



ESTONIA

NATO member



since 2004

**Defence share
in GDP**

2018

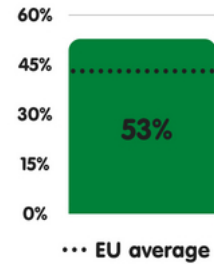


PESCO projects

Participant



Trust in EU



What does the country fear?

Estonia is one of two EU member states that see external meddling in domestic politics as its most significant security threat (the other is Lithuania). Estonia also sees the deterioration of the rules-based international order and – given the country’s dependence on information technology – cyber attacks as major threats. Estonians expect external meddling in domestic politics to remain a leading security threat in the next decade, although they suspect that issues such as economic instability and uncontrolled migration will also become important.

Who does the country fear?

Estonia has long seen the Russian government as far more of a threat to its security than any other actor. It expects this to remain the case during the next decade. Estonia also views North Korea as a significant threat, mostly due to Pyongyang’s capacity to destabilise Europe. Estonians believe that powers such as China and Turkey – and even the United States – may increasingly come to be threats in the next decade.

Essential security partners

Estonia’s most important European security partners are other NATO members, especially the United Kingdom, France, Germany, and Poland. Nonetheless, the US continues to be Estonia’s crucial security partner, contributing to its security through the deployment of troops, missile-defence radars, and other materiel on Estonian soil, as well as technological cooperation, high-level political coordination, and technical military and intelligence collaboration. Tallinn believes that it may have to make concessions to the Trump administration to ensure that the US remains engaged with European security.

The EU as a security actor

Like their counterparts in most other EU countries, the Estonian establishment largely perceives the EU as a transatlantic geopolitical project that has NATO as its backbone. Yet Estonia is also one of two EU countries that see PESCO as an essential initiative that could significantly contribute to national security (the other is Luxembourg). Estonia is particularly interested in establishing a so-called “military Schengen Area”, which would help EU member states’ military units pass through one another’s territory. The Estonian establishment views efforts to strengthen defence industry cooperation within the EU as primarily a way to enhance European defence cooperation more broadly – rather than as an economic opportunity or threat.