



SLOVAKIA

NATO member



since 2004

Defence share in GDP

2017



PESCO projects

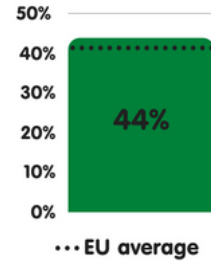
Leader



Participant



Trust in EU



What does the country fear?

Slovakia views disruptions in the energy supply and state collapse or civil war in the European Union’s neighbourhood as the most significant threats to its security. Heavily reliant on Russian oil and gas, it is one of four EU countries that perceive such disruptions as at least a significant security threat (the others are Poland, Hungary, and Croatia). Bordering Ukraine, Slovakia feels exposed to instability in the EU’s neighbourhood. Slovakia views external meddling in domestic politics as a significant threat, and is one of four EU countries that see financial issues as vital to national security (the others are Greece, Portugal, and Malta).

Who does the country fear?

Bratislava views international criminal organisations as the most threatening actors it faces. Its perception of Moscow is more ambiguous. Unlike neighbouring Poland and the Czech Republic, Slovakia did not consider Russia to be a threat until the annexation of Crimea in 2014. The Security Strategy of the Slovak Republic 2017 casts Russia in a negative light due to the country’s violation of international law and Ukraine’s sovereignty and territorial integrity. Although Slovakia’s ruling parties see Russia as a valuable partner, most opposition groups – with the exception of the right-wing People’s Party Our Slovakia, which openly opposes the EU and NATO – are now wary of Moscow.

Essential security partners

Slovakia’s essential security partners are the three other members of the Visegrád group (the Czech Republic, Poland, and Hungary). Bratislava closely cooperates with these countries on European issues, often in an effort to formulate a shared central European narrative on issues such as migration. Slovakia also regards Germany as an important partner on security issues, not least because of its economic leadership and its position at the EU’s core. Slovak Prime Minister Peter Pellegrini made his first three official foreign visits to Prague, Warsaw, and Berlin. As a NATO member, Slovakia sees the United States as a crucial security partner, mostly due to the Article 5 security guarantee.

The EU as a security actor

Slovakia generally sees the EU as an economic cooperation project, with NATO the focus of the country’s security and defence policy. However, Slovakia strongly supports PESCO, especially as the launch of the initiative coincided with Slovakia’s decision to modernise its armed forces and increase military spending to 2 percent of GDP by 2024. Unlike Warsaw, Bratislava does not view PESCO competing with NATO but rather a complementary structure that could help the country strengthen its military capabilities. Slovakia leads PESCO’s EuroArtillery project, and participates in four other strands of the initiative.