**The delegation of Portugal Ophélie Daneau**

**The North Atlantic Council (NAC)**

**Topic A: Adapting to climate change and climate security**

Surrounded by the Azores and Madeira in the Atlantic Ocean, 60% of Portugal’s territory is covered with forests and agricultural land. This location has allowed the country to develop its local production and to put more emphasis on the preservation of local ecosystems (Bento-Gonçalves et al., 2018). The preservation of such territories has allowed the nation to be recognized for its transition towards renewable sources of energy, accounting for 54% of its total energy consumption (Luckman, 2023). Furthermore, the country has adopted a strategy to ensure climate resilience, the “2050 Carbon Neutrality Roadmap for Portugal”, which establishes guidelines towards a sustainable agriculture and insures the protection of biodiversity trough carbon neutrality. Severely affected by climate change in the past, the nation’s aims to make a cohesive transition from a fossil fuel to a cardon neutral economy (Portuguese environment agency, 2019). However, the country’s energy supplies have been treated by an increase of 0,3 degree per decade of the average annual temperature, and a decrease of 25 mm precipitations caused by climate changes (International Energy Agency, 2021).

Therefore, climate security is at the center of Portugal’s priorities, and has a founding member of NATO since 1949, the country stands in support of the alliance’s stance on climate adaptation. The “NATO Climate Change and Security Action Plan”, adopted in 2021, provides changes on NATO’s objectives, including an annual assessment on NATO’s strategic environment, and based on the result provided, the incorporation of reinforcement considerations (NATO, 2022). While Portugal supports this action plan, it believes in the implementation of more concrete solutions to act faster on this pressing issue. A clear framework and a standardized climate process, that adapts to the capacities of each ally is essential to face the current climate crisis. This long-term solution includes the establishment of clearer communication lines to reach climate security collaboration, and the reduction of gas emission from military activities (NATO, 2024).

Has many NATO members been still dependent on external sources of energy (NATO, 2024), the development of initiatives towards local production, while considering the geographical location, resources and capabilities must be putted in place to face the crisis (Andrew & Landry, 2023). To conclude, Portugal believes on the continuation of current plans of the alliance, but also in the implementation of concrete framework for the whole alliance to act quickly on climate change and climate security.

**Topic B: Integrating responses to emerging threats and cybersecurity**

As one of the EU leaders in digital public services, Portugal has experienced a rapid growth in recent years in terms of technological advancements, while promoting the importance of coworking on the manner. In fact, 10% of the country’s GDP is directed towards information and communication technologies, while assuring the employment of 80 000 workers to increase research developments (International Trade Administration, 2024). Furthermore, the “National Cybersecurity Center (CNCS)” in 2015, which aims to put effective measures in place to instore an effective use of cyberspace, allowed the region to develop its specialized innovative and cybersecurity efforts and ensuring that the country is equipped with advanced digital skills (NATO, 2021).

Even though these innovations helped the country against emerging threats, it still has vulnerabilities and is not enterally protected from the emerging cyber-attacks. In 2020, these attacks increased by 79% due to the pandemic and made the region increase its investments towards artificial intelligence and digital skills (U.S. Department of Commerce, 2024). Furthermore, in 2022, the country suffered from a computer attack preventing many essential services from acting, such as firefighters and hospitals nationally (Courrier International, 2022).

In NATO, Portugal holds a significant role in cybersecurity, has it hosts two NATO approved centers of innovations under the NATO “Defense Innovation Accelerator for the North Atlantic (DIANA)” (Diplomatic Portal, 2022). First, Portugal ensures advancements in the “Joint Analysis and Lessons Learned Centre in Lisboa (NCI Academy)” which allows the instauration of training opportunities and the assessment of threats in new technologies (NATO, 2024). Secondly, the region ensures the leadership of the “Naval Striking and Support Forces NATO (STRIKFORNATO)” to promote the use of safe technologies in the alliance’s military operations (Diplomatic Portal, 2022).

Portugal believes that with working together, NATO can develop a stronger real-time detection technology to detect online threats, by performing mapping and the detection of flaws and vulnerabilities in shady technological configurations. NATO must universalize and propose clear frameworks of tracking system within the alliance, to create effective barriers for malicious behavior online. Portugal believes that to prevent emerging threats towards NATO, the alliance should adopt a proactive and multidisciplinary approach while adopting more cyber policies. Finally, it should invest further in DIANA, and increase a sense of international collaboration on the matter.

**Topic C: Development of New Frameworks for Humanitarian Aid and Crisis Response**

Humanitarian aid as always been in the center of Portugal’s values and priorities, as it helped multiple countries recover, during and post-conflict. In fact, the country has been highly implicated in NATO’s humanitarian aid response as one of the main security providers of Ukraine since 2023. The Ministry of Defense of Portugal as assured that military aid packages were actively sent, to not only help the active military forces, but the citizens in greater danger, as well has welcoming Ukrainian refugees (NATO, 2024). The region has also offered its support to Gaza, has it has been announced during the International Conference for the Civilian Population in Gaza that 10 million euros was going to be invested towards humanitarian help for the ongoing crisis and provide humanitarian aid (Portugal Government, 2023). Moreover, the country’s foreign aid policy actively helps living conditions from worsening in a multitude of countries. In 2019, the Mozambique Recovery and Reconstruction Support Fund was implemented by Portugal to help after the unfortunate consequences of the Cabo Delgado Province insurgency (NATO, 2022).

Portugal is committed to ensure the development of clearer frameworks around humanitarian aid and crisis response amongst NATO. Instead of adopting a view centered around the limitations of specific military measures, while ensuring the security of its alliance during interventions, NATO should focus on the need towards greater humanitarian aid efforts. The implementation of long-term sustainable changes is essential, by collaborating. NATO recent technological advancements would be very useful to include to current military interventions for humanitarian aid. For example, the implementation of more Unmanned Aerial Vehicles (UAVs), in disaster response would benefit local areas has the drones would ensure military security (International Trade Administration, 2024). It is the development of initiatives to help further local territories often forgotten that will make a difference in the long term.

Thus, NATO should put its focus toward the establishment of more permanent infrastructures for humanitarian aid, ensuring the long-term viability of regions with restricted access to help.

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