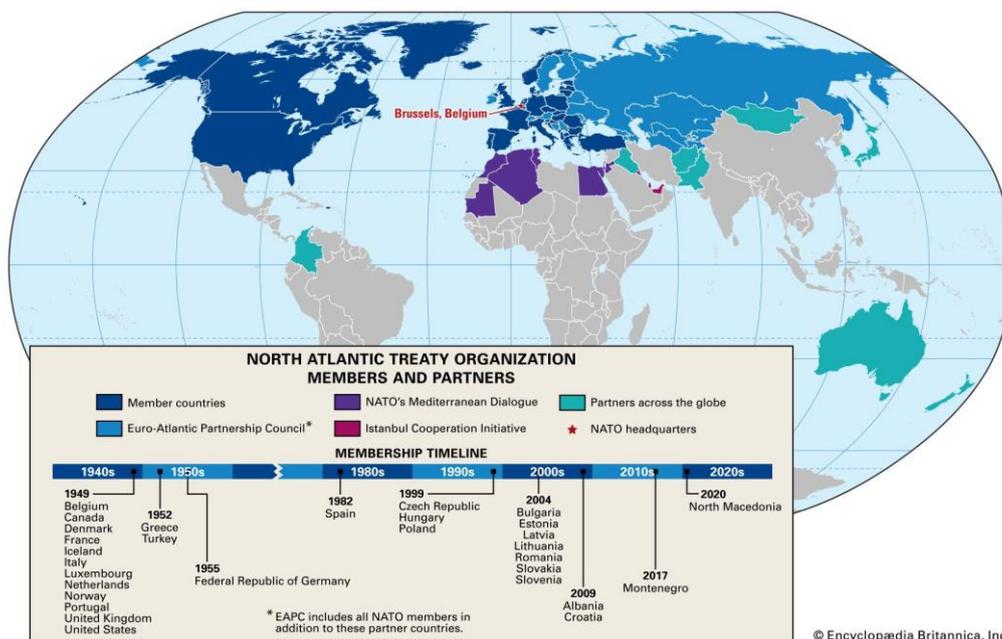


## North Atlantic Treaty Organization (NATO)

North Atlantic Treaty Organization is also called the North Atlantic Alliance. It was founded in the aftermath of the World War II, with an aim to secure peace in Europe, promote cooperation among its members, and guard their freedom. All of this was in the context of countering the threat posed by the Soviet Union.



In 1949, the Alliance’s founding treaty was signed in Washington by twelve European and North American countries. NATO commits the Allies to observe democracy, individual liberty and the rule of law, and peaceful resolution of disputes. The treaty works on democratic values and sets out the idea of collective defence, meaning an attack against all Allies.

The North Atlantic Treaty Organization – or NATO- ensures that the security of its European member countries is inseparably linked to that of its North American member countries.

### Key Highlights

#### NATO member countries

There are 30 members countries presently and are the important players in the North Atlantic Treaty Organization are the member countries themselves.

Albania (2009)	Belgium (1949)	Bulgaria (2004)
Canada (1949)	Croatia (2009)	Czech Republic (1999)
Denmark (1949)	Estonia (2004)	France (1949)
Germany (1955)	Greece (1952)	Hungary (1999)
Iceland (1949)	Italy (1949)	Latvia (2004)
Lithuania (2004)	Luxembourg (1949)	Montenegro (2017)
Netherlands (1949)	North Macedonia (2020)	Norway (1949)
Poland (1999)	Portugal (1949)	Romania (2004)
Slovakia (2004)	Slovenia (2004)	Spain (1982)
Turkey (1952)	The United Kingdom (1949)	The United States (1949)

Headquarters: Brussels, Belgium

Official language: English, French

Secretary General: Jens Stoltenberg

### Which countries can join NATO?

- NATO membership is open and permitted to any other European state which positions to

- further the principles of this Treaty and
- contribute to the security of the North Atlantic area
- Under the Membership Action Plan, NATO helps aspiring members prepare for membership and meet key requirements by providing practical advice and targeted assistance.

### **How do NATO function?**

- NATO provides a unique forum for dialogue and cooperation across the Atlantic. Initially, the Alliance started with 12 member countries in 1949. However, the founding Treaty allows other European nations to join the Alliance as long as the existing Allies agree for the same.
- Any prospective member must share NATO's core values. It should have the capacity and willingness to contribute to security in the Euro-Atlantic area.
- Presently, NATO has 30 members who are stronger and safer together. For about seven decades, NATO has ensured peace within its territory. While the threats and the way NATO deals with them have also evolved over time, the purpose, values and founding principles of the Alliance have remained the same.
- For its first four decades, the Cold War defined the Alliance and its collective defence was NATO's main role. In 1989, when that confrontation ended with the collapse of the Soviet Union, some said that the NATO fulfilled its purpose, that it was no longer needed. And yet the Alliance is still here.

### **How has NATO stood the test of time?**

- With the end of the Cold War offered hope for progress and peace. But it also ushered in a new era of instability, and NATO has responded to changes in the security environment by shifting its focus, also taking on new tasks.
- NATO aims to promote security through partnership and cooperation beyond ensuring the collective defence of its members. Since the early 1990s, the Alliance has developed relations with non-member countries as well such as former Cold War adversaries of the former 'Eastern Bloc' etc. And some of these partners have since become members of the Alliance.
- Presently, it is working with non-member countries and other organizations is considered as one of NATO's fundamental tasks. It works with 40 partner countries too with other international organizations, like the European Union and United Nations.
- NATO has taken on a crucial role in international crisis management since the end of the Cold War, and working closely with partner countries, the Alliance helped to end the war and build sustainable peace in the Balkans.
- During the 9/11 terrorist attacks on the United States, Allies and partners deployed forces to Afghanistan to help bring stability. And during the Arab Spring, NATO-led an air campaign over Libya to protect civilians being targeted by the Qadhafi dictatorship.

### **NATO surveillance in sea operations**



- In maritime security operations, NATO and its partners have helped to prevent piracy off the Horn of

Africa and to cooperate in fighting terrorism in the Mediterranean Sea, and has also supported international efforts to stem illegal migration and human trafficking in the Aegean Sea.

- With technological advancements, there is a much broader range of threats than in the past. Globally, to the East, Russia has become more assertive with the illegal annexation of Crimea and destabilization of Ukraine, as well as its military build-up close to NATO's borders. To the South, the security situation in Middle East Africa has deteriorated, fuelling large-scale migration flows, inspiring terrorist attacks and causing loss of life.
- NATO is responding by reinforcing its deterrence and defence posture, as well as supporting international efforts to stabilize and strengthen the security outside NATO territory.
- In present times, there is a constant threat and confronted with the spread of weapons of mass destruction, threats to energy supplies, cyber attacks and environmental challenges with security implications.
- These challenges are too big for any one country or a single organization to handle on its own, so NATO is working closely with its network of partners to help tackle them.
- Consensus and consultation are part of NATO's fundamental functionalities. All member countries are represented in the North Atlantic Council, where decisions are taken by consensus – meaning unanimously- expressing the collective will of all the nations.

### **NATO Army**



- There is no NATO army, i.e., national forces are under any national command. When called upon, Allied nations volunteer their troops, equipments or any other capabilities to NATO-led operations and exercises.
- Each member state pays its own armed forces and covers the cost of deploying its forces. But together, the allies get a lot more security for a lot less cost than they had to do it alone.
- Each member contributes a small percentage of its national defence budget to NATO. The national contributions pay for running the political and operational headquarters in Belgium, as well as the integrated military command structure across NATO territory.
- They also cover some of the costs of shared military capabilities, systems and facilities needed for communication, command, and control, all for logistical support to NATO operations. Other multinational capability projects are funded by groups of Allies.
- Thanks to years of joint planning, exercises and deployments, soldiers from different nations can work well together when the need arises. Working together, the Allies are stronger.