indo-Pacific matters to the Euro-Atlantic.”

58. The Communiqué makes clear **the Indo-Pacific region is important for the Alliance. Allies committed to enhance dialogue and cooperation with these partners**, including through individual tailored partnership programmes. In public remarks, **the NATO Secretary General also confirmed that the issue of a NATO liaison office in Japan “will be considered in the future”.**

59. **This continued deepening of the Indo-Pacific partnerships and of the cooperation with them and with the EU to address common challenges are fully in line with the Assembly’s recommendation** “to further develop political and practical cooperation with other like-minded partners, including Indo-Pacific democracies, to defend the rules-based order and address common challenges” (Declaration 481).

5. **Reaffirming the commitment to protecting shared democratic values**

60. The Communiqué opens with a declaration that Allied leaders are **“bound by shared values of individual liberty, human rights, democracy, and the rule of law”.**

61. **Allies did not take any specific steps to follow up on this issue**, despite the Assembly’s calls to operationalise the commitments made in the Strategic Concept. However, they noted that **resilience** is not only “essential basis for credible deterrence and defence and the effective fulfilment of the Alliance’s core tasks” but also **“vital in our efforts to safeguard our societies, our populations and our shared values”.** The Communiqué further notes that **“Allies should also promote societal resilience”.** Moreover, it stresses that Allies remain **united in defending our open and democratic societies” against hybrid threats and challenges**, including through further comprehensive preventive and response options.

62. Reflecting how deeply anchored the commitment to shared democratic values is in NATO’s approach to the challenges and threats it is confronted with, statements on their importance are found throughout the Communiqué:

- Leaders note that **Ukraine's defence against Russia's war** is not only in defence of the nation and land, but also in the defence of values shared between Ukraine and the Alliance.
- **Beijing's stated ambitions and coercive policies** not only challenge Allied interests and security but also its values. In its relations with China, Allies vow to "stand up for our shared values and the rules-based international order".
- Cooperation in the **Western Balkans** and countries' Euro-Atlantic integration are vitally dependent on "[d]emocratic values, the rule of law, domestic reforms, and good neighbourly relations".
- Allies put a particular emphasis on strengthening **NATO partnerships** with those which "share the Alliance's values and interest in upholding the rules-based international order".
- Efforts on and approach to **emerging disruptive technologies** is founded in Allies' "democratic values and human rights".

63. **All of the above statements and commitments, in conjunction with the 2022 Strategic Concept, provide a sound basis for the Assembly to continue to advocate that NATO operationalises the commitment to shared democratic values, including through the establishment of a Centre for Democratic Resilience at NATO HQ.**

6. Taking a strong stance on Russia's threat

64. The Summit Communiqué reiterates that **Russia remains "the most significant and direct threat to Allies' security and to peace and stability in the Euro-Atlantic area"**.

65. Addressing Russia's war against Ukraine, leaders called upon Russia to **"immediately stop this illegal war of aggression, cease its use of force against Ukraine, and completely and unconditionally withdraw** all of its forces and equipment from the territory of Ukraine within its internationally recognised borders, extending to its territorial waters".

66. However, **Russia's threat to the Alliance goes beyond** the impact of its war. Moscow **continues its military build-up**, including its nuclear modernisation, has **increased its presence in areas neighbouring NATO territory, continues to hold large-scale no-notice and snap exercises, intensifies its hybrid operations and deepens its military integration with Belarus**, including with an announced intention to deploy nuclear weapons in the country.

67. On this basis, **Allied leaders made clear they cannot consider Russia a partner and that any changes in NATO-Russia relations must be predicated on stopping its aggressive behaviour and fully complying with international law.** Still, the Alliance remains **willing to have open channels** to Moscow for risk management and mitigation.

68. **The Allied stance on Russia reflects NATO PA recommendations**, notably the call "to operationalise a new approach to relations with Russia based on the Strategic Concept's characterisation of Russia as the 'most significant and direct threat to Allies' security' (Declaration 482).

7. Continuing the fight against terrorism in all its forms and manifestations

69. The communiqué reaffirms that "[c]ounterterrorism in all its forms and manifestations is essential to our collective defence. **NATO's role in the fight against terrorism contributes to all three core tasks of the Alliance** and is integral to the Alliance's 360-degree approach to deterrence and defence."

70. As a demonstration that Allies **fight the threat of terrorism “with determination, resolve, and in solidarity”**, leaders tasked the NAC to update the Policy Guidelines and Action Plan on Counter-Terrorism as well as to **reassess in which areas NATO can further provide civil-military assistance to partners**.

71. As part of the agreement between Sweden, Türkiye and the NATO Secretary General, the latter also announced **the establishment of a new position of Special Coordinator for Counter-Terrorism**.

72. **The decisions are fully in line with Assembly recommendations** “to continue efforts to counter, deter, defend and respond to threats posed by terrorist groups” and to enhance cooperation with partners, notably with the EU and in the South (Declaration 481).

8. Addressing challenges in the South

73. Allies agreed to further address the interconnected security, demographic, economic, and political challenges in the Alliance’s southern neighbourhood.

74. **Leaders tasked the NAC “to launch a comprehensive and deep reflection on existing and emerging threats and challenges, and opportunities for engagements with our partner nations, international organisations, and other relevant actors”**, to be presented at the 2024 Summit in the United States.

75. Allies will also **deepen political engagements and public diplomacy outreach with regional partners**. Notably, NATO will examine **whether a NATO Liaison Office in Amman could be set up. Allies are also considering broadening the existing NATO Mission Iraq**, as the Iraqi government has requested advice for its Federal Police.

76. **The continued Allied focus on the South is in line with long-standing positions of the Assembly as well as its recommendations in Declaration 481**.

9. Rising to China’s challenge

77. Allied leaders reiterated that **Beijing’s “stated ambitions and coercive policies challenge [Allied] interests, security and values”**. They cited, inter alia, the “deepening strategic partnership” with Russia and their attempts to undermine the rules-based international order. However, **Allies “remain open to constructive engagement”**, for example on reciprocal transparency or strategic risk reduction. **Leaders noted their continued efforts to raise shared awareness, resilience and preparedness, to protect against coercive tactics and efforts to divide NATO and to defend shared values and the rules-based international order**.

78. **NATO’s continued efforts** to address China’s systemic challenge, to ensure the Alliance ability to guarantee its defence and security and to explore constructive dialogue where possible are **fully in line with the NATO PA’s recommendations** (Declaration 481).

10. Strategic stability, arms control, disarmament and non-proliferation

79. Once again, Allies underlined that **“[s]trategic stability, delivered through effective deterrence and defence, arms control and disarmament, and meaningful and reciprocal political dialogue remains essential to our security”**.

80. Allies **called out “Russia’s violations and selective implementation of its arms control obligations and commitments”**. In light of the rapid expansion and diversification of China’s nuclear arsenal, the Communiqué also **urged Beijing “to engage in strategic risk**

reduction discussions and to promote stability through greater transparency with regard to its nuclear weapon policies, plans and capabilities.” Allies noted their continued deep concerns about Iran’s nuclear programme and their **“clear determination that Iran must never develop a nuclear weapon”**. Similarly, they strongly **condemned North Korea’s WMD and ballistic missile programmes**. They urged both countries to change course.

81. Leaders stressed that the Treaty on **the Non-Proliferation of Nuclear Weapons continues to be “the essential bulwark against the spread of nuclear weapons”**. In contrast, they “reiterate[d] that the Treaty on the Prohibition of Nuclear Weapons (TPNW) stands in opposition to and is inconsistent and incompatible with the Alliance’s nuclear deterrence policy, is at odds with the existing non-proliferation and disarmament architecture, risks undermining the NPT, and does not take into account the current security environment.”

82. The Summit Communiqué language on strategic stability, arms control, disarmament and non-proliferation is generally in line with long-standing Assembly recommendations and Declaration 481.

11. Reinforcing Allied resilience

83. In Vilnius, **Allies adopted the 2023 Alliance Resilience Objectives**. The objectives will guide nations to develop national goals and implementation plans to “strengthen NATO and Allied preparedness against strategic shocks and disruptions”. They also committed to **“work towards identifying and mitigating strategic vulnerabilities and dependencies, including with respect to our critical infrastructure, supply chains and health systems.”**

84. To address the developing threat to critical undersea infrastructure, Allies also directed the **establishment of a NATO Maritime Centre for the Security of Critical Undersea Infrastructure**, located at NATO’s Maritime Command, and of **a new network of NATO and Allied officials, the private sector and other stakeholders** to improve information sharing and exchange best practice.

85. These actions are all in line with NATO PA resilience recommendations in Declaration 481.

12. Emerging and disruptive technologies

86. NATO and Allies continue to address both the opportunities and risks of emerging and disruptive technologies. **NATO’s Defence Innovation Accelerator for the North Atlantic (DIANA) has launched its first challenges to start-ups. During the Summit, the 23 Allies⁶ participating in the NATO Innovation Fund selected the Fund’s investment team** under whose watch investments are set to begin in the coming months. The Communiqué also noted that **new strategies on the opportunities and risks of quantum technologies and of biotechnology and human enhancement will be developed.**

87. These lines of effort are fully in line with established NATO PA positions, including the recommendation in Declaration 481 to “[shape] standards and committing to principles of responsible use that reflect the Alliance’s democratic values and human rights”.

13. Tackling cyber challenges

88. To address growing cyber challenges, **Allies took a number of decisions**. They:

⁶ Belgium; Bulgaria; Czechia; Denmark; Estonia; Finland; Germany; Greece; Hungary; Iceland; Italy; Latvia; Lithuania; Luxembourg; Netherlands; Norway; Poland; Portugal; Romania; Slovakia; Spain; Türkiye; United Kingdom

- **endorsed a new cyber concept**, which will, inter alia, enhance the contribution of cyber defence to NATO's deterrence and defence and further integrate the political, military and technical levels;
- **reaffirmed and enhanced their Cyber Defence Pledge**;
- committed to ambitious **new national cyber goals**;
- launched a new **Virtual Cyber Incident Support Capability** to support national mitigation efforts if called upon; and
- vowed to further **deepen and broaden mutually beneficial and effective cyber partnerships**.

89. Moreover, a **new comprehensive NATO Cyber Defence Conference** will take place in Berlin this November.

90. **These actions are very much in line with long-standing NATO PA positions.**

14. Understanding and adapting to climate change

91. In its efforts to become the leading international organisation when it comes to understanding and adapting to the security impact of climate change, **NATO released three major climate change reports during the Summit**:

- the 2023 [Climate Change and Security Impact Assessment](#), focusing on extreme weather's impact on operational stress and life cycles of military equipment;
- the [Compendium of Best Practice](#), providing examples of Allied efforts to adapt to climate change; and
- the [Greenhouse Gas Emissions Mapping and Analytical Methodology](#) with guidelines and tools to calculate emissions from NATO's civilian and military facilities.

92. Moreover, at the Summit, **the 12 sponsoring nations⁷ signed the founding document of the Centre of Excellence for Climate Change and Security**, to open in Montréal later this year.

93. **Allies thus heeded the Assembly's recommendations** "to further boost efforts to ensure NATO becomes the leading international organisation in understanding and adapting to the impact of climate change on security and enhances its own contribution to combatting climate change" (Declaration 481).

15. Intensifying NATO-EU relations

94. **Cooperation between NATO and the European Union** – "a unique and essential partner" – has become **more significant since Russia's war against Ukraine**. The two organisations have "**demonstrated unity of purpose and common resolve** in leveraging our complementary, coherent and mutually reinforcing roles".

95. **Allies welcomed the recent establishment of a NATO-EU Staff Coordination dedicated to supporting Ukraine**. Leaders also **noted progress** in several areas. However, they also **called for additional efforts on military mobility and ensuring non-EU Allies' fullest involvement in EU defence efforts**.

⁷ Canada, Denmark, France, Germany, Greece, Italy, Latvia, Luxembourg, Norway, Romania, Türkiye and the United Kingdom

96. **The Communiqué is in line with the Assembly’s wish “to strengthen the strategic partnership between NATO and the EU” (Declaration 481).**

16. Challenges and opportunities in the Western Balkans

97. Allies “remain strongly committed to the security and stability” of this strategic region. **Leaders noted that “[d]emocratic values, the rule of law, domestic reforms, and good neighbourly relations are vital for regional cooperation and Euro-Atlantic integration”.**

98. They underlined that strengthened **“NATO-Serbia relations would be of benefit to the Alliance, to Serbia, and to the whole region.”** They encouraged Belgrade “to engage with NATO and its neighbours in a constructive manner”.

99. Leaders called the **recent escalatory actions in northern Kosovo unacceptable and condemned the violence**, including the unprovoked attacks that caused serious injuries to NATO soldiers. **They “call[ed] on both sides to immediately de-escalate, return to dialogue, and engage constructively in implementing the agreement”** recently reached Brussels and Ohrid.

17. Enhancing the focus on the Black Sea region

100. As the Black Sea region is of strategic importance and Russia’s war has exacerbated the situation, **Allies vowed to “further monitor and assess developments [...] and enhance our situational awareness**, with a particular focus on the threats to our security and potential opportunities for closer cooperation with our partners in the region”.

101. **This stance is fully in line with the NATO PA recommendation on the Black Sea in Declaration 481.**

18. Supporting Vulnerable partners

102. As Allies continue to stand by partners most vulnerable to outside interference, **they engaged with Foreign Ministers of Georgia and the Republic of Moldova as well as with the Deputy Foreign Minister of Bosnia and Herzegovina**, including on the implementation of their individual “tailored support” packages adopted in February 2023.

103. Concerning Georgia, the Summit Communiqué reiterated the 2008 Bucharest Summit decisions and all subsequent decisions that **“Georgia will become a member of the Alliance with the Membership Action Plan (MAP) as an integral part of the process”**. It notes, however, that **“Georgia must make progress on reforms, including key democratic reforms, and make best use of the [Annual National Programme]” to advance on its Euro-Atlantic path**. The Vilnius Summit thus for the first time makes a clear distinction in the way the Alliance looks at Georgia and Ukraine’s respective membership paths.

104. **For Bosnia and Herzegovina**, the Communiqué notes NATO’s strong support for the country’s sovereignty, territorial integrity, stability and security. Allied leaders encouraged **domestic reconciliation**, urged Bosnia and Herzegovina’s officials to **refrain from what the Communiqué, meaningfully, calls “divisive and secessionist rhetoric and actions”**, and encouraged the country **to take advantage of NATO’s continued support tools**, including for key reforms, “without prejudice to a final decision on NATO membership”.

105. **Regarding the Republic of Moldova**, Allies are **“stepping up political and practical support to strengthen its resilience and uphold its political independence”**. They welcomed the country’s ongoing democratic reform efforts and stand ready to further support its European integration path.

106. The Summit Communiqué is generally in line with established NATO PA positions and recommendations in Declaration 481.

19. Further priorities

107. Intelligence cooperation: Leaders vowed to **reinforce intelligence cooperation within the Alliance and with partners** as well as **Allied security and counter-intelligence measures**.

108. Hybrid and other asymmetric challenges and threats: **Allies reaffirmed their efforts to counter hybrid and other asymmetric challenges and threats**, including challenges to energy security, and **reaffirmed that Article 5 could apply**, depending on the level of hybrid operations.

109. The space domain: Leaders “**committed to enhancing the sharing of our space data, products and services within NATO in support of the Alliance’s requirements and defence plans.**” They also **welcomed ongoing efforts on the Alliance Persistent Surveillance from Space (APSS) multinational programme** as well as **the establishment of the Space Centre of Excellence in France**, which received NATO accreditation shortly after the Summit.

110. Human Security agenda: **Leaders endorsed [the first NATO Policy on Children and Armed Conflict](#)** to “help enhance the ability of Allied troops to handle situations of harm to children when in operations or during the conduct of its military activities”. **They also endorsed an updated [NATO Policy on Combatting Trafficking in Human Beings](#)**, which “makes sure that the risk of human trafficking is fully integrated in military planning, duly assessed and mitigated from the outset”.

111. Women, Peace and Security (WPS) agenda: Leaders reconfirmed their commitment to and implementation of the WPS agenda. **They decided to begin assessing and updating NATO’s Policy on Women, Peace and Security. These actions are in line with the Assembly recommendation** to sustain the momentum in carrying forward the WPS agenda.

112. International organisations: The Summit reaffirmed NATO’s desire to strengthen engagement with other international and regional organisations. Notably, **Allies have begun exploring whether to open a Liaison Office in Geneva to interact with the United Nations and other international organisations.**

113. Crisis prevention and management: Whereas the Assembly recommended in Declaration 481 that leaders “accelerate work to define the parameters of NATO’s future engagement in crisis management”, **the Summit did not make any specific decisions on this issue outside its actions to step up NATO’s deterrence and defence posture.**

114. Baltic airspace cooperation: During the Summit, Estonia, Latvia and Lithuania signed a declaration to increase the airspace for use by NATO.

115. Allies will next meet for the **NATO’s 75th anniversary Summit in Washington, D.C. in 2024**. It was announced that **the Netherlands will host the 2025 Summit**.