

## SUPPORTING FINLAND'S AND SWEDEN'S MEMBERSHIP IN NATO

Adopted at the YEPP Council Meeting in Larnaca, Cyprus. 26/11/2022

### Recognising that:

1. The North Atlantic Treaty Organisation (“**NATO**”) is a political and military alliance that consists of 30 independent member countries<sup>1</sup> which allows them to consult and cooperate in the field of defence and security and conduct multinational crisis-management operations together.
2. NATO is committed to the principle that an attack against one or several of its members is considered as an attack against all. This is the principle of collective defence, which is enshrined in Article 5 of the Washington Treaty.
3. According to NATO 2022 Strategic Concept, the policy of NATO in relation to other European democratic countries can be defined as an Open Door policy: *“NATO’s enlargement has been a historic success. It has strengthened our Alliance, ensured the security of millions of European citizens and contributed to peace and stability in the Euro-Atlantic area. We reaffirm our Open Door policy, consistent with Article 10 of the North Atlantic Treaty, as an expression of our fundamental values and our strategic interest in Euro-Atlantic peace and stability. Our door remains open to all European democracies that share the values of our Alliance, which are willing and able to assume the responsibilities and obligations of membership, and whose membership contributes to our common security. Decisions on membership are taken by NATO Allies and no third party has a say in this process”*<sup>2</sup>.
4. Finland and Sweden are committed partners of NATO, they have been involved in the Alliance's Partnership for Peace programme since 1994<sup>3</sup> which aims to increase stability, diminish threats to peace and build strengthened security relationships between NATO and non-member countries in the Euro-Atlantic area. Both countries have also played and are playing an active role in past and present NATO-led peace support operations.

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<sup>1</sup> Sorted alphabetically: Albania (2009), Belgium (1949), Bulgaria (2004), Canada (1949), Croatia (2009), Czechia (1999), Denmark (1949), Estonia (2004), France (1949), Germany (1955), Greece (1952), Hungary (1999), Iceland (1949), Italy (1949), Latvia (2004), Lithuania (2004), Luxembourg (1949), Montenegro (2017), Netherlands (1949), North Macedonia (2020), Norway (1949), Poland (1999), Portugal (1949), Romania (2004), Slovakia (2004), Slovenia (2004), Spain (1982), Türkiye (1952), The United Kingdom (1949) and the United States (1949).

<sup>2</sup> “*NATO 2022 Strategic Concept*”. Adopted by Heads of State and Government at the NATO Summit in Madrid (29 June 2022). From: [https://www.nato.int/nato\\_static\\_fl2014/assets/pdf/2022/6/pdf/290622-strategic-concept.pdf](https://www.nato.int/nato_static_fl2014/assets/pdf/2022/6/pdf/290622-strategic-concept.pdf)

<sup>3</sup> Signatures of Partnership for Peace Framework Document. From: [https://www.nato.int/cps/en/natolive/topics\\_82584.htm](https://www.nato.int/cps/en/natolive/topics_82584.htm)

5. Finland and Sweden, simultaneously handed their official letters of application to join NATO over to NATO Secretary General, Jens Stoltenberg, on 18 May 2022.
6. NATO Heads of State and Government extended an invitation to Finland and Sweden to join the Alliance at the Madrid Summit on 29 June.
7. The accession protocols for both countries were signed on 5 July after completion of accession talks; those protocols must now be ratified by all Allies, according to their national procedures<sup>4</sup>. In this regard, all NATO members except Hungary and Turkey have ratified such protocols.

### Acknowledging that:

1. Sweden and Finland are strong countries in terms of military policies. On one hand the Finnish defence spending, as a percentage of GDP, was already around NATO's 2% target, with further increases planned —while other NATO members do not even comply with such requirement— and the country also has a conscription policy, which demonstrate a strong commitment to self-defence against a potential threat, such as a Russian attack<sup>5</sup>. On the other hand, Sweden has long worked with NATO, including assisting the Alliance with peacekeeping operations<sup>6</sup>. Moreover, both countries are EU members and strong democracies<sup>7</sup>.
2. Since the defence of Finland plays a key role in Sweden's defence policy, it is also relevant to take into account the steps of their neighbour country into the alliance.
3. The recent brutal invasion of Ukraine by Russia has underlined the importance and the role of NATO as an alliance that defends democracy against authoritarianism. The clear historical alignment of interests and values between Sweden, Finland and NATO member countries makes the membership application of both countries a natural consequence, and there should be no major obstacles.
4. The surprising attitude taken specially by Turkey, blocking both applications, is unacceptable and is a great danger to European security.
5. Blocking the entry of Sweden and Finland would be a major victory for Putin who would demonstrate certain ability to influence inside NATO and a clear sign of weakness. On the other side, the

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<sup>4</sup> According to Article of 10 of the Washington Treaty, the decision to admit new incumbent members in the NATO alliance must be "by unanimous agreement".

<sup>5</sup> "Finland is ready to fight Russia if attacked - defence chief". Reuters. 22 June 2022. From: <https://www.reuters.com/business/aerospace-defense/finland-is-ready-fight-russia-if-attacked-defence-chief-2022-06-22/>

<sup>6</sup> "Sweden's road to NATO". Government of Sweden. 5 October 2022. From:

<https://www.government.se/government-policy/sweden-and-nato/swedens-road-to-nato/>

<sup>7</sup> Democracy Index 2021: In the China challenge. From: <https://www.eiu.com/n/campaigns/democracy-index-2021/>



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acceptance of both countries will strongly reinforce the alliance's eastern front and improve its defence capabilities.

**YEPP calls on:**

1. The EPP to continue to strongly encourage the membership applications of both countries in all the relevant institutions, including NATO Parliamentary Assembly.
2. The relevant EU institutions to coordinate the efforts of all the EU Member States that are also members of NATO by using all diplomatic tools to increase political pressure on the Turkish government and the Turkish parliament to accept Sweden and Finland's membership as soon as possible.