



FRANCE

NATO member



since 1949

**Defence share
in GDP**

2017



PESCO projects

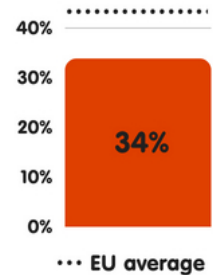
Leader



Participant



Trust in EU



What does the country fear?

France perceives terrorism and cyber attacks as the most significant threats to its security. The country's 2017 Strategic Review also emphasised its significant concern about the deterioration of the rules-based international order, especially in the realm of non-proliferation. Unlike other large EU member states, France perceives the return of military competition and inter-state war as a genuine threat. Paris regards all these threats as having intensified in the past decade, expecting them to remain acute or even rise in the next decade. France sees itself as highly resilient against the threats it faces, particularly military attacks on its territory and disruptions in the energy supply.

Who does the country fear?

Due to the recent terrorist attacks on Paris, Nice, and other parts of France, the French government sees jihadist groups (from Syria, Iraq, and the Sahel region, as well as Europe) as posing the most pressing threat it confronts. It also regards Russia and North Korea as significant threats. France believes that Russia is most likely to attack the EU through economic warfare, cyber operations, information warfare, and interference in domestic politics. It expects the threat from Russia to recede over the next decade but that from international criminal groups to increase in the period.

Essential security partners

Paris perceives the transatlantic relationship as important, with the United States contributing to French national security through high-level political coordination at the UN Security Council and elsewhere. France engages in technical military and intelligence cooperation with the US in expeditionary operations, including Barkhane (in the Sahel) and Chammal (in Syria and Iraq). Within the EU, France's key security partners are the United Kingdom along with Germany, Italy, and Spain. France wants to maintain its close defence and security relationship with the UK through bilateral cooperation after Brexit. But the French military – and parts of the French political elite – fear that Brexit will weaken Paris within the Union by removing the only member state that shares much of France's strategic culture.

The EU as a security actor

France regards the EU as a security community that should aim to develop closely interconnected – if not unified (as in President Emmanuel Macron's proposal for a joint intervention force) – armed forces capable of operating autonomously across the globe. A leader in establishing PESCO, France sees the initiative as a significant step forward for European defence and coordination between European countries more broadly (if not as far-reaching as it originally hoped). Paris regards efforts to strengthen defence industry cooperation in the EU through the European Defence Fund as beneficial so long as they only boost European companies (rather than European subsidiaries of external companies) and enhance European strategic autonomy. Still, France's European Intervention Initiative (EI2) stresses its focus on operations and its reliance on flexible cooperation and integration.