

## **NATO launches a public debate on its Strategic Concept**

On July 7<sup>th</sup>, 2009, two Bulgarian associations that bear the name of the great George C. Marshall were introduced at a conference in Brussels that formally launched the process leading to the new Alliance's Strategic Concept.

[http://www.nato.int/cps/en/SID-408A92C7-DF9AA833/natolive/news\\_56119.htm](http://www.nato.int/cps/en/SID-408A92C7-DF9AA833/natolive/news_56119.htm)

The insightfulness of the debates provoked the resurgence of interest in problems, upon which thousands of pages in tens of languages have so far been written. This reveals the presence of an attitude of mind leading to an out-of-date practice that could once again prove to be ineffective.

A separate conference panel discussion was dedicated to the topic *NATO as seen by others*. The messages that would be generated from the text of the new Strategic Concept could be misunderstood and even lost in the context of the comprehensive information environment and cultural diversity. To remain misunderstood is the first step leading to defeat, which is the most unwelcome scenario. In times when risks and threats constantly evolve the Alliance, which is a solid pillar of security, cannot afford the luxury of lapsing into lethargy.

What shall we do?

To initiate a "live" national debate, that will make the citizens of our country involved into the process of elaboration of the new Strategic Concept. Given the environment of challenges, risks and threats that are difficult to predict we should have the understanding and thence the agreement of our society in the difficult decisions to be taken in the name of our common security.

No less important is the question of achieving comprehension and understanding on the NATO security ideas from the countries, which are not party to the North-Atlantic treaty. Without their support cannot be provided an accelerated reconstruction and return to normality in Afghanistan as well as in other areas, where the Alliance is committed to guarantee security. Bulgaria is a country that can share its best practices both in the field of the intercultural communication and the security sector reform. We have an academic community which can share this expertise in a systematic way.

This is the new sphere of activity of the think-tanks and associations named after George C. Marshall. We as his followers are ready to become mediators of our societies and to present to the NATO group of "wise men" our both individual and shared points of view on the Alliance's global missions.

The realization of this dialogue will offer the Alliance not only an inexhaustible resource of legitimacy concerning its upcoming actions, but will also charge it with a bigger responsibility – to be one of the main global security pillars. No country can guarantee its security on its own in the global world of today, where knowledge, technology and resources are constantly exchanged.

As a first step in this debate, the George C. Marshall associations – the think-tank and the Alumni Club – provide their web-page and electronic bulletins as a place where will be held the virtual part of the debate on *The New NATO Strategic Concept and the Common Responsibility for our Future*. <http://www.gcmarshall.bg/>

Written materials up to 10 000 characters will be published online in Bulgarian, English, German and Russian.

Please, send your publications to [office@gcmarshall.bg](mailto:office@gcmarshall.bg)

We would kindly ask the *George C. Marshall European Center for Security Studies* in Garmisch-Partenkirchen, Germany, to forward in due form this message to all the George C. Marshall Alumni associations worldwide.

We would also be happy to receive support for a project of the Bulgarian association aimed at the setting up of a permanent workshop which has to realize two objectives:

- To present different points of view on the new NATO Strategic Concept.
- To retranslate to our society the significance of its messages.

We hope to make the Bulgarian society involved in the process throughout the multitude of messages and thence to support the Bulgarian government in the Alliance burden-sharing in guaranteeing not only our security, but also the non-NATO one.

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