

Brussels, 19 December 2023

The Western European Partners WEP4 and NATO

Austria, Ireland, Malta and Switzerland - together we are NATO's Western European Partners, the WEP4. We consider ourselves NATO's closest partners in values, and through our shared interest in Euro-Atlantic security.

In light of the multitude and complexity of the defense and security challenges we are currently facing, including Russia's aggression against Ukraine, we emphasize the growing importance of our partnership with NATO. Besides our bilateral cooperation with NATO and Allies, we are convinced that there is a positive agenda for NATO working with us, the WEP4.

We have compiled elements of such a positive agenda in a Non-Paper, which we are happy to share. We have started discussing the paper with NATO and Allies and look forward to continuing this discussion.

We are looking forward to future engagement on these ideas.

Sincerely,

Mission of Austria



Jürgen Meindl
Ambassador

Liaison Office of Ireland



Kevin Conmy
Ambassador

Mission of Malta



Clint Tanti
Ambassador

Mission of Switzerland



Philippe Brandt
Ambassador

The Western European Partners WEP4 and NATO

A contribution to partnership policy as NATO prepares for the 2024 Washington Summit

We are the Western European Partners

Austria, Ireland, Malta and Switzerland - together we are NATO's **Western European Partners, the WEP4**. We consider ourselves **NATO's closest partners** in values, and in particular through our shared interest in Euro-Atlantic security.

We share a **common interest in upholding the security within the Euro-Atlantic area**. Russia's illegal war of aggression against Ukraine has affected all of us. Our security environment has substantially deteriorated and remains volatile. We will continue to support Ukraine.

We share **fundamental values** with NATO Allies, namely the promotion of fundamental freedoms and human rights, and the safeguarding of freedom, justice and peace through democracy. WEP4 partners share an interest in promoting the Rules Based International Order (RBIO), Austria, Ireland and Malta EU Member States and all by working with and through multilateral organizations such as the UN, the EU, the OSCE and the ICRC. We are committed to human security, the Rule of Law, the Protection of Civilians (PoC) and the Women, Peace and Security (WPS) agenda, while also tackling new security challenges such as the nexus between climate change and security.

We are contributing partners

We are committed to our roles as partners to Euro-Atlantic security, and international peace and security more broadly. Individual WEP4 partners participate significantly in NATO, UN, EU and OSCE **missions and operations**. In particular, WEP4 partners contribute to NATO's largest ongoing mission, KFOR, with significant contingents. Other mission contributions from WEP4 partners include the NATO Mission in Iraq and EUFOR Althea.

We are committed to contributing to interoperability and capacity building. We build on a high-level of **interoperability and military cooperation**. WEP4 partners offer Education and Training through courses and exercises open to Allies and partners. WEP4 partners send Voluntary National Contributions and Partner Staff Posts to NATO IS and NATO command structure. Financially and through experts, WEP4 partners support NATO Trust Funds, DCB packages and various programs such as DEEP or BI. WEP4 partners provide expertise e.g. through NATO accredited Partnership Training and Education Centers (PTEC) such as the Austrian Armed Forces International Centre AUTINT and other entities, such as the Geneva Centres.

We contribute to dialogue and cooperation

Cooperative security remains an important element of stability and security in the Euro-Atlantic area. WEP4 partners contribute to human security, capacity building and arms-control and non-proliferation.

Based on our common values and in view of supporting the RBIO, we are committed to **facilitating dialogue and cooperation between NATO and its partners**. We believe strongly that NATO needs platforms for exchange and discussions on security-related issues between NATO and partner countries. We invite NATO to consider more regular meetings with partners, including on NAC-level. We will work to carry forward the informal dialogue that was started in the context of the Partnership Symposiums, and particularly in view of potential partnership discussions at the 2024 Washington Summit.

We support the establishment of thematic groupings and retain an interest in joining such groupings, where relevant. In offering our expertise and know-how we can contribute **to the shaping of policies in these areas at an early stage**, together with other like-minded and advanced partners (e.g. PIAG, IP4 and others), thus adding broader support and expertise to such policies.

We contribute to the innovation and EDT agenda

Transnational security challenges like cyber threats, maritime threats, hybrid warfare, climate change, terrorism and irregular migration affect NATO Allies and WEP4 partners alike. We believe that such challenges can only be tackled in cooperation with other stakeholders. Hence, we are interested in working closely with NATO on issues such as cyber defense, maritime, resilience, hybrid/disinformation and climate change and security.

Like NATO and its Allies, we have an interest in staying at the **technological forefront** while using new technologies in a responsible manner based on legal and ethical principles. Cooperation in innovation and EDTs and participation in the development of principles of responsible use is in our interest.

To further utilize partners' knowledge and expertise, WEP4 partners wish to establish **opportunities for partner participation in the innovation and EDT agendas**. Working closely with partners on innovation and EDTs, e.g. by including partners in DIANA and the Innovation Fund, would contribute to NATO maintaining its technological edge.

As NATO aims to be at the forefront of understanding and adapting to the impact of climate change on security, WEP4 partners can contribute significant expertise in this field. We would welcome the opportunity to work with NATO in this area, building on our participation and contributions in other relevant fora on climate change and security.

We strive to enhance our interoperability and partnership with NATO, individually and as WEP4 partners. We are committed to remaining NATO's closest partners.

Our cooperation could be further promoted by:

- Frequent **bilateral exchanges** with Allies and partners, as WEP4 (and PIAG). Regular exchange and briefings on topics of interest, e.g. RBIO, ESC or EDTs. In particular, high-level meetings, tailored briefings and frequent exchanges with PASP.
- Privileged **access to documents and information**, based on mutual trust and cooperation and existing security agreements (including NNN-status for WEP4).
- **Early engagement on the shaping of new norms and policies**. Including partners before decisions are already made broadens the legitimacy of new norms, and facilitates partners' willingness to subscribe to such norms. Dialogue can aggregate the views and expertise of different partners, ultimately leading to better policy outcomes.
- **Opportunities to participate in additional exercises** to improve interoperability and high-level exercises such as CMX.
- **Opportunities to participate** in bodies and formats working on innovation and EDTs, such as **DIANA**, the **Innovation Funds**, the **Cyber Pledge** and instruments like the **resilience goals**.