



Your Ideas, Your NATO: 2012 Policy Workshop Competition

Editorial Team: We are excited to announce our newest policy workshop! We want you to tell us your ideas for promoting NATO values, building partnerships, and engaging members in the Smart Defense initiative. Winners receive a cash prize and a trip to Berlin to present their ideas to policymakers!

Atlantic-community.org invites students and young professionals to contribute their policy ideas on key issues of the upcoming NATO Summit in Chicago in our new policy workshop, "Your Ideas, Your NATO". We want to hear ideas from young people in all NATO Member and Partner countries on how the Alliance can build a sense of community, reach out to new partners in North Africa and the Middle East, and encourage participation in NATO's Smart Defense initiative. Tell us what you're looking for from "your NATO" and have a chance to discuss your ideas directly with decision makers, including US Ambassador Philip Murphy and a NATO representative, during the May 21 summit!

Our competition has two components: an op-ed article, where you propose your ideas in one of the three topic areas, and an online debate among the shortlisted entries, where you will work with your peers from throughout NATO Member and Partner countries to jointly develop a memorandum for policy makers. This means you'll be actively involved in working with people from other countries to debate, compromise, and arrive at joint recommendations. As part of the next generation of decision makers, you'll be asked to both defend your own position and arrive at a workable consensus, just like the real policy-making process.

We're open to new ideas and new perspectives. You *don't* have to be an expert on NATO or international security; you just need to have some good foreign policy ideas and be able to support your arguments. And when you [register with atlantic-community.org](http://atlantic-community.org), we'll help you get started with background resources, opportunities to ask questions of NATO officials, and other useful information to help you get started!

Awards

15 articles, 5 in each category, will be shortlisted and their authors invited to take part in the online debate portion of the competition. From these 15 finalists:

Three winners, one in each category, will receive a cash prize of 500 EUR each, as well as a round trip flight and four nights' accommodation in Berlin, Germany to attend the award ceremony, where they will present their policy memos. [See video of our last event](#), where winners of the "Ideas with Impact" competition presented their recommendations to US Ambassador to Germany Philip Murphy and CDU/CSU Foreign Policy Spokesman Phillip Missfelder.

Three runners-up, one in each category, will receive a cash prize of 250 EUR each.

Eligibility

The competition is open to all citizens of NATO [Member](#) and [Partner](#) countries aged 35 or younger. Read the terms and conditions [here](#).

How to Participate

1. Register Now!

Become a member of atlantic-community.org by registering here: <http://www.atlantic-community.org/index/users/register> Once you've registered, you'll receive continuous updates about the competition, including information resources, jury selection, policy makers appearing at the event, and the opportunity to participate in a Q&A with NATO officials before submitting your policy ideas!

2. Submit an Article

Write a 600-800 word op-ed style article addressing one of the three questions listed below. The article should be written in English and contain clear policy recommendations relating to the chosen topic. It should *clearly explain* your policy ideas, outline *why* your recommendations are useful or better than current approaches, and explain *how* your recommendations could be effectively implemented. It should be free of technical jargon and be accessible and understandable to a general audience.

All articles will be judged on the quality of the ideas and the construction of arguments, not on the opinions expressed. Your article will also be edited for grammar and consistency by a native English speaker. We strongly encourage anyone with interesting policy ideas to participate, even if you have little experience writing in English.

Please note that each category has a different deadline for submission. See below.

Submit your article through atlantic-community.org by [logging in](#) and clicking the "Submit Article" button on the front page or following this link: <http://www.atlantic-community.org/index/articles/add>

If you encounter any technical difficulties, please inform Jason Naselli, Managing Editor, at "naselli AT atlantic-community DOT org"

If you've previously registered but have forgotten your password, [click here](#).

3. Be Part of the Online Debate

In each category, five articles will be shortlisted. The shortlisted articles will then be published and put up for discussion in the Open Think Tank at atlantic-community.org. During the week, the five shortlisted authors will be invited to make constructive comments and criticisms of each other's articles and defend their own arguments. The shortlisted authors will then come together in an online workshop to construct a joint policy paper, the [Atlantic Memo](#), out of the best ideas, with moderating and assistance from the Atlantic Community editorial team.

An expert jury of academics and policymakers will then select three winners and three runners up in each category, with 2/3 of their assessment based on the submitted articles and 1/3 based on the authors' online collaboration.

Read the Atlantic Memos and winning articles from our previous competitions, [Ideas with Impact](#) and [Women on Transatlantic Security](#).

Article Questions

Category 1: Values and Community

The new NATO Strategic Concept "reconfirms the bond between our nations," not just as one of militaries and governments, but as "a unique community of values, committed to individual liberty, democracy, human rights, and the rule of law." This commitment is a collective effort, but despite 60 years of alliance, NATO is still sometimes seen as "they" and not "we". Many Americans tend to think of the Brussels-based NATO as a primarily European organization, while many Europeans still see NATO as an embodiment of the American presence in Europe, rather than an alliance of equal partners.

Question: *How can NATO encourage ownership and identification among its member nations and their publics? How can it turn "they" into "we"?*

Deadline for submission: February 23, 2012

Category 2: Partnerships after the Arab Spring

NATO's Mediterranean Dialogue already includes two Arab Spring countries, Tunisia and Egypt, and will presumably add a newly free Libya as well. With the political and security climate in the region likely to change greatly as countries face instability and a transition to democracy, NATO's partnerships in the region



will change too. The Libya intervention created a highly positive image of NATO in the Arab world, but US and some European opposition to Palestinian statehood is still a contentious issue and public opinion on the Arab street is shaky. (Rightly or wrongly, NATO is heavily identified with US policy in region.) The Mediterranean Dialogue's objectives are to "contribute to regional security and stability, achieve better mutual understanding, and dispel any misconceptions about NATO among Dialogue countries," and moving forward, NATO will have to work with new governments and in new environments to further these goals.

Question: *How should NATO reach out to partners new and old in North Africa and the Middle East in order to build relationships and fulfill the objectives of the Mediterranean Dialogue?*

Deadline for submission: March 15, 2012

Category 3: Smart Defense

In February 2011, NATO Secretary General Anders Fogh Rasmussen introduced the concept of Smart Defense - "ensuring greater security, for less money, by working together with more flexibility." To accomplish this, he said NATO "must prioritize... must specialize... and must seek multinational solutions." However, the European Union, whose nations also comprise the majority of NATO members, has been unable to accomplish a similar task as individual national defense budgets are rolled back. Similarly, the United States, which provides much of the R&D funding to develop "smart" defense technology, faces having to roll back its defense investment as well. Secretary Rasmussen has suggested NATO can be a broker between allied nations that have similar defense interests and lack the money to develop capabilities on their own, but it is up to individual members to choose this path.

Question: *How can NATO best encourage member states to share investment burdens as part of a Smart Defense framework?*

Deadline for submission: April 5, 2012

Important Dates

February 23: Deadline for Category 1

February 27 – March 2: Shortlisted articles for Category 1 published on atlantic-community.org

March 3 – 8: Category 1 shortlisted authors collaborate on policy memo

March 9: Policy Memo published for Category 1

March 12: Category 1 winner and runner-up chosen

March 15: Deadline for Category 2

March 19 – 23: Shortlisted articles for Category 2 published on atlantic-community.org

March 24 – 29: Category 2 shortlisted authors collaborate on policy memo

March 30: Policy Memo published for Category 2

April 2: Category 2 winner and runner-up chosen

April 5: Deadline for Category 3

April 9 – 13: Shortlisted articles for Category 3 published on atlantic-community.org

April 14 – 19: Category 3 shortlisted authors collaborate on policy memo

April 20: Policy Memo published for Category 3

April 23: Category 3 winner and runner-up chosen

May 21: Award ceremony and event in Berlin, Germany

Resources

If you think you've got some ideas but need to read more about some of the issues, check out some of our

helpful resources here. Remember to [register](#) and you'll receive updates when new resources and information are posted.

[NATO LibGuides: NATO's New Strategic Concept](#)

[NATO Mediterranean Dialogue](#)

[NATO LibGuides: NATO and Libya](#)

[NATO A-Z: Smart Defense](#)

About atlantic-community.org

Atlantic-community.org is the first online foreign policy think tank. With over 6000 members, our mission is to encourage open and democratic dialogue on the challenges facing Europe and North America. We especially want to provide a voice for new generation of thinkers and young leaders, giving them the opportunity to publish and debate side by side with established experts and to have their policy ideas considered by senior officials. This gives our members real political influence, while decision makers benefit from the next generation's fresh ideas.

Our main section is Your Opinion, where op-eds written by members and edited by our staff are published on a daily basis. Readers comment on the ideas and suggestions presented in the articles, and we periodically condense these debates into [Atlantic Memos](#) – executive summaries that harness the collective intelligence of the community, and present the best solutions and policy recommendations. These memos are sent to policy-makers in over 27 countries in Europe and North America.

Atlantic-community.org is a project of [Atlantische Initiative e.V.](#), a German non-profit organization dedicated to building and strengthening a strong transatlantic community and a culture of constructive foreign policy debate.

If you are interested in helping promote the competition or for any media inquiries, please contact Joerg Wolf at "wolf AT atlantic-community DOT org"

Sponsors

The competition is sponsored by the [NATO Public Diplomacy Division](#), [the US Mission to Germany](#), and the [Heinrich Böll Foundation](#).

