

# 104th ROSE-ROTH SEMINAR

JOINT WITH  
THE SUB-COMMITTEE ON  
RESILIENCE AND CIVIL SECURITY  
(CDSRCS) AND  
THE SUB-COMMITTEE ON  
TRANSITION AND DEVELOPMENT  
(ESCTD)

**SUPPORTING PARTNERS AT RISK:  
PROJECTING STABILITY,  
STRENGTHENING SECURITY AND  
ADVANCING EURO-ATLANTIC  
INTEGRATION**

**STOCKHOLM, SWEDEN  
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*This Seminar Report is presented for information only and does not necessarily represent the official view of the Assembly. This report was prepared by Paul Cook, Director of the Economics and Security Committee, and Pilar Maria Bolognese, Researcher*

## I. INTRODUCTION

1. The NATO Parliamentary Assembly (NATO PA) held its 104<sup>th</sup> Rose-Roth Seminar in Stockholm from 23 to 24 October 2023. The Seminar was entitled “Supporting Partners At Risk: Projecting Stability, Strengthening Security And Advancing Euro-Atlantic Integration”.
2. During the two-day seminar, government officials, local and international experts, military officers as well as NATO and EU representatives addressed a broad range of issues, including Sweden’s contribution to NATO and support for partners at risk, Ukraine’s fight for freedom, democracy and security, the European and/or Euro-Atlantic integration of other partners at risk – Bosnia and Herzegovina, Georgia and the Republic of Moldova, as well as the ongoing NATO accession process of Sweden. Hybrid and cyber security threats and Sweden’s experience in fostering resilience and defending against these also featured prominently on the agenda of the seminar.
3. This seminar was organised in cooperation with the Swedish Parliament, supported by the Swiss government and the Geneva Centre for Security Sector Governance (DCAF). It brought together 60 parliamentarians from 20 Allied and partner countries.
4. The main objectives of Rose-Roth seminars are to promote exchange and mutual understanding among legislators from Allied and partner nations and to assist partner parliaments to develop the tools for effective and democratic parliamentary oversight of defence and security.
5. The seminar also included a visit to the Livgardet, the Swedish Armed Forces’ largest unit, tasked with diverse responsibilities running from ceremonial duties to counterintelligence missions.

## II. SWEDEN’S CONTRIBUTION TO NATO AND SUPPORT FOR PARTNERS AT RISK

6. Democracy, the rule of law and human rights are under threat from rising authoritarian and totalitarian political movements, **Julia Kronlid**, Deputy Speaker of the Riksdag of Sweden, told the audience. She stressed the importance of parliamentary cooperation to preserve peace and democracy in the face of democratic backsliding spreading across many countries. Many of today’s conflicts and tensions within and between countries are generated by democratic deficiencies and weaknesses in the rule of law. She noted that Bosnia and Herzegovina, Georgia and the Republic of Moldova know what it means to have suffered aggression and understand the requirements for self-defence. “The Swedish Parliament’s condemnation of Russia’s invasion of Ukraine and support for Ukraine is as solid now as it has ever been. Russia’s invasion has shown what can happen when a regime turns authoritarian”, the speaker stressed. She called on parliaments to safeguard democracy and international law.
7. Recent crises culminating with Russia’s renewed war of aggression against Ukraine and terrorist attacks against Europe and Israel have demonstrated the need for a strong, capable and resilient European Union (EU). Despite Russia’s attempts to foment divisions across the EU and NATO, member states have stood the test, **Jessika Roswall**, the Swedish Minister for EU Affairs, emphasised. She noted that Russia’s attack on Ukraine has provoked a major security policy shift in Sweden, including its decision to apply for NATO membership. Stockholm is dedicated to strong sanctions against Russia and military support to Ukraine. Cooperation and support for partner countries, politically, economically, humanitarian and military, contributes to crisis management and resilience to hybrid and cyber threats. Ms Roswall welcomed stronger EU and NATO cooperation. The Minister also recognised that Georgia, the Republic of Moldova and the Western Balkans are high on both Sweden’s and the EU respective agenda.

8. In her remarks, **Mimi Kodheli**, former Vice-President of the NATO Parliamentary Assembly and head of the Albanian delegation, also highlighted the challenges posed by terrorism and autocracies to democratic values and to the rules based international order. She noted that Allies and partners must work together to help Ukraine win the war and hold Russia accountable for the crimes committed. Bosnia and Herzegovina, Georgia and the Republic of Moldova are facing threats destabilising their societies and are on the front line to protect democratic values, she added. Ms Kodheli reiterated the Assembly's long-standing call for the establishment of a Centre for Democratic Resilience at NATO Headquarters to help partners defend democracy and their values. Sweden's multifaceted contribution, she added, is crucial to maintaining peace and security, and its commitment to foster stability and security in the euro-Atlantic area will make it a model NATO member.

9. In his keynote address, **Carl Bildt**, a former Prime Minister of Sweden, noted that over the past three decades the transatlantic community has had to manage the end of the Cold War, the rapid expansion of Euro-Atlantic institutions to include formerly communist democracies and the onset of Russian revanchism beginning with the illegal annexation of Crimea in 2014 and extending to today's multi-layered crisis including the full-scale invasion of Ukraine. It is crucial to maintain support for Ukraine, "fighting for its country's security and freedom but also for all Europe", the former Swedish Prime Minister noted. He argued that there are two conditions for peace to occur, Putin must leave the Kremlin and stability and territorial integrity must be restored in Ukraine. The EU can play a pivotal role by helping Ukraine prepare for membership by securing democracy, opening up the economy, and solidifying the rule of law. Ukraine is a large country, but its economy is relatively small. Conflict in the Middle East is now diverting attention away from Ukraine, he added, noting the two conflicts are linked by the need to uphold international law.

10. During the discussion, Carl Bildt was asked to elaborate on Russia's revisionist foreign policy. He emphasised the need for partner countries to defend themselves by strengthening national defence capabilities. Given his experience, he addressed several other crucial issues, such as security of the Arctic and the related problems of climate change and contested jurisdictions, ethnic cleansing in Ukraine, the Mediterranean and Baltic regions as well as enlargement perspectives.

11. "Supporting Ukraine is the right and smart thing to do", said **Pål Jonson**, Minister for Defence of Sweden. He noted that a Russian victory would be disastrous for Ukraine as well as for Euro-Atlantic security. Sweden is now not only sending military equipment but also helping to build capabilities. He categorised Swedish support to Ukraine in four baskets. The first is weapons delivery. The second is training: Sweden participates in the de-mining missions led by Lithuania and in the British-led Interflex Operation and provides training to Ukrainian soldiers in Sweden. Third, Sweden is working bilaterally with Ukraine to develop the country's procurement agency to make sure that it can develop a strong industrial base, needed for what has become a war of warehouses and attrition. Finally, he added, the fourth category is the counteroffensive.

12. Pål Jonson said that Sweden stands by its commitment made during the Vilnius summit to support NATO and the security of the entire alliance, based on a 360-degree approach, and welcomed the new regional plans. In particular, he stressed the importance of Sweden's engagement in the Baltic Sea and in the High North. Sweden is going to continue pursuing regional defence cooperation, he added, because Nordic defence cooperation is very important now to guarantee cooperation across Nordic countries. A defence cooperation agreement with the US is being negotiated, same as in Finland and Denmark. The Swedish government is committed to reach 2.1% of GDP spending in 2024, the Minister said.

13. In his remarks, **Tobias Billström**, Minister for Foreign Affairs of Sweden, said that "Ukraine is in a fierce fight to maintain sovereignty and territorial integrity" and that the outcome of Russia's full-scale invasion of Ukraine "will not only define Ukraine and Russia, but the rest of Europe and the world and will have consequences on the rules based order." Russia has imperialist goals, the ambition to dominate its neighbours and to change European security, the Minister added. Russia's aggressive actions and violations of the United Nations Charter have placed the country outside of the European security order. The Minister underscored the importance of defending Ukraine's

independence and sovereignty to thwart Putin's ambition to export domestic oppression. The Belarusian regime has been an accomplice in Russia's war on Ukraine, allowing its territory to serve as a launchpad for Russian military operations. Sweden supports democracy, the rule of law and human rights in Belarus, including further sanctions and other international missions, he said.

14. In such turbulent times, the Minister emphasised the need for cooperation with like-minded countries to guarantee a free and democratic Europe and to protect open democratic societies built on human rights and resilient economic systems. The transatlantic link is indispensable but should not be taken for granted, he added. The world is facing the greatest foreign and security challenge since the Cold War, Mr Billström said. Cooperation between EU and NATO is key to mobilising the resources and tools needed both to meet complex security challenges and to foster transatlantic solidarity.

15. The Minister said that Sweden's application to NATO represented a paradigm shift and stressed the contribution Sweden is already making and will continue to make as a NATO member. "Not only will Sweden be safe in NATO, but NATO will also be safer with Sweden as a member", Billström said. Sweden is fully committed to the security of the entire Alliance, based on a 360-degree approach and welcomes the three essential core tasks of NATO - deterrence and defence, crisis prevention and management, and cooperative security. It is important to also support Bosnia and Herzegovina, Georgia and the Republic of Moldova politically and with concrete actions, he added.

### III. UKRAINE'S FIGHT FOR FREEDOM, DEMOCRACY AND SECURITY

16. **Galyna Mykhailiuk**, member of the NATO PA's Ukrainian delegation, reaffirmed Ukraine's commitment to join NATO and its plans to make its defence industry among the strongest in Europe. Ukraine's counteroffensive is currently facing challenges due to the density of Russia's layered defence including extensive minefields, she stressed. Russia's mines have proved devastating for the Ukrainian people, Ms Mykhailiuk told members, noting that President Zelensky's aspiration is to demine 80% of Ukraine's territory and restore it to normal use within 10 years. In addition to investments in Ukraine's defence project, Allies must provide humanitarian assistance and support for the demining process.

17. "One important problem that Ukraine is facing is the deportation of Ukrainian children," Ms Mykhailiuk underlined. She highlighted the problem of ethnic cleansing for the parliamentarians' consideration. Russian occupiers have deported 200,000-300,000 children to Russia, and only 390 have been returned. She stressed the importance of condemning these acts and called on the international community to recognise Russia as a terrorist state and to hold it accountable for war crimes. The scale of atrocities committed by Russia is unprecedented, she underscored; it has targeted children and civilian infrastructures including residential buildings, schools, hospitals as well as cultural and religious buildings.

18. In the discussion, Ms Mykhailiuk, provided further details on Ukraine's progress in fostering democratic reforms, bolstering the rule of law and combatting corruption. The Ukrainian parliament is ready to work full time to provide high quality laws to meet the requirements for EU membership. She added that most of the population in Ukraine want to join the EU. She also expressed several concerns regarding the feasibility of holding presidential and parliamentary elections next year.

### IV. GEORGIA'S EURO-ATLANTIC PATH

19. The war in Ukraine has generated a new set of threats to Georgia. **Lasha Darsalia**, First Deputy Minister of Foreign Affairs of Georgia, noted that Georgia experienced first-hand Russian aggression and continues to stand by the formal membership bid made to join NATO 20 years ago. Since the 2008 Bucharest NATO Summit, Georgia has made significant progress on the

Euro-Atlantic integration path, it has achieved full interoperability with NATO while contributing to collective defence, Mr Darsalia stressed. Despite its size and capabilities, Georgia contributes significantly to European and Black Sea security, and it sits astride transit routes which are key to broadening the supplier base for energy. She said that only an Article 5 guarantee would provide a credible deterrent to the threats to Georgian security, adding that Euro-Atlantic integration was thus essential.

20. Lasha Darsalia was asked to elaborate on Georgia's internal reform on the path to Euro-Atlantic integration. He stressed the importance of undertaking bold steps to demonstrate that Georgia is not only a consumer but also a contributor to European security. During the Q&A, Mr Darsalia called on the international community to support Georgian efforts to regain full sovereignty and territorial integrity. Members of the Georgian delegation to the NATO Parliamentary Assembly pointed out the progress in democratic reform in Georgia.

## V. THE EURO-ATLANTIC INTEGRATION OF PARTNERS AT RISK: THE PATH FORWARD

21. Strong partnerships for NATO are key to meet the challenges of today, **Judith Gough**, the United Kingdom's Ambassador to the Kingdom of Sweden, stressed. Sweden's place, she added, is within NATO. Article 5 guarantees an unparalleled level of deterrence. She emphasised the need to continue to support Ukraine by helping it to defend itself and to move along the path to membership. It is crucial to support partners at risk to guarantee freedom and democracy, multilateralism as well as an open and free international order.

22. **Tanya Hartman**, the Head of Policy East in the Political Affairs and Security Policy Division at NATO, noted that energy, hybrid and cyber threats are numerous and pervasive, not only for the partners at risk but for the whole Alliance. There are also internal challenges which make it harder to respond to security challenges, she stressed. Effective domestic institutions and restored trust in governments can strengthen the rules based international order. She emphasised the importance of supporting Ukraine to demonstrate to partners and to us that crimes of war aggression will not be tolerated and the Euro-Atlantic security framework will be defended.

23. NATO will have to continue to implement tailored measures to support partners at risk in the areas of resilience and capacity as well as to counter hybrid and cyber threats, Ms Hartman said. To enhance both security and address the socio-economic needs of partner countries, NATO Allies must collaborate with international organisations that share common objectives, like the EU. She also called on parliamentarians to foster accountability and funding to defence, security and resilience at home.

24. Despite Putin's efforts to divide the EU and NATO, they have adopted a unified approach, **Cosmin Dobran**, Director for Peace, Partnerships and Crisis Management at the European External Action Service, added. The EU and NATO are working together to ensure Ukraine's sovereignty. Examples include the Military Assistance Mission to support Ukraine and provide training to soldiers and the EU Advisory Mission to ensure civilian security and support Ukrainian law enforcement, as well as the European Peace Facility, several support packages to assist partners as well as the Common Security and Defence Policy. Operation Althea in Bosnia and Herzegovina also demonstrates ongoing EU and NATO cooperation. Mr Dobran stressed the importance of coordinating efforts to ensure Euro-Atlantic integration of the Alliance's partners.

25. During the discussion, several speakers reflected on the path to Euro-Atlantic integration for partners at risk and the importance of supporting reforms needed to join the EU and NATO.

26. **François Voeffray-Peyro**, Ambassador of Switzerland to Sweden, stressed that the consequences of Russia's aggression of Ukraine are not only European but global. Food and energy security, nuclear risks and inequalities are mounting, and the achievement of sustainable development goals has been set back, he added. Switzerland is not a member of NATO or the EU. It remains militarily neutral, while nonetheless condemning Russia's invasion of Ukraine.

He underscored that enhanced security cooperation is needed to ensure peace and security. Switzerland will accordingly assist Ukraine in demining efforts and will continue supporting Bosnia and Herzegovina, a country where Switzerland's engagement is very strong. The Ambassador told the parliamentarians that last year Switzerland published a report on developing areas of enhanced cooperation between Switzerland and the EU and NATO while remaining neutral. It remains dedicated to building upon existing partnerships, such as the Partnership for Peace and KFOR mission in Kosovo.

## VI. SHARING SWEDEN'S EXPERIENCE IN FOSTERING RESILIENCE TO HYBRID THREATS

27. **Charlotte Petri Gornitzka**, Director General at the Swedish Civil Contingencies Agency noted that cyber and hybrid threats posed by state and non-state actors, the sabotage of critical infrastructure as well as disinformation and weaponised migration are by no means new, but they have increased in frequency and severity, and their effects are becoming more tangible. Efforts to counter these threats are also increasing, she added, and international support, including from Sweden, is improving their effectiveness.

28. Ms Petri Gornitzka emphasised three ways to improve resilience to hybrid threats. First, combatting cyber threat demands a whole of society effort. Hybrid threats should not be boxed into a single sector because these threats exploit vulnerabilities across myriad sectors. She stressed the importance of bringing all relevant actors to the table, including those operating outside of government. Indeed, the private sector must be engaged to ensure the security of supply of essential services, including energy, food and pharmaceuticals. She noted that there are new EU laws aiming to ensure that essential infrastructure – including those in private hands - are better protected from different threats, including hybrid actions. Third, she highlighted the need to involve citizens in building resilience against hybrid threats and to help ensure access to reliable information that is essential to building trust between citizens and government. The Swedish Civil Contingencies Agency has distributed a brochure to all Swedish households explaining the threats and outlining strategies for building resilience.

29. The world is facing the most difficult security situation since War World II, said **Magnus Hjort**, Director General of the Swedish Psychological Defence Agency. Sweden faces an array of challenges within the country including the integration of migrants, persistent segregation, lack of knowledge of the Swedish language, falling trust in essential institutions and the media as well as organized crime. Sweden is also vulnerable to disinformation. Given the precarious state of international security, the speaker noted that malign information warfare amplifies these risks and must be countered.

30. Even though Sweden ranks very high for democracy and freedom, it nonetheless confronts persistent threats to its democracy, Mr Hjort stressed. The Swedish Psychological Defence Agency was established last year to safeguard Sweden's open and democratic society, to encourage the free formation of opinion and to strengthen resilience. Psychological defence is the collective ability to counter malign influence, disinformation and propaganda warfare. He mentioned three pillars to achieving these ends: independent media and journalism, a well informed and educated population, and a society built on trust. He emphasised the importance for other nations to establish an agency dedicated to psychological defence in order to finance training and research that can strengthen public resilience, monitor foreign malign influence and prepare for future conflict in which the information space will play a critical role.

## VII. THE REPUBLIC OF MOLDOVA'S EUROPEAN ASPIRATIONS AND THE IMPACT OF RUSSIA'S AGGRESSION AGAINST UKRAINE

31. "The situation in Moldova is highly uncertain in the current context", said **Florent Parmentier**, Secretary-General at CEVIPOF. The Republic of Moldova's future can be conceived in two very different ways. The most likely scenario is that the Republic will inexorably move closer to the EU. Its relationship with the EU is the closest it has ever been. The speaker pointed out three primary reasons. First, the current political leadership is the most 'pro-EU' the country has had since its independence. For the second reason, he mentioned that the country's population is comparable to that of other Western Balkan states, and this provides a certain advantage when conducting national reforms. The third point is that the Republic of Moldova shares a language with Romania.

32. The speaker also emphasised that Russian influence in the Republic of Moldova is at the lowest in the last thirty years. Its gas infrastructure is no longer owned by Gazprom but by a Romanian partner, Russian diplomats and their families were expelled on grounds of espionage, the EU has replaced Russia as the biggest trading partner and Russian media have been banned. Russia is staying away from the borders, and this might facilitate settlement of the situation in Transnistria.

33. Florent Parmentier envisioned a second potential scenario. He pointed out that Russia's invasion of Ukraine had sparked significant price inflation and exacerbated a range of societal challenges, sparking doubts among the population of Moldova about the country's political direction and threatening increased political polarisation. The strengthening of the Republic's democratic and economic resilience and overall capacities is essential to reinforce the country's security arrangements and capacity to respond to hybrid threats, but also to ensure the ultimate success of the greater European integration project. If the current government were to fall for economic reasons, it would have an adverse impact across the European continent.

## VIII. THE EXECUTABILITY OF NATO'S PLANS: NATIONAL AND SOCIETAL IMPLICATIONS

34. "If Russia stops fighting in Ukraine, the war is over. If Ukraine stops fighting, it loses its country. We therefore have a moral duty to support Ukraine as long as it takes", stressed Admiral **Rob Bauer**, Chair of the Military Committee at NATO. Allies must now prioritise defence production to address critically needed capabilities and execute the regional plans agreed in Vilnius, he added. That includes more troops at higher readiness; more equipment; better adaptation; more enablement, which includes creating and sustaining logistics, maintenance, military mobility, and replenishment and prepositioning of stocks; and it involves more collective defence exercise. The regional plans cover three main regions, the Admiral explained, the High North and the Arctic, the Western Balkans and Central Europe, and the Mediterranean and Black Sea.

35. The Alliance must live up to promises made, including by allocating more funds to defence investments. If a nation does not meet its obligations, it puts the whole Alliance at risk, the Admiral stressed. The 2% GDP spending goal is now the floor and no longer a ceiling, he added. Russia will increase defence production and lower the requirements for manufacturers as long as quality is maintained, he underscored, noting that Russia's economy can be quickly placed on war footing because it is not reliant on the private sector. By contrast, in Europe, prices for equipment are increasing and the economy cannot be placed quickly on a war footing. Even if a conflict were to directly engage NATO, there would not be time to quickly mobilise defence industrial resources given the current state of the defence industrial base. The Admiral stressed that a concerted effort is needed to move past the widespread belief that investing in the defence industry is unethical. He also noted that governments will have to invest more in defence technology and recognise the renewed importance of the link between security and economic activity.

## IX. BOSNIA AND HERZEGOVINA: OVERCOMING INTERNAL AND EXTERNAL CHALLENGES TO PROGRESS TOWARDS EURO-ATLANTIC INTEGRATION

36. **Slaven Galic**, Deputy Minister of Defence of Bosnia and Herzegovina, opened his remarks by stressing that Bosnia and Herzegovina has made significant steps in its journey towards Euro-Atlantic integration. Since 2006, when Bosnia and Herzegovina joined the Partnership for Peace, the country has participated in numerous NATO missions. Bosnia and Herzegovina was extended a Membership Action Plan and its light infantry battalion group now meets NATO combat readiness standards, the Deputy Minister noted. Bosnia and Herzegovina is a member of the OSCE and contributes to the OSCE Mobile Training Team. Mr Galic added that Bosnia and Herzegovina has credible resources for mitigating natural disasters and has deployed those assets after natural disasters in Türkiye and Slovenia.

37. However, the country is facing energy and economic challenges, including complex security threats, Mr Galic noted. Regional security relies on maintaining a balance between regional preferences, internal security as well as political and economic factors, he stressed. The Deputy Minister emphasised that Russia's invasion of Ukraine represents the most significant security challenge to human rights, democratic society and economies. The current situation in the Middle East, he added, could potentially escalate and have an impact on the security environment in the Western Balkans. The country also confronts a range of hybrid threats that aim to undermine democratic institutions and spread disinformation. Bosnia and Herzegovina has served as transit point for immigration from the Middle East and Africa for a decade, and the border with Croatia makes the country even more vulnerable.

38. That not all countries in the Western Balkans have obtained EU and NATO membership exposes those countries and the region more broadly to a range of economic and security threats. Bosnia and Herzegovina remains committed to fight corruption, to solve its internal political challenges, to increase defence spending and to make military service more attractive, the Deputy Minister noted. Reflecting Bosnia and Herzegovina's ambition to join NATO, the country will host the Military Strategic Partnership and the Partnership Symposium. The NATO PA was scheduled to hold its second Rose-Roth seminar of 2023 in Sarajevo, in Bosnia and Herzegovina, on 14-16 November 2023.

## X. PRACTICAL SUPPORT TO PARTNERS AT RISK IN THE CONTEXT OF RUSSIA'S RENEWED INVASION OF UKRAINE

39. The cooperation between NATO and its partners at risk started decades ago, and remains essential, **Gerlinde Niehus**, Deputy Director of Defence and Security Cooperation Directorate, Operations Division at NATO, stressed. The speaker noted that NATO's partnerships have evolved significantly. In the 1990s the objective of partnerships was to bring partner countries into NATO, while in the 2000s, the goal was for some partners without immediate prospects for membership simply to work alongside the Allies. Today, an ongoing war on the European continent, terrorist attacks in the Middle East and violence in the Western Balkans require strengthened partnerships and increased preparedness and resilience for partners to counter malign influences.

40. In face of the great challenges posed by the war, Ukraine continues cooperation and reform efforts, Ms Niehus highlighted. Before February 2022, NATO already had a significant partnership programme with Ukraine. One of the main deliverables of the Madrid Summit was the development of a comprehensive assistance package that regulates cooperation with Ukraine. Furthermore, the speaker noted, NATO has a long term plan to support strategic reform efforts in Ukraine and an interoperability roadmap to help Ukraine achieve NATO standards, including a strategic defence procurement review to increase Ukraine's transparency and accountability. A Joint Analysis Lessons Learned Centre was also established to support Ukraine's lesson learned efforts.



41. After Ukraine, Georgia is NATO's closest partner, Ms Niehus emphasised. There is NATO staff on the ground in Tbilisi working with Georgian counterparts, on issues spanning from education to crisis management. NATO respects the Republic of Moldova's declared neutrality, she noted, but the partnership has been beneficial. The new government has strengthened its partnership with NATO on counter-terrorism, strategic communication and explosive devices programmes. However, there is a clear need for more staff and increased resources.

42. **Darko Stancic**, Assistant Director and Head of Europe & Central Asia Division at DCAF stressed the importance of "translating values and norms into practical normative and institutional realities." DCAF works with partners to bring experts to the table and promotes the idea that successful reforms require an understanding of national procedures. Therefore, DCAF collaborates with the NATO PA to document practices in national areas, he noted.

43. In his address, Mr Stancic described two main areas of work within DCAF, normative alignment and strategic capacity. In the context of normative alignment, DCAF has helped the Republic of Moldova promote laws to set up a trajectory to strengthen the country's democratic capacity and has provided Ukraine expert capacities to facilitate discussions. For strategic capacity, he noted, DCAF will be working with Bosnia and Herzegovina to support its migration asylum strategy and to strengthen law enforcement cooperation in the Western Balkans. Advancing gender equality is also a very important for DCAF, which is currently working with Bosnia and Herzegovina and Ukraine to reinforce judicial responses to gender-based violence. Special attention should also be given to manage such difficult changes, he stressed. The speaker highlighted the importance of united and clear political messaging to facilitate reforms and to establish clear expectations.

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