

**Committee: disec 2**

**Topic: The question of the Expansion of NATO**

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## Summary

In 2022, NATO adopted the Strategic Concept. This clearly lays out NATO's purpose and principles, its core tasks and values, as well as the Alliance's strategic objectives within a radically deteriorated security environment. It reaffirms that NATO's key purpose and greatest responsibility is to ensure the collective defence of Allies. To do this, the Alliance fulfils three core tasks: deterrence and defence; crisis prevention and management; and cooperative security.

As of recently, NATO's main threats are the Russian Federation (which shattered peace in Europe by waging a war of aggression against Ukraine); terrorism; conflict and instability in the Middle East and Africa; pervasive instability and its impact on civilians, cultural property and the environment; China's stated ambitions and coercive policies; cyberspace; emerging and disruptive technologies; the erosion of arms control, disarmament and non-proliferation architectures; and the security implications of climate change. The Strategic Concept reiterates that Allies will retain a global perspective on peace and security and work closely with partners (by reinforcing its coordination and cooperation with the United Nations and the European Union), to tackle these possible threats.

## Definition of Key Terms

Countries with cautious perspectives might believe that the expansion can lead to:

**Geopolitical Balance:** Some member states might be cautious about expansion to avoid upsetting geopolitical balances or provoking neighbouring countries or other major powers.

**Burden-Sharing:** Existing members may be concerned about the financial and military burden of integrating new members into the alliance. They might want assurances that potential new members will contribute meaningfully to NATO's capabilities.

**Security Guarantees:** There could be concerns about the potential commitments required to defend new member countries in the event of conflicts, especially if those conflicts are distant from existing NATO territory.

## Background Information

This alliance was formed in 1949 after the signing of the North Atlantic Treaty (more commonly known as the Washington Treaty). NATO is a political and military alliance whose purpose is to guarantee the freedom and security of its members through any political means, promoting democratic values, consultations and cooperation on any security-related issues to solve problems, build trust and, in the long run, prevent conflict; and military means, were the diplomatic efforts to fail, it does have the power to undertake crisis-management operations (following the Article 5 of the Washington Treaty or under UN mandates).

## Major Countries and Organizations Involved

**Eastern European Countries:** Many countries in Eastern Europe, particularly those that were once part of the Eastern Bloc or the Soviet Union, have been supportive of NATO expansion. They often see NATO membership as a way to enhance security, stability, and their integration into Western institutions. Examples include Poland, Hungary, Czech Republic, and the Baltic states (Estonia, Latvia, Lithuania).

**Western Countries:** Traditional NATO member states in Western Europe have generally supported expansion, viewing it as a means to strengthen the alliance's collective defence capabilities and promote stability in neighbouring regions.

**Certain Former Soviet Republics:** Some former Soviet republics, like Ukraine and Georgia, have sought NATO membership as a way to align with Western institutions and protect their sovereignty. However, these aspirations have been met with resistance from Russia, which considers their NATO membership as a challenge to its interests.

**Ukraine:** The Alliance now fully supports Ukraine's inherent right to self-defence, and its right to choose its own security arrangements. Ukraine's future is in NATO. Relations between NATO and Ukraine date back to the early 1990s and have since developed into one of the most substantial of NATO's partnerships. Since 2014, in the wake of Russia's illegal annexation of Crimea, cooperation has been intensified in critical areas. Since Russia's full-scale invasion in 2022, NATO and Allies have provided unprecedented levels of support.

**Georgia:** it is one of NATO's closest partners. It aspires to join the Alliance. Over time, a broad range of practical cooperation has developed between NATO and Georgia, which supports Georgia's reform efforts and its goal of Euro-Atlantic integration. The country contributes to the NATO-led operation Sea Guardian and cooperates with the Allies and other partner countries in many other areas.

Countries More Cautious or Opposed to NATO Expansion:

**Russia:** Russia has been one of the most vocal opponents of NATO expansion, especially when it comes to countries in its perceived sphere of influence. Russia views NATO enlargement as a security threat and has expressed concerns about the alliance's increased presence near its borders.

For instance, the apprehensions against Finland joining NATO mainly emanated because Finland is located in the vicinity of Russia's border. Any NATO military presence in its vicinity might provoke Russia to respond quite aggressively. Finland has committed a strategic blunder by giving up its buffer status and Cold War posturing of neutrality.

**Domestic Opposition:** In some countries, there has been domestic opposition to NATO expansion due to concerns about increased defence spending, potential security risks, or shifts in foreign policy alignment.

## Timeline of Events

**4 April 1949:** Signature of the North Atlantic Treaty by 12 founding members: Belgium, Canada, Denmark, France, Iceland, Italy, Luxembourg, the Netherlands, Norway, Portugal, the United Kingdom and the United States. Article 10 of the Treaty provides the basis for NATO's "open door policy".

**18 February 1952:** Accession of Greece and Türkiye.

**6 May 1955:** Accession of the Federal Republic of Germany.

**30 May 1982:** Spain joins the Alliance (and the integrated military structure in 1998).

**October 1990:** With the reunification of Germany, the new German Länder in the East became part of NATO.

**January 1994:** At the Brussels Summit, Allied leaders reaffirm that NATO remains open to the membership of other European countries.

**28 September 1995:** Publication of NATO Study on Enlargement.

**8-9 July 1997:** At the Madrid Summit, three partner countries – Czechia, Hungary and Poland – are invited to start accession talks.

**12 March 1999:** Accession of Czechia, Hungary and Poland, bringing the Alliance to 19 members.

**23-25 April 1999:** Launch of the Membership Action Plan (MAP) at the Washington Summit. (Bulgaria, Estonia, Latvia, Lithuania, Romania, Slovakia and Slovenia join the MAP.)

**14 May 2002:** NATO foreign ministers officially announce the participation of Croatia in the MAP at their meeting in Reykjavik, Iceland.

**May 2002:** President Leonid Kuchma announces Ukraine's goal of eventual NATO membership.

**21-22 November 2002:** At the Prague Summit, seven partner countries – Bulgaria, Estonia, Latvia, Lithuania, Romania, Slovakia and Slovenia – are invited to start accession talks.

**26 March 2003:** Signing ceremony of the Accession Protocols of the seven invitees.

**29 March 2004:** Accession of Bulgaria, Estonia, Latvia, Lithuania, Romania, Slovakia and Slovenia.

**21 April 2005:** Launch of the Intensified Dialogue on Ukraine's aspirations to NATO membership and related reforms, at an informal meeting of foreign ministers in Vilnius, Lithuania.

**21 September 2006:** NATO foreign ministers in New York announce the decision to offer an Intensified Dialogue to Georgia.

**28-29 November 2006:** At the Riga Summit, Allied leaders state that invitations will be extended to MAP countries that fulfil certain conditions.

**2-4 April 2008:** At the Bucharest Summit, Allied leaders invite Albania and Croatia to start accession talks; assure the country known at the time as the former Yugoslav Republic of Macedonia that it will be invited once a solution to the issue of the country's name has been reached with Greece; invite Bosnia and Herzegovina and Montenegro to start Intensified Dialogues; and agree that Georgia and Ukraine will become members in future.

**9 July 2008:** Accession Protocols for Albania and Croatia are signed. Allied foreign ministers agree that Georgia should develop an Annual National Programme under the auspices of the NATO-Georgia Commission.

**1 April 2009:** Accession of Albania and Croatia.

**4 December 2009:** NATO foreign ministers invite Montenegro to join the MAP.

**22 April 2010:** NATO foreign ministers invite Bosnia and Herzegovina to join the MAP, authorising the North Atlantic Council to accept the country's first Annual National Programme only when the immovable property issue has been resolved.

**2 December 2015:** NATO foreign ministers meeting in Brussels invite Montenegro to start accession talks to join the Alliance, while encouraging further progress on reforms, especially in the area of rule of law. In a statement on NATO's "open door" policy, ministers encourage Bosnia and Herzegovina to undertake the reforms necessary for the country to realise its Euro-Atlantic aspirations and to activate its participation in MAP. Ministers also reiterate their decisions at Bucharest and subsequent decisions concerning Georgia, welcoming the progress the country has made in coming closer to the Alliance and expressing their determination to intensify support for Georgia.

**19 May 2016:** Allied ministers sign the Accession Protocol, following which Montenegro has 'Invitee' status and starts attending North Atlantic Council and other NATO meetings.

**5 June 2017:** Accession of Montenegro

**11 July 2018:** At the Brussels Summit, following the historic agreement between Athens and Skopje on the solution of the name issue, Allied leaders invite the government in Skopje to begin accession talks to join NATO. Full implementation of the agreement on the solution of the name issue is a condition for a successful conclusion of the accession process.

**5 December 2018:** Allied foreign ministers decide that NATO is ready to accept the submission of Bosnia and Herzegovina's first Annual National Programme under the MAP. The registration of immovable defence property to the state remains essential.

**6 February 2019:** The Allies sign the Accession Protocol of the Republic of North Macedonia, following which the country takes part in NATO activities as an invitee.

**15 February 2019:** The Republic of North Macedonia is officially recognised by its constitutional name, following the full implementation of the agreement between Athens and Skopje.

**27 March 2020:** Accession of the Republic of North Macedonia.

**18 May 2022:** In a meeting with Secretary General Jens Stoltenberg at NATO Headquarters, Finland and Sweden simultaneously submit their official letters of application to join the Alliance.

**29-30 June 2022:** Heads of State and Government from Finland, Georgia, Sweden and Ukraine, and the Defence Minister of Bosnia and Herzegovina, take part in the NATO Summit in Madrid. NATO reaffirms its commitment to its "open door policy", formally inviting Finland and Sweden to become members of NATO and promising to step up support for Bosnia and Herzegovina, Georgia and Ukraine.

**4 July 2022:** Finland and Sweden complete accession talks at NATO Headquarters in Brussels.

**5 July 2022:** Allies sign the Accession Protocols for Finland and Sweden, making them official Invitees.

**4 April 2023:** Accession of Finland

## Relevant UN Treaties and Events

NATO was originally formed with a group of North American and European nations, more concretely twelve founding members: Belgium, Canada, Denmark, France, Iceland, Italy, Luxembourg, Netherlands, Norway, United Kingdom, United States of America.

In 1952, Greece and Turkey were the first countries added. As one of the conditions for the end of the country's occupation by France, the United Kingdom, and the United States, West Germany joined NATO in May 1955. The Soviet Union then created its own collective security alliance (commonly known as the Warsaw Pact) later that same month. After Franco's rule came to an end, the newly democratic Spain decided to join NATO in 1982.

Negotiators came to an agreement in 1990 that a united Germany would continue to be a member of NATO under the terms of West Germany's current membership. Many former Warsaw Pact and post-Soviet states aimed to join NATO after the collapse of the Soviet Union in 1991. In 1999, Poland, Hungary, and the Czech Republic joined NATO despite strong opposition from Russia and much internal debate within NATO.

Shortly before the 2004 Istanbul summit, Bulgaria, Estonia, Latvia, Lithuania, Romania, Slovakia, and Slovenia became the organisation's seventh member after NATO formalised the application process with "Membership Action Plans". On April 1, 2009, two Adriatic Sea nations—Albania and Croatia—joined before the Strasbourg-Kehl summit. Montenegro and North Macedonia became the newest NATO members on June 5, 2017, and March 27, 2020, respectively.

Vladimir Putin, falsely asserted that NATO military infrastructure was being built inside Ukraine and that Ukraine's potential future membership was a threat. As a result, Russia invaded Ukraine in 2022. Finland and Sweden submitted applications for NATO membership in May 2022 as a result of Russia's invasion. While Sweden is still undergoing ratification, Finland joined on April 4, 2023. Following Russia's

declaration of the annexation of its territory, Ukraine submitted an application to join NATO in September 2022. Bosnia and Herzegovina and Georgia are the other two nations that have formally informed NATO of their desire to join. Kosovo hopes to join NATO as well. Several other European nations that are not members of the alliance, such as Austria, Cyprus, Ireland, Malta, Moldova, and Serbia, are debating joining the alliance.

## Possible Solutions

**Security and Stability:** Some member states might view the inclusion of new countries as a way to enhance security and stability in a particular region. This could be especially true for countries located in regions facing security challenges.

**Collective Defence:** Enlarging the alliance might strengthen its collective defence capabilities, allowing member states to respond more effectively to emerging security threats.

**Partnership and Solidarity:** Member states may see expansion as an opportunity to deepen partnerships with like-minded countries, fostering greater solidarity and cooperation.

**Regional Integration:** For countries aspiring to join NATO, existing member states might view their inclusion as a step toward regional integration and alignment with Western values and institutions.

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Enlargement of NATO

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