

Outcome of the Madrid NATO Summit, June 2022

On 28-30 June 2022, NATO leaders met in Madrid and adopted a new strategic concept, rewriting their assessment of the threat environment in the light of Russia's war on Ukraine. NATO also overhauled its defence and deterrence posture, and officially invited Finland and Sweden to join the Alliance.

NATO's new strategic concept

From 28 to 30 June 2022, the NATO Allies' heads of state or government met for the 32nd time since 1949, to steer a course through current challenges and determine the Alliance's future direction. The summit's most important outcome was the adoption of NATO's new ([eighth](#)) [strategic concept](#) – a document that sets out the Alliance's strategy, and outlines its defence and deterrence posture, its core tasks, and the security challenges it faces. NATO's last [strategic concept](#) dated back to 2010, when the security situation in Europe was fundamentally different. The new [strategic concept](#) marks a fundamentally new departure:

- **Threat environment:** The new concept states that the Euro-Atlantic area is no longer at peace, and faces 'the possibility of an attack against Allies' sovereignty and territorial integrity'. This is starkly different from the 2010 concept's assessment, which noted that the area was at peace and the threat of a conventional attack against NATO was low. New security challenges such as space, cyber- and hybrid threats, climate change, and emerging and disruptive technologies (EDTs) are all mentioned. NATO commits to enhancing its cyber-defences and investing in its ability to deter, prepare and defend against hybrid threats. The concept notes that cyber- and hybrid threats could justify invocation of [Article 5](#) (the mutual defence clause). [Commentators](#) note the 'laundry list' will make prioritising difficult and that it lacks detail on how the challenges should be met.
- **Russia:** NATO notes that Russia presents the 'most significant and direct threat to Allies' security and to peace and stability in the Euro-Atlantic area'. By contrast, in the 2010 [concept](#), NATO sought to pursue 'a true strategic partnership with Russia'. One [expert](#) argues that this is the strongest language on Russia since 1991 and is reminiscent of 'Cold-War style language'. In arguably a rebuke to Putin, NATO leaders also reaffirmed NATO's [open-door policy](#) and stated that 'no third party has a say in this process'.
- **China:** China's 'ambitions and coercive policies' are said to challenge NATO's 'interests, security and values', in this first ever mention of the country in a strategic concept. The concept warns that China's hybrid, cyber- and disinformation activities are a threat to NATO and raises [concerns](#) about the deepening strategic partnership between Russia and China. However, the Allies remain open to constructive engagement with China. It was in this context that the Allies' Indo-Pacific partners, Australia, New Zealand, Japan and South Korea, attended their first ever NATO summit.
- **Core tasks:** NATO reaffirms and reinforces its three core tasks: cooperative security, crisis prevention and management (as opposed to simply crisis management in the 2010 concept) and deterrence and defence (collective defence in the previous concept). Importantly, the new concept [mainstreams](#) resilience through all three core tasks. According to one [analyst](#), the core tasks remain 'broadly the same'. However other [experts](#) argue that the importance of deterrence has risen compared with other core tasks, even arguing that it now has [primacy](#).
- **EU-NATO cooperation:** The new concept states that the EU is a 'unique and essential partner for NATO'. The two organisations share 21 (23 once Finland and Sweden join NATO) Member States in common. [EU-NATO cooperation](#) focuses on issues of common interest such as crisis management. It was cemented in a strategic partnership in the early 2000s and expanded through two joint EU-NATO declarations, in 2016 and 2018, that outline areas for strengthened cooperation. A third EU-NATO [declaration](#) is expected in the near future. The new concept underlines that cooperation will be enhanced on issues of common interest, such as [military mobility](#), [EDTs](#), the [impact](#) of climate change on security, human security, the 'women, peace and security' [agenda](#), and [hybrid](#) and



[cyber](#)-threats. NATO recognises that stronger EU defence will contribute to transatlantic security. This is coherent with the emphasis placed on enhancing EU-NATO cooperation in the EU's [Strategic Compass](#). A [Euro-Atlantic](#) dinner was held on 29 June on the fringes of the summit. [Challenges](#) nevertheless remain, owing to tensions between member states (most notably Turkey and Cyprus) and comparatively weak EU military capabilities and defence [spending](#) (the latter are improving rapidly).

NATO strengthens its deterrence and defence posture

NATO's secretary-general [announced](#) a 'fundamental shift' to deterrence and defence, encompassing:

- **Enhanced forward presence:** Allies committed to boost the [eight](#) multi-national battlegroups, currently deployed on its eastern flank, to brigade-level if [necessary](#). For instance, the United States announced that it would significantly [increase](#) US troop deployments to several eastern European Allies and that the permanent headquarters of the US Army's V Corps would be in Poland.
- **Forces boosted to high-readiness:** The Alliance's rapid reaction force, the NATO Response Force, will be increased to [300 000](#) troops. For the first time since the Cold War these forces will be [dedicated](#) to defending a specific Ally. By way of [example](#), the United Kingdom has earmarked an extra 1 000 personnel for rapid deployment for the defence of Estonia.
- **Forward deployed equipment:** The Allies committed to [deploy](#) stockpiles, facilities and military equipment to the Eastern flank to boost the credibility of NATO's deterrence. For instance, on 30 June, following the NATO summit, France [deployed](#) a missile defence system to Romania.

According to [experts](#), these steps are an impressive show of resolve to bolster defences and counter Russia's aggression against Ukraine. However, one [analyst](#) cautions that these commitments will be expensive, and if not backed up adequately, could undermine NATO's credibility.

Support to Ukraine

NATO Allies have [supported](#) Ukraine with military equipment and aid since even before the beginning of the Russian invasion. These deliveries have been coordinated inter alia by the [EU](#) and the [Ukraine Contact Group](#), which includes 50 nations. At the summit, the NATO Allies [confirmed](#) their commitment 'for as long as it takes'. NATO members also committed to continue with major bilateral military and financial help, and agreed to a comprehensive assistance package for Ukraine, including non-lethal equipment such as 'secure communications, fuel, medical supplies and body armour'. NATO further committed to help Ukraine [transition](#) to modern equipment, enhance interoperability and bolster its defence and security institutions.

Accession of Finland and Sweden to NATO

Finland and Sweden officially [submitted](#) their NATO membership applications on 18 May 2022. It was initially unclear whether their application would be accepted (NATO accession requires [unanimity](#)), owing to Turkey's concerns that the countries were [harbouring](#) 'terrorists'. However, ahead of the summit, Finland, Sweden and Turkey signed a [memorandum](#) of understanding in which Turkey obtained [commitments](#) on counterterrorism (relating to groups it [considers](#) terrorists) and on national arms embargoes. On 29 June 2022, NATO formally [invited](#) Finland and Sweden to become full members and on 5 July, NATO ambassadors [signed](#) the accession protocols, paving the way for ratification by all members. Finland and Sweden can now participate officially in NATO meetings (they had already been attending unofficially since Russia invaded Ukraine). The [ratification](#) process could take up to a year and may yet be [blocked](#) by Turkey. Once complete, NATO's secretary-general will officially invite the candidates to accede to the [Washington Treaty](#). Once their [instruments of accession](#) have been deposited, Finland and Sweden will be full members.

European Parliament position

In its June 2022 [recommendation](#) on the EU's foreign, security and defence policy following the Russian invasion of Ukraine, Parliament underlined the need to intensify EU-NATO cooperation and the importance of a substantial third EU-NATO joint declaration. MEPs also called for a further boost to NATO's enhanced forward presence, while acknowledging that NATO is the bedrock of its members' collective defence. In 2021 the Parliament adopted a [resolution](#) on EU-NATO cooperation, in which it emphasised that strong partnership was vital to address today's security challenges and called for deeper cooperation.

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