



## NATO Summit of Heads of State and Government

Brussels, Belgium, 11 July 2018

### **Address by Paolo Alli (Italy)**

President, NATO Parliamentary Assembly

The NATO Parliamentary Assembly strongly believes in the unity of NATO, the most powerful political and military Alliance, and firmly supports your leadership and the strong commitment of Secretary General Stoltenberg.

Parliamentary diplomacy is becoming increasingly important. We reach out to a growing network of national parliaments, other Assemblies and multilateral institutions, and everywhere, from the Far East to Central Asia, from the Arab world to Africa, we see growing interest in NATO as a source of stability and a security partner.

In contrast, the Russian Federation still occupies parts of its neighbours, is investing massively in its military, and is seeking to undermine our free institutions. We fully support the dual-track approach to Russia: dialogue is possible only through reinforcing our deterrent presence in the East.

Daesh is being defeated in Iraq and Syria, but terrorism is not dying: it will find new and unpredictable ways of reappearing. We must increase our attention to the Southern flank and the commitment against terrorism. In that context, the NATO Hub for the South in Naples is a vitally important preventative tool.

“Freedom is not free”, the Americans say: in many countries we take freedom and peace for granted. Working with my predecessor Mike Turner and the US Congress, the NATO PA has long recognised unfair burden sharing as a threat to Allied unity. Progress has been made since 2014, but we are still far from reaching the goal of the Wales pledge. Our Assembly will remain your partner, continuing to urge parliaments and governments to close the transatlantic gap on spending, capabilities and contributions to operations, and working to educate and convince our publics that spending for defence is investing for the future.

We welcome and support NATO and the EU's joint efforts to build synergies and strengthen cooperation.

The Euro-Atlantic integration of the Western Balkans is a key factor for both institutions, and we strongly support the accession process for the former Yugoslav Republic of Macedonia, as well as the recognition of the progress achieved by other aspirants, including Georgia and Ukraine.

40 years ago, the Italian Statesman Aldo Moro, a few days before being murdered by the Red Brigades, said: “If it were possible to say: let's skip this time and go directly to the future, we all would accept doing that. But it is not possible, today is the time of our responsibility. Let's walk together, as the future, to a large extent, still belongs to us”.

In this difficult time we are living, please allow me to repeat these words in front of you, the leaders of the democratic world, and assure that we, the members of your Parliaments, will walk together with you.

Thank you.