



# POLAND

## NATO member



since 1999

## Defence share in GDP

2017

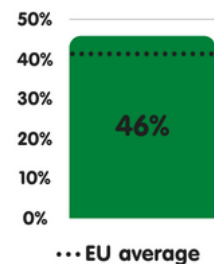


## PESCO projects

Participant



## Trust in EU



### What does the country fear?

Polish leaders view inter-state war involving Poland or its allies as the most significant threat to the country. To prepare for this possibility, the government is modernising the Polish armed forces through a programme that has experienced extensive delays. Poland perceives other major threats in state collapse or civil war in the European Union's neighbourhood (particularly Ukraine), external meddling in domestic politics, disruptions in the energy supply, cyber attacks, and the disintegration of the EU. As in Hungary, the government often presents uncontrolled migration and jihadism as related threats.

### Who does the country fear?

Polish leaders agree that Moscow is the most threatening actor Poland faces, Washington is the country's main ally, and EU membership is important to national security. Russia's annexation of Crimea in 2014 and subsequent instigation of conflict in eastern Ukraine have only reaffirmed this perception. Polish leaders worry China might emerge as a threat in the next decade due to the tension surrounding the country's growing power. They have recently begun to view neighbouring Ukraine and Germany as emerging threats to Polish national security. This is due to Ukraine's reinforcement of the country's national identity, and to historical wariness of Berlin that Poland's ruling party exploits for political ends.

### Essential security partners

Poland's main European security partners include the United Kingdom, France, Germany, Romania, and Sweden, due to either their military capabilities (the United Kingdom, France), their shared threat perceptions (the UK, Romania, and Sweden), or their importance to military logistics and procurement (Germany). Polish leaders view the United States as indispensable to national security, and have procured almost half of foreign-supplied military equipment from the country since 1991. Warsaw would like Washington to boost its deployment of 3,500 US soldiers to Poland, and to make their presence there permanent. As one of the few NATO members to spend 2 percent of GDP on defence, the Polish government hopes to maintain very close relations with Washington – especially since the ruling party believes it has a worldview similar to that of President Donald Trump.

### The EU as a security actor

Due to its focus on the US and NATO, Poland has been wary of PESCO. But if PESCO develops in cooperation with NATO rather than as a rival structure, Poland may increase its engagement with the initiative, especially if it regards this as an effective way to strengthen European NATO members' military capabilities. However, Polish policymakers rather doubt that PESCO will lead to the acquisition of new defence capabilities in Europe. The Polish government is also very cautious about European defence industry cooperation, as it fears that France and Germany would dominate this process and gain greater control over Poland's defence industry, reducing Polish companies to mere subcontractors. As a consequence, Warsaw would prefer to develop its defence industry independently.