

22.Istanbul Summit Communiqué

Issued by the Heads of State and Government participating in the meeting of the North Atlantic Council

1. We, the Heads of State and Government of the member countries of the North Atlantic Alliance, reaffirmed today the enduring value of the transatlantic link and of NATO as the basis for our collective defence and the essential forum for security consultation between Europe and North America. Our 26 nations are united in democracy, individual liberty and the rule of law, and faithful to the purposes and principles of the United Nations Charter. Inspired by the common vision embodied in the Washington Treaty, we remain fully committed to the collective defence of our populations, territory and forces. Transatlantic cooperation is essential in defending our values and meeting common threats and challenges, from wherever they may come.
2. At our last Summit, in Prague in 2002, we agreed to transform our Alliance with new members, new capabilities, and new relationships with our partners. Just a few months ago, seven new member countries – Bulgaria, Estonia, Latvia, Lithuania, Romania, Slovakia and Slovenia – joined our Alliance in the most robust round of enlargement in NATO’s history. Today at our Istanbul Summit, we have given further shape and direction to this transformation in order to adapt NATO’s structures, procedures and capabilities to 21st century challenges. We underscore that these efforts should not be perceived as a threat by any country or organisation. Our Alliance is taking on a full range of missions, promoting stability where it is needed to defend our security and our values.
3. Today, we have:
 - decided to expand the NATO-led International Security Assistance Force (ISAF) in Afghanistan, including through several more Provincial Reconstruction Teams (PRTs) and by enhancing our support for the upcoming elections;
 - agreed to conclude the Alliance’s successful SFOR operation in Bosnia and Herzegovina, and welcomed the readiness of the European Union to deploy a new and distinct UN-mandated Chapter VII mission in the country, based on the Berlin+ arrangements agreed between our two organisations;
 - confirmed that a robust KFOR presence remains essential to further enhance security and promote the political process in Kosovo;
 - decided to enhance the contribution of Operation Active Endeavour, our maritime operation in the Mediterranean, to the

- fight against terrorism;
 - decided to offer assistance to the Government of Iraq with the training of its security forces, in conformity with the separate statement that we have issued on Iraq;
 - agreed on an enhanced set of measures to strengthen our individual and collective contribution to the international community's fight against terrorism;
 - decided to further the transformation of our military capabilities to make them more modern, more usable and more deployable to carry out the full range of Alliance missions;
 - reaffirmed that NATO's door remains open to new members, and encouraged Albania, Croatia and the former Yugoslav Republic of Macedonia to continue the reforms necessary to progress towards NATO membership;
 - taken a number of steps to further strengthen the Euro-Atlantic Partnership, in particular through a special focus on engaging with our Partners in the strategically important regions of the Caucasus and Central Asia; and
 - decided to enhance our Mediterranean Dialogue and to offer cooperation to the broader Middle East region through the "Istanbul Cooperation Initiative".
4. Contributing to peace and stability in Afghanistan is NATO's key priority. NATO's leadership of the UN-mandated International Security Assistance Force demonstrates the readiness of the North Atlantic Council to decide to launch operations to ensure our common security. NATO's aim is to assist in the emergence of a secure and stable Afghanistan, with a broad-based, gender sensitive, multi-ethnic and fully representative government, integrated into the international community and cooperating with its neighbours. Establishing and sustaining peace in Afghanistan is essential to the well-being of the Afghan people and to our shared struggle against terrorism. We remain committed to that cause and pledge to contribute to ISAF the forces necessary for successful completion of our mission in Afghanistan.
5. In consultation with the Afghan authorities, we will continue to expand ISAF in stages throughout Afghanistan, through the establishment by lead nations of additional Provincial Reconstruction Teams. We will continue to coordinate and cooperate with Operation Enduring Freedom, as appropriate. The successful conduct of nation-wide elections will be a crucial milestone in the democratic development and peaceful evolution of Afghanistan. In response to President Karzai's request, ISAF is currently supporting the voter registration process and will provide enhanced support to the Afghan authorities in providing security during the election period, within means and capabilities. After the election, it will be for the government of Afghanistan to develop a forward-looking plan that fulfils the vision of the Bonn Agreement to

promote national reconciliation, lasting peace, stability, and respect for human rights. ISAF has been assisting in disarming the militias and securing weapons. The Bonn process is on track and legitimate political institutions are developing. Reconstruction projects, security sector reform and other initiatives are improving the daily lives of many citizens. We strongly condemn the increasing attacks on civilian aid workers, who are making a valuable contribution to Afghanistan's future.

6. We call on the Afghan authorities to energetically pursue the disarmament, demobilisation and reintegration process, and particularly the withdrawal of military units from Kabul and other urban centres. We will provide appropriate support, within ISAF's mandate, to the Afghan authorities in taking resolute action against the production and trafficking of narcotics. We are prepared to help the Afghan government to build a better future for Afghanistan, together with Operation Enduring Freedom, the UN Assistance Mission to Afghanistan, the European Union, and other international organisations on the ground. We also call on Afghanistan's neighbours to contribute to this effort consistent with the wishes of the Afghan authorities. We commend the role of Canada in ISAF and look forward to the future role of the Eurocorps.
7. The security environment in the strategically important region of the Balkans is stable but remains fragile. The Alliance remains committed to peace and stability in the Balkans, and the territorial integrity and sovereignty of all the countries in the region. We will remain committed until peace and security are firmly established and the progressive integration of all Balkan countries into Euro-Atlantic structures is achieved. All the countries of the region must assume ownership of, and implement, pressing reforms. Closer cooperation in their own region will help to promote stability and prosperity. While welcoming improvement in cooperation with the International Criminal Tribunal for the Former Yugoslavia (ICTY), where it has occurred, we stress that all countries concerned must cooperate fully with the ICTY, in particular bringing to justice all those who are indicted by the Tribunal, notably Radovan Karadzic and Ratko Mladic, as well as Ante Gotovina, in accordance with United Nations Security Council Resolutions 1503 and 1534.
8. As the security situation in Bosnia and Herzegovina has evolved positively, we have decided to conclude the Alliance's successful SFOR operation by the end of this year. We welcome the readiness of the European Union to deploy a new and distinct UN-mandated robust Chapter VII mission in the country, based on the Berlin+ arrangements agreed between our two organisations, and look forward to continued close cooperation. NATO's long-term political commitment to Bosnia and Herzegovina remains unchanged and the establishment of a NATO headquarters will constitute NATO's residual

military presence in the country. NATO HQ Sarajevo, which has the principal task of providing advice on defence reform, will also undertake certain operational supporting tasks, such as counter-terrorism whilst ensuring force protection; supporting the ICTY, within means and capabilities, with regard to the detention of persons indicted for war crimes; and intelligence sharing with the EU. The Dayton/Paris Accords remain in force as the basis for peace and stability in Bosnia and Herzegovina.

9. In Kosovo, a robust KFOR presence remains essential to further enhance security and promote the political process. We reaffirm our commitment to a secure, stable and multi-ethnic Kosovo, on the basis of full implementation of United Nations Security Council Resolution 1244, the agreed Standards before Status Policy and the Standards Review Mechanism. We strongly condemn the outbreak of violence resulting in the loss of lives and the destruction of religious and cultural heritage sites in March 2004, and will not tolerate any such actions intended to undermine the political process. We call on all parties to speed up the reconstruction and to create conditions for the safe return of displaced persons. We urge all communities to work constructively towards meeting the internationally endorsed standards, to engage in dialogue at all levels, and to participate in local civic institutions. We also call on them to conduct, and participate in, the upcoming October elections in a fair and peaceful manner. We welcome the appointment by the UN Secretary General of Mr. Søren Jessen-Petersen as his Special Representative in Kosovo. To further progress, NATO will continue to work with the UN, the EU, the OSCE and other international organisations, as well as the Contact Group, including, as appropriate, attendance at its meetings.
10. NATO's maritime surveillance and escort operation, Operation Active Endeavour, demonstrates the Alliance's resolve and ability to respond to terrorism. In March of this year, the operation was extended to the whole of the Mediterranean. Work is underway to further enhance its contribution to the fight against terrorism, including through the contributory support of partner countries, including the Mediterranean Dialogue countries. We welcome the offers of contributory support by Russia and Ukraine and have invited both countries to discuss the modalities of their participation. All such offers of support, including by other interested countries, will be considered on a case-by-case basis. In reviewing Operation Active Endeavour's mission, NATO may consider addressing, in accordance with international law, the risk of terrorist-related trafficking in, or use of, nuclear, chemical and biological weapons, their means of delivery and related materials.
11. We pay tribute to the men and women of all nations serving in NATO-led operations for their professionalism and dedication to the cause of peace and security. We appreciate how much the success of our operations depends on

the bonds they build with the governments and peoples in the various theatres of operation. We are profoundly grateful for the sacrifice of those who have lost their lives or been injured in the course of their mission, and extend our deepest sympathies to their families and loved ones.

12. Terrorism and the proliferation of Weapons of Mass Destruction (WMD) and their means of delivery currently pose key threats and challenges to Alliance and international security.
13. We strongly condemn terrorism, whatever its motivations or manifestations, and will fight it together as long as necessary. The Alliance provides an essential transatlantic dimension to the response against terrorism, which requires the closest possible cooperation of North America and Europe. We are committed to continue our struggle against terrorism in all its forms, in accordance with international law provisions and UN principles. Our approach to terrorism, and its causes, will include the full implementation of United Nations Security Council Resolution 1373 on the fight against terrorism, and will continue to be multi-faceted and comprehensive, including political, diplomatic, economic and, where necessary, military means. Continuing terrorist acts, including in Istanbul last year and in Madrid in March of this year, have shown the acute threat which terrorism continues to pose around the world. Defence against terrorism may include activities by NATO's military forces, based on decisions by the North Atlantic Council, to deter, disrupt, defend and protect against terrorist attacks, or threat of attacks, directed from abroad, against populations, territory, infrastructure and forces of any member state, including by acting against these terrorists and those who harbour them. We have accordingly agreed today an enhanced set of measures to strengthen our individual and collective contribution to the international community's fight against terrorism, including the need to prevent WMD from being acquired by terrorists. These measures include:
 - improved intelligence sharing between our nations, including through our Terrorist Threat Intelligence Unit and a review of current intelligence structures at NATO Headquarters;
 - a greater ability to respond rapidly to national requests for assistance in protecting against and dealing with the consequences of terrorist attacks, including attacks involving chemical, biological, radiological and nuclear (CBRN) weapons and, in this regard, continued robust support for the NATO Multinational CBRN Defence Battalion;
 - assistance to protect selected major events, including with NATO Airborne Early Warning and Control Aircraft;
 - an enhanced contribution to the fight against terrorism by Operation Active Endeavour;
 - a continued robust effort through our operations in the Balkans

- and Afghanistan to help create conditions in which terrorism cannot flourish;
 - enhanced capabilities to defend against terrorist attacks, including through our programme of work to develop new, advanced technologies; and
 - increased cooperation with our partners, including through the implementation of our Civil Emergency Action Plan and the Partnership Action Plan on Terrorism, and with other international and regional organisations, including the active pursuit of consultations and exchange of information with the European Union.
14. The Alliance's policy of support for arms control, disarmament and non-proliferation will continue to play a major role in the achievement of the Alliance's security objectives, including preventing the proliferation of Weapons of Mass Destruction and their means of delivery. We stress the importance of all states abiding by, and fully implementing, their arms control, disarmament, and non-proliferation commitments, and of strengthening existing international arms control and disarmament accords and multilateral non-proliferation and export control regimes. In this regard, early admission of all NATO members into all appropriate existing non-proliferation regimes would play a positive role. Today, we:
- underline our commitment to reinforcing the Nuclear Non-Proliferation Treaty, the cornerstone of non-proliferation and disarmament, and ensuring the full compliance with it by all states Party to the Treaty;
 - underline the importance of related other international accords, including the Biological and Toxin Weapons Convention, the Chemical Weapons Convention and the Hague Code of Conduct against the Proliferation of Ballistic Missiles;
 - strongly support United Nations Security Council Resolution 1540, calling on all states to establish effective national export controls, to adopt and enforce laws to criminalise proliferation, to take cooperative action to prevent non-state actors from acquiring WMD, and to end illicit trafficking in WMD and related materials;
 - resolve to strengthen our common efforts to reduce and safeguard nuclear and radiological material;
 - resolve to prevent and contain proliferation of WMD and their means of delivery, and to work together to achieve these objectives;
 - welcome the adoption by the G-8 of its Action Plan on Non-Proliferation adopted on 10 June; and
 - welcome the discovery and ongoing investigation of the A.Q. Khan proliferation network.
15. The Alliance underscores its strong support for the aims of the Proliferation Security Initiative (PSI) and its Statement of Interdiction Principles to establish a more co-ordinated and effective basis through which to

impede and stop shipments of WMD, delivery systems, and related materials flowing to and from states and non-state actors of proliferation concern. The Alliance welcomes PSI efforts which are consistent with national legal authorities and relevant international law and frameworks, including United Nations Security Council Resolutions. We call on our partners and other countries to join us in supporting and implementing the objectives of the PSI.

16. The Alliance welcomes the steps taken by Libya to implement its decision, announced on 19 December 2003, to dismantle its WMD programmes under international supervision, and to limit its missiles to a range less than 300 kilometres. We look forward to continued progress. At the same time, we urge Libya to respect fundamental human rights.
17. We reiterate our commitment to the CFE Treaty as a cornerstone of European security, and reaffirm our attachment to the early entry into force of the Adapted Treaty. We recall that fulfilment of the remaining Istanbul commitments on the Republic of Georgia and the Republic of Moldova will create the conditions for Allies and other States Parties to move forward on ratification of the Adapted CFE Treaty. We note the progress that was made in 2003 on withdrawal of Russian military forces from the Republic of Moldova. We regret that this progress has not continued in 2004 and that the extended 31 December 2003 completion date, agreed in the framework of the OSCE, was not met. It is essential that efforts be intensified to complete the withdrawal as soon as possible. We will continue, via the OSCE, to monitor and assist in this process. We urge a swift resolution of the outstanding issues between Georgia and Russia as set out in their Istanbul Joint Statement of 17 November 1999, and to this end, call upon the parties to resume negotiations at an appropriately senior level. We welcome the approach of non-CFE Allies who have stated their intention to request accession to the Adapted CFE Treaty upon its entry into force. Their accession would provide an important additional contribution to European security and stability.
18. We welcome the progress made in the transformation of the Alliance's military capabilities. This is a long-term endeavour which must continue if NATO is to be able to perform the full range of its missions in a challenging security environment and respond to its operational commitments and the threats we face today, including terrorism and the proliferation of weapons of mass destruction. NATO must be able to field forces that can move quickly to sustain operations over distance and time.
19. In realising the goals we set at the Prague Summit in November 2002:
 - o the NATO Multinational CBRN Defence Battalion has just become fully operational;
 - o as planned, the operationally flexible NATO Response Force (NRF) will reach initial operational capability later this year;

- the implementation of NATO's streamlined command arrangements is on track, including the establishment of Allied Command Transformation;
 - the implementation of national Prague Capabilities Commitments (PCC) is progressing, and multinational activities – in strategic sealift and airlift, air-to-air refuelling, and the Alliance Ground Surveillance system – continue to make progress and will enhance our military capabilities in many areas; and
 - we are examining options for addressing the increasing missile threat to Alliance territory, forces and population centres through an appropriate mix of political and defence efforts, along with deterrence. We note the initiation of the feasibility study on missile defence decided at Prague to examine options, and we continue to assess the missile threats.
20. In order to meet today's challenges, we need the right capabilities. In some cases nations could free up resources from no longer needed national force structures and/or capabilities and reinvest them in deployable capabilities. We need greater willingness and preparedness of nations to provide these forces and capabilities. NATO needs to be able to act quickly and is configured to do so. At the same time, we are determined to further enhance our political decision-making process through in-depth consultations facilitating a common sense of purpose and resolve, the definition of clear strategies and objectives before launching an operation, as well as enhanced planning to support nations' contributions to operations – recognising the sovereign right of each of our nations to decide upon the use of its forces.
21. In order to enhance our ability to conduct operations successfully and strengthen the link between political agreement to commence operations and the provision of the necessary forces, we have today:
- welcomed the commitments made by the seven new Allies in the framework of the Prague Capabilities Commitment, and reaffirmed our support for it; we welcomed the cooperation between PCC and European Capabilities Action Plan groups; we will give special emphasis in our national plans to overcoming remaining critical shortages, implementing our national commitments, further advancing the multinational cooperation projects in which our countries participate, and making our capabilities interoperable and adapting them to the evolving security environment;
 - welcomed the report from our Defence Ministers on further steps to increase the usability of our forces through the adoption in Istanbul of high-level political targets and to supplement such targets through individual national usability targets, and agreed to intensify our efforts, taking account of national priorities and obligations, to structure, prepare and equip land forces for deployed operations under NATO or other auspices;
 - welcomed changes to the Alliance's planning processes, making

them more responsive to current and future operational requirements. We have directed the Council in Permanent Session to produce for our consideration comprehensive political guidance in support of the Strategic Concept for all Alliance capabilities issues, planning disciplines and intelligence, responsive to the Alliance's requirements, including for forces which are interoperable and deployable, able to carry out major operations as well as smaller ones, to conduct them concurrently if necessary, as well as to operate jointly in a complex security environment. The interfaces between the respective Alliance planning disciplines, including operational planning, should be further analysed;

- welcomed progress in the work to improve the force generation process for NATO-agreed operations and the NATO Response Force, including by moving towards a longer-term and more comprehensive and proactive approach, and facilitating decisions that are matched at each stage with the requisite military capabilities; and
 - directed that work on theatre ballistic missile defence be taken forward expeditiously. In this context we noted the approval of the principle of the establishment of a NATO Active Layered Theatre Ballistic Missile Defence programme; welcomed the willingness of nations to make the tri-national Extended Air Defence Task Force available to the Alliance; and noted ongoing work by the NATO Military Authorities in relation to the defence of deployed NATO forces, including the NRF, against theatre ballistic missiles.
22. With the decisions taken here in Istanbul and the further improvements we have put in train and which we have directed the Council in Permanent Session to pursue, we are ensuring that Allied capabilities will be modern, efficient and flexible, fully appropriate to the challenges we face now and may face in the future.
23. We have invited the Secretary General and the Council in Permanent Session to take the steps necessary to ensure that the transformation process, including on questions of management and funding, is fully implemented. We look forward to the outcome of the NATO Agencies Review which should provide a sound basis for the next decade of support activity. We encourage the Secretary General to carry forward the new NATO Headquarters project in a timely and effective way.
24. NATO's armament activities must meet the Alliance's evolving military needs. We therefore reaffirm the importance we attach to mutually advantageous transatlantic defence industrial cooperation.

25. We celebrate the success of NATO's Open Door policy, and reaffirm today that our seven new members will not be the last. The door to membership remains open. We welcome the progress made by Albania, Croatia and the former Yugoslav Republic of Macedonia (1) in implementing their Annual National Programmes under the Membership Action Plan, and encourage them to continue pursuing the reforms necessary to progress towards NATO membership. We also commend their contribution to regional stability and cooperation. We want all three countries to succeed and will continue to assist them in their reform efforts. NATO will continue to assess each country's candidacy individually, based on the progress made towards reform goals pursued through the Membership Action Plan, which will remain the vehicle to keep the readiness of each aspirant for membership under review. We direct that NATO Foreign Ministers keep the enlargement process, including the implementation of the Membership Action Plan, under continual review and report to us. We will review at the next Summit progress by aspirants towards membership based on that report.
26. The recent enlargements of NATO and the European Union are a major step towards a Europe whole and free, and a strong confirmation that our organisations share common values and strategic interests. We are pleased with the progress made in developing the NATO-EU strategic partnership on the basis of and since the conclusion of the Berlin+ arrangements. NATO and the EU continue to cooperate effectively in the Western Balkans, and are committed to assist the countries of the region in their further integration into Euro-Atlantic structures. NATO-EU relations now cover a wide range of issues of common interest relating to security, defence and crisis management, including the fight against terrorism, the development of coherent and mutually reinforcing military capabilities, and civil emergency planning. We are determined to work together to further develop the NATO-EU strategic partnership as agreed by our two organisations, in a spirit of transparency, and respecting the autonomy of our two organisations.
27. Building on the progress made since our Prague Summit, we have today taken a number of steps to further strengthen the Euro-Atlantic Partnership. While taking these steps, we expect all Partners to fulfil their commitments to the protection and promotion of human rights and the other fundamental freedoms and values they have adhered to under the Euro-Atlantic Partnership Council and the Partnership for Peace. We support the independence, sovereignty and territorial integrity of all states in the Euro-Atlantic area.
28. We have launched today a Partnership Action Plan on Defence Institution Building. We encourage and support Partners to make full use of this new instrument to build democratically responsible defence institutions.

29. Military interoperability and transformation are central to the effectiveness of our Partnerships in helping us to meet evolving security challenges and to enable Allied and Partner forces to operate effectively in NATO-led operations. The value of this cooperation to the Alliance, in particular by the Western European Partners, is continuously being demonstrated in the Balkans as well as in Afghanistan. We intend, therefore, to provide our Partners with increased opportunities to enhance their contributions to NATO-led operations, and to help transform their defences in keeping with NATO's own evolving operational roles and capabilities, including through enhancement of the Operational Capabilities Concept. We will seek the earliest possible involvement by troop-contributing nations in the decision-shaping process, including the possibility of political consultation. NATO's new command structure offers opportunities to increase the participation by Partners, including by offering them appropriate representation in the Allied Command Transformation.
30. NATO has adopted a comprehensive policy to contribute to international efforts to combat the trafficking in human beings, which constitutes a flagrant abuse of human rights and fuels corruption and organised crime. We are also determined to work together with our Partners to support international efforts, where NATO can add value, to combat this and other forms of illegal trafficking.
31. In enhancing the Euro-Atlantic Partnership, we will put special focus on engaging with our Partners in the strategically important regions of the Caucasus and Central Asia. Towards that end, NATO has agreed on improved liaison arrangements, including the assignment of two liaison officers, as well as a special representative for the two regions from within the International Staff. We welcome the decision by Georgia, Azerbaijan and Uzbekistan to develop Individual Partnership Action Plans with NATO. This constitutes a significant step in these countries' efforts to develop closer Partnership relations with the Alliance. We welcome the commitment of the new government of Georgia to reform.
32. We remain committed to partnership with the Republic of Moldova and encourage it to make use of Partnership instruments to take forward its aspirations of promoting stability in the region as a Partner of this Alliance.
33. We look forward to welcoming Bosnia and Herzegovina and Serbia and Montenegro into the Partnership for Peace once they have met the established NATO conditions. We want them to succeed in joining the Euro-Atlantic partnership and will assist them in this endeavour. We are prepared to assist the countries by including them in selected PfP activities. Each country will be

judged on its own merits on the road to PfP.

34. We welcome Bosnia and Herzegovina's significant progress in defence reform, a key condition for PfP membership. We urge continued progress towards achieving a single military force. We have agreed to designate a Contact Point Embassy in Sarajevo to increase understanding of NATO. We are concerned that Bosnia and Herzegovina, particularly obstructionist elements in the Republika Srpska entity, has failed to live up to its obligation to cooperate fully with ICTY, including the arrest and transfer to the jurisdiction of the Tribunal of war crimes indictees, a fundamental requirement for the country to join PfP. We also look for systemic changes necessary to develop effective security and law enforcement structures.
35. Serbia and Montenegro has also shown progress in defence reform, and the government has played a constructive regional role, improving relations with its neighbours. We look forward to further progress in these areas, in particular in relation to the government's engagement on Kosovo-related issues. At the same time, the International Court of Justice cases against several of the Allies still stand. We call on the government to fulfil its international obligations, in particular to cooperate with ICTY and render all necessary assistance to secure the arrest and transfer to the jurisdiction of the Tribunal of war crimes indictees.
36. From its inception in 1994, NATO's Mediterranean Dialogue has greatly contributed to building confidence and cooperation between the Alliance and its Mediterranean partners. In the current security environment there are greater opportunities for effective cooperation with Mediterranean Dialogue partners. Following our decision at Prague to upgrade the Mediterranean Dialogue, we are today inviting our Mediterranean partners to establish a more ambitious and expanded partnership, guided by the principle of joint ownership and taking into consideration their particular interests and needs. The overall aim of this partnership will be to contribute towards regional security and stability through stronger practical cooperation, including by enhancing the existing political dialogue, achieving interoperability, developing defence reform and contributing to the fight against terrorism. Our efforts will complement and mutually reinforce other Mediterranean initiatives, including those of the EU and the OSCE.
37. We have today also decided to offer cooperation to the broader Middle East region by launching our "Istanbul Cooperation Initiative". This initiative is offered by NATO to interested countries in the region, starting with the countries of the Gulf Cooperation Council, to foster mutually beneficial bilateral relationships and thus enhance security and stability. The initiative focuses on practical cooperation where NATO can add value, notably in the defence and security fields. This initiative is distinct from, yet takes into

- account and complements, other initiatives involving other international actors.
38. While respecting the specificity of the Mediterranean Dialogue, the enhanced Mediterranean Dialogue and the “Istanbul Cooperation Initiative” are complementary, progressive and individualised processes. They will be developed in a spirit of joint ownership with the countries involved. Continued consultation and active engagement will be essential to their success.
39. Since its creation two years ago, the NATO-Russia Council has raised the quality of the relationship between the Alliance and Russia to a new level, to the benefit of the entire Euro-Atlantic area. We reaffirm our determination to broaden our political dialogue and are committed to deepening our consultations on key security issues, including Afghanistan and the Balkans, and the fight against terrorism and against the proliferation of Weapons of Mass Destruction and their means of delivery. Our practical cooperation has progressed further, including in military-to-military projects. Through our efforts to improve interoperability, we have also laid the groundwork for future operational support to NATO forces, including for potential joint peacekeeping operations. We welcome the progress made in advancing practical cooperation on theatre missile defence, civil emergency planning, the Cooperative Airspace Initiative, and search and rescue at sea. We look forward to making further progress in implementing the Rome Declaration of May 2002, working together as equal partners in areas of common interest.
40. We welcome Ukraine’s determination to pursue full Euro-Atlantic integration. In this context, we reaffirm the necessity to achieve consistent and measurable progress in democratic reform. We encourage Ukraine to accelerate the implementation of the objectives outlined in the NATO-Ukraine Action Plan, particularly regarding the conduct of free and fair elections, the guaranteeing of media freedoms, and implementation of the results of the Defence Review. We are determined to support Ukraine in these efforts, while noting that a further strengthening of our relationship will require stronger evidence of Ukraine’s commitment to comprehensive reform, in particular with a view to the conduct of presidential elections this autumn. We welcome Ukraine’s continued participation in KFOR within the Polish-Ukrainian Battalion. We note the progress made by Ukraine in defence reform and in strengthening defence and military cooperation with NATO, including in the area of host nation support and strategic airlift. With this understanding, we instruct the Council in Permanent Session to assess NATO-Ukraine relations, with a view to presenting recommendations to Foreign Ministers after the presidential elections.
41. We note the importance of the Black Sea region for Euro-Atlantic security. Littoral countries, Allies and Partners are working together to contribute to further strengthening security and stability in the area. Our Alliance is prepared

to explore means to complement these efforts, building upon existing forms of regional cooperation.

42. We welcome the interest shown by several countries who are developing individual, mutually beneficial dialogues on security matters with NATO as contact countries. In this context, we welcome the interest shown by Australia in closer cooperation with our Alliance.
 43. NATO and the OSCE have largely complementary responsibilities and common interests, both functionally and geographically. NATO will continue to further develop the cooperation with the OSCE in areas such as conflict prevention, crisis management and post-conflict rehabilitation.
 44. We welcome the role of the NATO Parliamentary Assembly in complementing NATO's efforts to promote stability throughout Europe. We also appreciate the contribution made by the Atlantic Treaty Association in promoting better understanding of the Alliance and its objectives among our publics.
 45. Today's complex strategic environment demands a broad approach to security, comprising political, economic and military elements. We are united in our commitment to such an approach. The Alliance is conducting challenging operations in regions of strategic importance; transforming its capabilities to meet the new threats; and working ever more closely together with partner countries and other international organisations in a truly multilateral effort to address common security concerns. While NATO's transformation continues, its fundamental purpose – based on the common values of democracy, human rights and the rule of law – endures: to serve as an essential transatlantic forum for consultation and an effective instrument for Europe and North America to defend peace and stability, now and into the future.
 46. We express our deep appreciation for the gracious hospitality extended to us by the Government of Turkey and the city of Istanbul. Here in Istanbul, a city that bridges two continents, we have reaffirmed the vital transatlantic link, and extended new offers of cooperation to countries and to regions of strategic importance.
1. Turkey recognises the Republic of Macedonia with its constitutional name.