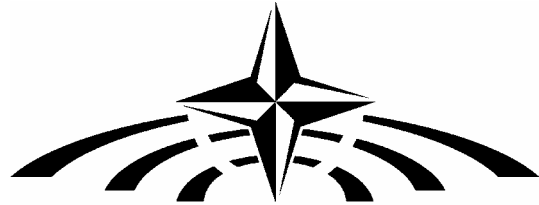# ANNEX 3.

NATO ENLARGEMENT AND PARTNERSHIPS

NATO Parliamentary Assembly

SUB-COMMITTEE ON
CENTRAL AND EASTERN EUROPE

Bert Koenders
(Netherlands) Rapporteur

January 2003

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Introduction

1.   In the first half-century since its inception, NATO has grown from an organisation of 12 in 1949 to 16 during the Cold War. As NATO continued to adapt to the changing security environment after the demise of the Warsaw Pact, it opened up to new members and partners. At the 1997 Madrid Summit, NATO offered membership to the Czech Republic, Hungary and Poland. At the 50th anniversary Washington Summit, NATO Heads of State and Government decided to revisit enlargement at a summit no later than 2002. Continuing the enlargement process remains central to the transformation of the Alliance.

2.   From the parliamentary perspective, the NATO PA has voiced strong support in favour of further developing Alliance partnerships, and especially to continue the enlargement process. The Political Committee, and its Sub-Committee on Central and Eastern Europe in particular, have been at the forefront of this discussion and closely followed preparations for NATO membership by the candidate countries. The Committee and this Sub-Committee have initiated several reports and resolutions on this subject. In addition, the Sub-Committee has visited nine of the now ten applicant countries between 2000 and 2002, thereby obtaining important insights into the status of preparations from senior government officials and parliamentary interlocutors.

3.   At its meeting in Sofia in May 2002, the NATO PA called for a broad and regionally balanced enlargement and recognised that Bulgaria, Romania, Slovakia, Slovenia, Estonia, Latvia and Lithuania have proved their progress towards NATO membership through successful programmes of reform at home and their contributions to NATO operations in the Balkans. Each of the applicant countries is already making a distinctive contribution to the stability and security of the Euro-Atlantic region. As applicant countries continue participation in the Membership Action Plan (MAP), they must sustain their reform efforts to meet the criteria as laid out in the 1995 *Study on enlargement* and the MAP.

4.   As the November 2002 Prague Summit approaches, when NATO Heads of State and Government decide upon which candidate countries to invite joining the Alliance, the need for internal adaptation to an enlarged Alliance that could include up to 26 member countries becomes more pressing.

5.   This paper provides an update on events concerning NATO enlargement after the Committee adopted the 2001 report. It looks at the continuing efforts of candidate countries to

meet criteria for Alliance membership, primarily focusing on non-military areas. Moreover, by addressing NATO partnership programmes, this report takes a broader look at NATO's Open Door policy. It thus looks at the increasingly relevant contributions of Partnerships for stabilising NATO's Southern, South-Eastern and Eastern neighbourhoods and concludes that developing even better and more structured relations with Russia and Ukraine, as well as with other countries, will be pivotal in further deepening and broadening security in the Euro-Atlantic area.

6.   The paper will lead to the conclusions as formulated in chapter VI, namely that NATO should invite seven of the candidate countries, if they continue and conclude reform processes under way to meet membership criteria. Moreover, your Rapporteur will conclude by stressing that the "Open Door" policy must continue and that Parliaments have to play an important role in this.

Discussions in NATO Member Countries

7.   Prior to 2001 there was no or little public debate about further enlargement, as NATO was occupied by a number of important security issues, including, among others, the situation in the Balkans, the Defence Capabilities Initiative (DCI) and the European Security and Defence Policy (ESDP) as well as missile defence. However, the June 2001 NAC Summit and US President George W. Bush's keynote speech in Warsaw shortly thereafter have reaffirmed NATO's commitment to enlargement and advanced the public debate in and among member countries. Although the September 11 attacks initially appeared to eclipse NATO enlargement, the debate picked up steam again at the end of the year, with indications for a larger group of countries to be invited.

8.   In America, "September 11 (2001) changed the way we looked at enlargement," according to senior government officials. Suddenly, the United States realised that "we need as many allies as we can get" to fight terrorism. US leaders have consistently called for a "robust enlargement". At the Foreign Ministers meeting in Reykjavik in May, the US Secretary of State, Colin Powell, said that conditions for a "big bang" enlargement were "better than ever". In July 2002 President Bush and President Kwasniewski of Poland issued a joint statement expressing "the desirability of a broad round of enlargement" to include "all European democracies ready to share in the responsibilities of NATO membership". The British Prime Minister, Tony Blair, echoed these sentiments in a message to candidate

countries at the Riga summit in the same month. In April 2002, the then-Defence Minister of Germany Rudolf Scharping said that NATO could grow from 19 members to "26 or more".

9.   With regard to the parliamentary dimension of the debate, some Parliaments of NATO member states have also at times addressed NATO enlargement. The NATO PA continues to put NATO enlargement high on its agenda. In addition to the activities and reports of the Political and the Defence and Security Committees, the NATO PA's Resolutions adopted at the Amsterdam, Berlin and Ottawa Sessions argue for an ambitious enlargement. The NATO PA's May 2002 Sofia declaration confirmed the PA's unanimous support for "a robust enlargement of NATO", stressing the importance that "aspirant countries continue their reforms well beyond the Prague Summit". In response to NATO PA Declaration 306, adopted at the 2001 Spring Session in Vilnius, and Resolution 312, adopted at the Annual Session in Ottawa in 2001, Lord Robertson, the NATO Secretary General has reaffirmed to the Assembly that the enlargement process "continues to be a key Alliance policy to which NATO remains fully committed".[2]

NATO Enlargement in a Changing Security Environment

10.   While enlargement has been declared a priority and though the 1999 Washington Summit has established important instruments, especially the MAP, to help prepare applicant countries for membership, the debate of the "how" has been affected by changing perceptions of the general security environment.   Most significantly, as mentioned above, the 11 September 2001 attacks in the United States had a profound impact on the debate. Initially reactions by security analysts, as well as a few government officials, gave the impression that not only was further enlargement of NATO off the agenda, but that the future of the Alliance was in doubt. Some observers maintained that the US decision not to ask NATO to conduct the military operation in Afghanistan, even though the Alliance invoked Article 5, called into question the very *raison d'être* of the Alliance. Many criticised the fact that invoking Article 5 did not lead to the use of the NATO consultation process or further NATO involvement in the politico-military sphere. Other critics pointed to US frustrations about the growing capabilities gap and the only partial success of the Defence Capabilities Initiative (DCI). They also said that Washington did not want a "war by committee". Some American observers even went so far as to argue that if NATO did not undertake to fight terrorists, it would be soon "out of

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[2] See the Comments of the Secretary General of NATO, Chairman of the North Atlantic Council, on the Policy Recommendations adopted in 2001 by the NATO Parliamentary Assembly.

business". Another group has suggested that NATO's military role is diminished in the new security environment, as it is no longer needed for territorial defence and is not capable of supplying the out-of-area expeditionary forces that are now needed.

11.   Changed perceptions of the threat posed by international terrorism also briefly brought the question of "whether" to enlarge back on the agenda. Some argued that because Russian cooperation in the "war on terrorism" was crucial, and as Alliance priorities had dramatically changed, enlargement was no longer necessary or desirable. To obtain Russia's support in the international anti-terror coalition, it was suggested that NATO, and the US in particular, would be prepared to make concessions to Moscow on, for example, strategic arms reductions, missile defence, membership of the World Trade Organisation (WTO), and especially on NATO enlargement.

12.   While your Rapporteur agrees that changes in the international security environment require an in-depth discussion about the future of NATO, he wants to stress that the "war on terrorism" is only one element in the discussion on the future of NATO. NATO still remains the sole institutional link between the US and Europe and prevents re-nationalisation of defence. NATO enhances close military and diplomatic links between the Western world and Russia, Central Asia and Ukraine and, through the Mediterranean Dialogue, with the Muslim countries of the Middle East and North Africa as well. Through its partnerships with Central Asian partners, including, for example, Uzbekistan, NATO has contributed and is contributing to the international coalition that the United States needs to win this campaign. Moreover, in addition to the Allies' military contributions to the "war on terrorism", European NATO Allies provide more than 90% of the International Security Assistance Force (ISAF) in Afghanistan and almost half of the civil reconstruction aid. In the future, tough choices will have to be made on NATO's goals and missions, as well as on its structure.

13.   As preparations are under way for the Prague Summit, NATO is already addressing these issues and the summit, originally dubbed an "enlargement summit", will deal with a much broader agenda. In November 2002, NATO member countries will be presented with a package of measures aimed at strengthening NATO's preparedness and ability to take on the full spectrum of security challenges. NATO member countries are set to produce a number of new measures, including a new military concept for the defence against terrorism; new military tasks for the strategic commanders; a stronger emphasis on counter-terrorism in NATO exercises and training policies; and adaptation of the Euro-Atlantic Partnership Council and Partnership for Peace to contribute in this fight. Your Rapporteur however would like to stress

that this Summit should continue to put enlargement and its consequences on top of the Agenda.

14.   With regard to the debate on enlargement, the issue is no longer Russia's potential response but rather applicant countries' preparedness and ability to co-operate in anti-terrorist activities. Russia's opposition to the three Baltic candidates has in fact softened as relations with the Alliance have improved. The establishment of the NATO-Russia Council (NRC) in May 2002 demonstrated NATO's role in cementing growing east-west cooperation. As to contributions of candidate countries, it is important to emphasise that those countries that merit invitation at the Prague Summit must be net producers of security. The experience with the previous enlargement round has shown that the military contributions of the three newcomers have been limited, and that the pace of necessary military adaptation and modernisation, especially in the Czech Republic and Hungary, is too slow. In fact, experts at NATO Headquarters believe that full military integration into NATO may take up to ten years. However, Poland, Hungary, and the Czech Republic have made important contributions to Alliance security, including, for example, peacekeeping operations in the Balkans. As to the military contributions of candidate countries, it is worth noting that the seven that appear, at present, most advanced have a combined population that is just slightly above that of Poland, the largest of the three new members that joined the Alliance in 1999.

15.   Against the backdrop of the perceived new security demands in the "war on terrorism" there has been some debate whether military or non-military criteria weigh more heavily in the assessments. Addressing the October 2001 Rose-Roth seminar in Bucharest Ioan Mircea Pascu, the Romanian defence minister, said that the emphasis on accession criteria had shifted from political to military criteria. He argued that the MAP might have to be adjusted to allow the military to play a part in fighting terrorism and that increased emphasis should be placed on military intelligence and on training special operations. At the same time, as applicant countries' military contributions to combating terrorism are rather limited, non-military means, namely political influence and support, by which they can contribute will receive more attention. Your Rapporteur would argue that the level of internal security in an applicant country, especially the ability to control its borders, to apprehend terrorist suspects and disrupt terrorist financial networks without disrupting human rights, deserves close attention. Other non-military criteria for membership have also become more important, especially fighting corruption. The issue of bilateral agreements between the US and some applicant countries on the International Criminal Court (ICC) is a complicating factor.

16.   In the "war against terrorism", NATO candidate countries swiftly declared their solidarity with the US and commitment to contribute in combating this new security challenge. When the heads of State of the "Vilnius Group" of NATO applicant countries met on October 5, 2001 in Sofia they declared the September 11 attacks an attack on "all of us" and affirmed their commitment to full support for the war against terrorism. Two months later, at the Euro-Atlantic Partnership Council's (EAPC) Foreign Ministers Meeting, NATO applicant countries fully associated themselves with the North Atlantic Council's Statement "NATO's Response to Terrorism". In March 2002, the Vilnius Group's Foreign Ministers asserted their determination "to fight terrorism and its financial links with trans-national organised crime". The enlargement process has encouraged candidate countries to take firm steps against trafficking, corruption and money laundering, thereby reducing systematic weaknesses which have previously enabled terrorist networks to operate. In the international campaign against terrorism, NATO applicant countries have acted as *de facto* US and NATO Allies. Many have granted unrestricted overflight rights for aircraft taking part in "Operation Enduring Freedom". Moreover, aspirant countries have provided intelligence, access to bases, and public diplomatic support. Most have contributed troops or pledged to do so in the international fight against terrorism. Candidate countries with smaller militaries have focused on developing specialist forces in order to make value-added contributions to future anti-terrorist operations. As General Joseph Ralston, the Supreme Allied Commander Europe, said "NATO remains relevant and viable in the post-September 11 world, and the aspirant nations offer limited but improving military capabilities and infrastructure to the Alliance".

17.   With regard to NATO enlargement, the terrorist attacks appear to have primarily strengthened the consensus on both sides of the Atlantic in favour of a large round. One year ago, a NATO invitation to Bulgaria and Romania appeared unlikely. However, attention has since shifted to the Black Sea, due to the region's strategic value, both for the US-led anti-terrorism operations and as a transit route for Caspian oil. Bulgarian and Romanian accession would also facilitate closer partnerships with Ukraine and Georgia, promoting stability in the South Caucasus-Caspian regions and providing vital connections with Central Asia. It remains to be seen if, and if so in what respect, new members' geographic location has an impact on NATO's security perception. Whether this strengthens the momentum towards a development that leads to NATO increasingly taking on a role of power projection or whether it remains "merely" a security organisation tasked with the territorial defence of its members is one of the questions likely to be raised.

Update on Status of Preparations of the Nine Application Countries

18.   As stated in the 2001 Sub-Committee report, there are no established formal criteria for accepting new members.   However, as an organisation of members that share common values, NATO has stated that only democracies with market economies and proven human rights records can join. The Sub-Committee's previous report already provided a general overview of applicant countries that were recognised as candidates for NATO membership at the 1999 Washington summit.   Building on this Sub-Committee's 2001 assessment, the Rapporteur of the Defence and Security Sub-Committee's Report on Future Security and Defence Capabilities, Mr David Price (Canada), has produced an update on the military preparations of candidate countries that concludes that seven of the applicant countries for NATO membership, namely Bulgaria, Estonia, Latvia, Lithuania, Romania, Slovakia, and Slovenia, "have made sufficient progress in reforming (...) their militaries" to merit an invitation.[3] Readers who wish to obtain more specific information on the military preparations should consult his 2002 Draft report on "Military Preparations of NATO Candidate Countries" [AV 182 DSC/FC (02) 5]. Those interested in a more general synopsis of candidate countries' achievements should look up the 2001 report of the Sub-Committee on Central and Eastern Europe entitled "NATO enlargement" [AU 214 PC/CEE (01) 5 rev 1]. In addition, the Committee and Sub-Committee trip reports provide further insights into issues related to NATO enlargement.

19.   Candidate countries' preparations for NATO membership continue unabated.   Their foreign and security priorities remain accession to NATO, as well as to the European Union. With regard to non-military preparations, candidate countries have made further progress in reforming and strengthening the judicial system, as a vital element in ensuring respect for the rule of law. This includes adopting basic legislation, though efforts in this area need to be further stepped up, with particular attention to ensuring the independence of the judiciary. The European Commission's 2002 accession assessment concluded that Bulgaria, Estonia, Latvia, Lithuania, Romania, Slovakia, Slovenia continued to fulfil the political criteria, and that the overall record in strengthening democratic institutions, in respecting the rule of law and in protecting human rights had improved since the previous year. However, the EU report also concluded that reform of the judiciary should be accelerated and that corruption, fraud and economic crime remained a serious problem, even though anti-corruption bodies have

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[3] Based on the information obtained during the visits of the Sub-Committee to candidate countries, your Rapporteur agrees with this assessment.

generally been strengthened. Your Rapporteur considers sustained public support in candidate countries to be a pivotal prerequisite for joining the Alliance. Without sufficient public support, necessary political, military and economic reforms are likely to falter sooner or later. Strong domestic pressures to give social and employment spending priority over defence-related expenditures is part of the political reality in any democracy. Candidate governments need to explain to their people why investing in security matters, even when financial resources are scarce. While NATO should assist in promoting strategies to inform the public about the Alliance's values and goals, it is the task of national governments to generate public support for membership.

20.   Albania continues to experience slow, albeit stable, economic progress. However, the economy remains fragile with approximately 30% of the population living below the poverty line. Albania struggles to fulfil the political criteria for NATO membership. Negotiations for a Stabilisation and Association agreement, as decided by the EU at the 2001 Gothenburg summit have been delayed. In an April 2002 report, the European Commission stated that the conclusion of a SAA is conditional on a sustained reform effort by Albania. The report cited democratic standards, strengthening of the judiciary and improvement of public administration as crucial areas for reform. According to the report, widespread corruption and organised crime, particularly illegal trafficking of all types, remain very serious problems.

21.   The US State Department's 2001 Report on Human Rights Practices and the 2002 Human Rights Watch World Report stated that the country's human rights record was poor in many areas, despite some improvements. Organised crime and corruption and a weak judicial system that is subject to political pressure and corruption remain challenges that need to be overcome. Albania scored 2.5 in Transparency International's (TI) 2002 Corruption Perceptions Index (10 representing highly clean and 0 representing highly corrupt). This makes Albania the most corrupt of all candidate countries surveyed by TI. Albania is attempting to counter organised crime. The national Strategy against Trafficking of Human Beings was approved in November 2001 and an international Anti-Traffic Centre was established in the city of Vlora. The first phase of anti-trafficking operations was recently completed at sea and is due to be followed by operations on land. There is hope that the election of a 'consensual' president, Alfred Moisiu, in June 2002 will mark the end of a period of political deadlock and instability. A retired army general, President Moisiu has stated that his first objective will be to hasten the country's integration into the EU and NATO, and a draft mandate for opening the negotiations for a SAA may be approved this autumn. Public support for the country's membership in NATO remains at a high level, around 95%, according to the

Albanian Mission to NATO. Defence spending for 2002 was approximately US$61 million, with a view to gradual increases in 2003 and 2004. Albania participates in ISAF and has sent a platoon of 28 soldiers to Afghanistan in August 2002.

22.   The new Bulgarian government under Prime Minister Simeon Saxe-Coburgotski and President Georgi Parvanov remains committed to joining NATO and, as President Parvanov said, also to reviving Bulgaria's relations with "Russia, Ukraine, and other strategic partners." Current public support for joining the Alliance stands at 62.9%. In its negotiations on EU enlargement, Bulgaria has closed 21 of the 31 chapters at the end of July 2002. Bulgaria fulfils the political criteria for NATO membership, although there are serious weaknesses in its legal system.   The country scored 4.0 in Transparency International's 2002 Corruption Perceptions Index, a rating which demonstrates that corruption continues to pose a serious challenge. The European Commission's 2002 regular report on Bulgaria's called for progress on the effective enforcement of a legal framework, prevention of corruption and protection of the Roma minority. Recent and future steps to combat these problems include anti-corruption amendments to the Law on the Judiciary (July 2002), the establishment of a Public Training Centre for magistrates (planned for January 2003) and a pending Anti-discrimination Law. In September 2002 Bulgaria's Parliament set up a special commission to curb corruption, and the Interior Minister proposed a law that would make it easier to confiscate the property of people or companies convicted for crimes including terrorism, drug trafficking, smuggling, money laundering, fraud and embezzlement. These must remain priority areas for government action if planned reforms are to have tangible effects.

23.   Bulgarian defence spending was US$ 445 million, or 3.1% of GDP, in 2002. Parliament intends to keep the defence budget constant at 2.85% of GDP in 2003 and 2004, which would provide for steady growth as GDP increases at an expected 5% annually.   Bulgaria is contributing to the ISAF peacekeeping force in the Afghan capital of Kabul and has pledged support for future Allied actions in the war against terror.

24.   Croatia has been accepted to MAP in May 2002, only two years after it joined the Partnership for Peace. In March 2002 the Croatian Parliament signed a package of legislation in the area of defence and national security. Croatia signed a Stabilisation and Association Agreement with the EU in October 2001. The 2002 Stabilisation and Association process (SAP) annual report recognised significant improvements in the political environment since the advent of the new leadership in 2000. The new government has shown determined efforts to establish a fully-fledged democracy and end Croatia's political and economic isolation. The

SAP report stated that the continuing weakness of the judiciary and resulting problems in law enforcement represented a significant obstacle to the achievement of economic, political and social reform. Despite substantial improvements in human rights, de facto discrimination against the Serb minority continues. Corruption remains a problem, and Croatia scored 3.8 in Transparency International's 2002 Corruption Perceptions Index. Nationalistic pressures affect the attitude of the government towards regional co-operation with its neighbours, and have delayed the solution to a border dispute with Slovenia over the Bay of Piran. However, after an agreement on the disputed area was reached between Slovenia and Croatia in summer 2002, this contentious issue appears to be settled in the framework of a negotiated settlement. Moreover, cooperation between Croatia and the International Criminal Tribunal for the former Yugoslavia (ICTY) has faced some difficulties. For example, Croatia has not yet complied with a request by the ICTY immediately to hand over General Janko Bobetko, the wartime army Chief of Staff, who was indicted in August for failing to prevent, investigate and punish the killings of civilians and destruction of property committed when Croatian troops withdrew from rebel Serb-held territory after a brief incursion in September 1993. Croat government officials have suggested that full co-operation with the ICTY is hampered because of limits imposed by the Croat constitution - *an argument not shared by the ICTY*. When the Sub-Committee visited Zagreb in mid-September 2002, the President of Croatia, Stipe Mesic, stressed that he supported Croatia's full co-operation with the ICTY. In the view of your Rapporteur, it will be important to follow up how the Croatian authorities implement their pledge for full co-operation. The 2002 defence budget is approximately US $519 million, or 2.4% of GDP, with US$7.5 million allocated to the implementation of NATO partnership goals. Croatia has stated its full support for the international campaign to combat terrorism. Josef Broz, head of the Croat delegation to the NATO PA, told members of the Sub-Committee during the visit in September 2002 that public support for NATO membership was strong, reaching approximately 76 % in autumn 2001.

25.   There has been a change in government since the Sub-Committee visited Estonia in November 2001. President Arnold Rüütel nominated Siim Kallas to be the country's next prime minister after the break-up of the coalition of Mart Laar, the prime minister at the time. Agreement has been reached with the EU on 28 chapters out of 31, and Estonia is determined to finalise the EU accession negotiations by the end of 2002. Estonia fulfils the political criteria for NATO membership. Estonia scored 5.6 in Transparency International's 2002 Corruption Perceptions Index, placing it above a number of NATO member countries. The 2001 US State Department and the 2002 European Commission country reports on human rights practices state that the Estonian government generally respects the human rights of its citizens and the

large ethnic Russian non-citizen community. Like the two other Baltic candidate countries, Estonia has signed a border agreement with Russia, though the ratification of the agreements is still pending in the Russian Duma. The next meeting of the Inter-Governmental Commission (established in 1998 and co-chaired by the prime minister of Estonia and the deputy prime minister of the Russian Federation) is scheduled for November 2002.

26.   According to an opinion poll in June 2002, 69% of Estonian citizens and 58% of all respondents support NATO membership; 72% of the Estonian population support the current level of defence expenditure. The poll also shows that the Armed Forces belong to the group of most reliable state institutions, enjoying the support of 79% of all respondents. Defence expenditure was US$130 million or 2 % of GDP in 2002, and the Estonian government has pledged to maintain that percentage level for the following years. Estonia pledged its support for "Operation Enduring Freedom" and contributed a small Estonian logistics unit in Kyrgystan.

27.   Latvia has completed 27 of the 31 chapters in the negotiations with the EU. Although it needs to improve legislation on the integration of the non-Latvian, primarily Russian, minority, Latvia fulfils the political criteria for joining NATO. The EU's 2002 Regular Report stated that Latvia continues to fulfil the Copenhagen criteria and has a functioning market economy, though it adds, as stated in the 2001 US State Department Human Rights Report, that inefficiency in the judicial system still hampers the fair administration of justice. Latvia scored 3.7 in Transparency International's 2002 Corruption Perceptions Index, a substantially lower rating than either of its Baltic neighbours. When he visited Latvia in 2002, the NATO Secretary General stressed the importance of stepping up anti-corruption efforts. In April 2002, the Corruption Prevention and Combating Bureau was established in order to centralize anti-corruption efforts. According to the Latvian Mission to NATO, the latest public opinion survey in July 2002 showed that 66.1% of respondents favoured Latvia's accession to NATO, an increase from 57% as reported in the Sub-Committee's October 2001 report.

28.   The defence budget has doubled as a percentage of GDP. from 0.84% in 1999 to 1.75% in 2002 (which represents 154,15 million EUR0); 2% of GDP will be allocated for defence and NATO integration from 2003 until 2008 inclusive. This fixes the nation's defense budget for 2003 at roughly $184 million, up from $150 million in 2002. In making contributions to the war against terrorism, Latvia has focused on developing explosive ordnance disposal units, mine-clearing divers and military medics, areas in which it would provide value-added contributions.

29.   The EU 2002 Regular report states that Lithuania fulfils the Copenhagen political criteria and that it has a functioning market economy. Concerning the accession negotiations with the EU, the country had closed 28 chapters in June 2002. Lithuania fulfils the political criteria for NATO membership. It scored 4.8 in Transparency International's 2002 Corruption Perceptions Index; ranking it below all current NATO members except Poland and the Czech Republic. In January 2002 the Parliament approved the National Anti-Corruption Programme, aimed at reducing the level of corruption in Lithuania, promoting democracy, encouraging welfare development and strengthening national security. Amendments to the Criminal Code in July 2002 increased criminal responsibility for financing terrorism.

30.   According to the latest opinion poll conducted in July 2002, 68.4 % of Lithuanian residents support the country's membership of NATO. The 2002 defence budget is approximately US$ 292 million, and Lithuania is committed to spending 2% of GDP on defence from 2002 until 2005. Lithuania supports international anti-terrorism measures, and sent military medical personnel to participate in "Operation Enduring Freedom", as a part of a Czech field hospital. In late September 2002 the Lithuanian Parliament approved a plan to send a platoon of 40 special intelligence troops to Afghanistan to join the US-led war against terrorism.

31.   As reported last year, the former Yugoslav Republic of Macedonia[4] came under attack from insurgents that infiltrated from Kosovo in early 2001. The August 2001 Ohrid agreement has put an end to the conflict and the situation stabilised further in March 2002, when the country's parliament adopted an amnesty law for those who participated in the 2001 fighting. Nevertheless, tensions between ethnic Macedonians and Albanians still exist, as members of the Sub-Committee were told during their visit in April this year. The delicate security situation worsened in August 2002, when hostages were taken in protest at the arrest of Albanian suspects, following the murder of two Macedonian policemen.

32.   The continued presence of a NATO-led peacekeeping force is deemed necessary. NATO Operation *Essential Harvest* was originally put in place to help disarm the so-called National Liberation Army (NLA). The 700 or so troops of Operation *Amber Fox*, which succeeded *Essential Harvest* in late September 2001, protect international monitors from the EU and the OSCE, who are overseeing the implementation of the peace plan in the former

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[4]   Turkey recognises the Republic of Macedonia with its constitutional name

Yugoslav Republic of Macedonia. *Amber Fox'* mandate has been extended until 15 December 2002. The EU has proposed taking over this mission afterwards; however, as this report is being drafted, no agreement has been reached. To help rebuild the country, international donors pledged US $515 million.

33.   The former Yugoslav Republic of Macedonia[5] struggles to fulfil the political criteria for NATO membership. The International Crisis Group recognises that, while corruption plagues all transition countries, in the former Yugoslav Republic of Macedonia it is endemic at high levels of government and threatens the viability of the state. (Macedonia was not included in Transparency International's 2002 Corruption Perception Index). The parliamentary elections held in mid-September are a positive sign and represent "a victory for the democratic process", as the OSCE ambassador to Skopje stated. The outcome of the elections, which were generally considered free and fair, is likely to further political compromise between ethnic Macedonians and Albanians; a change of government alone will not solve the problem of corruption. The Macedonian government and political parties must commit to anti-corruption training programmes and legal reforms.

34.   Public support for NATO, which had been as high as between 64 and 84% in the 1994 to 1997 period, fell to around 25% after the 2001 crisis, members of the Sub-Committee were informed. An investigation of public opinion found that improved ratings were dependent on a positive portrayal of NATO peacekeepers in the local media and awareness of NATO's contribution to the suppression of global terrorism. The defence budget for 2002 is set at US$85 million, 2.6% of GDP. As members of the Sub-Committee were informed during their visit in April, the former Yugoslav Republic of Macedonia plans to spend US$152 million on defence reforms over the next five years.

35.   In early April this year, the government of Romania adopted a new reform action plan, addressing the various critical steps of the reforms that it is committed to undertake prior to and after the November summit in Prague. As of August 2002, Romania has provisionally closed 13 of the 31 chapters of the negotiations with the EU. An oversized bureaucracy continues to make the country unattractive for international investors, though Romania has continued to make progress towards becoming a functioning market economy, as the EU's 2002 Assessment report states. Due to weaknesses of the legal system, organised crime,

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[5] Turkey recognises the Republic of Macedonia with its constitutional name

corruption, and trafficking in women and girls continue to pose serious problems. Romania scored 2.6 in Transparency International's 2002 Corruption Perceptions Index, a score that is only marginally higher than Albania's. The Romanian government's anti-corruption office started functioning in September 2002, and this will hopefully invigorate policing and prosecutions. The US State Department's 2001 Report on Human Rights observed that the Roma minority was subject to police brutality and experienced discrimination in housing, employment and access to goods and services. The Romanian government has adopted a National Strategy for Improving the Condition of the Roma Community and has recently implemented measures in the fields of education, health protection, police co-operation, public administration and employment. Further concrete measures need to be implemented and long-term funding for the National Strategy must be guaranteed. Overall, however, the country meets the political criteria for NATO membership.

36.   Romania has enjoyed one of the highest levels of public support for NATO membership among all candidate countries, reaching approximately 85% according to Romanian government sources. The 2002 defence budget was US$ 1,066.4 million, representing 2.38% of GDP. The government has pledged to maintain defence spending at 2.38% of GDP until 2005. Romania has signalled its willingness to cooperate in the war against terror. In 2002 it deployed one infantry battalion to Operation Enduring Freedom in Afghanistan, contributed 57 military personnel to the ISAF and had a C-130 transport aircraft based in Karachi, Pakistan.

37.   Slovakia has closed 27 of the 31 chapters in its negotiations with the EU and meets the political criteria for NATO membership. The EU's 2002 Regular report said that Slovakia fulfils the Copenhagen criteria, and that progress has been achieved in overcoming deficiencies in political and judicial institutions. In 2001, suspicion of public procurement corruption led to the suspension of EU pre-accession financial assistance, demonstrating an urgent need to clarify and simplify the legal system. Slovakia scored 3.7 in Transparency International's 2002 Corruption Perceptions Index, ranking it alongside Latvia and the Czech Republic. Some progress in the fight against corruption which, according to the EU's 2002 Regular report, remained a serious concern, has been made. According to the 2001 US State Department Human Rights Report, Slovakia generally respects human rights, but has problems in areas such as discrimination against the Roma population. An important step was taken in March 2002, with the election to parliament of a human rights ombudsman, who can act on an appeal or on his own initiative. A public opinion poll conducted in June 2002 shows that 59.8% support NATO membership, up from 52.2% in June 2001. The success of the centre-right coalition in the 21 September elections is considered by many Western observers as a

positive sign for political stability and continued, sustained commitment to meet requirements for Alliance membership

38.   The 2002 defence budget is US$ 455 million or 1.89% of GDP, with plans to increase the defence spending to at least 2% of GDP in 2003. Slovakia is contributing to the "war against terrorism" by sending 40 troops to Operation Enduring Freedom in Afghanistan in August 2002.

39.   According to the EU 2002 Assessment Report, Slovenia fulfils Copenhagen political criteria and has a functional market economy. With 28 chapters closed in its negotiations with the EU, Slovenia is one of the front-runners among all EU applicant countries. Slovenia meets the political criteria for NATO membership. The 2001 US State Department report on Human Rights Practices indicates that Slovenia has no problems in respecting human rights of its citizens. Slovenia scored 6.0 in Transparency International's 2002 Corruption Perceptions Index, the highest ranking of all NATO applicant countries.   Relations with neighbouring Croatia have been tense due to disputed borders in the Bay of Piran.   After the border incidents of August 2002 the Slovenian Prime Minister said that relations between the two countries were at their worst level since 1991.

40.   Public support for NATO represents a potential problem; it has hovered around 50% in recent years, but declined in 2002. A July 2002 poll by *Politbarometer* showed 39% in favour of NATO membership. Slovene defence spending reached approximately US$300 million, or 1.55% of GDP, in 2002. It is projected that spending will increase to US$336 million, or 1.6% of GDP in 2003 and gradually progress to US$616 million, or 2% of GDP, by 2008.

NATO Partnerships

41.   As NATO continues its Open Door policy, it also advances co-operation with countries in the Euro-Atlantic area. Responding to neighbouring countries' increasing desire to collaborate, NATO has established a comprehensive set of outreach programmes. In addition to its special relationships with Russia and Ukraine, the Euro-Atlantic Partnership Council (EAPC) and the Enhanced Partnership for Peace (PfP) Programme, as well as the Mediterranean Dialogue, have dramatically altered the Euro-Atlantic security landscape.   In addition to NATO partnerships, the NATO PA has itself established several programmes to closely monitor progress in relationships between the Alliance and its partners, thereby providing an important parliamentary perspective. Besides the creation of its Mediterranean Special Group (MSG),

the Assembly has established Joint Monitoring Groups with the Ukrainian and Russian Parliaments to monitor progress on NATO's relations with Ukraine and Russian Federation, specifically the Founding Act and the NATO-Ukraine Charter.

Partnership for Peace (PfP)

42.   NATO's Partnership for Peace (PfP) was launched in 1994 and designed to complement the North Atlantic Cooperation Council (NACC) focus on multilateral, political dialogue. The PfP's principal goal is to promote transparency in national defence planning and military budgeting, the democratic control of the national armed forces, as well as to develop the capacity for joint action, for example for peacekeeping or disaster response operations between NATO and partner countries' forces. By developing tailored PfP programmes according to each partner-country's individual needs and abilities it offers the opportunity for each partner-country to develop its own bilateral relationship with NATO at its own pace. The process of self-differentiation and inclusiveness is the key principle of the PfP programme, and the degree of partners' involvement is completely voluntary. Though PfP does not include any security guarantee by NATO along the lines of Article 5 of the Washington Treaty, NATO consults with any partner-country if it feels that its security, political independence or territorial integrity is endangered.

43.   Recognising the value and success of PfP and the experiences of NATO-led peacekeeping operations such as the Implementation Force (IFOR), NATO Allies approved an "Enhanced and More Operational PfP" at the 1999 Washington Summit. The three main initiatives to reinforce and improve PfP are the Planning and Review Process (PARP); the Operational Capabilities Concept (OCC); and the Political-Military Framework for NATO-led PfP Operations. The PARP, which increasingly resembles the Alliance's own defence-planning process, lays down interoperability and capability requirements for participants to attain and includes an extensive review process to measure progress. The OCC provides NATO commanders with reliable information about potential partner contributions for actual operations by providing information about these forces' availabilities and capabilities. The Political-Military Framework for NATO-led PfP Operations has replaced *ad hoc* consultations on partners' possible military contributions to complicated and potentially dangerous operations by establishing a mechanism for institutionalised consultations between NATO and partner countries.

44.   At the time of writing, further improvements for PfP are being discussed and could be adopted at the Prague Summit. For example, improvements are feasible in the co-ordination of Individual Partnership Programmes (IPP). NATO considers introducing a "Partnership Action Plan" which would serve as an umbrella and replace Individual Partnership Programmes (IPP). The "Partnership Action Plan" under discussion could allow focusing on functional areas, such as combating terrorism.

The Euro-Atlantic Partnership Council (EAPC)

45.   Succeeding the NACC, the Euro Atlantic Partnership Council (EAPC) was established in 1997 to increase Partners' contribution to Alliance decision-making processes as well as involving Partners more closely in consultations for the planning, execution and political oversight of NATO-led PfP Operations. The EAPC expanded NACC's original focus on practical political and security-related consultations to include crisis management, arms control, international terrorism, defence planning, civil-emergency and disaster preparedness, armaments cooperation and peace-support operations.

46.   The EAPC's minimum of institutional rules provides partner countries with many opportunities to initiate discussions on major issues of concern. At the 1999 Washington Summit, an Ad Hoc Working Group on Regional Cooperation in South-East Europe was set up under the EAPC to support NATO's South-East Europe Initiative (SEEI), which aims at long-term regional security and stability. Two initiatives that stood out in this initiative are the South-East Europe Assessment Paper on Regional Security Challenges and Opportunities (SEECAP) as well as the South-East Europe Security Cooperation Steering Group (SEEGROUP) established in 2000. The former was established to bring together neighbouring countries for exchange of information and perceptions of security challenges, while the latter was established to strengthen practical cooperation among neighbouring countries of the region.

47.   Partnership has developed into one of the most important instruments for fostering regional security and stability by developing crisis management capabilities and instruments. Today partner countries provide approximately 10% of the SFOR troops and some 18% of the forces deployed in KFOR. The structure of participation in such operations varies from partner countries contributing troops to be integrated with NATO units (Polish-Ukrainian battalion, Czech-Slovak unit) or to form joint units such as BALTBAT, or the Southeast European Brigade (SEEBRIG). Reflecting its success and its importance, Partnership was included in the

NATO Strategic Concept at the 1999 Washington Summit as a fundamental security task of the Alliance.

48. As the Alliance adapts to a changing security environment that features new threats, partnerships will evolve as well. Today's agenda for PfP and EAPC already include improving co-operation and capabilities to address terrorism and other non-conventional security threats. Nevertheless, Allies and partners should consider how to enhance training and exercises to carry out missions related to combat international terrorism and peacekeeping operations. To that end, Finland and Sweden have suggested to integrating anti-terrorist activities into the work of the EAPC and PfP. More generally, Allies and partners should devise a strategy to widen and strengthen partner countries' involvement in the main decision-making process, especially in the areas of PfP operations, anti-terrorism, crisis management and prevention as well as civil emergency planning.

49. As Lord Robertson has said, "Enlargement will fundamentally change the nature of partnerships". In fact, your Rapporteur anticipates that NATO partnerships will become even more important after the next Enlargement round. For one thing, PfP activities remain an essential instrument in building interoperability and the capability of partner countries to contribute to NATO-led PfP operations, but more importantly, the accession of new members will have an impact on security issues beyond Central and Eastern Europe.

50. Jan Erik Enestam, the Finnish defence minister, announced that Finland is considering whether to intensify its relations with NATO under the Partnership for Peace (PfP) programme, stressing, however, that Finland has no intentions to reconsider its non-aligned status in the near future. Participants in the NATO PA's October 2001 Rose-Roth seminar on "The Role of NATO in the Security of the Black Sea Region" anticipated that countries in the Caucasus and Central Asia, in particular, will be affected by further NATO enlargement. As a consequence, the Alliance should enhance its partnerships with Ukraine and Georgia to promote strategic stability and development in the South Caucasus-Caspian area.

51. On the political level, the EAPC can give those countries that have not applied for membership or will not be included in the next enlargement round a firm sense that they belong within the broader NATO family. As former US Ambassador to NATO, Robert Hunter, has argued that, as Partners demonstrate their capacity to take on additional responsibilities, NATO should consider giving the EAPC true decision-making powers beyond the capacity to help shape decisions of the North Atlantic Council. Moreover, Allies and partner countries

may want to consider whether the EAPC should gradually take on a role in "out-of-area" dispute and conflict management. Areas of concern to NATO members increasingly include or border EAPC member states. What is more, the relative balance between partner countries and Allies in the EAPC will progressively shift towards the latter after the Prague summit. With non-Allied membership of the EAPC increasingly dominated by countries east of Turkey, there is a good argument to be made for the EAPC to emphasise dispute and conflict resolution and to help countries in the Caucasus and Central to develop their politics and economies, as well as to reform their militaries.

The Mediterranean Dialogue

52.   Though the Mediterranean has always played a significant part in the European security equation, the Gulf War, the break-up of former Yugoslavia and, most recently, the threat of terrorism have reinforced the interest in this region.   NATO's Mediterranean Dialogue was launched in 1994 and aims at contributing to regional security and stability and achieving better mutual understanding. In February 2000 Algeria joined the six countries that initially signed on to the Dialogue, namely Egypt, Israel, Jordan, Mauritania, Morocco and Tunisia. The Dialogue provides for political discussions with the participating countries. Its work is organised through an annual Work Programme focusing on practical cooperation in security and defence-related areas, information, civil emergency planning and science.

53.   In October 2001, NATO and the seven Mediterranean Dialogue countries conducted a fifth round of political consultations on the security situation in the Mediterranean, notably in the aftermath of the attacks against the United States on 11 September. It was also an occasion to assess cooperation undertaken in the framework of the Dialogue and to look at areas where this could possibly be developed further. The Mediterranean will be increasingly important for European security, not only because of existing regional tensions, especially the unresolved Middle East crisis, whose conflict potential goes far beyond its point of origin. Other pressing security issues include terrorism, which is linked to a lack of democratic and economic reforms and a lack of fundamental freedoms and human rights, the proliferation of weapons of mass destruction by some countries along the Mediterranean shores and the rift between Europe and the Mediterranean region in terms of their democratic and economic development.

54.   Reflecting the need for increased cooperation between NATO and Mediterranean countries, the North Atlantic Council decided at the May 2002 Reykjavik meeting of foreign

ministers to upgrade the political and practical dimensions of the Mediterranean Dialogue. Improved cooperation will include consultation on security matters of common concern, including terrorism-related issues. NATO and its Mediterranean partners should focus on practical cooperation where concrete results could be quickly achieved. In addition to counter-terrorism, Lord Robertson identified military education, training and doctrine, defence reform, defence economics, border security and civil emergency planning as areas of possible cooperation.

Relations with Russia

55. Relations between NATO and the Russian Federation have developed very positively over the last 12 months, due to President Vladimir Putin's "pro-Western" approach and the terrorist attacks of 11 September 2001. Russia had raised objections to the previous enlargement round and, with few exceptions, Russian government officials had voiced strong criticism, if not outright rejection, of NATO's Open Door policy. However, last year's terror attacks in the US have led to a rapprochement between NATO and Russia with improved relations, primarily due to growing cooperation between the US and Russia over the war on terrorism in Afghanistan. This was already indicated on 13 September 2001 when the NATO-Russia Permanent Joint Council (PJC) issued a communiqué stating that the PJC has agreed to strengthen cooperation in the fight against international terrorism.

56. A new quality in relations was reached when NATO and Russian Heads of State and Government established the new NATO-Russia Council (NRC) in Rome on 28 May. The creation of the NRC provides opportunities for consultation, joint decision and joint action on a wide range of issues. The NRC will focus on specific, well-defined projects where NATO and Russia share a common goal. The initial work plan, as identified by the Rome Declaration, includes projects in the following areas: assessment of the terrorist threat, crisis management, non-proliferation, arms control and confidence-building measures, theatre missile defence (TMD), search and rescue at sea, military-to-military cooperation and defence reform, civil emergencies, as well as new threats and challenges. Other projects may be added as the NRC develops.

57. The NRC replaces the PJC, that was set up in 1997 but never adequately used because of disputes over Kosovo and other issues. The NRC is chaired by the NATO Secretary General. It will meet at least once a month at ambassadorial and military representative level, twice a year at foreign and defence minister level and, on relevant occasions, will summon a

Summit. The first meeting of NRC "at twenty" at defence minister level took place on 6 June at NATO Headquarters. Unlike the PJC, the Council gives Russia an equal voice on decisions in the areas listed above. However, the NRC does not affect NATO's existing responsibilities as a political and military alliance based on collective defence. The NRC does not give Russia a veto over NATO decisions or action. NATO Allies retain the freedom to act, by consensus, on any issue at any time. NATO Allies will decide among themselves on the issues they will address in the NRC, as well as the extent to which they will take a common position on these issues.

58. If used to the maximum extent, closer NATO-Russian cooperation will be crucial for improving European security. Though we are still at a very early stage in the new NATO-Russia Council, prospects for a genuine cooperation appear bright. Senior NATO officials describe the atmosphere at the meetings are very open and productive. The NATO Secretary General reported at the Warsaw meeting of 20 defence ministers in late September that NRC progress in the field of defence was "already remarkable". More specifically, NATO and Russia had "already produced impressive results" in areas like TMD and Peacekeeping, according to Lord Robertson. Your Rapporteur sees the reinvigoration of the Alliance's partnership with Russia as an important development. There should be no taboo subjects between the partners, and the NRC allows for addressing sensitive issues. This includes the situation on Georgia's northern border, where groups of Chechen rebels are operating. The Allies consider that "Georgia's territorial integrity must be respected", but they also share "Russia's concerns faced with the use of Georgian territory by the rebels as a relative safe hinterland", stressed by the NATO Secretary General.

59. Russian acquiescence to the presence of US military advisers to Georgia and the use of bases in countries of the CIS for American and Allied aircraft reflects the new spirit of partnership endorsed by President Putin. A lot of work needs to be done, however, to overcome old stereotypes that continue to exist in large parts of the Russian public that views NATO sceptically. According to opinion polls taken in early 2002, i.e. before the NRC was established, approximately 60 % of Russians "totally distrust" NATO. It is hoped that those in Russia who are critical of the West will develop a more realistic understanding of what NATO is and what it stands for. Members of the Political Committee learned during the recent visit to Moscow that President Putin, though enjoying high public approval ratings, lacks the necessary support in the bureaucracy, where many senior and lower-level officials remain deeply critical of NATO. In the meetings with the Committee, some experts took the view that Mr Putin may have already "overextended" himself, thus making himself vulnerable to criticism.

60.   Providing a parliamentary dimension for the newly created NRC, the NATO PA decided at the Spring Session 2002 in Sofia to create a parliamentary counterpart to the Council. This Parliamentary dimension will take the form of a NATO-Russia Parliamentary Standing Committee that will cover the same issues as the NATO-Russia Council and will provide an overall co-ordination role concerning relations between the Assembly and the Russian Federal Assembly.   Like the NATO-Russia Council, the members of the Parliamentary Standing Committee will work as equal partners in areas of common interest. The first meeting of this Committee will take place at the Assembly's Annual Session in Istanbul in November 2002.

Relations with Ukraine

61.   NATO's special relationship with Ukraine, the "Distinctive Partnership" established 1997, has generated a closer political engagement between the partners, which in turn has led to more substantial and effective cooperation in a number of areas. It has made significant contributions to international peace-keeping operations in South-East Europe. As members of the Political Committee were informed during the joint visit to Kiev in November 2001, NATO assists Ukraine in its efforts to reform its military from a Soviet-legacy force into one that is smaller, more professional, and capable of defending Ukrainian security while contributing to international missions.   More specifically, the Alliance provides assistance in implementing realistic planning and budgeting, and matching its plans to its resources. NATO-Ukraine co-operation in defence reform includes ongoing consultations on revising the national security concept, military doctrine and the transition of military personnel to the civilian sector.   In addition, enhancing transparency in decision-making, work on reforming the armed forces to include border security, involving areas like stopping drug-trafficking, arms smuggling, and terrorism. NATO-Ukraine co-operation also extends to the civilian sector, where Ukraine is gaining technical expertise and learning how to work with NATO countries in areas such as search and rescue operations and emergency management.

62.   The 11 September 2001 terrorist attacks had led the Ukrainian National Security and Defence Council to decide on further revision of the national security concept that is being prepared in Ukraine, members were told in Kiev in November 2001. Shortly thereafter, NATO and Ukraine issued a joint statement condemning "in the strongest possible terms" the terrorist attacks in the US. Ukraine pledged to contribute fully to finding and punishing those who committed the atrocities. For example, responding to a request by NATO, Ukraine granted rights for seven NATO planes to fly over the state's territory to participate in the anti-terrorist

operations in Afghanistan. Moreover, it has given permission for American planes to land at airfields in Kiev, Lviv, and Odessa, in emergency.

63.   Though it had earlier expressed fears of becoming a "buffer zone" between NATO and Russia, Ukraine had gradually come to see NATO as a collective security organisation that does not threaten its security. In fact, Ukraine welcomed the last enlargement round of the Alliance. Government officials from Kiev add that they welcome the continuation of NATO's Open Door process if it does not reproduce new separation lines or "zones of influence" in the Euro-Atlantic area. Volodymyr Shkidchenko, the Ukrainian minister of defence, reconfirmed this at the Munich Security Seminar in early February 2002, stating that Ukraine "considers NATO enlargement as expansion of the security, stability and democracy zone in Europe".

64.   Ukraine has also welcomed the rapprochement between NATO and Russia. Improving relations between Russia and NATO would benefit Ukraine by reducing tensions between two of its important neighbours, members of the Political Committee were told during the Kiev visit early November 2001. Lord Robertson, the NATO Secretary General, told Anatoliy Zlenko, the Ukrainian foreign minister, on 6 December that an enhanced NATO-Russia cooperation would in no way disrupt NATO-Ukraine relations. At the same time, it appears that Ukraine's southern flank is exposed to a relative deficit of security and stability, owing among other things to the unresolved Transdnistria conflict and the possible unravelling of Moldova, with ripple effects on Ukraine and other countries in the region.

65.   NATO-Ukraine cooperation, which has already been very successful under the Distinctive Partnership, will therefore intensify. At their meeting in Reykjavik on 15 May, Allied and Ukrainian foreign ministers underlined their desire to take the NATO-Ukraine relationship to a qualitatively new level. Ukraine's Security and Defence Council declared on 23 May that it would start the process to seek NATO membership. Though setting a date for starting membership negotiations would be premature at this early stage, the alliance is prepared to help Ukraine draw closer to Europe on condition that Ukraine respects democratic norms, said NATO Secretary General Lord Robertson at the North Atlantic Council's meeting in Kyiv in early July. At the time of writing, discussions are under way to forge closer cooperation between NATO and Ukraine by establishing an "action plan" that would set annual target plans for cooperation. Such an "action plan" could be modelled on the MAP, and would provide both increased transparency as well as benchmarks against which progress in reforms could be evaluated.

Enlargement and the Future of NATO

66.   Estonia, Latvia, Lithuania, Slovakia, Slovenia, and also Bulgaria and Romania, have made great strides towards political stability, democracy and a market economy. They have managed to achieve levels of preparedness in all five chapters of the MAP or are about to do so, enabling them to assume the obligations and responsibilities of membership to contribute to the security of the North Atlantic area. Your Rapporteur would therefore suggest that NATO Heads of State and Government should invite Bulgaria, Estonia, Latvia, Lithuania, Romania, Slovakia and Slovenia to join the Alliance.

67.   If NATO Heads of State and Government extend an invitation at Prague, and if these candidate countries continue to implement their plans, parliaments of NATO member countries should ratify the necessary treaty protocols without delay.

68.   NATO applicant countries already contribute to Euro-Atlantic stability and security as they participate in NATO-led peace operations, establish good relations among themselves and with their neighbours, and transform their defence and civilian structures to be compatible with NATO. In 2001, seven of the nine NATO aspirants made force contributions to NATO operations in Kosovo, and eight of the nine contributed to NATO operations in Bosnia. What is more, NATO applicant countries actively support the "war on terrorism" by military and non-military means. They act as *de facto* NATO allies.

69.   Candidate countries have invested heavily in preparations for NATO membership and continue to do so. They have committed to NATO's objectives and operations and comply with NATO's guidelines for defence reform.   Their continuing commitment of considerable resources to security issues to comply with MAP is especially noteworthy as they need to reform on many fronts. Their people, who have been under communist rule for decades, are eager to see their living conditions improve soon. Not surprisingly, during the Sub-Committee visits to candidate countries, host speakers often conveyed the need for a "breakthrough" at the Prague summit to honour reform commitments, as well as to counter the "reform-fatigue" some countries are beginning to experience after over a decade of strenuous reform efforts.

70.   Arguments against NATO enlargement - that is, that it needlessly antagonises Russia, costs too much, weakens the Alliance politically and militarily, and distracts NATO from its original mission - ring even more hollow after 11 September 2001. As the previous round demonstrated, enlargement has made NATO both politically and militarily stronger and has

further contributed to stabilising Europe by, *inter alia*, improving relations between Russia and the three NATO newcomers.

71.   Your Rapporteur concurs with an editorial in the Washington Post on 7 April that argued that "the real benefit of NATO expansion lies in the leverage it offers to shape the political and economic development of European countries where democracy and free markets are not yet taken for granted". To achieve this, NATO must retain its military viability and therefore resolve its capabilities challenges. As Reykjavik and subsequent NAC meetings demonstrate, NATO applies the "lessons learned" from the previous round. Past experience has shown that new member countries need several years before they can contribute fully to Alliance security. This is why it is so important to continue the MAP process after an invitation has been issued, as stated in the Reykjavik communiqué.

72.   The Prague Summit provides an historic opportunity to reaffirm the importance of NATO to the collective security of the Euro-Atlantic region by addressing new threats, developing new capabilities, and by inviting new members. With regard to the latter, it is not the end, but rather the beginning, as invitees must continue reforms to meet the full responsibilities of a NATO member, including the completion of issues identified by the MAP. Moreover, the enlargement process will continue with remaining candidate countries progressing their reforms unabated. NATO Partnerships will be further strengthened as the Alliance further adapts its to the changing security environment. As perceptions of security are changing, NATO transformation is both desirable and necessary. New members and improved partnerships can play an important role in enhancing overall security and stability in the Euro-Atlantic region. If done properly, inviting new members will strengthen the Alliance NATO enlargement therefore deserves both parliamentary support and attention, both during and after the ratification process.

73.   Parliaments should closely follow and monitor implementation of commitments by the current candidate countries. Upon candidate countries meeting accession criteria as laid out in the MAP, NATO parliaments should quickly ratify accession agreements. As to NATO's parliamentary dimension, the NATO Parliamentary Assembly should include parliamentary representatives in its Standing Committee, once the accession protocols have been signed. The next round of the enlargement process must not create "dividing lines"; the NATO PA's continuing commitment to dialogue and partnership forms a crucial part of NATO's inclusion of its neighbours. Thus, Parliaments and the NATO PA can play a proactive role in ascertaining

the sustained commitment of NATO member countries to assist and support all candidate countries, both those that will be invited at the Prague Summit and those that will not.