



# THESSISMUN

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### North Atlantic Treaty Organization

*Topic area A: "Strengthening the Eastern Flank while focusing on risk containment policies and on the reinforcement of the eastern frontiers".*



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## TABLE OF CONTENTS

1. WELCOMING LETTER
2. INTRODUCTION TO THE COMMITTEE
3. INTRODUCTION TO THE TOPIC
4. NECESSARY DEFINITIONS
5. LEGAL FRAMEWORK
6. EASTERN FLANK; A ROADMAP FOR FURTHER STRENGTHENING AND COOPERATION
  - 6.1. NATO'S BALTIC STRATEGY AFTER 2014
  - 6.2. RUSSIA'S INTEREST IN THE BALTIC REGION
  - 6.3. RUSSIAN MANOEUVRES AND THE STRATEGIC COMMUNICATION OF DISINFORMATION
7. RISK CONTAINMENT POLICIES AND THE REINFORCEMENT OF THE EASTERN FRONTIERS
8. CONCLUSION
9. POINTS TO BE ADDRESSED
10. BIBLIOGRAPHY



## 1. Welcoming Letter

*Esteemed All,*

It is with great pleasure that we officially welcome you in the North Atlantic Council (NATO) of ThessISMUN 2018. We expect one more year full of passionate participations, striving for greatness and fully prepared to overcome all obstacles that may arise, during our upcoming sessions.

We are more than honored to be serving as your chairpersons in one of the most demanding Committees that will be simulated in ThessISMUN 2018. As part of our presidency, we aim on focusing on 3 important factors, which are considered as the keystone for a productive - yet worthwhile - experience; preparation, cooperation and persistence.

Preparation, since it is the most important step for your participation and the full enjoyment of the experience. Research, study the current Guides, stay up to date with the ongoing events and explore your countries' position and withstanding. Cooperation, since you are part of an Alliance, with common goals and strategies, that focuses on the development and security of its member states. Make sure that you take into consideration your co-delegates and their presence in the Council, as well as communicating and debating with them. Last, but not least, you need persistence, since within the past few years, the global environment has been facing numerous kinds of challenges and risks that require utmost persistence and willingness towards a safer and more stable environment.

Within the next weeks, we are going to provide you with all the necessary assistance both before and during the Conference, so as that you are fully prepared to follow the flow of our sessions, take part in the most challenging debates and come up with the most suitable solutions.

We both share our passion for these kind of simulations, even though we are coming from unlike academic studies, while we are more than ready to transfuse and transmit to you our addiction and inspire you for your next steps.

Looking forward for the upcoming experience!

We remain at your disposal!

Dimitra Markopoulou

Christos Sklivanos

## 2. Introduction to the Committee

The North Atlantic Treaty Organization (NATO) is a Political-Military Alliance which has been operating continuously since 1949, since after its first and foremost success on suppressing the Soviet spread in Europe and then in the post-Cold War era, the basis of a new Euro-Atlantic Security was formed. NATO's effectiveness, since its foundation, has been based in Diplomacy, Dialogue, Consensus and Cooperation with other organizations. The development and maintenance of adequate military structures and Forces alongside with other infrastructures and National Instruments gives the Alliance the ability to conduct operations that includes Self and Collective Defense (both Article 5 Operations and Non Art 5 Cases). Thus, the Agency is a viable factor, although in addition to the "effectiveness" factor, there are two other key factors that are required for its sustainability:

- The commitment of its members to the basic principles of the Western World such as the Common Cultural Heritage, Solidarity, the Rule of Law, Freedom and Democracy (notable exceptions of these principles in modern history are the totalitarian "Salazar" regime in Portugal, the seven-year Dictatorship of the Colonels in Greece, and the Erdogan's regime in Turkey).
- The capability to adapt to the geographically shaped environment and the estimated risks and threats that require to be handled from the Alliance as a single entity for the benefit of its members.

Furthermore, the Organization gives substance to the transatlantic bond that links Europe with North America into a unique alliance of defense and security. The fundamental and lasting purpose of NATO, formulated in The Washington Treaty<sup>1</sup>, is to preserve the freedom and security of all of its members by political and military

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<sup>1</sup> The North Atlantic Treaty (1949) [Online] 4 April 1949. [Accessed 26 January 2018] Available from: [https://www.nato.int/nato\\_static/assets/pdf/stock\\_publications/20120822\\_nato\\_treaty\\_en\\_light\\_2009.pdf](https://www.nato.int/nato_static/assets/pdf/stock_publications/20120822_nato_treaty_en_light_2009.pdf)

means. To this end, NATO has offered the collective security of its members since it was founded in 1949. It has, also, served as an essential forum for consultation on security issues for its members, and as the main pillar of peace and stability in Euro-Atlantic area. After the end of the Cold War, it was expected for the Alliance to dissolve since its purpose was fulfilled. However, the Alliance succeeded in adopting to new facts and took on new fundamental tasks, including building security bonds between the democratic countries from throughout Europe, to the Caucasus and Central Asia.

Reacting to the challenges that the overall security environment is facing, the Alliance has taken additional responsibilities. These include tackling, not only the instability caused by regional and national conflicts within Europe, but also the threats that reach the borders of the Euro-Atlantic area. Today, the Alliance is being involved in a growing range of activities, with a purpose to promote cooperation with Russia, Ukraine and other non-NATO states, while dealing with the new security challenges that arise in the 21st century, such as those caused by the international terrorism and the proliferation of weapons of mass destruction etc. In fact, in order to remain effective in defending and promoting security in this new environment which is changing rapidly, the Alliance has gotten into an evolving transformation that affects all aspects of its agenda, with new missions, new members, new capabilities and new ways of cooperation<sup>2</sup>.

### 3. Introduction to the Topic

The Russian annexation of Crimea in March 2014 and the invasion in eastern Ukraine has created a series of new incidents and facts that have led to the most imminent crisis in Europe since 1989. With a number of violations of the fundamental rules of International law, especially regarding the fundamental principles of territorial

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<sup>2</sup> NATO's purpose [Online] 13 Oct. 2015. [Accessed 26 January 2018] Available from: [https://www.nato.int/cps/sv/natohq/topics\\_68144.htm](https://www.nato.int/cps/sv/natohq/topics_68144.htm)

integrity and national sovereignty, Russia has unleashed a number of different warfare techniques in order to achieve its operational objectives. Hybrid warfare, military provocations targeting EU and NATO Member-States, as well as military exercises, including but not limited to nuclear scenarios, ballistic missiles, special troops etc.<sup>3</sup>

Following these incidents, the political and military stability in the Eastern Flank has been shaken and threaten through a number of provokes and campaigns of destabilization merely created by the Russian foreign policy. Even though a lot of different points of view have been expressed in NATO circles, regarding the ways Eastern Flank should be fortified, the actual need for the enforcement and assurance of the region finds everyone on the same ground. However, this political consensus could fray within the next years, especially after the memories of the Russian war to Ukraine are getting weak or in the case of Russia totally withdrawing from Donbas, which is highly unlikely to happen at this moment.<sup>4</sup>

The real challenge for NATO today is to align all its forces and strategies in order to reinsure the peace and stability in the region with following all the decisions and agreements that have been made between the basic actors. NATO's relations with Russia have always been tense, even though the 20-year-old NATO-Russia Founding Act allows some dialogue in the NATO-Russia Council.

## 4. Necessary Definitions

- *Readiness Action Plan (RAP)*<sup>5</sup>: Following NATO Wales Summit declaration in 5<sup>th</sup> of September 2014, a plan has been created, which includes increased

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<sup>3</sup> Henenow final

<sup>4</sup> NATO's Eastern Flank and Its Future Relationship With Russia. [Online] 23 October 2017. [Accessed 26 January 2018] Available from: <http://carnegieeurope.eu/2017/10/23/nato-s-eastern-flank-and-its-future-relationship-with-russia-pub-73499>

<sup>5</sup> Readiness Action Plan. [Online] 21 Sep. 2017. [Accessed 26 January 2018] Available from: [https://www.nato.int/cps/ua/natohq/topics\\_119353.htm](https://www.nato.int/cps/ua/natohq/topics_119353.htm)

military activity in the eastern part of the Alliance. It has been in place since May 2014 (“assurance measures”), and longer-term changes to NATO’s force posture (“adaptation measures”). *The adaptation measures aim to increase the readiness and responsiveness* and allow the Alliance to deal with security challenges, including those from the east and the south.<sup>6</sup>

- ***Eastern Flank:*** Following the Warsaw Summit (2016) the term has been used mainly in order to refer to Poland, the Baltic States and Romania, states that today face imminent threats from Russia’s political system and foreign policy. These states have requested and approved a NATO presence in their territories in order to secure their sovereignty and security, through a number of arrangements and agreements.<sup>7</sup>

- ***The Nordic-Baltic Region:***



<sup>6</sup>NATO’s Readiness Action Plan [Online] July 2016. [Accessed 26 January 2018] Available from: [https://www.nato.int/nato\\_static\\_fl2014/assets/pdf/pdf\\_2016\\_07/20160627\\_1607-factsheet-rap-en.pdf](https://www.nato.int/nato_static_fl2014/assets/pdf/pdf_2016_07/20160627_1607-factsheet-rap-en.pdf)

<sup>7</sup>NATO’s Eastern Flank – a new paradigm [Online] 13 July 2016. [Accessed 26 January 2018] Available from: <https://www.osw.waw.pl/en/publikacje/analyses/2016-07-13/natos-eastern-flank-a-new-paradigm>

Extending north partially beyond the “eastern flank”, the term includes the region that is comprised by eight Nordic and Baltic states (NB8)<sup>8</sup>. The Nordic and Baltic countries comprise Denmark, Estonia, Finland, Iceland, Latvia, Lithuania, Norway and Sweden<sup>9</sup>. Throughout the last years and within the challenging environment of geostrategic and politics, these countries have become increasingly interdependent in security terms.

- *The Baltic Sea Region*<sup>10</sup>: For the purposes of this study, the Baltic Sea region shall be defined as the ten countries belonging to the Council of Baltic Sea States (CBSS) – Finland, Sweden, Norway, Denmark, Germany, Poland, Lithuania, Latvia, Estonia and Russia. Norway is part of this term even though it is not directly neighboring on the Baltic Sea, given its membership of the CBSS and of NATO.
- *Enhanced forward Presence (EFP)*<sup>11</sup>: “As part of NATO’s strengthened deterrence and defense posture, Allies agreed at the 2016 Summit in Warsaw to enhance NATO’s military presence in the eastern part of the Alliance. NATO’s enhanced forward presence is defensive, proportionate, and in line with international commitments. It represents a significant commitment by Allies and is a tangible reminder that an attack on one is an attack on all, as it is clearly defined by Article 5 of the Washington Treaty. Fully deployed in June 2017, NATO’s enhanced forward presence comprises multinational forces provided by framework nations and other contributing Allies on a voluntary, fully sustainable and rotational basis. They are based on four

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<sup>8</sup>Securing the Nordic-Baltic region [Online]. [Accessed 26 January 2018] Available from: <https://www.nato.int/docu/review/2016/also-in-2016/security-baltic-defense-nato/EN/index.htm>

<sup>9</sup> Reinforced diplomatic cooperation between the Nordic and Baltic countries [Online] 30 Aug 2017. [Accessed 26 January 2018] Available from: [https://www.regjeringen.no/en/aktuelt/baltic\\_memo/id653674/](https://www.regjeringen.no/en/aktuelt/baltic_memo/id653674/)

<sup>10</sup> NATO and the Baltic Sea Region: Towards Regional Security Governance? [Online] 1998-2000. [Accessed 26 January 2018] Available from: <https://www.nato.int/acad/fellow/98-00/hyde.pdf>

<sup>11</sup> NATO’s Enhanced Forward Presence. [Online] November 2017. [Accessed 26 January 2018] Available from: [https://www.nato.int/nato\\_static\\_fl2014/assets/pdf/pdf\\_2017\\_11/1711-factsheet-efp.pdf](https://www.nato.int/nato_static_fl2014/assets/pdf/pdf_2017_11/1711-factsheet-efp.pdf)

rotational battalion-size battlegroups that operate in concert with national home defense forces and are present at all times in the host countries.”<sup>12</sup>

- ***Risk Containment Policies:*** This term includes all necessary plans and policies that are required in order to minimize and control the risky events that pose a threat to the current status quo. As far as NATO and its Allies are concerned, there are numerous decisions and resolutions that point out all the action plans in order to prevent unfortunate events.
- ***Deterrence by denial:*** “*Deterrence by denial means persuading the enemy not to attack by convincing him that his attack will be defeated - that is, that he will not be able to achieve his operational objectives*”.<sup>13</sup> Similar to this form of deterrence, there is also the “*deterrence by defense which is pursued through the preservation of strong and credible defense capabilities*”.<sup>14</sup>

## 5. Legal Framework

- **Washington Treaty (Founding Act)**<sup>15</sup>: On 4<sup>th</sup> of April 1949, the foundations of the North Atlantic Treaty Organization (NATO) were officially laid down. The Treaty was signed by the 12 founding members in Washington D.C., deriving its authority from Article 51 of the United Nations Charter. Even though, the complexity and the challenging nature of the international political environment, the 14 articles of the Treaty has never called for modification or further explanation, whereas each Ally has had the opportunity to use and

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<sup>12</sup>Boosting NATO's presence in the east and southeast [Online] 21 Dec. 2017. [Accessed 26 January 2018] Available from: [https://www.nato.int/cps/en/natohq/topics\\_136388.htm](https://www.nato.int/cps/en/natohq/topics_136388.htm)

<sup>13</sup>Debating security strategies [Online] 2013. [Accessed 26 January 2018] Available from: <https://www.nato.int/docu/review/2003/issue4/english/art4.html>

<sup>14</sup> Konstantinos Koliopoulos, “Strategic Thought from Antiquity to the Present”, Athens, Poiotita, 2010, pp. 23-24.

<sup>15</sup> The North Atlantic Treaty (1949) [Online] 4 April 1949. [Accessed 26 January 2018] Available from: [https://www.nato.int/nato\\_static/assets/pdf/stock\\_publications/20120822\\_nato\\_treaty\\_en\\_light\\_2009.pdf](https://www.nato.int/nato_static/assets/pdf/stock_publications/20120822_nato_treaty_en_light_2009.pdf)

implement the context of these article according to the capabilities and the circumstances each one faces.

- **Russia Founding Act**<sup>16</sup>: In May 1997, allies of the North Atlantic Council and the Russian Federation came together in Paris, at the highest political level (Head of States and Governments and the President of the Russian Federation), in order to create “*a lasting and inclusive peace in the Euro-Atlantic area based on the principles of democracy, cooperation and security*”<sup>17</sup>. After 4 months of continuous negotiations and debates, a paper was created that outlined all the terms and conditions of this new relationship. “*This Act defines the goals and mechanism of consultation, cooperation, joint decision-making and joint action that will constitute the core of the mutual relations between NATO and Russia.*”<sup>18</sup>
- **Wales Summit**<sup>19</sup>: On 4<sup>th</sup>-5<sup>th</sup> September of 2014, Heads of States and Governments had a meeting that was held in Newport, Wales, as a part of the annual summits that are being held between Allies in order to debate current issues and plan strategic actions. After the aggressive actions of Russia against Ukraine, the Allies felt the need to short out a mutual strategic plan in order to ensure and secure the southern neighborhood, from the Middle East to North Africa, while stabilizing the Euro-Atlantic region. In order to ensure that the Alliance is going to be ready to respond firmly and quickly to the new security challenges that arise, three tasks have been set: collective defense, crisis management and cooperative security, whereas a NATO Readiness Action Plan has been approved (as explained above). The aforementioned actions were undertaken in order to “ensure that NATO is able to effectively address

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<sup>16</sup> Founding Act (Official text) [Online] 27 May. 1997. [Accessed 26 January 2018] Available from: [https://www.nato.int/cps/en/natohq/official\\_texts/25470.htm?selectedLocale=en](https://www.nato.int/cps/en/natohq/official_texts/25470.htm?selectedLocale=en)

<sup>17</sup> Founding Act on Mutual Relations, Cooperation and Security between NATO and the Russian Federation signed in Paris, France [Online] 27/05/1997. [Accessed 26 January 2018] Available from: [https://www.nato.int/nrc-website/media/59451/1997\\_nato\\_russia\\_founding\\_act.pdf](https://www.nato.int/nrc-website/media/59451/1997_nato_russia_founding_act.pdf)

<sup>18</sup> Founding Act on Mutual Relations, Cooperation and Security between NATO and the Russian Federation signed in Paris, France [Online] 27/05/1997. [Accessed 26 January 2018] Available from: [https://www.nato.int/nrc-website/media/59451/1997\\_nato\\_russia\\_founding\\_act.pdf](https://www.nato.int/nrc-website/media/59451/1997_nato_russia_founding_act.pdf)

<sup>19</sup> Wales Summit Declaration [Online] 05 Sep. 2014. [Accessed 26 January 2018] Available from: [http://www.europarl.europa.eu/meetdocs/2014\\_2019/documents/sede/dv/sede240914wales\\_summit/\\_sede240914walessummit\\_en.pdf](http://www.europarl.europa.eu/meetdocs/2014_2019/documents/sede/dv/sede240914wales_summit/_sede240914walessummit_en.pdf)

the specific challenges posed by hybrid warfare threats, where a wide range of overt and covert military, paramilitary, and civilian measures are employed in a highly integrated design”<sup>20</sup>. What’s more, it is believed to be the most important Summit since the fall of the Berlin Wall.<sup>21</sup>

- **Warsaw Summit:** Following the Wales Summit of 2014, the next NATO Summit took place in Warsaw, Poland in 8<sup>th</sup>-9<sup>th</sup> of July 2016. Among the other outcomes of this negotiation process, the Allies agreed upon strengthening the military presence, deterrence and defense posture in order to assure the protection of populations, territories, airspace and sea lines of communication. Thus, as described in paragraph 40 of the official Warsaw Summit Communiqué, beginning in early 2017, the enhanced presence would be comprised by multinational forces “*based on four battalion-sized battlegroups that can operate in concert with national forces, present at all times in these countries, underpinned by a viable reinforcement strategy*”.<sup>22</sup> The aforementioned multinational forces were led by Germany operating in Lithuania, United States of America (U.S.A) in Poland, United Kingdom in Estonia, and also Canada operating in Latvia<sup>23</sup>.

**Brussels Summit:** The 28<sup>th</sup> formal meeting of the Heads of States and Governments was held in Brussels, Belgium in 25<sup>th</sup> of May 2017. During this Summit, special reference was made upon the need to increase and further enhance their protection of the eastern frontiers of the Alliance and the immediate need for an action plan to fight united against terrorism. “NATO leaders also agreed to do more to ensure fairer burden sharing across the Alliance. “*Today, we decided to develop annual national plans, setting out how Allies intend to meet the defence investment pledge we made together in 2014. The national plans will cover three major areas: cash, capabilities,*

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<sup>20</sup> ibid

<sup>21</sup> NATO summit 'most important' since fall of Berlin Wall [Online] 31 Aug. 2014. [Accessed 26 January 2018] Available from:

<https://www.usatoday.com/story/news/world/2014/08/31/nato-summit-heads-of-state-newport-wales/14524803/>

<sup>22</sup> Warsaw Summit Communiqué (Par 38) [Online] 09 Jul. 2016. [Accessed 26 January 2018] Available from: [https://www.nato.int/cps/en/natohq/official\\_texts\\_133169.htm](https://www.nato.int/cps/en/natohq/official_texts_133169.htm)

<sup>23</sup> British troops to lead new NATO defense of Baltic States from Russian 'aggression'[Online] 15 Jun 2016. [Accessed 26 January 2018] Available from:

<https://www.express.co.uk/news/world/680134/British-troops-to-lead-new-Nato-defence-of-Baltic-States-from-Russian-aggression>

and contributions,” said the Secretary General.<sup>24</sup> President Donald Trump’s short speech at NATO’s new HQ, besides his criticism on the equal contribution of the Allies, he also stated that “the NATO of the future must include a great focus on terrorism and immigration, as well as threats from Russia and on NATO’s eastern and southern borders.”<sup>25</sup>

## 6. Eastern Flank; a roadmap for further strengthening and cooperation

### 6.1. NATO’s Baltic Strategy after 2014

Following the admission of the three Baltic States to the North Atlantic Alliance in 2004, NATO’s activity in that region has been dramatically increased, while this particular enlargement of NATO’s region was strongly symbolic since, for the first time, former Soviet Federal Republics have become members of the North Atlantic Alliance. This particular enlargement has a double effect, not only for the image that the North Atlantic alliance has built, but also for the post-Soviet vision of the Russian Federation. As far as NATO is concerned, it became clear that its strategy has set as a priority to widen its capabilities of deterrence outside of Western and Central European Countries as well, by reaching the borders with Russia. Such a turn, although, is not as easy as one could imagine, since the overall power of all three Baltic States was very limited in order to make a significant contribution to the expansion of NATO’s defense capabilities. Even though Estonia has increased its total defense expenditure under NATO’s instructions, from 2004 to 2014, ie 1.7% of GDP in 2004-2.3% in 2009 and finally 2% in 2014<sup>26</sup>, whereas the other two countries, namely Latvia and Lithuania, had not exceeded 2% in the same period, the percentage

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<sup>24</sup> NATO leaders agree to do more to fight terrorism and ensure fairer burden sharing [Online] 26 May. 2017. [Accessed 26 January 2018] Available from: [https://www.nato.int/cps/en/natohq/news\\_144154.htm](https://www.nato.int/cps/en/natohq/news_144154.htm)

<sup>25</sup> Securing NATO’s eastern flank [Online] 29 May 2017. [Accessed 26 January 2018] Available from: <http://cepa.org/EuropesEdge/Securing-NATOs-eastern-flank>

<sup>26</sup> NATO military expenditure as a percentage of GDP 1949-2014, SIPRI institute, April 2016

of their spending by 2014 was down and reached less than 1%.<sup>27</sup> As a result, the Ukrainian crisis of 2014 has worked as a catalyst for the reformation of NATO's Baltic Sea Strategy. Especially following the Wales Summit of that year, the first Summit after the Russian aggression in Ukrainian territories, it was decided to increase overall spending to 3% for all Member-States. However, they had only approved a modest increase of presence in the East which later on created a lot of issues because of the logistical, military and political preparations required.

In particular, following the Russia-Ukraine dispute in March 2014, which led to the annexation of the Crimea by the Russian Federation, NATO has desired to underline the importance of the protection of the Nordic-Baltic region by the Russian factor. In several simulations carried out by the RAND Institute of Defense Research, it has been found that the Baltic States were particularly vulnerable despite any particular efforts made over the past 10 years to modernize their defenses and increase their collective deterrent power. In particular, the RAND Institute in a 2016 report explained that in the extreme case of a direct strike from the Russian army in the Baltic territories, the estimated time of response and arrival of the troops in Tallinn or Riga or Vilnius was 36-60 hours.<sup>28</sup>

Since NATO's military sector had acknowledged this situation, in 2015 they have conducted a total of 12 major military exercises. Amongst them, 5 were conducted in Estonia or within the territory of the Baltic countries, with the most remarkable one being the BALTOPS 2015 which was held in June 2015<sup>29</sup>. What's more, one more exercise in 2015 concerned the cyber-security sector and the development of cyber-

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<sup>27</sup> *ibid*

<sup>28</sup> David A Shlapak and Michael W Johnson, Reinforcing Deterrence on NATO's Eastern Flank Wargaming the Defense of the Baltics [Online] 2016. [Accessed 26 January 2018] Available from: [http://www.rand.org/content/dam/rand/pubs/research\\_reports/RR1200/RR1253/RAND\\_RR1253.pdf](http://www.rand.org/content/dam/rand/pubs/research_reports/RR1200/RR1253/RAND_RR1253.pdf)

<sup>29</sup> North Atlantic Treaty Organization Key NATO & Allied Exercises, [Online] n.p., 2015. [Accessed 26 January 2018] Available from: [http://www.nato.int/nato\\_static\\_fl2014/assets/pdf/pdf\\_2015\\_10/20151007\\_1510-factsheet\\_exercises\\_en.pdf](http://www.nato.int/nato_static_fl2014/assets/pdf/pdf_2015_10/20151007_1510-factsheet_exercises_en.pdf)

deterrent capabilities, where Estonia was the leader.<sup>30</sup> In total, until within 2016, the main goal of NATO's Baltic strategy was focused on the increase of all the conventional means for the deterrence of the Russian Federation.

## *6.2. Russia's interest in the Baltic Region*

On the other side of the map, Russia's strategic vision regarding its military presence and its reaction is of really interesting, as far as the aforementioned Western accusations of provocative and aggressive acts against NATO member-states and their sovereignty are concerned.

Russia has historically given particular importance to the Baltic sub-region, which, in combination with Ukraine, is considered to be its defensive front in Central Europe. The explanation of this vision and strategy towards the Baltic territories lies to Russia's historical will to hold at least one free passage to the sea, as well as its intention to protect the only accessible part of its territory, as far as physical obstacles are concerned.

At the same time, during the period 2008-2014, Russia has tried to maintain its naval and onshore presence in the Baltic, while attempting to promote policies for the upgrade and modernization of the forces, which are based in the border with Estonia, (the Kaliningrad region and Belarus).<sup>31</sup> These efforts aimed on reducing the permanent troops based in the aforementioned regions, while gradually replacing them with fewer and more professional Rapid Reaction Forces (R.R.F). However, the most important Russian doctrine for the existence of those exercises in the borders with the Baltic States, is Russia's claim that NATO is showing intentions of expansionism towards the East (instead of enlargement, officials refer to NATO's

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<sup>30</sup> *ibid* pg. 3

<sup>31</sup> "Russian Armed Forces in the Baltic Sea Region" [Online] 2014. [Accessed 26 January 2018] Available from: <http://www.diplomaatia.ee/en/article/russian-armed-forces-in-the-baltic-sea-region/>

eastward expansion).<sup>32</sup> Thus, it is clear that these two different approaches between NATO and Russia ultimately lead in a game based on mutual suspicion and the creation of security dilemmas. Russia's attitude within the last few years, and especially after 2014, has led to the militarization of the region. The incident with the two fighter jets and the helicopter that flew close to the US destroyer<sup>33</sup> shows that the Baltic is once again a region that faces great destabilization.

### ***6.3. Russian manoeuvres and the strategic communication of disinformation***

For the past few years, Russian officials have been carrying out and orchestrating strategic exercises. It is a fact that every country has the right to conduct military exercises. Countries, which are Member-States of OSCE though, have to fulfill the basic terms and respect the fundamental principles of the Organization. OSCE, which stands for the Organization for Security and Co-operation in Europe, has been created in order to deal with arms control, the promotion of human rights and other fundamental human rights, as well as the early warning, the conflict prevention, crisis management and the post conflict rehabilitation.<sup>34</sup> In that context, all 57 participating states are obliged to follow the instructions of the organization as far as exercises are concerned, in order to promote transparency and peace in the region.

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<sup>32</sup>NATO's Eastward Expansion; Did the West Break Its Promise to Moscow? [Online] 26 November 2009 [Accessed 26 January 2018] Available from: <http://www.spiegel.de/international/world/nato-s-eastward-expansion-did-the-west-break-its-promise-to-moscow-a-663315.html>

<sup>33</sup> Armed Russian jet comes within 5 feet of US recon jet By Lucas Tomlinson [Online] 20 June 2017. [Accessed 26 January 2018] Available from: <http://www.foxnews.com/world/2017/06/20/breaking-news-armed-russian-jet-comes-within-5-feet-us-recon-jet.html>

<sup>34</sup> Who we are: 40 Years of OSCE [Online] Undated. [Accessed 26 January 2018] Available from: <https://www.osce.org/whatistheosce>

Thus, Russian and Belarussian Ministry of Defense announced that they will conduct a series of joint Russian-Belarussian exercises<sup>35</sup>, the so called Zapad-2017 (West-2017 in Russian), which were scheduled for the 14<sup>th</sup> until the 20<sup>th</sup> of September. Those exercises have created a line of events and reactions both from the media and the international political environment. According to the information that the Defense Ministry of Belarus has published<sup>36</sup>, the number of military personnel that was to be used wouldn't exceed the 13.000 clause that has been set in OSCE's Vienna Document<sup>37</sup> that would require a mandatory formal notification and invitation of international observers.

Furthermore, in order to divert attention away from its actions, Russia has made a number of complaints against NATO, based on misinterpretation of the facts and ignoring all the efforts that NATO has made in order to build a partnership with Russia. There has been a number of facts that the Russian side is trying to forge and manipulate the news and media broadcast against the Alliance.

## 7. Risk Containment Policies and the Reinforcement of the Eastern Frontiers

Following the aforementioned events and all the all the policies that have been adopted, attention should be drawn upon some basic policies that need to be followed

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<sup>35</sup>Zapad 2017 Russian-Belarussian strategic exercise launched in Russia and Belarus [Online] 14.09.2017. [Accessed 26 January 2018] Available from: [http://eng.mil.ru/en/news\\_page/country/more.htm?id=12142199@egNews](http://eng.mil.ru/en/news_page/country/more.htm?id=12142199@egNews)

<sup>36</sup> Details of Belarussian-Russian army exercise Zapad 2017 unveiled Read [Online] 20.03.2017. [Accessed 26 January 2018] Available from: <http://eng.belta.by/society/view/details-of-belarussian-russian-army-exercise-zapad-2017-unveiled-99607-2017/>

<sup>37</sup>VIENNA DOCUMENT 2011 ON CONFIDENCE- AND SECURITY-BUILDING MEASURES par 40-43 [Online] 30 November 2011. [Accessed 26 January 2018] Available from: <http://www.osce.org/fsc/86597?download=true>

when dealing with the Eastern frontiers and the Russia's passive-aggressiveness. One could plan out 4 policies<sup>38</sup>:

- 1) Transparency is the most important factor for cooperation and stability to be achieved. If the parties involved do not share and disclosure all the necessary details of any military and strategic exercises, it could provoke aggressiveness.
- 2) Maintaining some level of necessary communication with Moscow is highly recommended since the base of a productive cooperation is lied upon mutual understanding and communication.
- 3) In order to counter Russian propoganda, the Alliance needs to make sure that by spelling out the facts, they ensure the transparency and that facts are being lied out in their true form.
- 4) The consensus on supporting and maintaining the already established Enhanced Forward Presence (EFP) is of great importance, since NATO wouldn't be able to match Russia's strategic capabilities. Thus, a further stabilization and enhancement of its vulnerable members is one of the safest solutions.

## 8. Conclusion

As it has been clear, within this challenging environment, NATO and its allies needs to find a way to reinforce their Eastern Flank in order to overcome Russia's air and missile forces. Consisted by multinational forces and led by framework nations, in a voluntary and sustainable basis, the framework and strategy needs to be developed and reinforced. Throughout the last Summits, the need for a further cooperation has arisen while different positions have been expressed for both neutrality and aggressiveness. Countries disagree upon Russia's intentions and its risky goal which affect and reflect on the defense strategies and a reasonable question is arising; How much defense is enough, since too much defense may provoke Russia's aggression.

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<sup>38</sup> NATO's Eastern Flank and Its Future Relationship With Russia. [Online] 23 October 2017. [Accessed 26 January 2018] Available from: <http://carnegieeurope.eu/2017/10/23/nato-s-eastern-flank-and-its-future-relationship-with-russia-pub-73499>

## 9. Points to be addressed

- What would be the most sufficient common strategy to be followed by the allies of the North Atlantic Organization regarding Russia's policies?
- How would the discussions about the size and shape of Eastern defenses could be finalized and agreed upon?
- How to maintain the consensus between the allies over the aforementioned and deal with the range of challenges presented by Russia on the Eastern Flank?
- Should there be permanent basing troops in the Baltic States and Poland? And if yes, how could it be implemented?
- Should NATO-Russia Founding Act remain intact? And how should it be implemented into force?
- What about the cyber deterrence factor? How could the allies protect themselves and how could it be secured?
- Which would be the most efficient way to succeed in transparency and disclosure?
- Which are the block opinions regarding the issues (USA, UK, Central European Countries)?

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