

Speakers Biographies

Irene Fellin

NATO Secretary General's Special Representative for Women, Peace and Security

Irene Fellin was appointed NATO Secretary General's Special Representative for Women, Peace and Security in 2021. She is the high focal point on all aspects of NATO's contribution to the Women, Peace and Security agenda, with the aim to facilitate coordination and consistency in NATO's policies and activities and to take forward the operationalization of the 2024 NATO Policy and the Action Plan on the implementation of the United Nations Security Council Resolution 1325 and related resolutions.

She is a Gender and Security expert and peacebuilder with more than 15 years of experience in the field of international security. She was instrumental in establishing and coordinating the Mediterranean Women Mediators Network (MWMN), a project promoted by the Ministry of Foreign Affairs and International Cooperation of Italy aimed at fulfilling the need to increase the number of women involved in peacemaking efforts and at facilitating the appointment of high-level women mediators at local and international level.

Fellin is a strong supporter of female leadership and in 2016 she founded the Italian chapter of Women in International Security (WIIS), an organisation dedicated to advancing the leadership and professional development of women in the field of international peace, security and defence. Under Ms. Fellin's remit are also the five areas of work of NATO's human security approach, namely the protection of civilians, cultural property protection, children and armed conflict, combatting trafficking in human beings and conflict-related sexual violence.

Koen Davidse

Director General Policy, Dutch Ministry of Defence

Koen Davidse has been the Director-General Policy at the Netherlands Ministry of Defence since November 2023. Over the course of his career, he has worked on security and justice, humanitarian affairs, peacebuilding, and sustainable development within the United Nations, the World Bank, and the Dutch government. From 2018 - 2023 he served as Executive Director at the World Bank. At the UN, he was Deputy Special Representative of the Secretary-General in Mali (MINUSMA), where he was intensively involved in the Malian peace process.

He previously served as Director for Multilateral Institutions and Human Rights, as well as Director of Peacebuilding and Stabilisation at the Ministry of Foreign Affairs, working on the SDGs, Afghanistan, and the Sudan Comprehensive Peace Agreement. Davidse holds a degree in international relations and political science from Erasmus University Rotterdam.

Olena Suslova

Founder, Women's Information Consultative Center

Olena Suslova is a human rights, gender activist and researcher with more than 30 years of experience. She has worked in Ukraine as well as countries of the former Soviet Union as a short-term expert and trainer on gender, peace culture, conflict transformation, etc. She founded an NGO, the Women's Information Consultative Center, in 1995. She published about 50 books, research articles, and manuals on gender issues. She works on the WPS agenda since 2010. She is a member of the steering committee of the NATO Civil Society Advisory Panel on WPS.

Colonel Nevena Miteva

Gender Advisor, Ministry of Defence of Bulgaria

Nevyana Miteva is the Deputy Minister of Foreign Affairs of Bulgaria.

Born in 1970 in Dobrich, she received an Air Force Master's Degree from the Georgi Rakovski National Defence College. Her past experiences include periods as Air Force Staff Officer, Chief expert in the Bilateral Cooperation and Regional Initiatives Department of national and international Women, Peace and Security Agenda at the Social Policy Directorate at the Ministry of Defence.

She is UN and NATO accredited as a Gender Advisor for the Nordic Centre for Gender in Military Operations (NCGM), Stockholm, Kingdom of Sweden.

In her role as the Deputy Minister of Foreign Affairs since April 2024, Nevyana Miteva speaks English fluently and possesses working knowledge of Russian and French.

Brigadier-General (BGen) Dany Poitras

Canadian Military Representative, Supreme Headquarters Allied Powers Europe (SHAPE)

Brigadier-General (BGen) Dany Poitras was born in Joliette, QC. He joined the Canadian Armed Forces in 1996 as a direct entry officer and was awarded his pilot's wings in 1999. He started his military career flying the CH146 Griffon helicopter with postings to 427 Tactical Helicopter Squadron in Petawawa, 403 Helicopter Operational Training Squadron in Gagetown as an instructor pilot, and 444 Combat Support Squadron in Goose Bay. In 2009, he transitioned to the search-and-rescue (SAR) community with a posting to 413 Transport and Rescue (T&R) Squadron in

Greenwood flying the CH149 Cormorant helicopter. He eventually commanded the "Tigers" at 424 (T&R) Squadron in Trenton and in July 2019, he took Command of 19 Wing in Comox where he led the formation through challenging times, namely progressing the CC295 Kingfisher transition during the COVID-19 pandemic.

BGen Poitras deployed in Bosnia and in Afghanistan. His staff experience includes 5 Wing Operations Officer, the Royal Canadian Air Force Aerospace Warfare Centre, and the 1st Canadian Division Headquarters. He also served at ADM (Pol) in Ottawa as the Director Western Hemisphere Policy and at the NATO Allied Air Command (AIRCOM) Headquarters in Ramstein, Germany as the Integrated Air Missile Defence and Offensive Operations Branch Head where he was concurrently the Commanding Officer for Canadian Armed Forces personnel in Germany. BGen Poitras has accumulated more than 4000 flying hours over his career. He has a bachelor's degree in civil engineering, a certificate in engineering management, and a master of defence studies.

He attended the Joint Command and Staff Program in Toronto and the United States Air Force Air War College program in Alabama. He was promoted to his current rank in 2024 and he currently serves as the Commander of Formation Europe and as the National Military Representative to Supreme Headquarters Allied Powers Europe (SHAPE) for NATO in Mons, Belgium. BGen Poitras is married and the couple has two wonderful daughters.

Fatimazhra Belhirsch

Member of the Senate for D66

Fatimazhra Belhirsch is a Dutch Senator for Democrats 66 and a former diplomat with nearly 15 years of experience in foreign affairs, international cooperation, and human rights. She holds a Master's degree in International and European Law from the University of Amsterdam and a law degree in Dutch civil and corporate law from Erasmus University Rotterdam.

In the Senate, she serves on the Committee for Foreign Affairs, Defence and Development Cooperation. She is a committed advocate of parliamentary diplomacy and currently serves as a member of the Bureau of the First Standing Committee on Peace and International Security of the Inter-Parliamentary Union. Belhirsch is rapporteur on *Robust Post-Conflict Mechanisms and Restoring a Just and Lasting Peace*.

She recently addressed the United Nations General Assembly (June 2025), urging parliamentarians to act not as spectators of conflict, but as agents of peace.

Prior to her time in parliament, Belhirsch served as a diplomat at the Dutch Ministry of Foreign Affairs. Her last position was Chief of Staff to the Minister for Foreign Trade and Development Cooperation. As a human rights advocate she worked in the Netherlands, Kosovo, Egypt, and beyond.

From 2022 to 2024, she served as Executive Director of the Foundation for Refugee Students UAF. She now chairs the Asylum Committee of VluchtelingenWerk Nederland (Dutch Refugee Council) and served on several boards in education, culture, and philanthropy. Currently she is the Vice Chair of Cito.

Her work continues to reflect a deep commitment to justice, equity, inclusion, and international solidarity — with a belief that true peace is built through dignity and shared responsibility