

KEY COMMITMENTS AND EXPECTATIONS FROM THE 2024 NATO SUMMIT IN WASHINGTON

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Abstract: In the period from 9 until 11 July, 2024, the 75 anniversary Summit of the Heads of State and Government of the Alliance was held in Washington, in the conditions of a conventional threat to the security of the Alliance and in a time of war on the soil of Europe. NATO leaders discussed strategically important issues related to deterrence and defense, long-term support for Ukraine and cooperation with the Alliance's global partners. The focus in strengthening the Alliance's defense and deterrence is placed through "investing in new, modern high-end military capabilities" and "increasing the readiness of our forces," (Stoltenberg, 2024) all underpinned by major increases in defence spending across the Alliance by supporting the increase in defense spending.

I have suggested that at the Summit, we agree a big NATO role in coordinating and providing security assistance and training for Ukraine," he said. "I strongly believe that we need a firmer, stronger institutionalized structure for the support. Ad-hoc, short term, voluntary announcements are good – but in the long term, we need more predictable, stronger support for Ukraine. In relation to the support of Ukraine, NATO is expected to increase its role in the coordinating and providing security assistance and training for Ukraine. According to Stoltenberg, this implies the establishment of a "firmer, stronger institutionalized structure" that will ensure a more predictable and sustainable long-term support of Ukraine. Cooperation with partners is crucial for security and stability because security is not only a regional issue but also a global issue.

Keywords: NATO, Deterrence and Defence, Partners, Ukraine.

Introduction

On the seventy-fifth anniversary of the existence of the Alliance, the Heads of states and governments discussed the issues related to the strengthening of the defense and the collective defense strategy, on the fight against terrorism, on the long-term support of Ukraine, on the challenges from the strengthened influence of China, on strengthening cooperation with partners, on the importance of unity, on the timely detection of global challenges and paving the way for a more cooperative and sustainable future based on a

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360-degree approach, as well as on the impact of emerging and disruptive technologies on security, climate change and the implementation of the platform for Women, Peace and Security within the three key tasks of the Alliance.

Deliverables in Deterrence and Defence

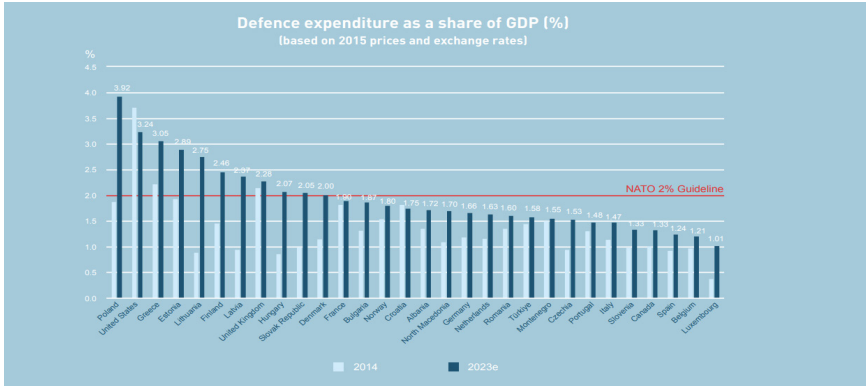
The general conclusion from the Washington Summit is that the Allies are satisfied with the delivery of what was agreed from 2022 Madrid Summit and 2023 Vilnius Summit with regard to the defense and deterrence. Namely, in the adaptation process of the Alliance started in 2020, the focus was placed on the implementation of two key concepts: the Deterrence and Defense Concept in the Euro-Atlantic Area - DDA with a focus on the present and The NATO Warfighting Capstone Concept – NWCC offers long-term guidance. It is believed that these Concepts should provide adequate defense and deterrence against all adversaries of the Alliance.

In 2022 in Madrid, the Alliance adopted the New Strategic Concept and established a new line of deterrence and defense in accordance with a 360-degree in all domains of action. It is an effort to deploy highly-ready combat-robust forces on the Alliance's Eastern flank. The plan is to realize this through the gradual increasing of 8 (eight) combat groups from battalion to brigade level (The Secretary General's Annual Report 2023, 2024). At the Summit in Vilnius (2023), three key decisions were made: first, a new Defense Investment Pledge was adopted, which aims to provide more resources for the development of allies' capabilities and the fulfillment of the three key tasks. Second, the new multinational and multi-domain Allied Reaction Force (ARF) was established and third the new generation of regional plans was approved (Vilnius Summit Communiqué 2023).

Achievements in terms of deterrence and defense are evaluated through the work done in three elements: cash, contribution to the new force structure of the Alliance, and capabilities. The results so far show that the defense and deterrence against all threats and challenges in all domains of warfare as well as in the various strategic directions in the Euro-Atlantic area are being continuously improved.

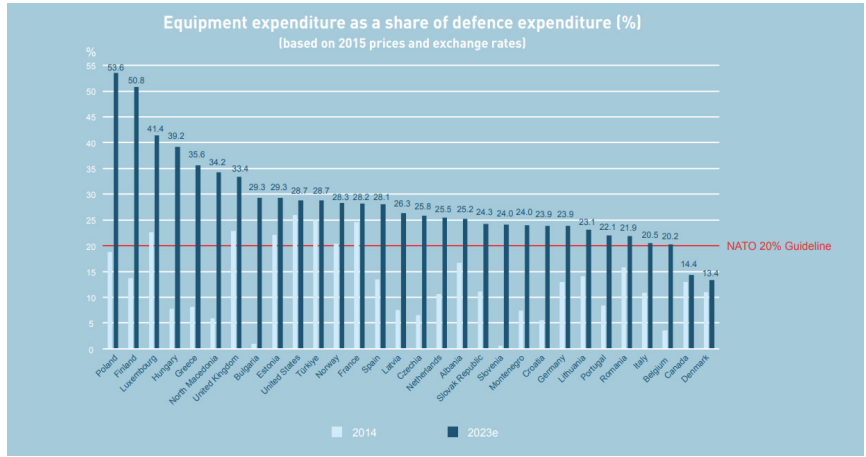
At the 2014 Wales Summit, Allies adopted the "Defence Investment Pledge" which committed defense spending to reach the level of 2% of GDP by 2024, of which at least 20% will be allocated for new major equipment, research and development (Wales Summit Declaration, 2014). These funds were planned to be invested in the development of defense capabilities in order the Allies to ensure that their forces reach the standards of deployability, sustainment and other agreed capabilities (Trismpioti, 2023).

One point of the discussion in Washington was the realization of agreed Defense Investment Pledge from Wales in 2014. In 2022, 7 Allies met the guideline of spending 2% of their GDP on defence (Trismpioti, 2023) and in 2023 this number increased to 11 – this, in contrast, to only three Allies meeting the guideline in 2014 (The Secretary General's Annual Report 2023, 2024). By the Washington Summit two-thirds of the Allies or 24 had reached the at least 2% of GDP in defence (Washington Summit Declaration, 2024). In 2024, North Macedonia reached the spending in defence level of 2.05% of GDP in less than four years of membership in the Alliance.



Picture 1. Defence expenditures as a share of GDP in %. Source: The Secretary General's Annual Report 2023, (2024). Investing in Defence, Resourced for The Future, March 14, 2024, https://www.nato.int/nato_static_f2014/assets/pdf/2024/3/pdf/sgar23-en.pdf#page=49

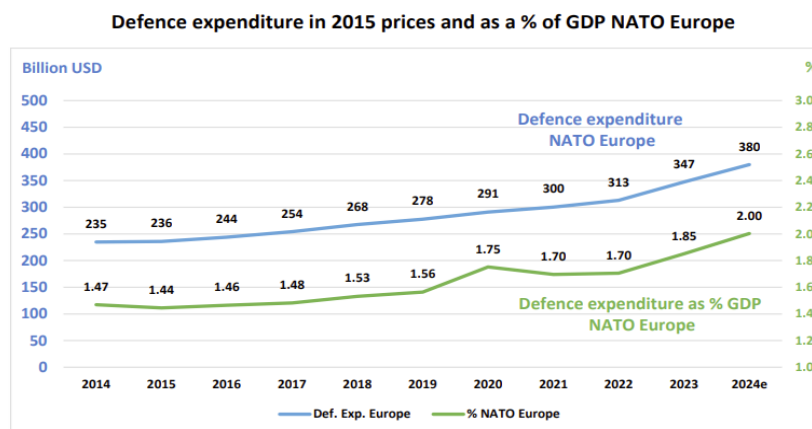
Regarding the second part of the commitment that 20% of defense expenditures will be allocated for new major equipment, research and development, it was stated that the situation is more than satisfactory. Namely, in 2022, 24 allies achieved the goal, and in 2023 28 allies spent more than 20% on the acquisition of new major equipment compared to 7 (seven) in 2014. In 2022, North Macedonia reached the level of 20% of defence spending for the new major equipment and modernization, and in 2024, about 30% of defense spending are allocated for the new major equipment and modernization.



Picture 2. Equipment expenditures as a share of the GDP in %. Source: The Secretary General's Annual Report 2023, (2024). Investing in Defence, Resourced for The Future, March 14, 2024, https://www.nato.int/nato_static_f2014/assets/pdf/2024/3/pdf/sgar23-en.pdf#page=49

In terms of total defense spending, the data shows that European allies and Canada are continuously increasing defense spending. Compared to 2021, in 2022 they increased by 2.2% in real terms and amounted to 350 billion dollars (expressed in constant prices from 2015) (Trismpioti, 2023). This trend continues in 2023 when, according to Stoltenberg, expenses have an "unprecedented rise" of 11% in real terms compared to 2022 (The Secretary General's Annual Report 2023, 2024). In 2024, an increase of 18% was observed in defense

spending compared to 2023, and it is predicted that European allies and Canada will spend in 2024 (expressed in 2015 constant prices) 380 billion dollars (Stoltenberg, 2024). If you consider that in 2014 NATO Allies invested an average of 1.47% of GDP in defense, a huge progress is visible in a decade as these figures have grown to reach the level of almost 2% of GDP in 2024.



GDP and defence expenditures in 2015 prices (billion USD)

	2014	2015	2016	2017	2018	2019	2020	2021	2022	2023	2024e
GDP NATO Total	35,304	36,167	36,839	37,856	38,782	39,585	37,917	40,233	41,341	42,276	42,827
GDP NATO Europe	15,987	16,315	16,639	17,151	17,465	17,752	16,616	17,709	18,356	18,769	18,970
Def. Exp. NATO Total	910	896	913	904	929	999	1,018	1,057	1,037	1,075	1,159
Def. Exp. Europe	235	236	244	254	268	278	291	300	313	347	380
% NATO Total	2.58	2.48	2.48	2.39	2.40	2.52	2.69	2.63	2.51	2.54	2.71
% NATO Europe	1.47	1.44	1.46	1.48	1.53	1.56	1.75	1.70	1.70	1.85	2.00

Picture 3. Defence Expenditures in 2015 prices and as a % of GDP. Source: Defence expenditure as percentage of GDP NATO total and NATO Europe, February 2024, https://www.nato.int/nato_static_fl2014/assets/pdf/2024/2/pdf/FACTSHEET-NATO-defence-spending-en.pdf.

Encouraged by what has been achieved, but also driven by the war in Ukraine and the increasing demand for military equipment and ammunition, at the 2023 Vilnius Summit the Allies adopted a new “Defence Investment Pledge”. With it, the members committed to continuously increase investments in defense expenditures after 2024, with a minimum of 2% of GDP representing an initial threshold for each ally, not a target. At the same time, the need to allocate at least 20% for new major equipment research and development remained unchanged. Increased defence expenditures means greater investment in modern capabilities and increased contribution to operations, missions and other NATO activities in order to overcome current shortfalls, and achieve requirements in all domains of warfare (Washington Summit Declaration, 2024).

The results of this defense investment policy are visible and recognized because in 2024 the defense expenditures of all 32 Alliance member countries reached a value of 1.2 trillion dollars.

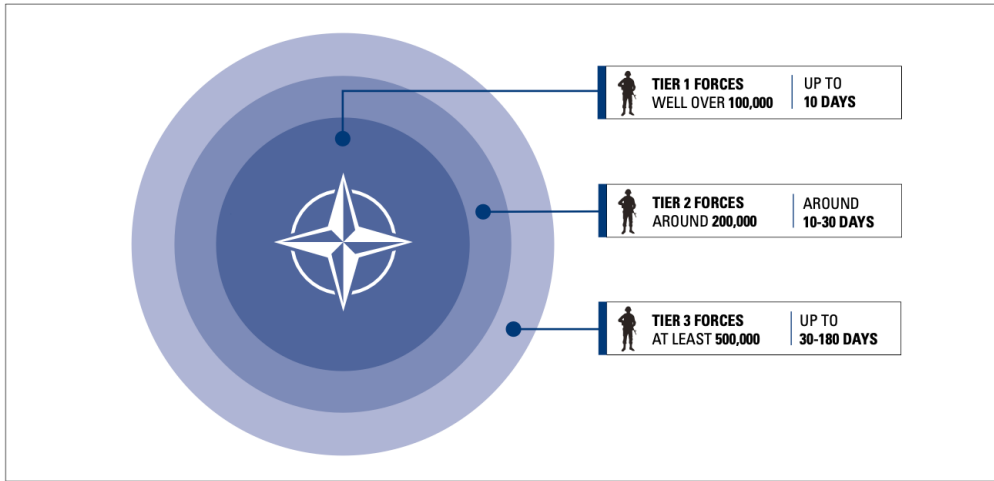
The Alliances New Force Structure

In the past few years, NATO has taken the biggest step in strengthening collective defense through adaptation and modernization of the Alliance. The measures taken contributed to strengthening defense and deterrence in all domains and strategic directions of action in the Euro-Atlantic area. Very highly trained combat forces have been deployed on the Eastern flank of the Alliance with the aim to deter any potential adversary. As a result of the illegitimate annexation of Crimea by Russia in 2014, the Allies, as part of longer term Adaptation Measures of the Readiness Action Plan from the 2016 Warsaw Summit, among others, agreed on three key decisions. First increased the readiness of the NATO Response Force – NRF, second, established Very High Readiness Joint Task Force - VJTF, able to begin deployment within two to three days, and third established eight multinational NATO Force Integration Units on the territory of Allies in the eastern part of the Alliance to assist in training of Alliance forces and in the reception of reinforcements when needed (Warsaw Summit Communiqué, 2016). These decisions included the establishment of an enhanced Forward Presence (eFP) in the NorthEast of the Alliance, and a tailored Forward Presence (tFP) in the SouthEast.

Within the enhanced Forward Presence (eFP), in 2017, the Alliance deployed 4 multinational battle groups in Estonia, Latvia, Lithuania and Poland (NATO's military presence in the east of the Alliance, 2024). The Army of the Republic of North Macedonia have been participating in the Canadian-led Alliance Battle Group in Latvia since June 2022. At the Madrid Summit in June 2022, the Allies agreed to a fundamental change in the concept of deterrence and defence of NATO, which includes strengthening the Alliance's Eastern flank. In accordance with these decisions, the NATO operation "enhanced Vigilance Activity" - eVA began, which refers to the deployment of additional 40,000 highly trained robust forces on the Eastern Flank of the Alliance, as well as establishing of multinational battle groups in Bulgaria, Romania, Hungary and Slovakia (Extraordinary NATO Summit in Brussels, 2022). The Army of the Republic of North Macedonia has been actively participating in the Alliance battle groups in Bulgaria and Romania since November 2022. This decision implied a gradual growth of the existing 8 (eight) battalion groups from battalion to brigade level (Madrid Summit Declaration, 2022). The New Force Structure (which will replace the NATO Response Force) enables the Alliance to deliver a response with greater scope and with highly prepared forces.

At the Summit in Vilnius in 2023, the Alliance promotes the new multinational and multi-domain Allied Reaction Force which will provide it with more options for rapid response against threats and crises in all directions (Vilnius Summit Communiqué, 2023). Under the old force structure through the NATO Response Force, Allies can deploy highly prepared forces with a readiness of under 15 days. The New Force Structure of the Allies allows them to have at their disposal over 300,000 soldiers with different levels of readiness (New NATO Force Model, 2023). The ARF are operational from July 1, 2024 (JFC Brunssum Public Affairs Office, 2024).

Figure 1: NATO's New Force Model



Picture.4. NATO New Force Structure with days of readiness and available forces. Source: New NATO Force Model, (2023). https://www.nato.int/nato_static_fl2014/assets/pdf/2022/6/pdf/220629-infographic-new-nato-force-model.pdf

However, if we look back a little, we will recognize that the military adaptation of the Alliance began in 2019, when the NATO Military Committee agreed the new military strategy. This was by the adoption of the NATO Concept for Deterrence and Defense in the Euro-Atlantic Area – DDA by the NATO Defense Ministers followed in 2020. The DDA established the framework for peacetime deterrence activities (known as SACEUR's Strategic Directive–SSD) and crisis and conflict response (known as SACEUR's AOR-wide Strategic Plan–SASP). The final segment of this process was the development and adoption of Regional Defense Plans that define the responsibilities and capabilities that nations need to provide under the SASP umbrella (House of Commons Defence Committee, 2023).

The work of NATO experts in the preparation of the three regional defense plans began in 2018 (Pugnet, 2023). According to Admiral Rob Bauer, chair of NATO's Military Committee (CMC), "approve three regional plans, which explain what [each nation] have to do given the geography of those regions to deter and defend (all threats), in all domains -space, cyber, land, maritime, air"... Out of those plans the next step is which forces, which capabilities in all domains - space, cyber, land, maritime, and air - do you need to execute those tasks..." (Bauer, 2023). In order to achieve the necessary level of readiness and manning, the allies determine a specific number of forces and equipment that will be put into operation and support of these plans. What follows after the adoption of the regional defense plans is the work of their execution, providing the necessary number of forces with greater readiness, as well as practicing the plans on the ground. The next step is related to equipping and investing in defense through NATO's defense planning process, which will share the burden of developing capabilities among nations in the five domains (Bauer, 2023). At the 2022 Madrid Summit, NATO also announced the new generation of military plans, and at the 2023 Vilnius Summit, it endorsed the Alliance's robust regional defense plans.

At the 2024 Washington Summit, Allies noted that forward defence have been strengthened and the allied ability to quickly reinforce any ally under threat has been

enhanced. The work done so far is reflected in a new generation of NATO defense plans that will make the Alliance stronger and more capable to deter and defend against any potential adversary, including at short or no notice (NCISG, 2024). The Alliance's commitment is reflected in delivering the required high readiness forces across all domains, including for a robust and agile Allied Reaction Force (Washington Summit Declaration, 2024).

Contribution in Capability Development

Further strengthening of the collective defense is planned to be implemented through the delivery of the necessary capabilities, forces, resources and infrastructure. Then, strengthening training and exercises to demonstrate the ability of the Alliance to defend, and rapidly reinforce any Ally that comes under threat, including through the Steadfast Defender 24 exercise, increasing capabilities through the NATO defense planning process, strengthening the NATO command and control structure, the ability to maneuver, strengthen, supply and sustain forces on the ground in order to respond to threats, as well as training, exercising and integrating NATO's Forward Land Forces within the framework of new plans, integrating the capabilities of Finland and Sweden in NATO plans, strengthening cyber defense, protection of critical underwater infrastructure and in many other areas (Washington Summit Declaration, 2024).

From the Declaration it can be seen that the Alliance plans to strengthen the capabilities related to air defense by advancing Integrated Air and Missile Defence - IAMD, based on the 360 - degrees approach. It means implementation of the new IAMD Rotational Model in the Euro - Atlantic Area with an initial focus on Eastern Flank. In addition, the Alliance is satisfied with the development of NATO Ballistic Missile Defence (BMD) Enhanced Operational Capability, which will ensure full protection of the NATO European population, territory and forces against the increased threats caused by the proliferation of ballistic missiles (Washington Summit Declaration, 2024).

The Alliance sees strengthening national and collective resilience as a key element in providing credible defense and deterrence and accomplishing three core tasks. Strengthening resilience is in the spirit of Article 3 of the Washington Treaty and is primarily a national responsibility and requires a whole of government approach, greater engagement of the private sector and society. Resilience will be strengthened by integrating civilian planning into national and collective defense planning in peace, crisis and conflict.

Long-Term Security Assistance for Ukraine

At the Washington Summit, the leaders reaffirmed their solidarity with the Ukrainian people and supported Ukraine's independence, territorial integrity and sovereignty within its internationally recognized borders "directly contributes to Euro-Atlantic security" (Washington Summit Declaration, 2024). More specifically, the leaders announced that they will support Ukraine in the fight against Russia with additional "air defence systems and other military capabilities" that are critical to success in the war. However, the leaders did not extend an invitation to Ukraine to join the Alliance, instead encouraging it to continue its reform progress because its future is in Euro-Atlantic integration. NATO will be in a position to extend an invitation to Ukraine to join the Alliance when Allies agree and conditions are met (Psaledakis, and Brunnstrom, 2024). More specifically they welcomed "the concrete

progress Ukraine has made since the Vilnius Summit on its required democratic, economic, and security reforms” (Washington Summit Declaration, 2024).

In addition, from the provisions of the Declaration, it can be seen that the Leaders made 4 (four) key decisions that should provide long-term security support to Ukraine in the war against Russian Aggression. These decisions include:

1. Establishing the **NATO Security Assistance and Training for Ukraine – NSATU** with aim to coordinate the provision of military equipment and training to Ukraine by Allies, and partners. NSATU will operate in member states and will support Ukraine’s self defence in line with the UN Charter. According to the International Law, NSATU will not make NATO a party of the conflict. The mission of the NSATU is to support transformation of Ukraine’s defence and security forces, enabling its further integration with NATO.
2. Announced a **Pledge of Long-Term Security Assistance for Ukraine** for the provision of military equipment, assistance, and training to support Ukraine in building a force capable of defeating Russian aggression. Through a proportional contribution, according to the shared contribution of the allied GDP, Allies are committed to support Ukraine politically, financially, military, economically and humanitarian, including military assistance amounting to roughly €40 billion annually for 2024. Allies are also making available their defence industry facilities to support Ukraine’s needs in military and other equipment. The goal is to provide a sustainable level of long-term and stable security support to Ukraine in the war. The need for further support to Ukraine will be re-evaluated during the 2025 NATO summit in The Hague. The provision of military equipment, assistance, and training for Ukraine, including: Purchase of military equipment for Ukraine; In-kind support donated to Ukraine; Costs related to maintenance, logistics and transportation of military equipment for Ukraine; Costs for military training for Ukraine; Operational costs associated with provision of military support to Ukraine; Investments in and support for Ukraine’s defence infrastructure and defence industry; All contributions to NATO Trust Funds for Ukraine, including non-lethal aid. Any support provided to Ukraine in accordance with the above criteria will be considered a contribution, regardless of whether it is provided through NATO, on a bilateral, multilateral or other basis. This includes assistance provided through the Comprehensive Assistance Package for Ukraine, in the Contact Group for Ukraine and other support formats. Allies will report NATO twice a year on deliveries to Ukraine starting January 1, 2024. Despite this Commitment, the Allies recommend continuing political, economic, financial and humanitarian support to Ukraine (Washington Summit Declaration, 2024).
3. Established **the NATO-Ukraine Joint Analysis, Training, and Education Centre** - JATEC, which is an important pillar of practical cooperation, in identifying lessons learned from the Russian war against Ukraine and aims to increase Ukraine’s interoperability with NATO.
4. To facilitate communication and improve coordination, NATO decided to appoint a **High Representative in Ukraine** with a permanent seat in Kyiv.

Cooperation with Partners

Partnerships for NATO represent a key mechanism for promoting stability, for a positive impact on the global environment and respect for international law. NATO fosters partnerships through the Partnership for Peace, the Mediterranean Dialogue, the Istanbul Initiative and with partners across the globe, especially with the Indo-Pacific partners and the European Union. Cooperation with the Indo-Pacific partners – South Korea, Japan, Australia and New Zealand is essential because this region directly affects Euro-Atlantic security. The intentions of the Alliance are to strengthen this cooperation in the future. Partnerships based on mutual trust and respect, political dialogue and cooperation play an important role in the implementation of the Alliance's core tasks.

Since the beginning of the war in Ukraine, the Alliance has established a program of cooperation with the so-called Partners of Risk who feel threatened by Russia's aggression against Ukraine. In order to support the Partners of risk, the Alliance established a mechanism for Defense and Related Security Capacities Building Initiative. This program includes a wide range of support and assistance in the development of the capabilities of the armies of the Partners of Risk through the implementation of Alliance standards, including support in equipping and modernization. The leaders welcomed Moldova's progress in implementation of democratic reforms and encouraged Bosnia and Herzegovina to continue on the path of European integration.

Regarding the cooperation with the EU, it is more than clear that the Alliance continuously invests in building the strategic partnership relationship and deepening the cooperation with the EU due to the fact that 23 countries out of 27 EU members are also NATO members. NATO sees the EU as an essential strategic partner with which it develops cooperation in all areas with special emphasis on space, cyber, climate change, defense and emerging and disruptive technologies. Collaboration is characterized by coherence and synchronicity, taking care to avoid unnecessary duplication in the development of capabilities. NATO and the EU are not seen as competitors, but complementary each other in areas of mutual interest.

The partnership between NATO and the EU is crucial in maintaining security and stability in the Euro-Atlantic area and in dealing with growing security challenges and threats. Together, the EU and NATO represent more than 1 billion inhabitants and some of the world's largest economies and have significant political and military influence in global settings (EU-NATO cooperation, 2024). Defense cooperation and the strengthening of European defense also play a major role. Cooperation between NATO and the EU will continue to strengthen and develop at a strategic level based on respect for the principles of mutual openness, transparency, complementarity and respect for mutual differences, different mandates, different autonomous decision-making processes and institutional integrity. So far, three joint declarations have been adopted to strengthen cooperation between NATO and the EU (Joint Declaration on EU-NATO Cooperation, 2023). These Declarations define the principles of cooperation and areas of mutual interest for action.

And at this Summit, the Alliance did not forget about the strategically important Western Balkans and the Black Sea region, which are of exceptional importance for security in Europe. The support of the countries of the Western Balkans includes cooperation in dealing with hybrid and cyber, dealing with disinformation and hostile influences from third countries

or non-state actors. Regarding the Black Sea region, the Alliance reaffirms its support for respecting the security, stability and freedom of navigation in the Black Sea by respecting the Montreal Convention of 1936.

Conclusion

The Jubilee Summit not only celebrated the 75th anniversary of the Washington Treaty, but also determined the key documents needed for further consolidation of the Alliance and established a new vision and projection for its further adaptation. In Washington, the Leaders of the Alliance and the partner countries confirmed the seriousness of their intentions through discussion and proposal of solutions to take a common position to deal with the challenges and threats in the Euro-Atlantic area multiplied at a time of increased competitiveness. The focus was on the delivery of what was agreed from the previous Alliance summits, related to the implementation of the Defense and Deterrence Concept in the Euro-Atlantic area, the Warfighting Capstone Concept, long-term support for Ukraine and deepening cooperation with partners.

Leaders are satisfied with what has been delivered so far on the DDA as 24 members have reached the defense spending level of 2% of GDP set at the Wales Summit ten years ago. They firmly believe that 2% of GDP is not enough to meet the requirements for the development of capabilities according to the 2023 Vilnius Defence Investment Pledge. A minimum 2% of GDP is an entry threshold not a target, for defense spending after 2024. With this policy, the Alliance expects timely fulfillment of the requirements for the development of the capabilities necessary to fulfill the defense and deterrence of every inch of the territory of the Alliance. Regarding the delivery of the agreed forces, the results indicate that the implementation of the New Alliance Force Structure is proceeding as planned. Proof of that is that since July 1st the Allied Response Force is in operational use, that is, the New Force Structure is fully functional. The focus of capability development remains on air defense, space, cyber, exercises and other areas of warfare.

Regarding Ukraine, major decisions have been taken that aim to demonstrate the determination, unity and solidarity of the Alliance in terms of long-term support of the Ukrainian people in the fight against Russian aggression. The most important decision is the Pledge on long-term security support of Ukraine, to which the allies commit themselves to deliver annually support in the amount of 40 billion euros. The purpose of such support is to provide a sustainable level of long-term and stable security support to Ukraine in the war against Russia. NATO Security Assistance and Training for Ukraine - NATO Security Assistance and Training for Ukraine - NSATU was established with aim of coordination in the provision of military equipment and training to Ukraine by the Allies. They established the NATO-Ukraine Joint Analysis, Training, and Education Center (JATEC) and appointed a senior political representative of the Alliance in Kyiv.

NATO reaffirmed cooperation with partners established through various cooperation mechanisms. Partnerships are seen as a key mechanism in strengthening security and preserving peace in a global framework. Special attention is paid to the cooperation and development of the partnership with the EU, which has gradually been raised to the level of a strategic partnership, but the strengthening of cooperation with the Indo-Pacific partners is not forgotten.

The general conclusion is that the Alliance is satisfied with what has been achieved so far in the delivery of what was agreed from the previous summits and the 2022 Strategic Concept. The decisions made at this Summit will have an impact on the further adaptation of the Alliance and the fulfillment of the three core tasks. In the long term, the implementation of these decisions is expected to have a positive impact on the future development of the democratic, political, economic and security dimension of the countries of the Euro-Atlantic area.

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