



WHAT IS NATO?

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#WEARENATO

The North Atlantic Treaty Organization is one of the world's major international institutions. It is a political and military alliance that brings together 31 member countries from Europe and North America.

These countries meet to cooperate in the field of security and defence. In this respect, NATO provides a unique, transatlantic link between these two continents for political and security cooperation.



PROTECTING PEOPLE

In a rapidly changing world, we want to live in free, democratic societies where we feel safe. Security in all areas of everyday life is key to our well-being.

FORGING PARTNERSHIPS

Establishing dialogue and cooperation is essential for peaceful relations and deeper international understanding. NATO provides a unique opportunity for member and partner countries to consult on political and security-related issues to build trust and, in the long run, help to prevent conflict.

Through practical cooperation and multilateral initiatives, countries are facing new security challenges together.

COMBATting NEW THREATS

As the nature of threats changes, so must the methods of preserving peace. NATO is reorienting its defence capabilities towards today's threats. It is adapting forces and developing multinational approaches to deal with terrorism, and cyber, space, hybrid and other security threats, such as the malicious use of new technologies.

BUILDING PEACE AND STABILITY

Strong, independent partners are vital for the stability of the Euro-Atlantic area.

It is crucial to stabilise regions where tensions pose security threats. This is why NATO takes an active role in crisis management operations, in cooperation with other international organisations.



WHAT DOES NATO DO?

NATO is committed to protecting its members through political and military means. It also encourages consultation and cooperation with non-NATO countries in a wide range of security-related areas such as defence reform and peacekeeping.

Through its discussions and partnerships, NATO contributes to preventing conflicts within and beyond the frontiers of its member countries.

It promotes democratic values and is committed to the peaceful resolution of disputes. If diplomatic

efforts fail, it has the military capacity needed to undertake crisis management and peacekeeping operations alone or in cooperation with other countries and international organisations.

NATO also has a third dimension that consists of activities in the area of civil preparedness, helping Allies and partners to cope with disasters, and of efforts to promote cooperation in the field of science and the environment.

HOW DOES NATO WORK?

Each member country has a permanent delegation at NATO's political headquarters in Brussels, Belgium. It is headed by an ambassador, who represents his/her government in the Alliance's consultation and decision-making process.

The North Atlantic Council is the most important political decision-making body within the Organization. It meets at different levels and is chaired by the Secretary General of NATO, who helps members reach agreement on key issues.

All decisions within each of NATO's committees are reached by consensus. A "NATO decision" is therefore the expression of the collective will of all member countries.

NATO has very few permanent forces of its own. When an operation is agreed by the North Atlantic Council, members contribute forces on a voluntary basis. These forces return to their countries once the mission is completed.

It is the role of the military command structure to coordinate and conduct these operations. This structure consists of headquarters and bases located in different member countries.

NATO's day-to-day activities, civil and military structures and security investment programmes are funded through common budgets to which member governments contribute in accordance with an agreed cost-sharing formula.



MEMBER AND PARTNER COUNTRIES

Signing of the North Atlantic Treaty on 4 April 1949

MEMBER COUNTRIES (+DATES OF ACCESSION)

- Albania - 2009
- Belgium - 1949
- Bulgaria - 2004
- Canada - 1949
- Croatia - 2009
- Czechia - 1999
- Denmark - 1949
- Estonia - 2004
- Finland - 2023
- France - 1949
- Germany - 1955
- Greece - 1952
- Hungary - 1999
- Iceland - 1949
- Italy - 1949
- Latvia - 2004
- Lithuania - 2004
- Luxembourg - 1949
- Montenegro - 2017
- Netherlands - 1949
- North Macedonia - 2020
- Norway - 1949
- Poland - 1999
- Portugal - 1949
- Romania - 2004
- Slovakia - 2004
- Slovenia - 2004
- Spain - 1982
- Türkiye - 1952
- United Kingdom - 1949
- United States - 1949

PARTNERSHIP FOR PEACE (PFP) COUNTRIES

- Armenia
- Austria
- Azerbaijan
- Belarus*
- Bosnia and Herzegovina
- Georgia
- Ireland
- Kazakhstan
- Kyrgyzstan
- Malta
- Republic of Moldova
- Russia*
- Serbia
- Sweden
- Switzerland
- Tajikistan
- Turkmenistan
- Ukraine
- Uzbekistan
- Algeria
- Egypt
- Israel
- Jordan
- Mauritania
- Morocco
- Tunisia

MEDITERRANEAN DIALOGUE (MD) COUNTRIES

ISTANBUL COOPERATION INITIATIVE (ICI) COUNTRIES

- Bahrain
- Kuwait
- Qatar
- United Arab Emirates

PARTNERS ACROSS THE GLOBE

- Afghanistan*
- Australia
- Colombia
- Iraq
- Japan
- Republic of Korea
- Mongolia
- New Zealand
- Pakistan

* The partnerships with Afghanistan, Belarus and Russia are currently suspended following North Atlantic Council decisions related to the security environment.