



NATO Approves Common Budgets for 2026, Strengthening Collective Defense

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Brussels, December 17, 2025 — On December 16, 2025, during a meeting of the **North Atlantic Council**, the Allies approved the **NATO common budgets for 2026**, reaffirming their commitment to strengthening collective defense in an increasingly complex global security environment.

The agreement reached by the Alliance member states includes:

- a **Civil Budget** amounting to **528.2 million euros**;
- a **Military Budget** amounting to **2.42 billion euros**.

These decisions confirm a trajectory of growth in defense spending, with the Allies investing not only in their own national forces but also in the collective capabilities of the Alliance.

What the Budgets Are For

NATO's common budgets are an essential tool for supporting the Alliance's strategic priorities and for improving operational readiness, interoperability, and military effectiveness.

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Military Budget 2026

The military budget will support key activities and capabilities, including:

- NATO's **military adaptation** to emerging threats;
- strengthening **interoperability among allied forces**;
- **crisis prevention and management**;
- **cooperative security**;
- maintaining the **NATO Integrated Command Structure**;
- support for **NATO-led training and exercise activities**;
- funding for **Alliance operations and missions**, as well as **capacity-building initiatives for partner countries**.

Civil Budget 2026

The civil budget will continue to fund **political consultations and decision-making processes among the Allies**, as well as the daily activities of the **NATO Headquarters in Brussels**, ensuring the effective functioning of the Alliance's political and administrative structures.

Why It Is an Important Decision

The approval of the common budgets has a dual value:

- **Political**, because it visibly demonstrates the unity and determination of the Allies in sharing responsibilities and burdens;
- **Practical**, because it allows for the funding of capabilities and infrastructure that no single country could effectively sustain alone.

Common funding is indeed one of the key tools of NATO's **burden sharing** principle and complements national defense spending, which remains the main source of deterrence and military capability for the Alliance.

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The Broader Context: Increasing Defense Investments

In recent years, NATO countries' defense spending has grown significantly. In 2025, many European Allies and Canada reached or exceeded the historic goal of allocating **at least 2% of GDP to defense**, a target that only a few states met a decade ago.

Moreover, during the **2025 NATO Summit in The Hague**, the Allies agreed on a **new enhanced investment commitment**, aiming to allocate **up to 5% of annual GDP by 2035** to defense and related security needs. This decision reflects the awareness of a rapidly evolving threat landscape and the need to ensure a credible and enduring defense posture.

Conclusion

The agreement on the **NATO common budgets for 2026** represents a concrete step towards a **stronger, fairer, and more action-ready Alliance**. Through these shared investments, NATO aims to maintain its deterrence and collective defense capability, strengthening the security of the Euro-Atlantic area and its partners in a new era of collective defense.

News link: <https://www.nato.int/en/news-and-events/articles/news/2025/12/17/nato-agrees-its-2026-common-funded-budgets-strengthening-allied-resolve-in-a-new-era-of-collective-defence?selectedLocale=>