



NATO PARLIAMENTARY ASSEMBLY  
ASSEMBLÉE PARLEMENTAIRE DE L'OTAN

THE PRESIDENT  
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15 April 2020

## TO SECRETARIES OF DELEGATION FOR DISTRIBUTION TO ALL MEMBERS

### Message from NATO PA President Attila Mesterhazy

Dear colleagues,

As promised, I would like to update you on my activities since my last message to you on 6 March 2020.

First of all, I hope this message finds you healthy and safe in these exceptional times, which challenge our way of life and have brought large parts of our societies and economies to a halt.

In these days, my thoughts are first and foremost with the relatives of all those who have lost their lives to the virus and with the many more who are hospital-bound and fighting off the infection. As you know, some Assembly members have also contracted the disease. I wish them all the strength they need to achieve a speedy and full recovery.

I also wish to pay tribute to all those on the frontlines against COVID-19, including our medical professionals, military personnel, and scientists. The courage and dedication these citizens showcase every day and every night is truly remarkable and admirable.

You can read my Statement on the **Coronavirus (COVID-19) outbreak** published on 19 March on our [website](#).

The key to overcoming this crisis lies in each and every one of us acting responsibly and caring for the others as well as for themselves. Through solidarity and unity of purpose, we will stand strong together and defeat this invisible enemy. In this regard, I welcome the conclusions of the NATO Foreign Ministers' meeting last week on COVID-19 and NATO's commitment to look into further ways of assisting affected allies.

I see an important role for our Assembly in the coming months in analysing the many dimensions of this global crisis and helping us draw the lessons from it.

Of course, this situation has unfortunately led to the cancellation or postponement of several of our meetings, including the [Standing Committee meeting](#) which was due to be held on 28-30 March in Luxembourg. I trust you have also seen the joint letter by myself and our Secretary General Ruxandra Popa on the **postponement of the Spring Session in Kyiv**. As we said, we are currently discussing several options for alternative arrangements, and we hope to be able to get back to you with more information in the coming weeks.

In this time when we have no activities planned, I want to ensure that our Assembly continues to make its voice heard on the coronavirus crisis, as well as on other international events relevant to us.

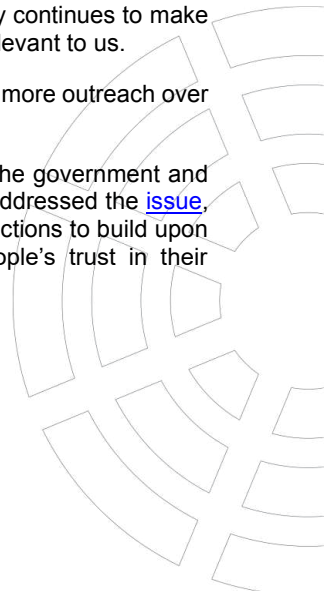
I have therefore increased the number of Presidential Statements, and encouraged more outreach over our social media platforms.

In the beginning of March, we received encouraging news from **Georgia**, where the government and opposition reached a political agreement on electoral reforms. Having previously addressed the [issue](#), I issued a [statement](#) warmly welcoming the agreement. I encouraged all political factions to build upon it to strengthen confidence, reduce polarisation, and bolster the Georgian people's trust in their democracy.

INTERNATIONAL SECRETARIAT · SECRÉTARIAT INTERNATIONAL

Place du Petit Sablon 3  
B-1000 Brussels  
T. +32 2 504 81 55

E. [secgen@nato-pa.int](mailto:secgen@nato-pa.int)  
[www.nato-pa.int](http://www.nato-pa.int)





Addressing the **security situation in Syria and the migrant and refugee crisis** remains a priority for the Assembly. I therefore issued a [statement](#) on the situation in Northern Syria and at the Greece-Turkey border. I condemned the indiscriminate bombings by the Assad regime and Russia in Syria, which led to the current situation. I also remain encouraged by the dialogue between Turkey and the European Union, including the review of the 2016 EU-Turkey Statement to identify and resolve differences.

Naturally, I also issued statements on **North Macedonia**, when the [Spanish Senate](#) ratified the country's accession to NATO and when North Macedonia deposited its [instrument of accession](#), becoming NATO's 30<sup>th</sup> member state. I wrote to the President of the Assembly of the Republic of North Macedonia on your behalf to officially welcome North Macedonia as a full member of the NATO PA. I wholeheartedly congratulate our friends for this momentous achievement. I look forward to welcoming the delegation at our next meeting.

I was also recently interviewed as part of a conference co-organized by a Hungarian think tank and the British Embassy in Budapest. In the interview, I present my perspective on NATO's strategy and top priorities in the cyber domain and NATO's role in handling the coronavirus crisis. You can read the interview [here](#).

Many of you will already have received advance paper copies of my **2019 Annual Presidential Report**. The Report was publicly launched on our [website](#) on 23 March. I hope you have time to read about the Assembly's achievements in 2019. Finally, my thoughts are also with the family of our former colleague and NATO PA Vice-President **Julio Miranda Calha**, who passed away on Saturday 28 March 2020. Between 1991 and 2019, Julio left a substantial legacy which I will make sure to preserve.

Once again, I would like to encourage you to sign up to the Assembly's newsletter to follow our latest activities, which you can do on the bottom of the NATO PA web site.

More initiatives will follow in the coming weeks, and I will continue to keep you informed. Some will focus on the COVID-19 crisis; others on other key priorities for our Assembly. I want to highlight once again the importance of our Assembly's involvement in the **reflection process on NATO's political dimension**. You will have received our Secretariat's brief on the NATO ministerial meeting including the names and biographies of the members of the group of experts. I will be reaching out to them to convey our Assembly's readiness to support their work.

Thank you for your active commitment to the NATO PA and thank you for your trust. Please do not hesitate to reach out to me or our Secretary General.

Attila Mesterhazy

