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TERMS OF REFERENCE FOR THE CIVIL SOCIETY ADVISORY PANEL ON WOMEN, PEACE AND SECURITY

BACKGROUND

1. NATO recognizes the instrumental role of civil society in promoting the Women, Peace and Security (WPS) agenda. Civil society's importance to NATO is underlined in the NATO/EAPC Policy on WPS¹, endorsed by Heads of State and Government at the Summit in 2018, and reflected in Action 4.2 of the related Action Plan², updated in 2021.
2. To encourage closer collaboration and engagement with civil society, NATO established the Civil Society Advisory Panel (CSAP) in 2016. The establishment of CSAP provides a channel for consultations on WPS between NATO, through the Secretary General's Special Representative (SGSR) for WPS, and civil society on a regular and systematic basis.
3. CSAP thereby contributes to NATO's advancement of WPS priorities, sustainable peace and inclusive security.
4. The CSAP Terms of Reference (TORs) were approved by the Partnerships and Cooperative Security Committee (PCSC) on 18 March 2016³. A revised version of the TORs⁴, informed by the 2019 Independent Assessment⁵, was approved on 28 May 2019 and provided the framework for the CSAP 2019 – 2022.
5. The lessons learned identified by the Independent Assessment included the need for diverse and inclusive membership; to have a simplified structure; to have regular communication; and to have a prioritised workplan; the need for enhanced advocacy and engagement; and for more interactive meetings. The feedback received during the last CSAP term reconfirmed these lessons learned and highlighted that they should remain focus areas for further revisions. Against this background, it is now timely to revise the TORs ahead of the launch of the call for nominations for CSAP membership 2023-2026.

PRINCIPLES

6. The CSAP will serve as a forum for regular consultation and dialogue between civil society and NATO. It will be convened by the NATO SGSR for WPS.

¹ EAPC(C)D(2018)0008.

² PO(2021)0336.

³ EAPC(C)D(2016)0003.

⁴ EAPC(C)D(2019)0004.

⁵ AC/340(EAPC)N(2019)0001.

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7. The CSAP is an entity external to the organisational and governance structures of NATO and will not have any authority regarding NATO decision-making processes. While dialogue with civil society and its recommendations are valued by NATO, the application of such recommendations is entirely at NATO's discretion.

8. CSAP will work with NATO through the SGSR for WPS. Input from relevant NATO stakeholders will be provided through the SGSR in accordance with NATO rules on classification and dissemination of documents and other information.

MEMBERSHIP

9. CSAP membership will represent a mix of experts from civil society.⁶ All CSAP members will participate in their individual capacity. They must have demonstrated knowledge and expertise in the WPS Agenda, as well as in integrating gender perspectives across peace and security topics, in women's rights and gender equality. They must be actively engaged in this field and be committed to making a constructive contribution to dialogue with NATO while being cognizant of NATO's approach to the implementation of the WPS Agenda. Further selection criteria are detailed at Appendix 1.

10. The SGSR will invite NATO Allies and Partner Nations to recommend qualified individuals to CSAP membership. In addition, the SGSR may consult civil society to provide supplementary recommendations. On this basis, and in close and transparent consultation with Allies and Partners, the SGSR will select the composition of CSAP membership. Once finalized, and having taken into account Allies' views and sensibilities, the list of CSAP members will be circulated to Allies and Partner Nations for endorsement.

11. To ensure good coordination and prioritization of work, a CSAP Steering Committee (SC) will be created, consisting of no more than five and no less than three CSAP members who, in consultation with the SGSR, will collate and coordinate all CSAP inputs to NATO, as appropriate and required. CSAP members may nominate themselves for the role of SC membership during CSAP Annual Meeting, based upon which the SGSR will make a final decision on SC membership.

12. CSAP and SC membership will be fixed for a term of three years and could be renewable. New members may be nominated during an ongoing CSAP term to fill vacant seats in line with the process outlined above. The composition of CSAP will be reviewed every three years, or upon the initiative of the SGSR, as appropriate. CSAP membership may be revoked at the SGSR's discretion as well as on the basis of the specified criteria in the Grounds for Termination section at Appendix 1.

⁶ "Experts" are either independent or from civil society organisations (CSOs), including from women's rights organisations and feminist networks, think tanks, youth groups, research institutions or academia.

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WORKING MODALITIES

13. CSAP will convene on an annual basis and at a date determined by the SGSR. The meeting will take place at NATO HQ, pending funding availability, or in virtual format. The main objective of this meeting is to take stock of progress made on the CSAP work plan to date and set the main priorities for the year ahead. The exact agenda and list of invitees for the annual meetings will be created by the SGSR in consultation with the CSAP SC. All organizational arrangements for the annual meeting will be made by NATO. All costs for the attendance and participation at the annual meeting will be covered by NATO.

14. Each annual meeting will be followed by a comprehensive report that details meeting conclusions and recommendations. The report will be drafted by the SGSR in consultation with the CSAP SC. The final report will be presented by the SGSR to Allies and Partner Nations. In addition, CSAP members are encouraged to share the final report with WPS government representatives in their capitals. Allies and Partner Nations will receive additional updates on CSAP's work during the year.

15. The annual meetings will be complemented by regular (at least four per year) conference calls with the CSAP and the SGSR. Among others, these conference calls serve to keep track of ongoing and new activities and to warrant a sustained level of engagement between NATO and CSAP. Short summaries of these calls will be drafted by the CSAP SC and will be shared with all CSAP members.

16. Any additional ad-hoc meetings may be convened at the discretion of the SGSR and relevant CSAP members.

17. The participation in at least three CSAP-related initiatives and/or meetings per year is a requirement for continued CSAP membership.

18. NATO encourages the participation of selected CSAP members in relevant committee meetings on a case by case basis and in other NATO events, upon invitation by the SGSR and in consultation with Allies.

FINANCIAL SUPPORT

19. NATO acknowledges the voluntary contributions of all CSAP members in providing their valuable time and goodwill, expert advice, and preparedness to work uncompensated on consultation and dialogue.

20. CSAP may receive financial support from NATO's WPS Financial Mechanism, as appropriate and required.⁷

⁷ EAPC(C)D(2013)0020

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ASSESSMENT AND EVALUATION

21. As needed, an independent assessment of CSAP will be conducted every three years with a view to evaluate its evolving pertinence and efficacy. The assessment will be carried out by an external and independent contractor, and will be presented to Allies and Partner Nations by the SGSR and if required the CSAP SC.

22. The CSAP TORs may be subject to review every three years, as needed. The revision process will be led by the SGSR, informed by an independent assessment of CSAP, when applicable, and will take into account the feedback provided by CSAP members and Partner Nations. The revised TORs will then be discussed and approved by Allies.

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SELECTION CRITERIA FOR THE CIVIL SOCIETY ADVISORY PANEL ON WOMEN, PEACE AND SECURITY

The Civil Society Advisory Panel on Women, Peace and Security (CSAP) should be composed of civil society experts⁸ with a dedicated focus on promoting the role of women in peace and security and integrating gender perspectives across peace and security topics, such as – but not limited to – the gender equality and human security nexus, resilience, counterterrorism, emerging security challenges (cyber, climate security and emerging and disruptive technologies), peace-making, peacekeeping, peace negotiations, humanitarian response and in post conflict reconstruction. Representatives should be committed to making a constructive contribution to promoting the mainstreaming of gender perspectives across NATO's three core tasks.

CSAP is diverse – ranging from civil society practitioners, gender equality experts, gender and conflict resolution experts, feminist organizations, women's rights activists to leaders of grassroots and youth organizations. Members will need a sound knowledge of conflict dynamics, ways to protect local populations, and the role of women in peace and security.

AFFILIATION

CSAP members will participate in their individual capacity. CSAP will consist of two main categories of membership and will be geographically balanced:

- 1) Up to 32 seats for Allies + invitee;
- 2) Up to 10 seats for NATO Partner Nations and/or conflict-affected regions, including where NATO engages or plans to engage.

Contingent on the number of nominations received, CSAP will run with a minimum of 15 representatives.

⁸ "Experts" are either independent or from civil society organisations (CSOs), including from women's rights organisations and feminist networks, think tanks, youth groups, research institutions or academia.

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ACCOUNTABILITY

Throughout their tenure, CSAP members should:

- Promote and abide by the CSAP Common Principles⁹.
- Respect rules of confidentiality and independence – including by abiding by NATO's procedures, decisions and working methods, and carry out their work free from interference from national governments or multilateral organisations.
- Respect the values of the Alliance while contributing in their individual capacity.

DISCLOSURE

In the event of any real or perceived conflict of interest prior to their tenure, or during their tenure, CSAP members should immediately inform the SGSR and CSAP Steering Committee (SC).

GROUND FOR TERMINATION

In the event that a CSAP member behaves counter to the accountability principles outlined above; no longer belongs to civil society (e.g. by joining a government or multilateral institution); or faces a conflict of interest (e.g. by wanting to undertake paid work for NATO on WPS), CSAP membership will be immediately revoked. CSAP membership may also be revoked in case the member does not participate in at least three CSAP-related initiatives and/or meetings per year. Allies and Partner Nations will be informed in advance of any revocation of membership.

⁹ The CSAP Common Principles are a CSAP-owned internal document.