



NEWS RELEASE

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

May 31, 2024

Canadian parliamentarians attend the 2024 Spring Session of the NATO Parliamentary Assembly in Bulgaria

From 24 to 27 May 2024, [Julie Dzerowicz](#), Member of Parliament (MP) and Chair of the Canadian NATO Parliamentary Association, led a delegation to Sofia, Bulgaria to participate in the 2024 Spring Session of the North Atlantic Treaty Organization Parliamentary Assembly (NATO PA). The other delegates were Senators [Claude Carignan](#), [Donna Dasko](#), [Clément Gignac](#) and [Rebecca Patterson](#), as well as MPs [Rachel Blaney](#), [Cheryl Gallant](#) and [Christine Normandin](#).

During the Spring Session, the NATO PA's five committees received expert briefings and debated preliminary draft reports on a wide range of defence and security issues:

- [NATO's evolving air and missile defence posture](#);
- [Allied support for Ukraine](#);
- [The Western Balkans](#);
- [Critical dual-use technologies](#);
- [The state of Russia's wartime economy](#);
- [Economic and strategic partnerships with the Indo-Pacific](#);
- [China's challenge to NATO's technological edge](#);
- [Artificial intelligence](#);
- [Synthetic biology](#);
- [Conflict-related sexual violence](#);
- [Water insecurity](#);
- [NATO @ 75](#);
- [NATO and the Global South](#); and
- [NATO's partners at risk](#).

Moreover, MP Dzerowicz – as the special rapporteur for the Committee on Democracy and Security – [presented](#) the preliminary draft of a [report](#) on the protection of cultural property in conflict situations.

In what is expected to be his final [address](#) to the NATO PA, NATO Secretary General Jens Stoltenberg acknowledged the important role parliamentarians play in security and defence, observing that, “at the end of the day, it is parliaments that decide what really matters for NATO.” They do so, he noted, through the approval of the budgets that make

collective defence possible, and by representing the “democratic institutions that NATO is established to defend.”

Secretary General Stoltenberg informed the plenary that, in addition to deterrence and defence, and NATO’s global partnerships, the other priority for the upcoming NATO Summit in Washington this July will be ensuring a robust, predictable framework of support for Ukraine. This support is both urgent and essential. The Secretary General stressed that gaps and delays in military support have “consequences on the ground” because they make it “very hard” for Ukrainians to defend their country.

The work of the Spring Session resulted in the adoption of two declarations:

- [Shaping NATO for the next generations at the Washington Summit](#); and
- [Standing with Ukraine until victory](#).

Looking to the Washington Summit, the first declaration calls on the Alliance to “fully recognise the threat that autocracies pose to democracies.” It also urges NATO leaders to emphasize that NATO is “prepared and will defend every inch of Allied territory at all times under Article 5.” As well, the declaration calls on NATO members to “deliver without delay” on their agreed commitment to spend at least 2% of national gross domestic product (GDP) on defence.

The second declaration underscores that Russia’s illegal war against Ukraine is “a critical test of the collective resilience of democracies against the tyranny and brutality of authoritarianism.” It calls on the Alliance to “urgently step up and speed up the delivery of the military assistance which Ukraine needs to win.” NATO members are also urged to ramp up their defence production, and to take all available steps to provide Ukraine with the “required number of air defence systems” so that it can protect its cities, infrastructure, and people.

Furthermore, this declaration urges Allied governments and parliaments to “support Ukraine in its international right to defend itself by lifting some restrictions on the use of weapons provided by NATO Allies to strike legitimate targets in Russia.”

While in Bulgaria, the Canadian delegation held a bilateral meeting with the Ukrainian delegation to hear about how Canada can continue to support Ukraine.

Also, the Canadian delegation held a trilateral meeting with the Finnish and Swedish delegations to initiate discussions about the Alliance’s northern flank.

Several Canadian parliamentarians participated in a side visit to the Novo Selo Training Area for briefings with the NATO Forward Land Force Battlegroup Bulgaria. With Italy acting as the multinational battlegroup’s “framework nation,” integrated training occurs to reinforce the Alliance’s defence and deterrence along the eastern and southern flanks and in the Black Sea region.

On 26 May 2024, the NATO PA’s Bureau, of which MP Dzerowicz is an ex-officio Vice President, [released](#) a statement on Georgia’s so-called “transparency of foreign influence” legislation. The Bureau declared it to be “a step backwards for Georgia’s democracy,” and a step that “runs counter to its NATO as well as EU aspirations and values.” With Georgia standing at a crossroads, this legislation – which Georgia’s president vetoed – “must now be withdrawn.”

Finally, members of the Standing Committee were shown a video welcoming them to Montreal in November 2024, which will host the 70th Annual Session of the NATO PA.

-30-

To learn more, follow us on our X account:

X: [@ParlDiplomacy](#)

Hashtag: #CANA

For further information:

Julie Dzerowicz, MP

Chair of the Canadian NATO Parliamentary Association

+1 613-992-2576

Céline Ethier

Association Secretary

Canadian NATO Parliamentary Association

CANA@parl.gc.ca