



IRELAND

**Not
NATO member**



**Defence share
in GDP**

2017

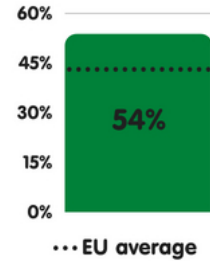


PESCO projects

Participant



Trust in EU



What does the country fear?

Ireland is very concerned that Brexit will exacerbate the other national security threats it confronts, particularly that from terrorism. It has remained relatively remote from the migration crisis and does not take part in the EU's common border control and visa provisions. Therefore, Ireland does not see uncontrolled migration as a threat to national security.

Who does the country fear?

Dublin perceives the terrorism threat primarily in unionist and republican paramilitary organisations that reject the Good Friday Agreement, and that may become more active if the UK and the European Union impose controls on their border after Brexit. The Irish government also worries about a growing threat from homegrown jihadists, including those returning home after fighting in foreign conflicts. Nonetheless, Ireland does not see itself as an obvious target of aggression. Although Dublin is concerned about the Trump administration's policies and rhetoric, it views them as having no direct impact on Irish national security. Governing party Fine Gael and the main opposition, Fianna Fail, view Russia as a moderate threat and are pro-EU and pro-NATO. Sinn Fein, Ireland's third largest party, does not see Russia as an inherent threat, positioning itself as anti-war, anti-NATO, and anti-PESCO.

Essential security partners

The United Kingdom is Ireland's most important security partner in Europe, as the two countries share a border and a common travel area, operate shared watchlists, and engage in a wide range of security and justice cooperation. Ireland's other important partners in Europe include Belgium, France, and Germany, given their shared interest in tackling homegrown terrorism. Dublin sees the countries' experiences in this area as instructive, and engages in intelligence sharing with them. Although it does not officially depend on the US security guarantee, Ireland has long benefited from American engagement with European security. Ireland engages in intelligence sharing with the United States, perceiving exchanges on cyber security as particularly important.

The EU as a security actor

Irish leaders support PESCO, seeing it as beneficial for national security not just in defence cooperation but also in strengthening the EU following Brexit. Because it spends little on defence, Ireland believes that the initiative could help it draw funding for research and capacity building, enhancing its defence forces' training, equipment, and information sharing capabilities. Some Irish leaders have criticised PESCO's impact on Ireland's neutrality. However, PESCO does not alter the fact that Irish troops will only be deployed abroad with government approval, the endorsement of parliament, and UN authorisation.