

Deputy Minister of National Defence addresses Subcommittee on Resilience and Political Security of the NATO Parliamentary Assembly

On 14 October 2024, Deputy Minister of National Defense Giannis Kefalogiannis delivered a speech on “Priorities of Greek Foreign and Defence Policy” during the sessions of the Subcommittee on Transatlantic Relations and the Subcommittee on Resilience and Political Security of the NATO Parliamentary Assembly, held at the Greek Parliament.

In his address to parliamentarians from 32 NATO member countries, Mr. Kefalogiannis emphasized that amidst ongoing geopolitical turmoil, Greece has chosen to be an active participant in resolving issues rather than shying away from them. He reaffirmed Greece's commitment to being a credible stabilizing force and deterrent in the region, underscoring the importance of collaboration and resilience in current challenges.

Deputy Defence Minister further highlighted Greece's strategic priorities, which include enhancing defense capabilities, strengthening transatlantic ties, and promoting regional stability through active diplomacy and cooperation with allies.

“I am very pleased to welcome you to Greece and especially to the Greek Parliament, the country's leading democratic institution. I am present here today as a representative of the Greek Parliament in the context of promoting cooperation and open dialogue between national parliaments and the NATO Parliamentary Assembly. A mechanism of consultation and participation in the acquis, actions, and value system of the North Atlantic Alliance, the most successful military alliance in history, which has as its permanent goal and priority the freedom and security of all its members by political and military means. But apart from a military alliance, NATO is also an alliance of values and principles.

Greece's defence policy is based on these common values and principles: the principle of international peace, democratic values, freedom, human rights, the rule of law, respect for international law, constitute for our country constitutional requirements and benchmarks for the national security and defence strategy.

The argument of the ancient Greek orator Isocrates in his "About Peace" speech, that peaceful disposition, respect for the Right and the simultaneous upgrading of the strength of the Armed Forces are indescribable conditions of the security and prosperity of a country, is validated in the modern defense policy of Greece. Because we seek peaceful coexistence with our neighbors, in accordance with the principles of the UN Charter by choosing the peaceful settlement of disputes versus the policy of cannon carriers and unprovoked threats, but without accepting any attempts to impose executed.



At the same time, however, we are dynamically and resolutely upgrading the country's defensive and deterrent power with a series of actions and reforms that we call “Agenda 2030”

The Greek Armed Forces are becoming flexible and modern, able to adapt to the new, fluid and complex battlefield in order to continue safeguarding Greece's sovereignty and independence, in order to continue to act as a pillar of peace and stability in our neighborhood and as a valuable member of the NATO Alliance. The geostrategic position of Greece, which is the link between the countries of Southeast Europe, the Black Sea, the Middle East and North East Africa, largely determines the priorities of the National Security Strategy and the priorities of our defence policy, as it interacts with the globalized network of security threats, such as modern forms of piracy with expansionary agents, energy insecurity, terrorism, hybrid threats, irregular migration and its instrumentalization, as well as revisionist regimes with expansionary agents and propaganda counterparts. All of these challenges test the security zone of Greece, the security of the southern borders of Europe and the stability of the Alliance's southeastern wing.

The international situation remains unstable and volatile. The conflicts of recent years, technological developments and new conventional and hybrid threats, as well as the regional situation, have dramatically deteriorated. I refer to the violent, unprovoked and illegal invasion of Ukraine by Russia, which undermined the foundations of the international legal order and activated the crisis prevention and response mechanisms of the international organizations of collective security and NATO. This ongoing conflict, coupled with the unprecedented current escalation of violence in the Middle East, has a significant impact on peace and stability in our neighborhood, with the emerging challenge of dealing with the imminent crowded refugee flows on the European continent.

Amidst these other developments in the international security system, amidst a wider geopolitical turmoil, Greece has chosen and chooses to be part of the solutions to the problems and not to refrain from resolving them, remaining a reliable factor of stability and deterrence in our wider region. Responding to new geopolitical challenges, it defends against any form of threat, whether conventional or hybrid. Our priority is to strengthen the country's deterrent power as well as our essential contribution as a reliable ally, neighbor, partner in safeguarding the regional security architecture and strengthening the international collective security and



defense system. First of all, guided by the experience of our NATO allies as well as other states, but also based on the lessons of the conflict in Ukraine, we aim to revolutionize the training of our personnel, in action and in reserve, and to create the civilian soldier, who will be trained, will be armed and will be ready to fight, if necessary.

In addition, the Armed Forces are being reorganized into a modern and flexible structure with adequate staffing and active equipment, while at the same time creating a new ecosystem of defense and innovation, with which, in close cooperation with universities, think tanks and private companies, we aim to design and construct new systems, adapted to the needs of the Greek and Allied Armed Forces. These systems, which will be based on new and emerging technologies to implement programs of high operational value, focusing on drone systems (air, ground, surface and submarine), cybersecurity and artificial intelligence, will be able to protect our borders and provide even stronger deterrence against any threat. In this context, a symbolic project is the creation of an anti-drone dome, which will allow our Armed Forces to operate protected from the threat of drones. These reforms, with a central pillar the upgrading and exploitation of the National Defence Industry, together with the parallel supply of new weapons systems and the experience

already accumulated from our participation in NATO and EU missions in the Mediterranean, the Red Sea and elsewhere, further strengthen the defence capabilities of our Armed Forces, contribute to the active exercise of our sovereign rights, and generally upgrade our national security. At the same time, however, they strengthen Greece's strategic defence partnership because they strengthen our unwavering support for our Allies and Partners, NATO & EU, with whom we share global responsibilities, such as promoting sustainable development, tackling climate change, defending collective security and ensuring respect for international law. After all, the operational upgrading of national capabilities, as part of the collective resilience and dynamics, constitutes an inevitable coherent part and essential basis for the effective fulfillment of the Alliance's common goals and missions.

In addition, Greece recognizes the utmost importance of strengthening the European Defence and Security Mechanisms and the creation of a defence arm of the European Union that can autonomously or in cooperation with NATO, contribute to the defence of its citizens and the Euro-Atlantic area. I remind you that the development of a common anti-missile and anti-aircraft defense system for Europe was a national initiative of Greek Prime Minister Mitsotakis and Polish Prime Minister Tusk.

Greece has to offer in this and already we are proceeding to the creation of our own anti-drone and anti-aircraft dome, as I mentioned. Also, our country, as a country with a long maritime history, which has the largest commercial fleet in the world, places particular emphasis on the issues of freedom of navigation and maritime safety in general. The geographical location of the country in Southeast Europe and the Eastern Mediterranean makes it a critical factor for the security of transport lines and energy networks between Europe and Asia, Europe and North Africa, as well as Western Europe – Eastern Mediterranean. At the same time, rapid developments and the emerging crisis in the Middle East create additional safety requirements, especially in the marine environment. This is why Greece participates in a substantial and active way in the planning and execution of the Alliance and EU operations to, among other things: Respect the rules of international and maritime law, combat terrorism, illegal trafficking of migrants and the instrumentalization of refugee flows, ensure freedom of navigation, energy security and protect the lives of seafarers. Our country fully embodies the well-known principle “the power in the union” and aims at strengthening defence alliances and international cooperation as a fundamental condition of national and collective security.

In this context, it establishes bilateral and multilateral cooperation in defence and security matters and always operates on the basis of mutual trust and joint action in

order to open ways of communication with the defence exercisers of other countries. All these initiatives, the upgrading of defence planning and the increase of the operational capabilities of the Armed Forces, the active partnership of the country in defending law and collective security, make our country a reliable ally capable of opening new horizons of cooperation, a state with a voice and a role in developments concerning stability in the wider region, a country that retains the role of guardian of peace in the Eastern Mediterranean and Balkan region.

Finally, allow me, taking advantage of my opportunity to refer to the priorities of Greece’s defence policy, to point out before you, before the institution that not only aims at highlighting the best practices for the defence of people and states but also contributes significantly to the more democratic determination of our defence and collective security, that Greece deeply believes in the potential of NATO to emerge not only as a military alliance but also as an alliance of principles, values and rules of international law, which will defend them and export them to the world.

After all, these principles are constitutional, as I mentioned at the beginning of my speech, and constitute the “cellular material” of its existence. And so this is the challenge of the 21st century for all NATO members, as the “optimum” pursuit of the role and work of our Alliance in the extremely complex contemporary geopolitical security environments.”

