

Joint Statement by the Ministers of Foreign Affairs

1. We, the representatives of Bulgaria, the Czech Republic, Estonia, Hungary, Lithuania, Latvia, Poland, Romania and the Slovak Republic, have gathered in Warsaw in *Bucharest 9*, platform for consultation and dialogue, to share views on a range of security challenges and threats to the Euro-Atlantic area, originating from the East and from the South, and to discuss our contribution to addressing them.
2. We recognize that the challenges to NATO's security are multifaceted. Russia's actions threaten the long-standing goal of a Europe whole, free and at peace. Terrorism has risen to unprecedented levels and poses a direct threat to the security of our populations. Allied security is deeply affected by the instability in the Middle East and North Africa, contributing to migration crisis. Threats in the cyber domain, hybrid tactics and malign influences in internal affairs are increasing. To meet these threats and challenges in their entirety our Alliance should be ready to respond anytime and anywhere in a 360 degree approach.
3. A solid transatlantic bond remains paramount to Euro-Atlantic security. We welcome the US enhanced military commitment to the security and defence of Europe, including the significant increase in funding of the European Deterrence Initiative for 2018.
4. The 2016 NATO Summit in Warsaw was a decisive step in strengthening NATO's overall posture in response to the new security environment. These decisions have been taken forward by NATO leaders at their meeting in May this year with renewed commitment to fair burden sharing and fighting terrorism. We welcome the deployments of Allied forces in our region and remain fully committed to implementing the initiatives developed as part of NATO's forward presence with the aim of strengthening deterrence and overall interoperability of our forces.
5. We believe that the 2018 NATO Summit agenda should focus on strengthening defence and deterrence and effectively projecting stability beyond NATO's borders. We need to consolidate and build on the decisions made in Wales and Warsaw, and to ensure coherence across our implementation efforts. We also need to make sure that the next summit provides concrete objectives and solutions for the path ahead in NATO's adaptation to the new security environment. This will require inter alia an adapted NATO Command Structure, which needs to be able to effectively respond to the changed security environment. We expect and are committed to work towards progress on fair burden sharing and NATO's contribution to fighting terrorism. We will also be working closely with our partners Finland and Sweden to address common security concerns.
6. With a view of the 2018 NATO Summit we intend as well to explore opportunities to further support NATO partners, as a part of our projecting stability efforts, in order to strengthen their resilience to the security challenges they face. To that effect their commitment to our shared values remains paramount. Reiterating our full support to their territorial integrity, independence, sovereignty and legitimate aspirations, we will examine how to further strengthen the political dialogue and practical cooperation with Ukraine, Georgia and the Republic of Moldova. We stress as well our interest and commitment to the security and stability of the

Western Balkans and our intention to work with aspirant countries and partners from the region to this effect. We welcome Montenegro's accession to NATO which demonstrates that the Alliance's door remains open. We stand ready as well to continue to contribute to the Resolute Support mission in Afghanistan and capacity building efforts in the Southern periphery of the Alliance, including in Iraq in complementarity with the UN, the EU and relevant regional actors.

- 7 We support NATO's approach to Russia as agreed at the Wales and Warsaw Summits, and confirmed at the Brussels special meeting in May. The Alliance responded to a changed security environment by enhancing its deterrence and defence posture while remaining open to political dialogue with Russia, based on reciprocity and with a view to increasing transparency and predictability.
- 8 We reiterate our firm and principled position on Russia's aggressive actions in Ukraine and that we will not recognize the illegal and illegitimate annexation of Crimea. We express our strong support to Ukraine's sovereignty and territorial integrity within its internationally recognized borders. We express our concern with the security situation in eastern Ukraine and believe that tangible progress in the conflict settlement can be achieved only by full cease-fire, withdrawal of heavy equipment from the line of contact, and withdrawal of Russia's weapons, equipment and personnel from Ukraine. We urge all signatories to the Minsk Agreements to fully comply with the commitments they signed up to. We continue to be concerned with the intimidation and attacks against OSCE Special Monitoring Mission's monitors and recall that the SMM must have full, safe and unhindered access throughout Ukraine. We underline that the resolution of the conflict in and around Ukraine must be based on its territorial integrity and international law.
9. We underline that the CFE Treaty, the Open Skies Treaty and the Vienna Document remain crucial pillars of the security system in the OSCE area. We believe that improving the Vienna Document mechanisms concerning dangerous military incidents can make an important contribution and a first step to rebuilding confidence in Europe. NATO closely monitors Russia's military posture in NATO's vicinity, including large scale strategic military exercises such as ZAPAD 2017, as well as their implications, and call on Russia to observe the letter and the spirit of the Vienna Document. We note that Belarus demonstrated more transparent approach with respect to this exercise. We encourage Russia to engage constructively in the OSCE Structured Dialogue.
10. NATO-EU cooperation remains key to our security, allowing us to respond to evolving security threats, including cyber, hybrid and terrorism. We look forward to expanding NATO-EU cooperation building on the Joint Declaration from Warsaw. The future of enhanced EU security and defence policy lies in its further development based on inclusiveness, close coordination and complementarity with NATO. Initiatives in this area should contribute to increasing cohesion among member states. Efforts such as Permanent Structured Cooperation (PESCO) undertaken in the spirit of coherence, inclusiveness and transparency should strengthen our defence and security. We look forward to the implementation of the European Defence Fund and underscore the need for strengthening EU's rapid response toolbox in line with June 2017 European Council conclusions.

11. The modern world is increasingly dependent on digital technologies, which make it vulnerable to cyber threats. Hybrid means are being used to intimidate sovereign countries. Our countries are determined to improve situational awareness, strengthen co-operation and enhance resilience, including of our partners in Eastern Europe and the Western Balkans. We welcome the establishment of the European Centre of Excellence for Countering Hybrid Threats in Helsinki.
12. Aware of the complexity and unpredictability of the security environment, which include important challenges to our countries, we reaffirm our readiness to continue to meet to assess the situation and the way to further contribute to Euro-Atlantic security.