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# EUROMIL SURVEY- DEFENCE SPENDING



European Organisation of Military  
Associations and Trade Unions

# 2023

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# NON FUC D D O R F N

EUROMIL, the European Organisation of Military Associations and Trade Unions, is the voice of European soldiers on an international level and its core mission is to promote the professional and social interests as well as the fundamental rights and freedoms of European soldiers. EUROMIL took the initiative of launching an internal survey concerning defence spending on 2023. A new geostrategic environment is being formulated shaking the international arena. Emerging geopolitical tensions and threats demand for robust and sincere international cooperation. In this framework, EU Member States are moving towards further integration in the field of security and defence following the Strategic Compass guidelines for the next five years to come.

Russia's invasion of Ukraine on the 24th of February 2022 consists a turning point triggering fundamental changes. To analyse a bit more, in an era of strategic competition and complex security threats Member States decided to increase defence spending. To this end, tools like the European Peace Facility (EPF), the Permanent Structured Cooperation (PESCO) and the European Defence Fund (EDF) expand the EU's ability to provide security for its citizens and its partners as well as providing support to Ukraine to its war against Russia. Under this framework the role of the European Defence Industry is gaining huge importance for investments in the fields of security and defence.

The participants were members associations and trade unions of EUROMIL.

# MAIN RESULTS

EU Member States are increasing their defence budget in order to address new threats and challenges deriving from the emerging turbulent geopolitical environment.

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This survey aims to provide a closer look at the 2023 defence spending of the European countries. More precisely, the questions are trying to shed light on whether European countries will indeed increase their defence budgets, what is the role of Russia in this regard, how the EU-NATO relations will evolve and where is the military personnel standing on these developments.

Notably, the vast majority (90%) of the participants underlined that their government is planning an increased defence spending and 80% of them state that this is partly because of Russia's war against Ukraine. Besides, all of the participants perceive the increased defence budget as a positive development.

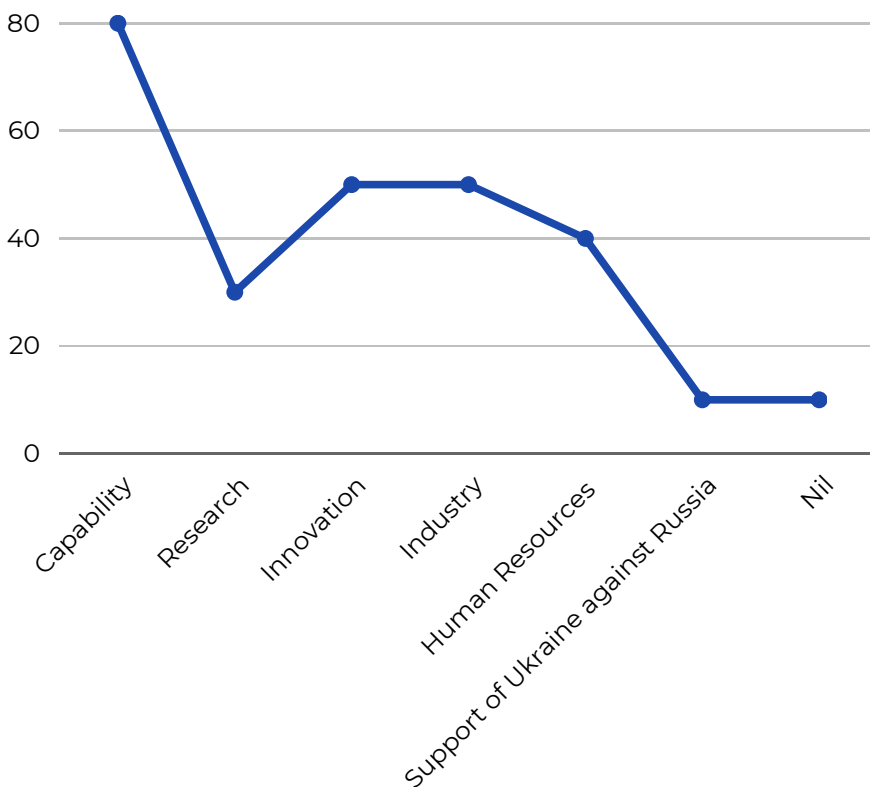
As far as it concerns the fields where the increased defence budget is planned to be spent, 80% replied to capability, 50% underlined the importance of industry and innovation, while 40% of the participants emphasized on the need for a part of the increased defence budget to be spent for human resources. It is worth mentioning that only 10% replied that their government is planning to spend part of its increased defence budget in support to Ukraine on its war against Russia.

Moreover, investing in Human Resources, particularly in personnel, is overly important because it is men and women in uniform that are going to implement what is planned and based upon the increased defence budget. In this regards, Sweden, Ireland and the Netherlands mentioned that part of the increased defence budget is planned to be spent on increased salary while Belgium underlined an amelioration in the working conditions. Furthermore, recruitment and retention are both significant and urgent due to the -more than 20 years- neglected European Armed Forces which renders it essential in investing in all the aspects of the Armed Forces in order to be able to respond to today's challenges and threats. Geopolitics of increased power competition require for more cooperation between European countries as well as transatlantic cooperation so that the military adapts to this environment and effectively contributes to EU or/ and NATO common exercises, missions and operations.

# New cooperation projects in the field of defence are largely taking place in a multilateral framework

Three quarters (75%) of the participants replied that any new cooperation projects that their government is planning on launching is taking place within a multilateral framework, while 12,5% replied that this is happening in a bilateral basis.

## FIELDS WHERE THE INCREASED DEFENCE SPENDING IS TO BE SPENT



8/10



The majority of the increased defence budget is to be spent on capability

40%



Almost half of the participants said that governments plan to spend the increased defence budget on human resources

100%

Participants see the increased defence budget as a positive development



A strong and more capable EU of defence can better contribute to NATO

Given Russia's aggressive behaviour and the consequent geostrategic shifts it generates in the international arena, the need for intensified work and cooperation emerged. In this regards, EU-NATO partnership and cooperation is being reinforced something which was recently reaffirmed by the [EU-NATO Joint Declaration](#), on the 10th of January 2023. The expanded and deepen EU-NATO cooperation spreads across various sectors such as the growing geostrategic competition, resilience and the protection of critical infrastructure, emerging and disruptive technologies, space, the security implications of climate change and foreign information manipulation and interference. Our members, in their vast majority (90%), supported that a stronger and more capable EU of defence can better contribute to NATO and become a more credible partner.

It was considered important to mention that according to an [EDA data collection](#), in 2021 there was a total defence expenditure of 26 EDA Member States of €214 billion which is translated in 1,5% of the GDP of all 26 EDA Member States. Comparing this percentage to other international actors, the EU lags behind the US, Russia and China that have a total of 3.5%, 3.7% and 1.6% respectively.

# KEY FINDINGS

01

## EUROPEAN COUNTRIES INCREASE THEIR DEFENCE BUDGET

An overwhelming majority of participants stated that their country has decided to increase defence budget.

02

## RUSSIA'S ROLE

According to the survey's results, for the majority of the participants Russia's invasion of Ukraine and the emerging geopolitical environment dictates and increase in their countries defence spending.

03

## A STRONGER EU IS A MORE CREDIBLE PARTNER

For the vast majority of the participants, a stronger and more capable EU of defence can better contribute to NATO and become a credible partner.

04

## A POSITIVE DEVELOPMENT

All participants see the increased defence budget as a positive development.

# PARTICIPANTS

EUROMIL members that participated in the survey in alphabetical order:

ASSOCIATION/TRADE UNION	COUNTRY
ACMP-CGPM	Belgium
AFMP/FNV	The Netherlands
AFM-GWU	Malta
AUME	Spain
ASSODIPRO	Italy
DBwV	Germany
PDFORRA	Ireland
PFEARFU	Greece
SAMO	Sweden
RACO	Ireland
ZVSR	Slovakia



# RESULTS BY COUNTRY

Results by country in alphabetical order:

## BELGIUM

Belgium was among the countries that have increased defence spending. Particularly, Belgium is planning to invest €1,113 million in defence, which equals with **20,7%** more than last year. For Belgium, Russia's invasion of Ukraine imposes an increase in the country's defence spending which should be spent mainly in capability and innovation. Furthermore, Belgium sees the increase in the defence budget as a positive development, like all participants did.

## GERMANY

Germany is also increasing its defence budget. Specifically by **7%** since last year. More precisely, the total amount of the increase comprises of €50.8 billion which is planned to be spent on capability and industry. Additionally, Germany is planning on launching new cooperation projects on the field of defence. However, the framework within which it is planned is not mentioned. DBwV, Deutscher Bundeswehrverband E.V. / German Armed Forces Association, mentions that it was not consulted on how could the defence budget be better used. Lastly, Germany like every other participant perceives the increased defence budget as a positive development.

## GREECE

Greece belongs to the countries that are increasing the defence budget too. It is worth mentioning that last year, Greece was first in NATO, spending almost 3.8% of GDP and for 2022 reached almost 4% . For Greece the emerging geopolitical environment due to the Russian aggression against Ukraine imposes an increase on the country's defence spending however, this is not the only reason. Greece underlines that Ukraine was not the only reason for an increase in defense spending, but it was also the rising tensions in the Aegean region from Turkey's side that influence this decision. Greece continues to spend on new equipment and to participate in multinational collaborations with countries inside and outside NATO and the EU. In a period which is characterized as pre-election for the country, PFEARFU, the Panhellenic Federation of Armed Forces Unions, is trying by all means to increase spending in favor of personnel and to strengthen the trade union discourse in these decisions.

Moreover, the country is planning to spend the increased defence budget on research, innovation and industry. Furthermore, it is highlighted that the defence budget should be spent on human resources as the rapid rise in inflation has limited the income which has not been revised since 2017. A revision which, by the way, was not to the benefit, especially of the lower ranks. Greece is planning on launching new cooperation projects on the field of defence operating in the multinational level and sees the increased defence budget as a positive development.



## IRELAND

For Ireland, it was two associations which participated in the survey, namely, PDFORRA, the Permanent Defence Force Other Ranks Representative Association, and RACO, the Representative Association of Commissioned Officers. Ireland belongs to the countries that has also increased defence spending. The government is planning to spend the increased defence budget in capability and human resources. PDFORRA believes that defence budget should be spent on human resources and technology, while RACO considers that it should be spent on capabilities and in the field of human resources particularly in retention initiatives. Regarding Russia's invasion of Ukraine and the emerging geopolitical reality, it looks like it has affected the situation in the defence sector. However, the government's decision to increase defence spending budget does not lay solely on that. More precisely, RACO mentions that in 2022, Ireland's Defence Budget stood at €1.107 billion and in 2023 an additional €67million is proposed bringing the total for 2023 to €1.174 billion. This is just over a **5%** increase but annual inflation is running circa 10%. It should be noted that this figure includes all salaries and pensions for all military and civilian staff (over 80% of actual spend). Following a Government Commission on the Defence Forces, this increase is the commencement of a planned increase in defence spending from €1 billion in 2020 to €1.5 billion by 2028. The 2022 commission on the Defence Forces reported prior to the outbreak of hostilities. Furthermore, Ireland is planning on launching new cooperation projects on the field of defence and this is taking place in a multinational level. Last but not least, in the question regarding if their organisation was or it will be consulted on how the defence budget could be better used, PDFORRA and RACO replied negatively. Concluding, both perceive the increased defence budget as a positive development.

## ITALY

Italy mentions that for the 2022 there has been spent €25.7 billion in defence and for 2023 it has been planned to invest €800 million more. The government is planning to spend the increased defence budget in the fields of capability, innovation and industry and ASSODIPRO/A.S.D.P., Associazione Solidarietà à Diritto e Progresso/ Association Solidarity Rights and Progress, underlines that a small piece of the cake should be spent for the personnel. Moreover, for Italy Russia's stance did have an impact in the country's decision to increase the defence spending. Furthermore, Italy agrees that a stronger EU in defence terms would be a more credible partner and can better contribute to NATO. It is worth mentioning that the government did not consult ASSODIPRO/A.S.D.P. on how the defence budget could be better used and it is not planning on launching any new cooperation projects in the field of defence.

## MALTA

Malta, opposite to every other participant, has not increased defence spending and therefore at the question concerning the impact of Russia's invasion in Ukraine in the defence budget replied negatively. AFM-GWU, the Armed Forces of Malta, General Workers' Union Committee, highlights that defence budget should be spent in better equipment, training, technology and wages. Lastly for Malta, like 90% of the participants, a stronger and more capable EU of defence could better contribute to NATO and become a credible partner.

## SPAIN

Spain belongs to the countries that have also increased their defence spending. Particularly, the increase from 2022 to 2023 consists of **26%**. For Spain, Russia's invasion of Ukraine did have an impact on the increase of the defence budget and the government is planning to spend it mainly on capability and industry. However, AUME, Asociación Unificada de Militares Españoles - United Association of Spanish Military, underlines that it should be spent on military personnel more. Furthermore, Spain is planning on launching new cooperation projects in the field of defence and this is happening within a multinational framework. Last but not least, AUME sounds the alarm on the fact that the rise in defence budget is NATO-oriented and there is the risk of forgetting national issues, like personnel that are not assigned on the international field.

## SWEDEN

Sweden mentions that from 2021 to 2025 the increase in the defence budget is **40%**. As it is well known Russia's invasion of Ukraine consisted a shift in Sweden's foreign and defence policy and had a severe impact on Sweden's decision to increase its defence budget. The government is planning to spend the increased defence budget on capability, research, innovation, industry and human resources. Additionally, Sweden believes that a stronger EU in defence terms can better contribute to NATO and become a credible partner. Furthermore, it sees the increased defence budget as a positive development and is planning on launching new cooperation projects in the field of defence, within a multinational framework. Moreover, Sweden was one of the few countries where SAMO, the Swedish Association of Military Officers, was consulted on how could the defence budget be better used.

## THE NETHERLANDS

The Netherlands is planning one of the biggest amounts of defence increase in percentage terms. Namely, it is planning on increasing its defence budget by **40%** in 2023. The government is considering on spending the increased defence budget on capability, research, innovation and human resources. The Netherlands was the only country that mentioned that their government is also spending a portion of the increased defence budget on support of Ukraine in the war against Russia. For Spain, a stronger EU in defence terms consists a more credible partner for NATO and it sees the increased defence budget as a positive development. Furthermore, the country is planning on launching new cooperation projects in the field of defence within a bilateral framework.

## SLOVAKIA

Slovakia replied that it has increased its defence budget. Particularly, in 2023 there was an increase of 609 million more in comparison to €2,45 billion in total in 2022 and 2,01% of the GDP. This equals to an increase of 24,8% in total. The government of Slovakia is planning to spend the increased defence budget on capability, human resources and infrastructure. However, the ZVSR believes that the defence budget should be spent on capability and infrastructure. Slovakia agrees that a more capable EU of defence can better contribute to NATO and become a credible partner. Moreover, Slovakia is launching new cooperation projects on the fields of defence in a bilateral basis and it perceives the increased defence budget as a positive development. Furthermore, the ZVSR was not consulted on how could the defence budget be better used. Concluding, Slovakia believes that Russia's invasion of Ukraine and the emerging geopolitical reality does have an impact in the increased defence budget.



# MEN AND WOMEN - WHERE ARE THEY? IN THE INCREASED DEFENCE BUDGET



01

It is very important to considering the human factor in the increased defence budget because we need them. At the end of the day they are to implement what is decided.

02

Military are citizens in uniform. Namely, they are citizens like everybody else and should be entitled to the same rights as all the other citizens. **We should protect those who protect.**

03

Strengthen and promote social dialogue at both the national and the EU level is of significant importance.

Concerning the military personnel on the question: **"Where do men and women in uniform stand in the increased defence budget of 2023?". More precisely, which percentage of the defence budget will be dedicated to military personnel needs this year. What are the new initiatives planned or already taken in advantage of military personnel due to the increased defence budget?"** participants answered the following:

## **Spain**

In Spain, personnel spending in the current budget 2023 has experienced an increase proportionally equivalent to the annual increase in the rest of public officials. It represents 26% of the General State Budget. Therefore, no clear correlation can be identified between the extraordinary increase in the Ministry of Defence budget (to fulfil the aim of 2% PNB of MoD budget in coming years) and the expenditure on personnel, beyond the necessary investment in personnel to operate the weapons systems and the increase in training activity.

## **Germany**

Germany spends on their personnel €20,6 billion (exact number: €20 629 782 000). Regarding the new initiatives planned or already taken in advantage of military personnel due to the increased defence budget DBwV mentioned that is too early to make any reliable budgetary deductions. What is clear is that Germany has a financial package of 100 billion euros (Sondervermögen) to supplement the regular defence budget. This money is earmarked only for procurement (there is no money here for social issues).

In direct connection or in anticipation of a possibly increasing defence budget, no improvement for soldiers, civil servants or pay-scale employees is currently foreseen. In general, however, it is expected that soldiers and civil servants will participate in the collective bargaining results in the public sector. However, this adjustment question arises regardless of whether and, if so, how much the defence budget will increase.

In addition, there are further developments in the area of salaries in the Bundeswehr. The background to this is the necessary implementation of rulings by the Federal Constitutional Court. These may result in additional costs in the HR-area, but are not prompted by the implementation of the increasing budget or in anticipation of it.

## **Greece**

Greece replied that according to the approved state budget for the year 2023, the percentage corresponding to military personnel is approximately 49%. The establishment of a Special Missions allowance, which includes the days at sea of the Hellenic Navy, is the intended effort with a financial impact and one that is reflected in a recently passed bill. Overall, the increase in the budget does not seem to have a drastic effect in favour of military personnel per se, but more at the level of armament programs.

## **Belgium**

The percentage of the Belgian defence budget dedicated to military personnel in 2023:

- Salary's: 1.645 million euros
- Allowances, grants and performance-related compensation: 172 million euros
- Total: €1.817 million which equals with 38,07% of the Belgian defence budget, which is an increase of 0,8% compared to 2022.
- New initiatives:
  - Salary increase:
    - in 2023: 72 million euro
    - as of 2024: 150 million euros
  - Meal vouchers:
    - in 2023: 6,17 million euros
    - as of 2024: 24,2 million euros
  - Allowance for instructors: cost still to be determined.
- More budget for improving infrastructure for lodging, workshops and for more safe working conditions: + €32 million in 2023.

## **Sweden**

Sweden replied that an exact percentage for 2023 could not be provided. The government office and the armed forces are still in a process to adjust the budget due to the new security situation in Europe. Therefore, the best assessment which could be delivered is around 35-37%. But it is a positive development given that in 2018 the figures were 30%.

## Slovakia

For Slovakia the percentage of the defence budget which will be dedicated to military personnel needs this year amounts around 42%. Particularly, during the past years, military pay grew faster than the pay of most employees in the public service. Based on the legislation, another increase is envisaged in 2023 and in the coming years. The number of military personnel in the command structure will increase; the command structure also employs more soldiers than civilians.

Optimization of the personnel expenses. Personnel expenses will be the major limitation on how much funding can be allocated for investment and modernisation. The largest projects for which the Ministry of Defence of the Slovak Republic has concluded implementation contracts are the purchases of F-16 fighter jets, Zuzana 2 howitzers, 8x8 armoured combat vehicles and 3D radars with different ranges. Moreover, investments should prioritise combat support, combat service support and the preservation of the existing combat potential of the combat units of the AFSR.





# CONCLUSION

The survey highlighted that the majority of the participating associations indicated that their country's defence budget has increased and mainly due to Russia's war of aggression against Ukraine and its geopolitical implications. However, the increased defence budget in the majority of the European states represents both a challenge and an opportunity. More cooperation is needed to spend smarter and become more resilient. The human factor should not be neglected since it is the main element that makes defence initiatives, missions and operations a reality. EU Member States and/or NATO Members should be able to deliver to their international commitments, as the NATO exercises and reinforcement of the eastern flank, the EU CSDP Missions and Operations, EU Battlegroups and EU Rapid Deployment Capacity (RDC), while reinforcing their national defences.

To conclude, more analysis of the topic is needed and a broader collection of data from European countries to have a deeper analysis of the states' stance to the spending of their defence budget. Another element that could be further explored is the gender aspect in the Armed Forces and how can the governments and states attract and retain more women in the military to minimize the gender gap, attract more personnel and be able to effectively face their national and international responsibilities.

**A stronger EU will effectively contribute to NATO**



**Despite the increased defence budget a small percentage of it is going to military personnel**

**Further data collection and broader research is needed, also in interconnected topics such as the gender aspect which is directly related to the effective operationalization of the military - a main aim of the increased defence spending.**



Thank you to all the participants for having contributed to this survey with their answers and for providing EUROMIL with the necessary information for the successful completion of this report. Your generosity, effort and contribution is greatly appreciated.

Thank you for your tireless and continuous effort and contribution in fighting for the rights of our citizens in uniform.

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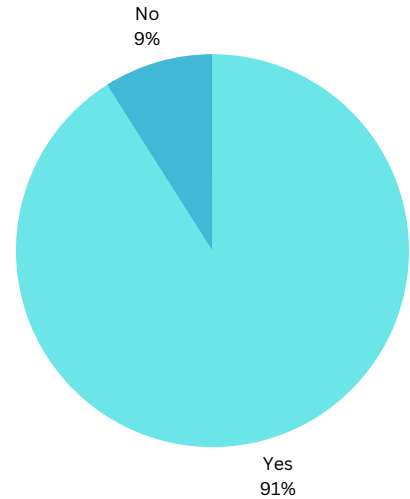
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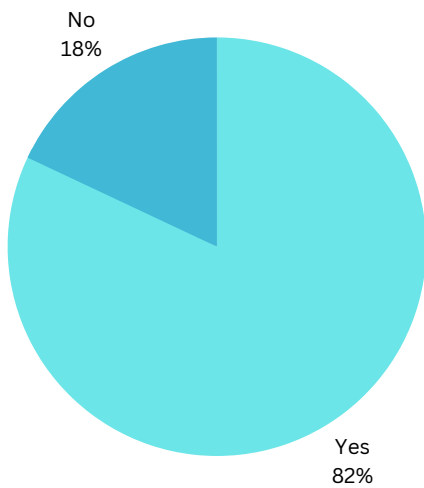
Has your country increased defence spending?

11 responses



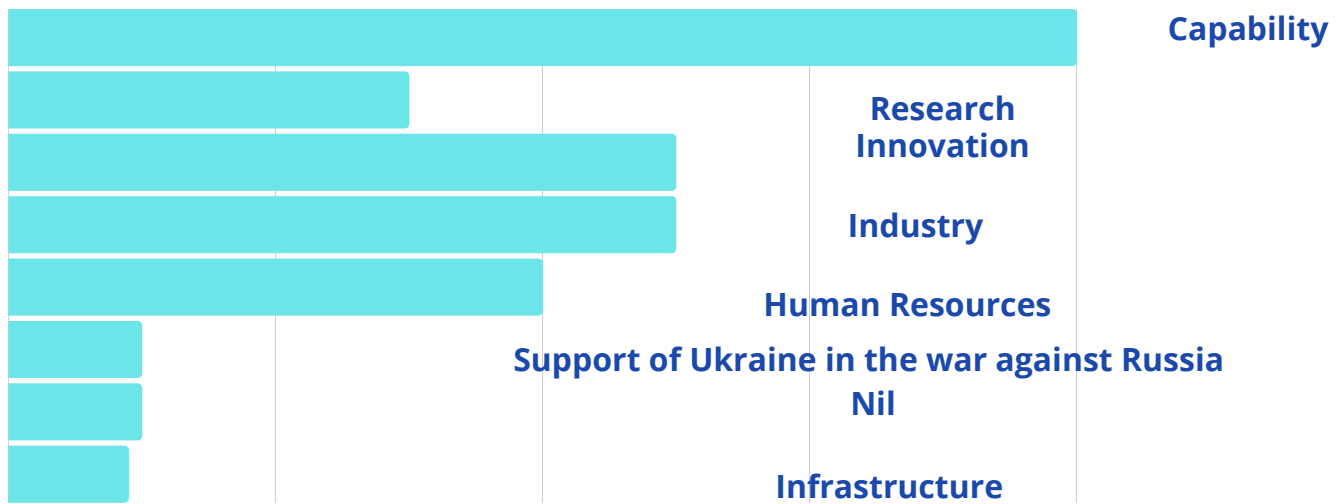
Do you think Russia's invasion of Ukraine and the emerging geopolitical reality imposes an increase in your country's defence spending?

11 responses



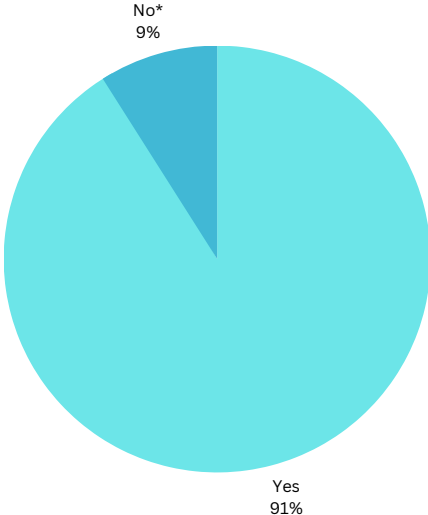
If yes, in which field is your government planning to spend the increased defence budget?

11 responses



Do you agree with the following statement: a strong and more capable EU of defence can better contribute to NATO and become a credible partner?

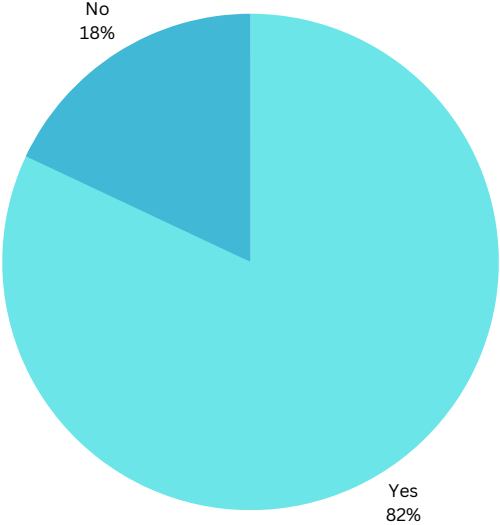
11 responses



\*PDFORRA: In relation to the question on EU/NATO interaction, in Ireland this is a political question and is difficult to answer in the affirmative as Ireland is not part of NATO and thus cannot be a more credible partner. Obviously, for those members who are members of NATO and the EU the answer would probably be yes.

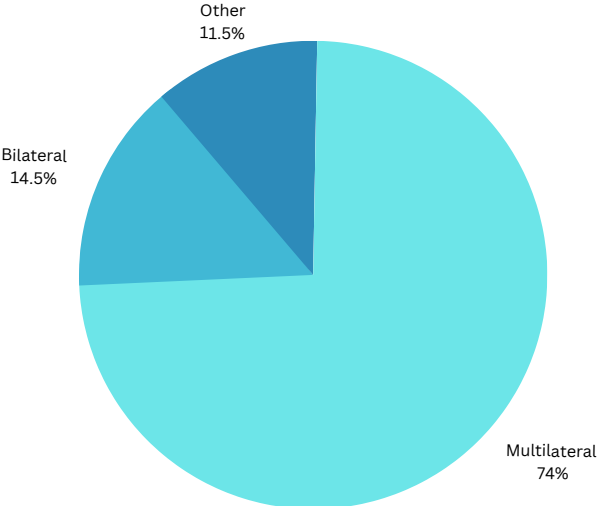
Is your country planning on launching any new cooperation projects on the field of defence?

11 responses



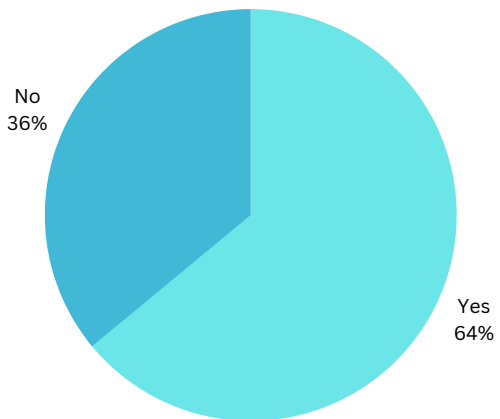
If yes, under which framework is this happening?

11 responses



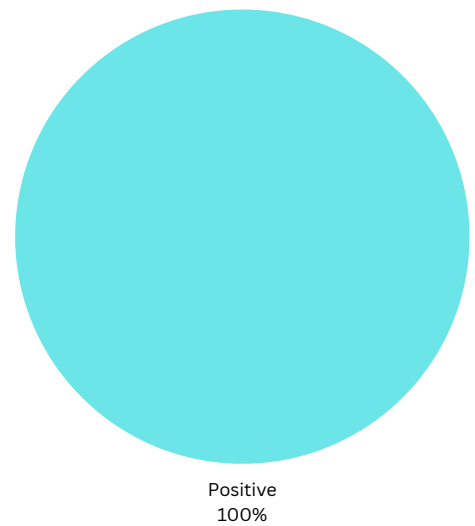
Was your organisation or will be consulted on how could the defence budget be better used?

11 responses



Do you see the increased defence budget as a positive or negative development?

11 responses



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