



ROMANIA

NATO member



since 2004

Defence share in GDP

2017

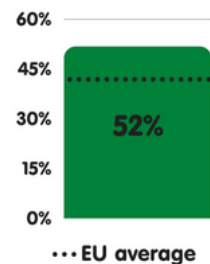


PESCO projects

Participant



Trust in EU



What does the country fear?

Romania perceives cyber attacks, state collapse or civil war in the European Union's neighbourhood, and inter-state war involving the country or its allies as being the greatest threats to its security. Romanians see their country as vulnerable due to its location in a region of intense geopolitical competition between the West and Russia. Romania's 2013 decision to host parts of NATO's missile-defence network (activated in 2016) prompted heavy criticism from Moscow, which viewed the move as designed to counter its nuclear arsenal.

Who does the country fear?

Romania's government and public view Moscow as by far the most threatening actor they confront. As a consequence, Romania continuously seeks assurances and support from the US and NATO in protecting the alliance's eastern flank, particularly in the Black Sea region. Romanian perceptions of Russia as a threat have intensified due to the country's annexation of Crimea in 2014, militarisation of the Black Sea, invasion of eastern Ukraine, and involvement in a frozen conflict in neighbouring Moldova. Bucharest is also concerned about the growing influence of Russian propaganda in Romania through Sputnik and social media. There is a risk that Romania will come to see Hungary as a threat if the upcoming centenary of the Trianon Treaty reawakens historical enmity between them.

Essential security partners

Germany, France, and the United Kingdom are Romania's key European security partners due to their leading roles in the European Union and NATO, and at the United Nations. However, Bucharest views Washington as easily its most important security ally. According to Romania's National Defense Strategy 2015-2019, the country's partnerships with the United States, NATO, and the EU are the three pillars of its foreign policy – with NATO the main guarantor of Romanian national security. This partnership with the US has led to, inter alia, naval deployments in the Black Sea, a contract to supply Romania with F-16 fighter jets, and rotational US troop deployments in Constanta. Determined to be a reliable partner for the US, Romania is one of the few NATO members that spends at least 2 percent of GDP on defence.

The EU as a security actor

Romania heavily favours cooperation with Washington rather than the EU as key to national security. The country remains sceptical of European security guarantees due to its experiences in the twentieth century. It is concerned that the push for EU security and defence cooperation could compete with NATO, endangering US involvement in European security. Romania is one of five EU members to see some aspects of EU membership and European integration as having both positive and negative effects on national security (the others are Poland, Hungary, the Czech Republic, and Sweden). As a consequence, Romania has limited involvement in PESCO. It joined PESCO to align with its key European partners – an especially important concern given that it will take up the EU presidency in 2019 – and to ensure that the initiative complements NATO.