

EUROPEAN PARLIAMENT

DELEGATION FOR RELATIONS WITH THE NATO PARLIAMENTARY ASSEMBLY

**Spring Session of the NATO-PA
in Bratislava, Slovakia, 28 May - 1 June 2004**

PROCEEDINGS BY THE SECRETARIAT

14 July 2004
AFET/NG/JF/gn

1. The Spring Session of the NATO Parliamentary Assembly, held from 28 May to 1 June 2004 in Bratislava, Slovakia, was attended by five EP members (see annex 1). The smaller number than usual of participants in attendance on the EP side should not be considered as any lessening of the interest our institution devotes to this event. This was simply as a consequence of the pre-electoral period in which the meeting took place. In fact, the active participation of those attending constituted a major contribution to the work of the different committees.

Mrs Catherine Lalumière, prominent member of the AFET Committee and Vice-President of the European Parliament acted as Chairman of the EP Ad Hoc Delegation at a meeting in which some 250 parliamentarians from 26 NATO Member States plus 13 associated delegations from Central and Eastern Europe, Ukraine and Russian Federation took part. This was the first time the NATO PA had held one of its twice-yearly sessions in Slovakia, which along with Bulgaria, Estonia, Latvia, Lithuania, Romania and Slovenia had become full NATO Members only a few weeks earlier.

2. Following the direction already taken in Orlando, the tone of the debates were both positive and moderate. This was far from that which had previously developed in meetings in Istanbul and Prague due to the war in Iraq. However, the existing situation in Iraq and Afghanistan, as well as the role that both NATO and the European Union could play in both cases, together with the issues related to the fight against international terrorism and the risk of dissemination of weapons of mass destruction, remained at the core of the debates.
3. During the Bratislava session, the Conservative Group elected M. Pierre Lellouche, Chairman of the French delegation, as the group's candidate to become the new President of the NATO Parliamentary Assembly. Consequently, and given the current consensus within the NATO PA about the order of successive presidencies (USA/Conservatives/Socialist), M. Lellouche will be proclaimed as President at the forthcoming session in Venice in November 2004, replacing Mr Douglas Bereuter (United States).
4. During the Bratislava session, the Political Committee of the NATO Parliamentary Assembly specially addressed issues related to NATO's contribution to Euro-Atlantic security, NATO-EU cooperation challenges posed by non-state actors attempting to obtain access to nuclear weapons and the use of force. In the Defence and Security Committee meeting, NATO operations in Afghanistan and in particular its possible expansion almost monopolised the debates. In general terms, however, no major confrontation points were perceived in comparison with positions expressed in various European Parliament resolutions. It was explained that it had proved impossible for the Defence and Security Committee to visit Guantanamo Bay because the facility is open only to law enforcement and intelligence agencies, the Red Cross and certain members of Congress. That obviously sheds additional light on the implicit refusal by the US authorities to authorise the visit of the EP delegation to Guantanamo Bay which was originally scheduled for the beginning of this year.
5. The Economic and Security Committee paid special attention to the consequences resulting from an enlarged Europe for a stronger Transatlantic relationships. They also discussed the issue of social reconstruction in the aftermath of the Cold War. Important issues for discussion also included reconstruction and development in the cases of Iraq and of Afghanistan, as well as the economic and trade implications of migration.

6. The Science and Technology Committee focused the issue of nuclear energy and NATO's missile defence challenges as well as areas dealing with **missile defence and weapons in space**. This last point opens up a field in which our Institution, to date, has made no recent major contributions. Therefore, **suggestion could be made for our Sub-Committee on Security and Defence to possibly compile a report dealing with this subject**.

Finally, the Committee of the Civil Dimension of Security dealt with the stability in the three Caucasus republics and with the issue of preserving civil liberties and fighting terrorism efficiently. The fight against trafficking of children in Europe was also touched upon. In all these issues, there were in fact no major conflicting points with the views expressed by our Parliament in a variety of reports and resolutions.

7. The Plenary Session included addresses by Mr Pavol Hrušovský, President of the National Council of the Slovak Republic and by Mr Mikuláš Dzurinda, Prime Minister of the Slovak Republic, followed by a question and answer session. Special attention should be given to the address by Dr Mohamed El Baradei, who made a number of important and worrying remarks concerning the risk of dissemination of weapons of mass destruction. Consequently, **it is strongly recommended that he be invited to address our own Committee on Foreign Affairs at the earliest possible opportunity**.
8. The Plenary Session ended with the reading of a telegram from Mr Japp de Hoop Scheffer, Secretary General of NATO and Chairman of the North Atlantic Council, explaining his absence due to unavoidable transport difficulties¹.

His absence was regrettable since at this Spring Session he was scheduled to respond to the Policy Recommendations urging specific actions, that had been addressed to the North Atlantic Council by the Annual Session which had taken place in Orlando in November 2003.

All reports and speeches can be found on the following website: <http://www.nato-pa.int>

9. The next Annual Session of the NATO-PA is scheduled to take place in Venice, Italy from 12-16 November 2004.

Annex:

- List of participants from the EP-Delegation
- Press release issued by the EP-Delegation

¹ N.B. In the run up to the meeting, the Slovak police had discovered several incendiary devices around the city.

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DELEGATION TO THE SPRING SESSION OF THE NATO PARLIAMENTARY ASSEMBLY

Bratislava, Slovakia from 28 May - 1 June 2004

Draft list of participants

Head of Delegation

Mrs Catherine LALUMIÈRE PSE

France

Committee

D&S

Members

Mr Ward BEYSEN

NI

Belgium

CDS

Mr Armin LASCHET

PPE-DE

Germany

D&S

The Earl of STOCKTON

PPE-DE

United Kingdom

S&T

Mr Demetrio VOLCIC

PSE

Italy

PC

Abbreviations of the political groups:

PPE-DE

Group of the European People's Party (Christian Democrats) and European Democrats

PSE

Group of the Party of European Socialists

NI

Non attached

European Parliament

Delegation for Relations with the NATO-Parliamentary Assembly

Presse Release

Bratislava, 30 May 2004

Afghanistan at a critical juncture.

European Parliamentarians draw attention to the risks for the elections in September

"Afghanistan will be the test for the complementary cooperation between NATO and the EU in international crisis management, reconstruction and state-building", declared Mrs Catherine Lalumière as acting head of the European Parliament delegation participating at the Spring Session of the NATO-Parliamentary Assembly meeting on 28 May - 1 June 2004 in Bratislava, Slovakia.

"We obviously need much more ISAF soldiers for the election period between now and September, in order to break the power of the warlords/druglords in that country and to extend the authority of the Karzai interim government beyond Kabul into the provinces" she explained.

Not only NATO's credibility is at stake with its first out-of-area mission, stated the members of the European Parliament, but also the European Union's civil reconstruction efforts in Afghanistan must be ensured by an increased military stabilization force.

"Without additional forces, helicopters, and logistical support, warlords will not disarm and the elections in September will be heavily influenced by the warlords and drug traffickers resulting in a 'narco-islamic-democracy' ", members were informed at Bratislava by former ISAF Commander, General Goetz Gliemeroth.