



Europeans Want Defense: Support for Increasing Military Spending

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According to a recent survey conducted by the [European Council of Foreign Relations](#) (Ecfr) and published on June 23, 2025, the **European public opinion generally favors increasing military spending**, a topic that is becoming increasingly central on the eve of a crucial NATO summit. The survey involved **16,400 respondents from 12 European countries**, with results suggesting a strong preference for increasing defense allocations, although some nations, like Italy, are showing more reluctance.



The survey highlights that in many nations, particularly Poland, Denmark, the United Kingdom, Estonia, and Portugal, there is a large majority in favor of increasing defense spending.

However, the situation in Italy is markedly different: the majority of respondents (57%) declared themselves against or strongly against increasing resources allocated to the military. Countries like France, Germany, and Switzerland show more moderate support, with percentages ranging between 45% and 47%, while Romania stands on a more balanced position with 50% in favor.

The EU's Autonomy from American Defense

Another theme emerging from the survey is **the lack of confidence in the European Union's ability to achieve full defense independence within the next five years.**

Despite some nations like Denmark and Portugal expressing optimism about the possibility of reducing dependence on the United States, the majority of Europeans remain skeptical, with particular emphasis in countries like Poland, Estonia, and Spain, where the view is that autonomy is almost "impossible" to achieve. **In Italy and Hungary, the opinion is similar, with over 50% of respondents considering such independence unlikely.**



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A factor that could further influence the orientation of military spending is the return of Donald Trump to the White House. The survey suggests that the rhetoric of the former president, which had sparked anti-American sentiments in Europe, is still weighing on Europeans' opinions. However, the majority of respondents believe that relations between Europe and the United States would improve once Trump leaves office, indicating a possible return to stronger cooperation.

NATO's "Spending Cap" and Solutions for European Defense

In view of the upcoming NATO summit, one of the most discussed topics is the potential increase in defense spending targets. Donald Trump recently raised the proposal to increase the Alliance's military spending from 2% to 5% of GDP, but many countries, including Spain, have expressed skepticism about this proposal, calling it unreasonable and counterproductive. The current discussion focuses on raising the spending target to 3.5% of GDP, with an additional 1.5% allocated to infrastructure and cybersecurity investments.



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To address concerns related to economic constraints, the European Union is seeking to encourage member states to invest in defense by proposing exemptions from budget rules for spending exclusively dedicated to security. Additionally, a plan has been launched that provides favorable rate loans for countries wishing to increase investments in the defense sector. **The European Commission has also authorized the reinvestment of unused funds from previous programs to strengthen military spending, at a time when security is a top priority.**

Support for increasing defense spending in Europe is widespread, but divergences between countries are evident. **While Eastern European nations and powers like the United Kingdom are in favor of an increase, countries like Italy and Spain show a more cautious view.** In a context of growing global uncertainties and in view of new geostrategic challenges, the discussion on European defense autonomy and the future of transatlantic alliances promises to be crucial for the coming years.