

**Report of the Canadian NATO Parliamentary Association  
respecting its participation in the Standing Committee  
Meeting**

**Canadian NATO Parliamentary Association**

**Zagreb, Croatia  
March 29-31, 2019**

# REPORT

## Introduction

The Canadian delegation to the North Atlantic Treaty Organization Parliamentary Assembly (NATO-PA) has the honour to present its report on the meeting of the Standing Committee, held in Zagreb, Croatia, from March 29 to 31, 2019. The Parliament of Canada was represented by Mr. Borys Wrzesnewskij, MP, Head of the Canadian Delegation, the Honourable Joseph A. Day, Senator and Mr. Darren Fisher, MP. The delegation was accompanied by Mr. Jean-François Pagé, Secretary of the Association.

The Assembly President, Madeleine Moon, MP (United Kingdom), welcomed the participants.

She asked delegates to observe a minute of silence in solidarity with Anton Hrnko, outgoing head of Slovakia's delegation to NATO-PA, who lost his wife, daughter and son in the Ethiopian Airlines disaster on March 10, 2019. The President invited all delegations to send messages of encouragement to Mr. Hrnko as a sign of NATO-PA support at this difficult time.

The Standing Committee observed a minute of silence.

## Remarks by Mr. Andrej Plenković, Prime Minister of the Republic of Croatia

Mr. Andrej Plenković welcomed the Standing Committee to Zagreb. He noted with satisfaction that the meeting coincided with the 10th anniversary of Croatia's accession to NATO. He also recalled that NATO is a political organization that embodies not only a security alliance, but also a community of values, and that Croatia has chosen to bind its present and future to that community.

While Croatia was an importer of security in the 1990s, he continued, it has evolved over the past three decades into a net security exporter. The political, economic and security transition that took place in Croatia over that period could almost be described as radical, and has had particularly positive results. Security issues remain at the heart of Croatia's regional policy and broader efforts within the Alliance.

Croatia's democracy and freedom are firmly rooted in its presence in NATO. Croatia has worked hard to establish itself as a reliable Ally and a robust contributor to major NATO initiatives. The Prime Minister reminded us that his country's defence spending continues to increase steadily. Today, Zagreb spends 1.7% of its GDP on defence, and expects to reach the 2% benchmark set for the entire Alliance. At the same time, it is also striving to reach the goal of 20% of total defence spending going to new equipment. At present, its efforts are focused on modernizing its air force.

As a member of the European Union, the Prime Minister continued, Croatia is also committed to strengthening EU's security and defence. It contributes to EU efforts where they do not duplicate ongoing NATO initiatives.

Croatia's foreign policy remains primarily focused on developments in southeast Europe. For Mr. Plenković, lasting peace and stability in the region are inseparable from further Euro-Atlantic integration. Croatia also encourages the continuation of truth and

reconciliation efforts between States in the region. As a result, it was among the first countries to ratify the NATO accession protocol for Northern Macedonia.

The Prime Minister concluded his remarks by returning to the essential role of parliamentary diplomacy, which has helped NATO member States better understand how strengthened allied security requires joint efforts.

***Review of the Observations of the Secretary General of NATO, President of the North Atlantic Council, on the General Policy Recommendations adopted in 2018 by the NATO Parliamentary Assembly***

The President recalled that the Assembly adopted several policy recommendations in 2018, to which the NATO Secretary General responded with detailed and positive comments.

She welcomed the comments of the NATO Secretary General, which she feels reflect the constructive relationship between the Assembly and NATO.

**Accession process for Northern Macedonia**

The Standing Committee decided that when it accedes to NATO and the Assembly, the delegation of Northern Macedonia will be allocated three seats.

Mr. Lamers, MP (Germany) indicated that the ratification bill would be submitted to his parliament before the summer recess. Paolo Formentini, MP (Italy) said that the foreign affairs committee of the Italian chamber of deputies would take up this issue the following week. Darren Fisher reported that the Parliament of Canada planned to debate this issue in June. Mr. Kalnins, MP (Latvia) said that once the Latvian parliament had completed its budget votes, Northern Macedonia's accession would be at the top of the agenda.

**Financial report**

The report on the audit of the NATO-PA financial statements and contingency fund for the year ended December 31, 2018 was presented by Hervé-Adrien Metzger, President of the International Board of Auditors for NATO. In his presentation, he explained that the NATO-PA financial statements and contingency fund for the year ended December 31, 2018 are in all respects compliant with the framework adopted by NATO-PA and the accounting principles set out in the NATO-PA Financial Regulations and Contingency Fund Regulations.

Marc Angel, MP (Luxembourg) and Secretary Treasurer of NATO-PA, reported on the Assembly's financial situation. After listing the Assembly's sources of income and its expenses, he reported a surplus of 30,786.07 euros for the 2018 financial year.

It was agreed that this amount would be allocated to the funding for Chapter 1 – Staff costs, to help cover the additional costs resulting from the replacement of several staff members on maternity leave and the temporary recruitment of a general service assistant pending the full-time recruitment of an operations and logistics coordinator.

The Standing Committee approved the Treasurer's proposal for allocating the surplus, and adopted all of the financial documents. The Standing Committee also approved the updated budget for the 2019 financial year.

**Proposal to amend the Assembly's regulations**

At its meeting in Warsaw in May 2018, the Bureau instructed Lord Campbell of Pittenweem to carry out a full review of the Regulations and to propose any revisions he considered necessary.

The President reminded the Standing Committee that the most recent revision of the Regulations, which dates back to 2004, primarily involved adapting the Assembly's structures following the accession of new members. The questions raised over the past year regarding the interpretation of the rules in the event of a president's inability to carry out his or her mandate—the current President of the Assembly not having been re-elected to the national parliament—highlight the need for a new revision. Such an exercise would also provide for taking into account other developments since 2004.

Lord Campbell of Pittenweem pointed out that the document distributed to members was a preliminary draft, but that it was important to discuss it because he felt that delegations should be able to take ownership of the process and have sufficient time for discussion in order to achieve the intended results. Finally, he indicated that a revision of the current Regulations, although not urgent, was nevertheless essential.

The Committee agreed to discuss the changes at the spring meeting in Bratislava.

Respectfully submitted,

Borys Wrzesnewskyj, M.P.,  
Chair of the Canadian NATO Parliamentary Association

## **Travel Costs**

<b>ASSOCIATION</b>	Canadian NATO Parliamentary Association
<b>ACTIVITY</b>	Standing Committee Meeting
<b>DESTINATION</b>	Zagreb, Croatia
<b>DATES</b>	March 29-31, 2019
<b>DELEGATION</b>	
SENATE	Hon. Joseph Day
HOUSE OF COMMONS	Borys Wrzesnewskyj, Darren Fisher
STAFF	Jean-François Pagé
<b>TRANSPORTATION</b>	\$ 34,616.66
<b>ACCOMMODATION</b>	\$ 1,919.13
<b>HOSPITALITY</b>	\$ 177.31
<b>PER DIEMS</b>	\$ 1,185.47
<b>OFFICIAL GIFTS</b>	\$ 0
<b>MISCELLANEOUS</b>	\$ 19.99
<b>TOTAL</b>	<b>\$ 37,898.57</b>