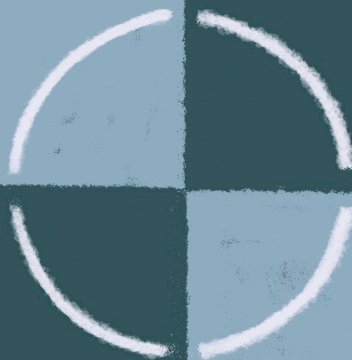




# Navigating NATO

Green and Progressive  
Paths to Influence



GREEN EUROPEAN FOUNDATION

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# Navigating NATO

## Green and Progressive Paths to Influence

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The **Green European Foundation (GEF)** is a European-level political foundation whose mission is to contribute to a lively European sphere of debate and to foster greater citizen involvement in European politics. GEF strives to mainstream discussions on European policies and politics both within and beyond the Green political family. The foundation acts as a laboratory for new ideas and offers cross-border political education and a platform for cooperation and exchange at the European level.



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**Cogito** works to broaden and deepen the social debate from a green perspective. We want to highlight constructive ideas and concrete examples that show that a sustainable society is within reach.

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# Foreword

Sien Hasker & Laurent Standaert

When Russia invaded Ukraine on February 24<sup>th</sup>, 2022, Europe's response was swift and unified. And where Putin may have claimed among his motives the need to counter NATO's growing influence in the region, the result was quite the opposite. Finland and Sweden have since joined the alliance, and public and political support for close EU-NATO cooperation only grew.

At the same time, 2024 elections in the United States and Europe hold profound uncertainty and the potential to destabilise existing security structures. Donald Trump has not been shy to criticise European allies and undermine NATO's collective security guarantee. As the war in Ukraine enters its third year, growing cleavages emerge within and between member states in terms of Europe's role.

For the green movement, these developments have raised uneasy questions. While there are regional differences, Greens have traditionally favoured a holistic European security approach over the transatlantic military alliance, and opposition or at least indifference to NATO were long the norm. In the current political landscape, and with influence from people and parties in the East, there has been however a recognition that disengaging from this forum is something Greens cannot afford to do.

The Green European Foundation launched this study to better understand how greens and progressives across the continent are navigating NATO – not in simple terms of for or against, but to see where it fits in their

security toolbox and what opportunities there are to bring NATO more in line with political ecology values and priorities.

It is important to bring alternative thinking into mainstream and conservative security spaces, and with more Greens in parliaments and governments across the continent, there is both the room and need for greater influence and expertise. Contemporary security risks originate not just in the military actions of autocratic neighbours, but encompass climate, cyber security, pandemic preparedness and much more. Areas which Greens have much to say about. These threats should certainly be tackled at European level, but also require strategic cooperation and coordination with and within international organisations like NATO, the UN, and OSCE.

Nevertheless, this report also highlights the substantial risks of simply trying to green NATO. Its democratic deficit and militarising logic should not be underestimated. Everything looks like a nail when all you have is a hammer. The question then becomes not just how but also when (and when not) to approach NATO as a venue for policy influence. For this, transnational exchange and mutual learning is key.

We hope that this publication, drawing on concrete examples and expertise, will stimulate citizens and experts across Europe, especially within the green movement, to think carefully about exactly how NATO could fit within our vision for a safe, secure, and peaceful Europe and world.

# Executive Summary

# Mapping the Movement

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Summary by  
**Sarah Bitamazire**

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■ For editorial reasons we will use expressions like *green and progressive parties*, *greens*, and *green parties* interchangeably throughout the report. The parties we interviewed mostly belong to or adhere to the values of the EGP (European Green Party).

Green and progressive parties<sup>■</sup> across Europe have historically held a sceptical view towards the military industry and defence alliances

such as NATO. This is not to say that they have been absent from the conversation or debate, but have in some contexts had such an antimilitarist stance that their perspective has not been taken seriously. Many have advocated for total disarmament and pursuing only non-military solutions to international conflicts.<sup>1</sup> Yet exact positions not only vary between parties, but have also shifted over time.

The Russian war of aggression against Ukraine, launched in February 2022, revamped the debate on defence and security in a context where the electorate was increasingly afraid and concerned with national security issues. The green political family was not immune to this. This all happened in a media context where NATO was sometimes presented as the only solution to secure Ukrainian sovereignty against the Russian aggressor, and thus safeguard European security. In what can be seen as a classic *realos-fundis* conflict,

internal debates were challenging because fundamental ideological positions were at odds with a professed need for pragmatism, as public opinion was moving increasingly in favour of NATO as a guarantor for European security.

For Greens in countries that were already NATO members, the internal debates were focused on strategies to influence NATO, as well as looking at NATO's role in the ongoing war waged by Russia in Ukraine. Belgium and Luxembourg are two examples of this. For green parties in countries that were not NATO members, the internal debates that began had elements of "for or against," but moved on quickly to discussing how to influence NATO instead. This was the case for *Vihreät* (Finland) and *Miljöpartiet de gröna* (Sweden). The shift from NATO-sceptic to NATO-pragmatic, or even NATO-positive, was most likely a combination of public opinion shifting and politicians having to deal with a starkly different security environment. For those within the green movement that had been positive towards NATO prior to the Russian invasion of Ukraine, their arguments were being heard in a different context and, in what can be seen as an unconventional

shift, it became increasingly difficult for ideological opponents of NATO to make their case. There was, and is, an increasing consensus that NATO is an actor that is important for European security, and that Greens must have serious policy positions towards influencing NATO.<sup>2</sup>

Security and defence have always meant something to green parties, but the definitions are often broader than, and different to, the conservative and generally mainstream political agenda, especially in Europe today. This broad and comprehensive green understanding of security is seen by some as a unique selling point for the movement. An example of this is the energy-security nexus that ideologically is well anchored in green politics and that led to calls for reducing European dependency on Russian oil and gas to stop financing Putin's war chest. However, pushing alternative readings is difficult without engaging with the military and defence structures that exist. There are clear gaps here.

Out of the ten Green and progressive parties that were interviewed for this study, eight are supportive of NATO membership, and all agree that green parties must be more engaged in security and defence. The question is not *if* but *how* greens and progressives can influence NATO. This is true even for the parties that continue to be opposed to NATO membership. It can at times be difficult to determine if the shift in ideological position is the result of long-term internal debates or short-term responses to the current security situation in Europe. What this report shows is that, regardless of the reasons why, there are several common and aligned policy positions on NATO among greens in Europe, and that further policies are being developed as reality changes.<sup>3</sup>

<sup>2</sup> Party representatives from the following countries were interviewed: Finland, Iceland, Sweden, Norway, Germany, Luxembourg, France, Belgium, Denmark, and the Netherlands.

The present mapping describes the positions on security and defence specifically in regard to NATO within ten political parties, with the aim of highlighting the policy suggestions that we consider most pertinent in today's security context. We hope this can be a helpful tool for internal discussions and debates on NATO among Greens and progressives across Europe, and a starting point to develop better green policies within security and defence.



## Endnotes

- 1 Newell, P (2019). Green Security (p.72). In Global Green Politics. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press. doi:10.1017/9781108767224.003
- 2 Samir Jeraj, "Are Green Parties Still Pacifist?", *Green European Journal*, 13 Dec 2022 <https://www.greeneuropeanjournal.eu/are-green-parties-still-pacifists/>

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# Report

# How Can Greens and Progressives Influence NATO?

Report by  
Sarah Bitamazire

## 1. Introduction

### 1.1 Method

This report aims to map green and progressive party positions on NATO. The study is not comprehensive, and can best be described as a cartography that analyses fragments of the European landscape on security and defence issues, specifically positioning on membership of the North Atlantic Treaty Organization (NATO). An overall objective is to look critically at green and progressive positions on NATO, and bring policy suggestions that are most pertinent in today's security context.

The study has included both desk research and primary data derived from 14 in-depth interviews with legislators, politicians, and policy staff. The desk research included public and internal policy papers, official statements, legislative proposals, academic journal articles, and research papers. The data available in these documents provided a good basis upon which to build the in-person interviews.

Because policy positions on security and defence are currently going through fast-paced changes, the incorporation of

qualitative interviews was necessary to provide first-hand insights, perspectives, and nuanced findings. At least one representative per party was interviewed, and the interviews were centred around seven main questions (see Appendices). The interviewees can be divided into two groups. The first group included representatives that had experience in defence and security policy, such as defence and/or foreign policy spokespersons. The second group were policy staff, political advisors, and staff from think tanks that work closely with the political parties interviewed. An exhaustive list of the parties involved can be found at the end of the report. For some parties, only desk research was possible. This has been indicated in the table.

The desk research and interviews provide enough data and information to present policy suggestions and a way forward for how greens can work to influence NATO.

### 1.2 Traditionalist and pragmatist views within green security policy

Green and progressive thinking on security has traditionally focused on collective security, broadening the traditional understanding of security beyond conventional

military and geopolitical concerns. The green and progressive movement, firmly rooted in civil society, feminist, and pacifist grassroots movements, has been at the forefront of what is now considered to be progressive security thinking: a comprehensive approach to security policy.<sup>1</sup> This comprehensive approach has emphasised environmental sustainability, climate change mitigation and adaptation, social justice and human rights, sustainable development and cooperation, and non-military approaches to conflict resolution.<sup>2</sup>

For the sake of this report, we can separate green and progressive policy thinkers into two categories: traditionalists and pragmatists. These are the two strands that have shown most disagreement, and where parties have sometimes had to make an ideological choice. The simplification has several faults, but does allow us to see green and progressive parties on a scale and identify which patterns are most prevalent today in regard to NATO.

Traditionalists belong to the strong pacifist movement that sees militarism as a function of, and intrinsically linked to, the capitalist industrial society of which it is part.<sup>3</sup> Emphasis is placed on the importance of non-military approaches to conflict resolution, such as diplomacy, negotiation, and conflict prevention. These approaches prioritise dialogue and cooperation over military intervention, aiming to reduce the potential for armed conflict and promote peaceful resolutions to disputes. Miljöpartiet de gröna is an example of a party that, despite having an official party line that is more pragmatic, has strong traditionalist voices within it that are vocally opposed to NATO membership.

Pragmatists share the view that the non-military approach is the better one, but also make the case that it would be naïve for greens to believe that states can function without military and police forces.<sup>4</sup> Over the

past few decades, following the 2003 invasion of Iraq, the various NATO-led interventions in Afghanistan, the intervention in Libya, and the full-scale Russian invasion of Ukraine in February 2022, many green and progressive political parties in Europe have revisited their security and military positions.<sup>5</sup> For many green parties, this has meant messy internal debates and sometimes starting policy development from scratch. In 2014, GroenLinks addressed internal schisms with an open and extensive discussion on military intervention, showcasing the broad spectrum of opinions that exist within the green movement.<sup>6</sup>

Regardless of the specific domain to which green and progressive legislators and policy developers belong, it is notable that their approach to green and progressive security thinking has been relatively passive and understated within policy areas that are purely military. These domains include national defence policies, military doctrine, rules of engagement, military ethics and conduct policies, and military technology and innovation, as well as defence industry policy. This is changing, however, and more greens and progressives are calling for policy development within these fields.<sup>7</sup>

### 1.3 State-centred security vs. human security

State-centred security focuses primarily on the protection and preservation of the territorial integrity, political sovereignty, and strategic interests of the state. It emphasises the use of military, diplomatic, and economic power to ensure the safety and stability of the nation-state.<sup>8</sup> The state-centred approach to security continues to underpin much of the conventional thinking on national and international security, with many countries prioritising the protection of their territorial integrity, political sovereignty, and strategic interests as paramount objectives in their security policies and strategies. This approach



is widely represented among the members of NATO, in stark contrast to the dominant thinking within the green movement.

The green and progressive movement has been at the forefront of emphasising

■ The United Nations Development Programme played a crucial role in introducing and promoting the concept of human security.

human security. Human security<sup>8</sup> recognises that the security of individuals is interconnected with broader social, economic, and political factors, advocating for a more comprehensive and people-centric understanding of security, beyond the traditional state-centric paradigm.<sup>9</sup> Notions of security should extend beyond the military and political dimensions to include the well-being and safety of individuals. It includes aspects such as economic security, food security, health security, environmental security, personal security, and community security.<sup>10</sup> This perspective gained prominence in the early 2000s but is becoming increasingly challenged or deprioritised in a context where military solutions are once again at the forefront of discussions on European and global security.

## 1.4 The North Atlantic Treaty Organisation

The North Atlantic Treaty Organisation (NATO) is a political and military alliance established in 1949, which functions based on the principles of collective defence and cooperation among its member states. The organisation operates through regular consultations and consensus-building among its 31 member countries, who contribute to decision-making processes on matters of common interest, including defence and security.<sup>11</sup>

NATO's core mission revolves around the mutual commitment to collective defence, which stipulates that an attack against one member shall be considered an attack against all, mandating a collective

response.<sup>8</sup> Additionally, NATO facilitates military cooperation, joint training exercises, and the sharing of intelligence and resources among its members to strengthen the defence capabilities and interoperability of the allied forces.

■ Article 5 of the North Atlantic Treaty.

NATO's enlargement policy states that NATO membership is open to any other European state in a position to further the principles of this Treaty and to contribute to the security of the North Atlantic

area.<sup>8</sup> The latest member to join was Finland in 2023. As of writing,

■ Article 10 of the North Atlantic Treaty.

Sweden has launched an application and is waiting on the official parliamentary approval of Hungary and Turkey.

## 2. An overview of Green parties' positions on NATO

This section describes the position towards NATO, historically and today, of green parties in Finland, Iceland, Sweden, Norway, Germany, Luxembourg, France, Belgium, and the Netherlands. They were chosen as an interesting cross-section of current and prospective members, with different approaches and experiences within the alliance. The profiles are based on interviews with representatives from these green and progressive political parties as well as desk research.

The aim has been to analyse the evolution of certain policy developments and describe the landscape of green European positions on NATO. Some of the main thematic areas include reform within NATO, nuclear disarmament, EU defence cooperation and how to deal with US influence on security policies and NATO, as well as the complementarity of the EU and NATO.

## 2.1 Vihreät, Finland

Finland is the only Nordic country that shares a substantial border with Russia. Vihreät's position on NATO has been the subject of internal debate, something that was somewhat fast-tracked following February 2022. Historically, the party's opposition was mainly critical of the alliance's military activities and what they perceived as a focus on military solutions to security challenges.

There have been differing opinions on NATO membership, with some greens being more open to Finland joining NATO, a position that gained traction as security dynamics evolved in Northern Europe. In the past few years, Finland's security environment has undergone changes: in its immediate neighbourhood, increasing tension between NATO and Russia has been made apparent, particularly in the Baltic Sea region. This has been a large contributing factor to some members of Vihreät re-evaluating their stance on NATO.

The importance of NATO for Finland's own security was a deciding factor for those who changed their stance on NATO membership. However, this was not followed by an endorsement of all things NATO-related. NATO is seen as Europe's main security provider and a way to ensure Finland's independence and continued peace in the Baltic Sea region.<sup>12</sup>

Vihreät is one of the more pro-NATO parties compared to those in neighbouring countries in the region, and has had extensive internal debates on how Finland within NATO can contribute to regional security.<sup>13</sup> One of the main questions asked during internal debates was 'how does one strive for peace and non-violence in an imperfect world?' Vihreät's latest Policy Programme, adopted at the Party Congress in 2022, changes the earlier position and now states that the Finnish Greens support Finland's membership of NATO.<sup>14</sup> In October 2023, the party adopted a more detailed policy position, reconfirming the commitment to

NATO membership and emphasising the importance of Finland having a strong role in safeguarding democracy in Europe.

Nuclear disarmament remains a clear priority for Vihreät, even after changing its stance on NATO membership. The party is against the presence of nuclear weapons on Finnish territory. Under current Finnish national legislation nuclear weapons are illegal. With regard to NATO as an arena to influence or not, it is a priority for Vihreät to make sure that Finland's own security and foreign policy is aligned with a broad security understanding. From this position, influencing NATO is a matter of "making NATO walk the talk". Representatives of Vihreät point to NATO needing to focus less on militarisation of security issues and more on building democracy and resilience, as well as prioritising climate commitments and environmental security.

Regarding how the EU and NATO should relate or cooperate, Vihreät takes the view that the organisations are complementary. In Finland, the argument for EU membership has, to a certain extent, been centred around security. NATO membership changes this dynamic. There is some concern regarding outsourcing security discussions too much to NATO, the reason for this being that a military alliance risks militarising everything. This increases the importance of having a clear division of roles. An idea that has been part of the Finnish debate is the imperative to have a strong EU voice within NATO to counter the risks of over-militarisation.

## 2.2 Píratar, Iceland

In the Icelandic context, generally known to be pacifist-oriented, support for NATO has increased after the full-scale Russian invasion of Ukraine. Defence expenditure has doubled, and NATO activity has increased exponentially during the past

decades. The Naval Air Station at Keflavik is the host command for NATO in Iceland, where the US has had strategic bombers stationed since August 2023.

Piratar's position on NATO can be described as a pragmatic choice of comfort. They are ideologically opposed, but opposing NATO-related issues is difficult to prioritise.<sup>15</sup> There are politicians within the party who push for a more active role within forums such as the NATO Parliamentary Assembly, arguing that there is a need for more people advocating disarmament and feminist foreign policy within the traditionally militaristic and conservative NATO circles. The party has criticised the complete lack of transparency regarding NATO-related issues, notably between government and parliament. Piratar openly criticised the Keflavik Air Station, which can be described as a non-permanent permanent base. This criticism is geared towards increasing US influence in Iceland in the domain of security.

Piratar want Iceland to be declared free of nuclear weapons, and would like to see an updated bilateral agreement with the US where it is clear what is and is not allowed in an Icelandic context. The Icelandic representative of Piratar was part of the group of greens and progressives that put forward the amendment in May 2023 in Luxembourg with 20 policy positions, in which they encouraged national governments to take steps needed for international security, including the practical steps needed to foster arms control and nuclear disarmament. Since 2017, a parliamentary proposal for Iceland to join the Treaty on the Prohibition of Nuclear Weapons (TPNW) has been put before parliament six times by members of the Left Greens, the most recent version in September 2022. During public consultations on the parliamentary proposal, the Ministry of Foreign Affairs has opposed Iceland joining the Treaty. In November 2022, the Ministry of Foreign

Affairs stressed that the National Security Policy also emphasises NATO membership and the bilateral defence agreement with the US, and that joining the Treaty would go against Iceland's commitments to NATO.

### 2.3 Miljöpartiet de gröna, Sweden

Since the party's formation, Miljöpartiet de gröna has been against Swedish membership of NATO as a clear position in the party programme. It has, however, not been a topic of discussion until recently. In more general defence and security policy issues, the Swedish Greens have mainly focused on the need for a stronger civilian defence and disaster preparedness.

The larger discussion in the last 15 years has been on the question of the EU's militarisation, where they have, for example, been strong advocates for a civilian peace corp. During their seven years in government coalition with the social democratic party, Miljöpartiet de gröna agreed to several revisions and goals regarding national defence policies, military targets, and cooperation with NATO. This alienated parts of the party, including former leadership that saw such policies as being incompatible with their pacifist grassroots.<sup>16</sup>

The Russian war of aggression against Ukraine has affected both members of the party and the electorate. Although many would traditionally distance themselves from war, arms sales, and military alliances, there is an understanding that previous positions must be questioned and re-examined.<sup>17</sup> Several representatives of the party have expressed the need for a pragmatic stance on NATO membership, contrasted against what earlier was a strong position against.<sup>18</sup>

The current position of the Swedish greens is still against NATO membership. However, party leadership has signalled in several statements and motions in parliament that in

the event of Swedish NATO membership, the party will not push for leaving NATO. They have several positions on how they think Sweden should act as an alliance member, should this day come.<sup>19</sup> Their policy positions include a clear stance on nuclear weapons: no nuclear weapons are brought into Swedish territory, and as a way of guaranteeing this they want to see a national statutory ban on nuclear weapons on Swedish territory. Other policy positions are introducing the principle of No First Use\*

\* No First Use (NFU) means a nuclear power pledges never to use nuclear weapons, except in retaliation to a prior nuclear attack (a second strike). Currently, only China and India have formal NFU policies.

in NATO, and working towards making NATO more democratic by way of a democracy requirement so that

only countries that meet basic democratic criteria will be allowed to be members.

The party leadership position was confirmed at the biannual congress in November 2023, but debates showed a party still very much divided between pragmatist and traditionalist views on military alliances and NATO in particular.

## 2.4 Miljøpartiet De Grønne, Norway

The Norwegian Greens, Miljøpartiet De Grønne (MDG), are in favour of NATO membership, and have nuanced and at times critical policy positions towards NATO. One example of this is that MDG voted against the presence of US military bases in Norway. MDG have also been vocal in regard to what they describe as NATO's inability to deal with Turkey's rogue behaviour, for example in regard to Sweden's NATO membership. Moreover, the Norwegian greens have tried to engage a larger political discussion regarding the exemption of NATO countries from war crime tribunals.<sup>20</sup>

MDG are critical towards US foreign policy and imperialism and want to see Norway being more openly critical towards this within NATO. One of the reasons for this

is the way in which US double standards undermine the credibility of NATO when it comes to democracy and defence. MDG want to see increased Nordic cooperation and coordination within NATO.

## 2.5 Bündnis 90/Die Grünen, Germany

There have been historical ideological tensions in Bündnis 90/Die Grünen. These inbuilt tensions between traditionalists and pragmatists have existed since the 1990s. Historically, German greens have been critical of NATO and have emphasised the importance of disarmament, conflict resolution, and a focus on non-military solutions to international conflicts.

The Joschka Fischer era was marked by significant foreign policy challenges and debates on the use of force in international conflicts, such as Germany's participation in NATO's intervention in Kosovo in 1999. This decision was controversial and met with resistance among the traditionalist parts of the party. Today, Die Grünen can be seen as more oriented towards the pragmatist side. Annalena Baerbock, who played a significant role in uniting the two sides, has moved the party more towards a centrist position. Baerbock initiated the party programme that describes NATO as an indispensable part of European security, and is in favour of EU defence cooperation.

The shift can be explained by the fact that no other green party in Europe has had to face the difficult dilemmas posed by the possibility of governmental coalitions in both national and regional parliaments. Die Grünen were part of a coalition government during the period 1998-2005 and have been again since 2021.

Earlier discussions within Bündnis 90/Die Grünen were focused on being for or against NATO, but after the full-scale Russian invasion of Ukraine there seems to be a

stronger consensus within the party that NATO is necessary for European security today. The German greens' official stance on a nuclear-free Europe is part of the party platform, while some in the party see the weapons as a necessary evil for as long as Europe remains threatened by Russia.<sup>21</sup> There is an ongoing debate regarding the 2% GDP defence budget goal, which some representatives see as short-sighted and inefficient, preferring a needs-focused budget goal. The need for an updated discussion on arms control and the organisation of the European defence industry is one that is seen as a top priority.

## 2.6 Socialistisk folkeparti, Denmark

Throughout the Cold War period, Socialistisk folkeparti (SF) was opposed to NATO. Following the Warsaw Pact, however, this changed and the party's position moved towards an acceptance of NATO. An event that solidified this change in position was the Balkan Crisis in the 1990s, when NATO was seen as an actor that could be proactive in defence when the UN Council had its hands tied due to obstruction by Russia.

During the first decade of this century, NATO was seen as moving away from its primary goals of being a defence alliance. SF did not support the NATO missions in Afghanistan and Iraq, to which Denmark contributed troops. The Ukraine war, and NATO's role in this, is seen as a constructive return to NATO's core values and goals. According to SF, the importance of NATO lies in its role as a defence alliance, a security guarantee, and an insurance policy, which should focus on defending democratic values and the territorial sovereignty of its members. SF does not consider NATO a relevant forum for political discussion or decisions regarding overall security policy and foreign policy.<sup>22</sup> The EU is considered a more appropriate forum for

such matters. NATO is to remain a defence of security, not an offensive actor with the mission of "spreading democracy."

SF criticises that the national contribution to the overall security guarantee within NATO is measured in percentage of national GDP, given that the security threat towards Denmark and/or NATO as a whole neither increases nor decreases with the development in GDP. However, this is not likely to change and, given the current security situation and the war in Ukraine, SF has also accepted and acknowledged the need to invest 2% of national GDP in its defence, which is in desperate need of investments into military equipment, recruitment, and ordinary repair and renovation.<sup>22</sup>

The most common discussion taking place in NATO is whether the member states live up to the demand to spend 2% of GDP. In response, SF emphasises – in line with the Danish position – Denmark's strong engagement in recent international military missions, investments in Arctic security (which is currently not included in how NATO calculates the 2%), and commitment to NATO-preparedness across the eastern flank towards Russia.

NATO is still seen as the cornerstone of Danish security and foreign policy on the broad political spectrum. Some argue that the Danish EU opt-outs also contribute to the fact that Denmark will continue to be dependent on NATO and on relations with the United States.<sup>23</sup>

## 2.7 Déi Gréng, Luxembourg

Déi Gréng has maintained a generally critical stance on certain aspects of NATO's policies, particularly with regard to military interventions and arms spending. The party has historically emphasised the importance of peaceful conflict resolution, disarmament, and a shift towards non-military solutions to global issues.

<sup>21</sup> From an email response by the SF representative.

While the Luxembourg greens have advocated for a reduction in military spending and a greater emphasis on diplomatic and humanitarian efforts, they have not explicitly called for Luxembourg's withdrawal from NATO. Instead, the party has stressed the need for a more cooperative and diplomatic approach within the framework of the alliance, promoting dialogue and conflict resolution through peaceful means.

## 2.8 Europe Écologie Les Verts, France

Europe Écologie Les Verts (EELV) has historically been critical of NATO, often expressing reservations about France's involvement in the organisation.<sup>24</sup> They have been known to advocate for a more independent and non-aligned foreign policy for France, emphasising diplomacy and peaceful conflict resolution over military intervention. They have also called for a reduction in military spending and the promotion of demilitarisation.

Overall, the party's stance has generally leaned towards a more pacifist and antimilitarist approach to international relations.<sup>25</sup> EELV support the idea of a European defence union and increased European defence cooperation, but have not included the question of leaving the Atlantic alliance in their 2022 party programme.<sup>26</sup> They emphasise the need for Europe to take security into its own hands instead of outsourcing this to NATO and, as an extension, the US.

Although EELV does not have a specific position on acting within NATO, a resolution from 2021 clarifies the party's short – and long-term policies on security and defence. This resolution states that Europe needs a defence policy in the short to medium term that complements multilateral organisations such as NATO.<sup>27</sup> In the long term, EELV wants to see increased European defence cooperation that includes a common budget process and takes into account the defence industry.

The core value is that Europeans must exert influence within the transatlantic framework, and have a concrete European defence policy that is more in line with European interests. The question of an EU army has been debated, but is still a contentious issue.

NATO's complementarity with the EU and Europe is seen as a pragmatic need that cannot be ignored for now. In the resolution, NATO is mentioned as a complementary security guarantee alongside the solidarity clause of the EU. European autonomy is seen as crucial, making NATO a necessary and important security guarantee for now, but not a long-term solution for European security. NATO is not considered to be the most relevant forum to invest energy and time into when it comes to a global peace project. EELV prefers to invest in forums that are more dedicated to peace and nuclear disarmament.

## 2.9 Ecolo and Groen, Belgium

Both francophone Ecolo and Flemish Groen have been critical of NATO's policies, particularly related to military interventions and defence spending. Both parties are pro-European, and there has been a clear preference for focusing on EU defence cooperation and the possibilities of an EU army, instead of relying exclusively on NATO.

Today, there is the view that NATO plays an important role in transatlantic security, but that there is a clear need for reform in many of its policies. Some examples include the need to emphasise collective defence instead of interventions in third countries, and the importance of diplomacy, conflict resolution, and peaceful solutions to global issues.<sup>28</sup> Belgian greens frequently advocate for a reduction in military expenditure and the promotion of non-military means for international security.



Groen and Ecolo want to increase European defence cooperation as a counterweight to the risks around NATO spearheading policy development within defence and security. There is a sense that involving NATO too much in security issues on a policy level comes with excessive risks, the main one being militarising security issues, but also the lack of democratic control in an organisation that is heavily dominated by the United States. The view is that NATO should be seen as an instrument for very well-defined military and security goals (deterrence and defence), not an organisation that develops normative policy positions in the broader security area.

In regard to the 2% of GDP defence spending goal, Belgium is far from this level of budget spending. The Belgian government decided to aim for 1.54% in 2030.<sup>29</sup> Greens do not want Belgium to focus on the percentage as a goal in itself. They warn that 2% for defence will risk being counterproductive because it will drain resources away from social and environmental objectives, and could feed a global arms race that will further destabilise the world. There also needs to be an increased emphasis on democratic values within NATO.

Both Ecolo and Groen emphasise the need for a stronger NATO climate strategy. Improving the security-military nexus is important since climate change plays a huge role in conflict management and is at times a driver of conflict. However, it is important to avoid the pitfalls of militarising the climate crisis response.

The Belgian greens push for increased efforts for nuclear disarmament, including halting nuclear sharing and introducing No First Use in NATO's nuclear position. They have also ensured that Belgium participated as an observer to the first meeting of state parties to the Treaty on the Prohibition of Nuclear Weapons (TPNW), despite serious pressure from within NATO not to.

## 2.10 GroenLinks, Netherlands

GroenLinks was critical of NATO early on. One of the four parties that was part of the merger was a pacifist party, and the other three parties had strong antimilitarist tendencies as well. Internally, GroenLinks had difficult discussions on NATO enlargement, and voted against the first accession round after the end of the Cold War. There was a preference for strengthening the Organization for Security and Co-operation in Europe (OSCE), but this shifted. Fear of Russian aggression in Central and Eastern Europe, and increased contact with politicians from that region as a consequence of EU enlargement, has influenced and broadened GroenLinks' understanding of European security.

US dominance within NATO is seen as a problem, and European defence integration as a counterweight to this. GroenLinks was one of the first parties in the Netherlands to advocate for stronger EU defence. EU military integration is seen as imperative for European security, something that goes hand in hand with strengthening of the EU Common Security and Foreign Policy (CSFP).<sup>30</sup>

Today, GroenLinks is a staunch supporter of NATO membership, as well as military support to Ukraine. Russia's actions have heavily influenced this change. GroenLinks still supports a strong EU defence, something that is seeing growing support politically in the Netherlands. The party has expressed concerns about certain actions taken by NATO and has advocated for a shift in focus towards conflict prevention, disarmament, and sustainable peacebuilding efforts.

The demand for removal of the US nuclear warheads on Dutch soil was dropped from the national election programme in 2021. The demand to sign (not necessarily ratify) the TPNW was not included in the programme with which GroenLinks and Labour jointly went into the 2023 parliamentary elections.<sup>31</sup>

The latter policy shift can partly be explained by the threat of Putin and his entourage potentially using nuclear weapons in response to Western support for Ukraine's struggle for survival. The party does remain committed to (European initiatives for) nuclear arms control, non-proliferation, and a negotiated phase-out of nuclear weapons.



### 3. Europe, NATO and views on security

As more EU member states become members of NATO, as in the case of Sweden and Finland, it is important for green parties in the EU to stay clear on the different competences of these organisations. It is in the interest of green political security goals to work towards a more active European participation in matters that relate to European security, and not outsource essential parts to NATO. This section looks at the risks and opportunities that exist as the EU and NATO enhance their cooperation.

#### 3.1 A European Security Agenda

NATO and the EU are fundamentally very different organisations. The EU is more complex, has a broader mandate, and more competences handed over to it by its member states. NATO is a narrow organisation, solely organised around military competence and action, and the policy development within NATO is tangential to the military axis and seen through a military lens or developed for military actors. There has been a broadening of the understanding of comprehensive security, especially under Secretary General Jens Stoltenberg, but it is not clear how much of an impact this has had on NATO's organisation as a whole.

A point of contention is whether it is in the interest of green security policy goals to enhance cooperation between the EU and

NATO, given the risks of US security norms having too big an impact on policy development. Several interviewees voiced concerns that if such a policy discussion were to be outsourced or handed over to NATO, the US position on this issue would be front and centre, and drastically different from the direction that green and progressive actors want to move in. Many green parties see the return of a Trump administration at the head of NATO as a real risk and a frightening prospect that needs a strong and unified EU as political counterweight. US foreign policy, especially under a Republican government, is not likely to align with green security policy. Other risks include viewing the climate crisis only through a military lens, military interventions with no basis in international law, and non-dedication to nuclear disarmament.

The new strategic concept adopted in Vilnius in June 2023<sup>32</sup> makes clear references to collaboration and complementarity between the EU and NATO. There is already a de facto EU pillar within NATO, something that is also referenced in joint statements made by NATO and the EU.<sup>33</sup>

Areas where NATO and the EU already collaborate, and where green parties should push to influence, are within cyber intelligence and securing and improving the resilience of critical infrastructure. Joint intelligence sharing regarding potential threats to critical infrastructure is an area where NATO can complement the EU well.

From a competence and legislative point of view, the UN and EU have stronger political and legislative mandates. These forums are more appropriate in areas like arms control, support to the defence industry, and defence budgeting.

Strengthening the EU's own defence cooperation is suggested by some as a first step in addressing the strong US influence within NATO; this is elaborated upon in Chapter 4.



Nuclear disarmament is another policy area that must be prioritised within a NATO context; this will be described in Chapter 5.

### 3.2 NATO's role in defining security and defence policy

The question of whether NATO should be a forum used to develop security and defence policy is where interviewees had the most diverging positions.

Voices in favour of using NATO as a forum to broaden and develop a comprehensive understanding of security challenges highlight this as a distinctive feature of the green and progressive movement. They argue that if NATO is to be viewed as one of the most important actors for European security today, then it is imperative to influence NATO's own internal understanding of security. This entails broadening its scope to include practical, not just theoretical, aspects of human security. Not doing so could be viewed as reckless, and this speaks for a collective commitment to ensuring that NATO adopts and enforces a comprehensive security framework that includes both robust security and human security. This view emphasises that the EU and NATO are not competitors, but should be viewed as complementary organisations, and that there is merit in welcoming that NATO has started to broaden its strategic foresight, analytical capacities, and how it looks at the origins of conflict.

Those against using NATO as a space for broadening notions of security see it as an important tool for European security, but emphasise that NATO is a military alliance and should stick to what it knows. Some interviewees were eager to state that they cannot picture NATO as an all-encompassing security organisation, and that the overall focus of NATO will remain military. Another argument against this is that the US has an influential role within NATO, and US military policies are far from the positions of green

and progressive parties within Europe. Are greens and progressives ready for a US-influenced broadening of security issues? There may be a certain naiveté here. Other forums, such as the UN and EU, are more appropriate, as they include a wider range of countries and allow for a global perspective on international security, rather than a Euro- or US-centric one.

The discussion on broadening security and moving towards a comprehensive understanding of these issues will inevitably find its way to NATO, but it is dangerous for NATO to end up being the only forum where security is discussed, or to have too much political weight as an arena to discuss security and all its components. NATO was not created with this in mind, and there are several organisational and political obstacles.<sup>34</sup> Another risk is that the climate crisis for instance will be viewed solely through a military lens if NATO is to take the lead. Even if climate breakdown will inevitably lead to military problems, the adequate response requires so much more than the military. NATO's only logistical response involves the military, which in itself makes it ill-suited to deal with broader security challenges.<sup>35</sup>

The EU already has a broader understanding of security, so supporting and prioritising EU defence integration is a better political position than using NATO as a forum in which to do this. The EU's security strategies over the past decades show that the EU is moving in a direction that greens agree with, even if there is a long way to go.

## 4. Green policies on national defence and influencing NATO

As part of a comprehensive green security framework, and as a question of credibility in governance, it is important that greens work on policy positions on the national military

and defence sector that meet the security challenges of today. This section describes policy positions on defence and military procurement, EU defence cooperation, and efforts to decarbonise defence. Influencing national defence positions is one way to influence NATO's policies in the long run.

#### 4.1 Green defence budgets

Defence spending is historically an area neglected or not prioritised by green and progressive parties in Europe. As the political agenda becomes increasingly concerned with defence budget spending, there has been a shift, but this development is slow. The dominant position has been one of passivity or a lack of interest, where defence issues have been left to other, more traditional parties in government coalitions.

Some representatives argue that greens should be highly engaged in shaping policies on defence spending, and that there should be a significant push for efficient and needs-oriented budgeting of defence. That is in contrast to the 2% defence spending goal that NATO asks of all its members. This push would entail resisting the current “more is more” trend in military spending that we see across Europe, and making the policy claim that this money needs to be spent efficiently.<sup>36</sup> Spending more money does not mean automatically fulfilling the overall goals set for the defence sector.

In the name of efficiency, the 2% budget spending goal promoted and required within NATO does not have to be seen as a fait accompli that member states should blindly accept. It can be argued that it is more in line with a green security policy to have a needs-based military spending policy that looks at which competences need to be invested in and plans budgets based on that, instead of an arbitrary 2% goal that fluctuates depending on the economic state of a nation.

This, together with enhanced EU defence cooperation, could lead to more efficient budgeting that would allow for serious investment in other sectors of society that are just as important for security. Examples include the energy transition – allowing us to move away from fossil fuel dependency – as well as investment in welfare and social security to build and maintain resilient, democratic societies. Such a human-centred approach to security is more in line with core green values.

#### 4.2 Decarbonising defence

Another area that is interesting for green defence policy is decarbonising the defence industry. The idea has some support in military circles and is coming up more and more,<sup>37</sup> but has yet to become mainstream.

■ The EU NATO Group led by Tom Middendorp is an example of this, commissioned and led by the International Climate and Security Council.

Decarbonising the defence industry refers to the process of reducing or eliminating greenhouse gas emissions and other environmentally harmful practices associated with the production, maintenance, and operation of military equipment and facilities. This involves transitioning the defence sector towards more sustainable practices, technologies, and energy sources.<sup>37</sup> By decarbonising the defence industry, governments and military organisations aim to address climate change and promote environmental sustainability while maintaining national security and military readiness. The argument is that this approach not only helps in mitigating the environmental impact of military operations, but also fosters the development of cleaner technologies that can have broader applications beyond the defence sector.<sup>38</sup> If such technologies can be used to increase and improve human security, it may be easier to motivate investing in defence because the use of such technologies would span over a wider range of sectors. At the

same time, the risk of greenwashing and false solutions must not be underestimated.

Military action is devastating for the environment. The concept of ecocide, within and outside of traditional conflict, has been gaining traction within international relations during the past few decades. A recent example is the environmental cost of the war in Ukraine, where local NGOs and international organisations observe destruction and pollution that will have consequences for generations to come.<sup>39</sup> It is clear that decarbonising defence in itself can only mitigate but not avoid such a toll in cases of war, and conflict prevention remains the priority.

When it comes to efficiency within military spending, decarbonising the military requires reforming archaic military structures and procurement processes. If this investment can lead to savings that free up spending potential in other sectors, it may help bridge another gap between pragmatists and traditionalists.<sup>40</sup>

### 4.3 EU defence cooperation and military procurement

There are voices within green parties that see better EU defence cooperation and integration as a way of moving away from national and inefficient spending at the mercy of the military-industrial complex, and instead in service of defending our societies in the most efficient ways. When it comes to defence industries, diminished rivalry between domestic defence industries could reduce the impetus to export arms to nations beyond the EU's borders. Historically, Sweden has maintained that its arms exports are justified by its neutral status. However, with neutrality no longer a defining aspect of Sweden's stance, this can be strategically repositioned to argue for a decreased necessity to export military hardware to countries such as Saudi Arabia.

This is more in line with a comprehensive understanding of what security is, who it is for, and how we build it in a sustainable way.

There are ongoing efforts within the EU to increase defence cooperation, even if this is not one of the core competences of the EU. In July 2022, the European Commission (EC) put forward its proposal for a regulation establishing the European Defence Industry Reinforcement through Common Procurement Act (EDIRPA), and the European Parliament voted in favour in September 2023.<sup>41</sup> The key goals were to address the EU's most urgent and critical defence capability gaps and incentivise EU Member States to procure defence products jointly. However, EDIRPA has been criticised for being a bad construction from the start, both in relation to its legal grounds and to its process and structure.<sup>42</sup>

National military procurement processes are known to be heavy and complicated. To truly reach a point of joint military procurement and planning, EU member states would have to abandon the idea of a procurement process solely based on national defence systems, and be dedicated to a concerted EU effort to coordinate defence capabilities.

## 5. NATO and nuclear disarmament

Ideologically, green stances on nuclear weapons are completely incompatible with NATO's nuclear deterrence policy. There are several green policy positions that can be pushed for within NATO, and where NATO can be seen as a forum that should be leading on nuclear disarmament efforts. This section looks at reform on nuclear policies within NATO, disarmament efforts globally, and NATO's role in this.

### 5.1 NATO membership and nuclear disarmament efforts

Nuclear disarmament is a goal that both traditionalists and pragmatists within the green movement share, irrespective of whether their countries are members of NATO or not. Even for those that advocate strongly for military defence and are not in favour of unilateral total disarmament, nuclear disarmament still remains a goal. Resistance to nuclear disarmament, and the treaties and forums that work towards this goal, can mainly be found among the governments of nations with nuclear weapons.

For most greens, resistance to NATO membership is rooted in the apprehension that NATO membership prevents any meaningful work on nuclear disarmament. The resurgence of threats of using nuclear weapons, or insinuations of using nuclear weapons in the Russian war on Ukraine, worried many green and progressive parties, and others across the political spectrum, even if the proposed responses vary.

NATO has three members - namely France, the UK, and the US – that have independent nuclear arsenals. Among NATO members, there are several that have nuclear weapons stationed on their territory through nuclear sharing.<sup>43</sup> There have been some examples of nuclear warheads being stationed, temporarily or permanently, in countries that are not part of the nuclear sharing arrangements. The presence of American nuclear warheads on Dutch soil was a huge point of discussion in the Netherlands, as well as ratifying the TPNW. Green and progressive parties ought to push for compliance with the TPNW within NATO, starting with ending nuclear sharing and pushing for a No First Use strategy.

The continued resistance against nuclear weapons and advocacy for unilateral steps of disarmament is a strategically and ideologically sound position for green and

progressive voices to have within NATO. The position should be that NATO should lead the way in nuclear disarmament, and that all members should ratify the TPNW. NATO has shown a reluctance to deal with this issue, and tends to give the TPNW a bad reputation.<sup>44</sup> This can be explained by the fact that politically influential states are also the states that have independent nuclear arsenals.

An increasingly hostile Russian government and the general tension that we now see in international security issues – a polarisation between Russia/China and the EU/US – makes a unilateral nuclear ban difficult to advocate for. However, even if Russia has gone rogue in certain respects, a dialogue is necessary between the EU, NATO, Russia, and China on nuclear disarmament. Closing the door to this dialogue is a dangerous path. Part of the strategy must be to build confidence between nuclear states, and increase the dialogue between nuclear states and non-nuclear states. Currently, the only platform for addressing this issue is the TPNW, and there are signs of wavering support to engage in it. NATO member states cannot afford to exhibit this hesitation, and it falls upon green and progressive parties to advocate for NATO to become a forum where nuclear disarmament is a central focus.<sup>45</sup>

## 6. Greens and institutional influence

Most of the green and progressive parties in Europe are, at the time of writing, not in government but in opposition. This means that greens are sometimes limited to the options of influencing institutions outside of executive power. It also requires focusing on where impact is possible. This section looks at the classic debate on whether greens are better off influencing policies from a position of political opposition or in coalition governments with other parties.

The example of the NATO Parliamentary Assembly (NATO PA) is used to exemplify what influence can look like for greens that are not in government.

## 6.1 Coordination and Greens in government

NATO is an alliance of sovereign governments and convenes on governmental and ministerial levels. Because of the national component of defence and security from a military standpoint, the most efficient way to influence NATO is to first influence the national defence and security debate. To do this, the overall goal must be to be in government. This means defining clear military policies and bringing them to the table when negotiating on potential government coalitions.

Green parties that are in coalition governments should, where possible, have communication channels dedicated to defence and security. The need for more, or rather better, political coordination within issues of security and defence is one of the most telling results from this study. One of the interviewees made the pertinent point that if we are not interested in influencing, then why are we in politics? Sitting at the table is a prerequisite to making our voice heard.

A current example is the ongoing coordination between greens in Germany, Luxembourg, the Netherlands, and Belgium making concerted efforts to have NATO member states as observers at the Treaty on the Non-Proliferation of Nuclear Weapons (NPT) high-level meetings. This is something that is not welcomed by France and the US, both not members of the NPT and reluctant to engage in NPT forums. The other NATO members, due to green party presence in government coalitions, strategically choose to engage in the NPT forums to foster openness to dialogue and counter the negative narrative that exists regarding the NPT within

NATO. Without greens in government, and without coordination, this would either not have been possible or less likely to happen. Finding like-minded countries within NATO, like-minded parties within governments of NATO member states, and looking for strategic positioning should be the overall goal for defence and security politicians who belong to the green and progressive political movement.

A historic example of successful green and progressive positions making a difference – or at least having political impact – while in government, is the Belgian Greens' position on the Iraq invasion in 2003. Belgium, France, and Germany were the only states in NATO to openly criticise the US invasion and reject the activation of Article 4 invoked by Turkey, in the context of the discussions at the UN on the US invasion of Iraq.<sup>46</sup> The pressure and lobbying from the US during this period was huge, and the concerted resistance from Belgium, France, and Germany shows that the veto function of NATO is useful, even if resisting can be hard.<sup>47</sup> The argument used by the states in question was that a deployment of NATO troops in Iraq would risk undermining efforts to end the Iraq crisis peacefully, a position that arguably took a larger, more comprehensive global security vision seriously.<sup>48</sup>

Greens and progressives should spend more time developing comprehensive national security policies that take the climate crisis into account, using forums such as the UN and EU to collaborate and develop common goals. COP28 was a wake up call that substantial negotiation efforts are now necessary to not let the oil lobby co-opt the scene.

## 6.2 NATO Parliamentary Assembly

Several representatives interviewed for this study mentioned the NATO Parliamentary Assembly (PA) as a forum where there is a

▪ The NATO PA is composed of 274 delegates from NATO's 31 member countries. Each delegation depends on the size of the country and political composition of the national parliament. In addition, there are observer and associate country delegates with more limited roles.

clear need for progressive green voices.<sup>48</sup> The NATO PA has no formal influence or power within NATO per se, but is a forum where

issues such as nuclear disarmament, broader security, and climate change can be put on the agenda.<sup>49</sup> Actions and initiatives within the NATO PA can be used to influence and bring attention to issues that later have a bearing on the national debates.

The current composition of the NATO PA is majority conservative, and it is thus these parties that set the agenda. If more progressive and green politicians were to engage in the NATO PA, it would be easier to shift the agenda and influence political narratives “from the inside.”

In May of 2023, representatives from several green and progressive parties from Belgium, Germany, and Iceland put forward an amendment to the NATO PA statement prior to the Vilnius Summit.<sup>50</sup> The amendment included 20 policy positions that encouraged national governments to take steps needed for international security, including the practical steps needed to foster arms control and nuclear disarmament. The likelihood of such an amendment being passed was close to zero, but the goal was to challenge the strong, conservative consensus narrative that is prevalent within NATO. One parliamentarian described it as a subtle but strategic way to push the disarmament agenda.



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# Policy Conclusions

# Paths to Influence

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Conclusions by  
**Sarah Bitamazire**

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Looking at green defence and security policy can at times feel scattered, and it can be difficult to define clear-cut policies that we can characterise as “green.”<sup>1</sup> In contrast to this, the interviews and desk studies show a much more concerted image than expected, where Greens across Europe express similar policy goals, but with varying degrees of resources and political influence to work towards them. This section highlights the policy suggestions considered most pertinent in today’s security context to influence NATO and security policy in general.

## A word of caution

The conclusion of this study and the many expert interviews is unequivocal: green and progressive actors must strive to influence NATO from within, regardless of their fundamental stance on membership. Pressing issues like nuclear disarmament, the need for a comprehensive understanding and implementation of security and defence policy, peaceful conflict resolution, and reducing military emissions are natural candidates for advocacy. At the same time, we also caution against overextending NATO’s mandate. Expanding its remit to encompass climate and democratic issues might appeal to those viewing security beyond traditional military lines, but the risks are significant and may not benefit green and progressive goals.

Political readiness to influence NATO is commendable, but expanding the alliance’s mission opens the door for military solutions

to be directed at broader challenges such as climate policy. Rather than encouraging NATO members to be more proactive in dealing with the climate crisis, there is a risk of militarising climate action. The climate crisis undeniably impacts security and military operations, which themselves contribute significant emissions, but there are strong reasons to limit NATO’s role in addressing climate policy.

Furthermore, NATO’s democratic deficit cannot be overlooked. Limited public and media scrutiny is not the ideal setting for climate initiatives. Another consideration is the United States’ dominant influence within NATO. Greens and progressives should critically assess the implications of a US-led development of security policy, particularly given the potential for another Trump-like administration.

## NATO and a comprehensive understanding of security

For the reasons outlined already, it is wise to move with caution when developing policy within NATO. Green parties should consider the potential risk that intensified collaboration between the EU and NATO, along with granting NATO a broader scope of responsibilities, might result in escalating militarisation within the EU and spill over into other areas of policy. A more appropriate forum for policy development within security and defence might be the EU and UN, as well as ad hoc multilateral cooperations with other like-minded states.

There are, however, areas where cooperation between NATO and the EU should be further enhanced, such as cyber intelligence and securing critical infrastructure. The threats here are multi-faceted and rapidly evolving, meaning each actor has its role to play in securing complementary competences. Joint intelligence sharing should also be a priority area of cooperation.

## Green defence budgets and EU defence cooperation

Seeing the military budget as part of a broader, comprehensive security framework allows planning seriously for military preparedness, while at the same time not compromising on equally important budget areas such as social welfare and sustainable development. Policy positions that greens can incorporate into their national defence policies include requirements for the military to report on emissions, increasing state investment into green defence technologies, and setting decarbonisation of the military as a strategic goal, one that is part of the national climate goals.

Although deeper EU defence cooperation could allow for spending in a targeted way, and in theory also benefit a strong EU position within NATO, it would also

require giving up a certain level of national sovereignty and adapting the founding treaties. Such a fundamental change may not lead to the improvements that greens and progressives want to see, and could result in an overly militarised focus on security.

## Nuclear disarmament

Nuclear disarmament is a field where Greens have high credibility. NATO should be a key forum in which nuclear disarmament issues are discussed, and Greens can start by pushing for internal compliance and working towards making sure that all NATO member states ratify the NPT and NPTW, and that reporting and compliance are encouraged in the NATO context. Fostering dialogue between states with individual nuclear arsenals and states with no nuclear arsenals within NATO should be a priority for greens as it leads to increased pressure regarding compliance. Other policy positions to push for are removing (or adapting) Nuclear Sharing, adopting a No First Use strategy within NATO, and forbidding the use of nuclear arsenals in NATO training exercises. Declaring Europe a nuclear-weapon-free zone should be a vision that is fostered by green voices.

## Institutional influence

NATO is an alliance of sovereign governments, and convenes on governmental and ministerial levels. Because of the national component of defence and security from a military standpoint, the most efficient way to influence NATO is to first influence the national defence and security debate. Finding like-minded countries within NATO, like-minded parties within governments of NATO member states, and looking for strategic positioning should be the overall goal of defence and security experts that belong to the green and progressive political movement.

Greens, both in opposition but especially in government, should not leave the development of defence and military policies to other parties. Green parties should have an overall goal of entering into government coalitions, and should have green defence and military policies put on the negotiating table.

Most green and progressive parties in Europe are, at the time of writing, not in government but in opposition. This means that politicians/legislators are limited to influencing outside of executive power. It also requires focusing on where impact is possible. Increased presence of greens in the NATO PA is important, and the creation of a green/progressive group within the structure of the NATO PA is a good start. If used strategically and through concerted efforts, NATO PA as a forum can be an important tool for greens, especially in opposition. It is, however, a forum with limited decision-making powers, and is therefore part of a long-term strategy more than an efficient way to have concrete policy influence.

## Endnotes

- 1 See also the recent efforts by the Heinrich Böll Stiftung to identify a green foreign policy doctrine: <https://gr.boell.org/en/2023/09/13/green-foreign-policy-snapshots>



# Appendices

## List of Abbreviations

**CSFP:** Common Security and Foreign Policy

**EC:** European Commission

**EELV:** Europe Écologie Les Verts

**EDIRPA:** European Defence Industry Reinforcement through Common Procurement Act

**EU:** European Union

**GDP:** Gross Domestic Product

**GEF:** Green European Foundation

**MDG:** Miljøpartiet De Grønne

**NATO:** North Atlantic Treaty Organization

**NATO PA:** North Atlantic Treaty Organization Parliamentary Assembly

**NPT:** Treaty on the Non-Proliferation of Nuclear Weapons

**OSCE:** Organization for Security and Cooperation in Europe

**SF:** Socialistisk folkeparti

**TPNW:** Treaty on the Prohibition of Nuclear Weapons

## Interview questions

This mapping included interviews with respondents from the ten case study countries, to gather concrete examples and experiences from greens and progressives across Europe.

### Party-specific:

- Does your party have a policy position in regard to NATO specifically?
- To what extent is NATO a forum that your party wishes to influence and/or participate in?
- If yes, what is the strategy and overall goal with this position?

### General:

- Is it possible to influence a military alliance from a position of non-violence?
- Is it possible to be positive towards/not in opposition to NATO and claim a position of feminist foreign policy? If yes, how? If not, why?
- What, if any, connection do you see between the EU and NATO? Which opportunities do you see? What risks do you see?
- Is there a role for the greens and other progressive parties and movements to play in shaping and broadening the conceptualisation and definition of security within the NATO context?

## List of interviewed parties

Country	NATO member?	Party	Opposition or Government? (as of Nov 2023)	Party position on NATO membership (as of Nov 2023)
<b>Finland</b>	Yes, since April 2023	Vihreät	Opposition	Support for NATO membership
<b>Sweden</b>	Yes, since March 2024	Miljöpartiet de gröna	Opposition	Against NATO membership
<b>Norway</b>	Yes, founding member, 1949.	Miljøpartiet De Grønne	Opposition	Support for NATO membership
<b>Iceland</b>	Yes, founding member, 1949.	Píratar	Opposition	Support for NATO membership
<b>Germany</b>	Yes, founding member, 1955.	Bündnis 90/Die Grünen	Coalition government	Support for NATO membership
<b>Luxembourg</b>	Yes, founding member, 1949.	Déi Gréng.	Coalition government	Support for NATO membership
<b>France</b>	Yes, founding member, 1949.	Écologie Les Verts, Les Écologistes	Opposition	Against NATO membership
<b>Belgium</b>	Yes, founding member, 1949.	Groen	Coalition government	Support for NATO membership
	Yes, founding member, 1949.	Écolo	Coalition government	Support for NATO membership
<b>Denmark</b>	Yes, founding member, 1949.	Socialistisk folkeparti	Opposition	Support for NATO membership
<b>Netherlands</b>	Yes, founding member, 1949.	GroenLinks	Opposition	Support for NATO membership





## Navigating NATO

Green and progressive parties across Europe have historically held a sceptical view towards the military industry and defence alliances such as NATO. At the same time, Russia's war of aggression against Ukraine spotlighted existing security vulnerabilities and profoundly shifted the public and political debate. In this context, the green movement may have differing attitudes towards NATO, but finds itself in the political reality of not *if* but *how* to engage within it. Based on desk research and expert interviews from ten case study countries, this report explores the different ways that greens and progressives can influence NATO, and the risks and opportunities this entails.

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