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**NOTE**

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from: General Secretariat of the Council  
to: Delegations  
Subject : Summary record of the meeting of the **European Parliament Delegation for relations with the NATO Parliamentary Assembly**, held in Brussels on 6 November 2012

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The meeting was chaired by Mr Saryusz-Wolski (EPP, PL).

**NATO Missile Defence - Political and budgetary implications**

The chair introduced the debate, stressing the importance of the matter and the fact that little progress had been made so far, and then gave the floor to the invited experts.

The moderator of the debate, Mr Lunn (Centre for Democratic Control of the Armed Forces), reported that the NATO missile defence system was being developed but its implementation would still require additional discussions/decisions. He wondered how Russia would view the project in the future.

Mr Zadra (NATO, head of the ballistic missile defence section) stressed the strategic importance of the missile defence system in view of the increasing threats and its political significance as a collective defence commitment by NATO members. He confirmed that the project was on track and making continuous progress. He pointed out, however, that the development was not comparable to the evolution within the NATO-Russia Council. In that respect, he hoped that more ambitious aims could be sought in the future, which would require more joint analysis exercises and discussions.

Mr Thränert (Centre for Security Studies, Swiss Federal Institute of technology) took the view that the results of the US elections would not change anything to the ongoing NATO work as there was broad US support for the missile defence system. He pointed out that the latter was about collective defence with the focus on threats and re-establishing regional order. In this context, he mentioned Iran and its nuclear programme. He clarified that the missile defence system was a damage limitation tool though it could not be called a shield for peoples. Mr Thränert added that the missile defence system could ensure that there would be no escalation of aggression despite its primarily defensive purpose.

Mr Sutyagin (Royal United Services Institute) outlined the Russian concerns. He referred to the erosion of Russia's international influence and the unchanged situation of the strategic forces. He explained that the continuously improved Western defence technologies/weapons were perceived as threats in Russia. Mr Sutyagin also stressed that defence weapons could also be used for purposes other than defence. Regarding Iran, he explained that it was impossible to intercept Iranian missiles in the boost phase, though the planned missile defence system could intercept Russian ones. He added that the planning of similar defence systems, for instance in Asia, would lead to the full territorial exposure of Russia. Mr Sutyagin also expressed doubts as to the need for the number of interceptors planned.

Mr Landsbergis (EPP, LT) stated that defenceless areas were vulnerable and he felt that Russia still had some old fashioned views. He considered that too much time was being spent on discussing whether the missile defence system would increase Russian military vulnerability and that the obsession with Russia should stop. Mr Landsbergis was supported on this by the chair who called on Europe to act in order to ensure that it was not defenceless.

The third MEP taking the floor, Mr Tannock (ECR, UK), put questions to the experts relating to the accuracy of interceptors, the costs of the system, the possible interests of Japan and South Korea, China's position and the issue of debris. He also stressed that he could understand some of the Russian concerns that had been presented.

In reply, Mr Thränert recalled that Israel had not intervened in the first Gulf War as it felt that it was protected by the Patriot missile defence system, whilst today it was known that the system only provided limited protection. He added that it was difficult to comment on accuracy at this stage, since the future system was still in the development/test phase. Mr Thränert considered that a technological discussion on interceptors would be never-ending and that the focus should instead be on transparency and enhanced cooperation between NATO and Russia. Mr Thränert regretted the fact that the public debate created a false connection between the missile defence system and Russia and ignored the real strategic concerns (proliferation of weapons of mass destruction and their ownership, which was threatening regional stability). Mr Zadra added that NATO was sensitive to the Russian concerns, however these concerns covered much more than the missile defence system; he also stressed that if the aim was to increase Russian military vulnerability, this would not be done by using interceptors. He did not agree with Mr Sutyagin's statement that NATO was not psychologically prepared to cooperate with Russia, which was excluded from the discussions. Mr Zadra recalled that NATO's offer to cooperate still stood and he insisted on the need for confidence-building and transparency. Mr Thränert called on Russia to take a realistic approach (the Cold War was over, NATO was looking for strategic cooperation with Russia and the defence system was not targeted at Russia but at new threats). Mr Sutyagin recalled that Russia had offered to sell some capabilities which could be included in the missile defence system and encouraged the acceptance of this offer which would contribute to better cooperation between NATO and Russia. With regard to China, Mr Thränert drew attention to the fact that China could have more concerns if there was close cooperation between Russia and NATO and that this element had to be taken into account in the thinking on confidence building. He also said that Japan was the closest US partner in the development of defence systems. From a financial viewpoint, Mr Zadra considered that the costs were not particularly high, as the EUR 1 billion budget covered a ten-year period and would be divided between the 28 allies (with the interceptors and centres financed nationally). Mr Zadra explained that discussions on the important issue of debris were ongoing and that this was an area that could lead to further cooperation with Russia once all elements were known. He argued that these issues should be discussed in an open manner and could lead to new areas of cooperation. In the same context, Mr Thränert referred to the issue of nuclear disarmament.