

Chairman's statement

Meeting of the NATO-Russia Council at the level of Heads of State and Government held in Bucharest on 4 April 2008

The Heads of State and Government of the NATO-Russia Council met today in Bucharest and resolved to enhance their work as 27 equal partners to respond together to the multi-faceted security risks we have in common. They renewed their commitment to the goals, principles and objectives set forth in the Founding Act and the Rome Declaration. They affirmed that the NRC was conceived as a strategic element in fostering Euro-Atlantic security, proceeding from the principle that the security of all states in the Euro-Atlantic community, to which they belong, remains indivisible. Our partnership has already had a good history of over a decade. During that time, NRC member states have developed a political dialogue on a broad range of international security issues and concrete projects where they have common goals and interests.

As dialogue among its members has broadened and intensified, the NRC has proven to be a useful forum for frank and open exchanges including on issues where views have differed, such as: NATO's Transformation including enlargement; missile defence; the Treaty on Conventional Armed Forces in Europe (CFE) and Kosovo. NRC member states will remain committed to the long-term viability of the CFE Treaty Regime. NRC member states will continue, in accordance with the relevant provisions of the Rome Declaration and subsequent decisions of the NRC, to seek, through continued dialogue as part of a multi-faceted approach, to facilitate resolution of outstanding CFE issues.

Acknowledging differences on Kosovo, the NRC remains committed to bringing about a stable, democratic, multi-ethnic, peaceful, and secure future for the Western Balkans.

NRC members called on all in the Western Balkans to renounce violence and to avoid any actions that could undermine the security and rule of law in the region. Issues related to security in Kosovo remain high on their agenda. The NRC will continue its open and active dialogue on Missile Defence, despite differences on this matter.

The NRC agreed that the success of international efforts in support of the Afghan Government in promoting peace and stability in and around Afghanistan is of utmost importance. Towards that end, a mechanism has been defined to facilitate land transit through Russian territory of goods to ISAF in accordance with UNSCR 1386. Recognising the threat of narcotics trafficking in the region, the NRC today also decided to make the NRC Pilot Project for Counter-Narcotics Training of Afghan and Central Asian Personnel an ongoing NRC initiative.

The fight against terrorism remains a key area of NRC cooperation. The NRC will continue its work in implementing the NRC Action Plan on Terrorism, in particular efforts to deny terrorists access to Weapons of Mass Destruction. The NRC highly values its continued naval cooperation in the framework of NATO's Operation Active

Endeavour in the Mediterranean, which continues to make a significant contribution to the fight against terrorism. The Heads of State and Government of the NRC tasked the NRC to expedite work on the NRC's joint project to counter terrorist threats to civil aviation, the Cooperative Airspace Initiative (CAI), so that the CAI system will reach its initial operational capability by the end of 2008 and full operational capability about the end of 2009.

The NRC will continue to enhance its dialogue in support of efforts against proliferation of WMD and their means of delivery.

The Heads of State and Government of the NRC commended progress in the NRC project towards developing interoperability among respective Theatre Missile Defence systems. The NRC conducted a successful Theatre Missile Defence exercise in January 2008 in Germany. Offers put forward by other NRC members to host exercises in future were also appreciated. Defence and military cooperation within the NRC has also helped to promote interoperability and transparency. The NRC will continue to enhance military to military work, as it enters a phase where more practical activities are pursued, as demonstrated, for example, by the successful endeavours in Search and Rescue at Sea. The Heads of State and Government of the NRC have tasked the NRC to intensify efforts to conclude a Framework Agreement on Air Transport and subsequent Implementing Arrangements for the use of Russian Armed Forces' air transport capability. The NRC also values the positive results of the NATO-Russia Centre for the Resettlement of Discharged Military Personnel from the Russian Armed Forces.

The NRC will enhance its important cooperation in civil emergency planning, scientific and environmental projects, to increase its preparedness and protection against acts of terrorism, and natural and man-made disasters.

The Heads of State and Government of the NRC are convinced that there remains ample room for increasing public awareness of NRC activities, including through the internet (www.nato-russia-council.info). To this end, they tasked the NRC to expedite work to facilitate other forms of dialogue among political scientists; the academic community; research institutions; and other relevant organisations.

Six years after its creation, the NATO-Russia Council has proven itself to be a key instrument for political dialogue, consensus-building, cooperation and joint decision-making by its 27 members acting in their national capacities and in a manner consistent with their collective commitments and obligations. The Heads of State and Government of the NRC reaffirmed their determination to continue to work in this constructive spirit in the future to ensure the NRC fulfils its potential by identifying and pursuing opportunities for joint action on a wide range of security issues.

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