

Updated June 30, 2026

Defense Primer: U.S. European Command (EUCOM)

U.S. European Command (USEUCOM, commonly referred to as EUCOM) is one of 11 combatant commands (CCMDs) within the Department of Defense (DOD, which is “using a secondary Department of War designation,” under Executive Order 14347 dated September 5, 2025). EUCOM was established in 1947 and is responsible for the “command and control of U.S. military forces in Europe.”

Organization

EUCOM is led by a four-star general or admiral. The Senate confirmed the current EUCOM commander, U.S. Air Force General Alexis Grynkeiwich, in June 2025. Since 1950, the North Atlantic Council (the primary decision-making body within the North Atlantic Treaty Organization, or NATO) has asked the U.S. President to nominate an American officer to serve as the alliance’s military commander, Supreme Allied Commander Europe (SACEUR), though no formal council resolution or treaty requires the council to do so. The EUCOM commander, therefore, has traditionally had *dual-hatted* responsibilities (i.e., simultaneously overseen EUCOM and NATO’s military operations).

has asked the U.S. President to nominate an American officer to serve as the alliance’s military commander, Supreme Allied Commander Europe (SACEUR), though no formal council resolution or treaty requires the council to do so. The EUCOM commander, therefore, has traditionally had *dual-hatted* responsibilities (i.e., simultaneously overseen EUCOM and NATO’s military operations).

All five DOD armed services, as well as U.S. Special Operations Command, provide forces to EUCOM. According to DOD, as of March 2026, there were more than 86,000 DOD personnel in Europe.

Mission and Strategic Context

According to EUCOM, the command’s mission is to “deter conflict, maintain peace and security, and provide strategic depth through military operations, exercises and security cooperation with NATO allies and partners.” In March 2026 testimony, General Grynkeiwich stated that EUCOM “has prioritized three mission areas: 1) Protect the U.S. Homeland; 2) Project U.S. Combat Power; and 3) Position the Alliance to Deter and Defend.”

The second Trump Administration signaled a shift in U.S. strategy in Europe in its 2025 National Security Strategy (NSS) and 2026 National Defense Strategy (NDS). While the 2022 NDS characterized Russia as an “acute threat” to the United States and European allies, the 2026 NDS described it as a “persistent but manageable threat to NATO’s eastern members.” The 2026 NDS called for allies “to take primary responsibility for Europe’s conventional defense, with critical but more limited U.S. support.”

Since 2014, following Russia’s invasion and occupation of Ukrainian territory including Crimea, EUCOM has focused on deterring Russia and providing assistance to Ukraine. In 2022, following Russia’s full-scale invasion of Ukraine, EUCOM established the Security Assistance Group-Ukraine to support long-term coordination of training and equipping the armed forces of Ukraine. General Grynkeiwich has highlighted EUCOM’s innovation efforts,

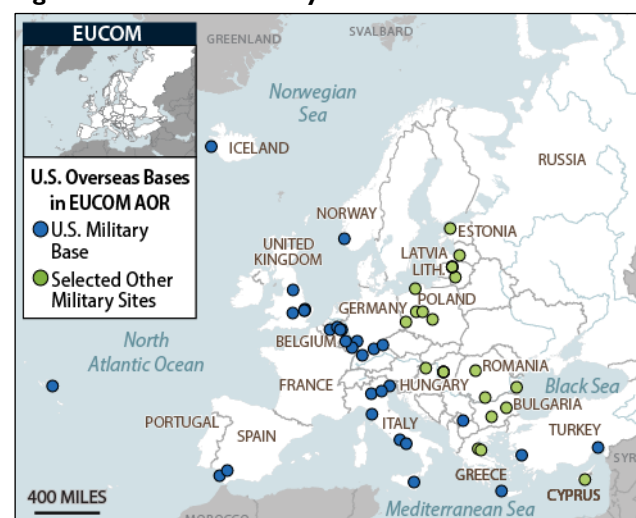
describing the European theater as a “laboratory” to test new equipment and tactics, with lessons learned from the war in Ukraine spanning all domains. The 2025 NSS indicated that negotiating an “expeditious cessation of hostilities in Ukraine” was a “core [U.S.] interest,” in part to “reestablish strategic stability with Russia.”

Area of Responsibility

The EUCOM area of responsibility (AOR) encompasses “53 sovereign nations and city states.” This AOR has changed over time, including in 2008, when the newly established U.S. Africa Command (AFRICOM) took responsibility for overseeing U.S. military activities on the African continent; in 2021, when DOD shifted Israel to U.S. Central Command’s AOR; and, in June 2025, when DOD shifted Greenland to the U.S. Northern Command (NORTHCOM) AOR.

U.S. military presence in Europe involves permanent and rotational forces. EUCOM’s AOR includes 30 overseas bases that DOD has consistently used for at least 15 years and at which the U.S. military exercises some degree of operational control; there are also 19 other military sites across EUCOM’s AOR that the U.S. military has used or to which it has access (see **Figure 1**). The majority of DOD personnel in EUCOM are stationed in Germany, Italy, and the United Kingdom. EUCOM is headquartered in Stuttgart, Germany.

Figure 1. EUCOM Military Bases and Selected Sites



Source: CRS analysis of unclassified U.S. government documentation, updated June 17, 2025. For more information about EUCOM and the methodology used to develop this map, see CRS Report R48123, *U.S. Overseas Basing: Background and Issues for Congress*.

Notes: Some dots may reflect more than one base or site. This map may not show all facilities where the United States has an access agreement with host nations within the selected geographic range.

Inclusion or exclusion may not reflect current deployments and operations. Names and boundary representations are not necessarily authoritative.

Budget

DOD budget documents do not typically enumerate funding for CCMDs. With certain exceptions, appropriations for CCMDs are largely dedicated to operations and maintenance accounts for headquarters and mission support activities, while joint force personnel and operations at CCMDs are typically funded by individual military services. In its role as combatant command support agent, the Department of the Army provides administrative and logistical support for EUCOM's headquarters. In FY2027, the Army requested \$510.9 million for such activities, 27% more than the FY2026 enacted figure (\$403.4 million).

In FY2026 and FY2027 budget materials, DOD did not publish a separate budget exhibit for the European Deterrence Initiative (EDI), required in statute (10 U.S.C. §221 note). In the past, this budget display identified “specific investments in the base budget that support deterring Russian aggression against NATO” but did not reflect a comprehensive picture of EUCOM's operating costs. Congress in December 2025 created an additional requirement that the EUCOM commander submit an “independent assessment” of activities and resources required for U.S. deterrence and defense posture in Europe with materials for the FY2027 and FY2028 budget (P.L. 119-60, §1250).

Issues for Congress

EUCOM Force Posture

Throughout 2025 and 2026, news articles reported that the Administration was considering reducing U.S. forces in the EUCOM AOR. Some Members of Congress have raised concerns regarding such proposed reductions, or other significant changes in U.S. military posture in Europe, particularly without consultations with Congress or coordination with NATO allies.

On June 18, 2026, DOD announced a six-month review of U.S. force posture and basing in the region,

designed to ensure that NATO is moving fast and irreversibly toward Europe leading, stepping up to take primary responsibility for the defense of Europe, stepping up to ensure our forces are postured for America's global needs, and stepping up to make sure that our access, basing, and overflight are clearly delineated and assured any other country would do the same at the same time.

The House Armed Services Committee (HASC)- and Senate Armed Services Committee (SASC)-reported versions of a National Defense Authorization Act for Fiscal Year 2027 (FY2027 NDAA) include various provisions related to congressional oversight of U.S. posture in Europe (e.g., H.R. 8800, §1232; S. 4784, §1222). In a committee report (S.Rept. 119-127) accompanying its version of the bill, SASC stated that it “remains deeply concerned about Russian aggression in the EUCOM [AOR]” and “directs the Department to maintain robust U.S. troop presence in Europe.”

Some Members have expressed concerns about the Administration's commitment to extending deterrence to NATO allies and how a perceived weakened U.S. commitment might affect nuclear proliferation among allies. New articles in June 2026 reported that the Administration may be considering additional nuclear weapons deployments to some NATO allies.

Congress could consider proposed force structure changes, their funding, and implications for national security, as it continues to monitor threats to the United States and its allies from Russia. In December 2025, Congress prohibited the use of certain DOD FY2026 funds for reducing troop levels in the EUCOM AOR below 76,000, divesting from EUCOM sites and property, or the U.S. relinquishment of the EUCOM Commander/SACEUR role absent certain DOD certification to Congress (P.L. 119-60, §1249). The HASC- and SASC-reported versions of an FY2027 NDAA would extend or apply a similar provision for FY2027 funds (H.R. 8800, §1232; S. 4784, §1222).

Potential CCMD Restructuring

Under 10 U.S.C. §161, Congress has delegated to DOD the authority to alter, adjust, create or disestablish CCMD structures, missions, and AORs. Congress retains the authority to direct or prohibit such realignments. Congress may consider the feasibility, efficiency, risks, and costs of modifying AORs, consolidating commands, alternative command structures, and how such changes may affect U.S. national security interests.

In February 2025, Trump Administration officials reportedly indicated they were examining restructuring some CCMDs, including potentially merging EUCOM and AFRICOM. Congress in December 2025 limited DOD funding for geographic combatant command consolidation (P.L. 119-60, §916). The HASC-reported version of an FY2027 NDAA would extend this provision (H.R. 8800, §903). The SASC version would establish EUCOM and AFRICOM as separate CCMDs in statute (S. 4784, §913 and §911).

CRS Products

CRS Insight INI2566, *NATO's June 2025 Summit in The Hague*

CRS Insight INI2534, *Russia's War Against Ukraine: Diplomatic Talks and U.S. Policy*

CRS In Focus IFI2277, *Russia's War Against Ukraine: U.S. Policy and the Role of Congress*

CRS In Focus IFI2606, *Russian Military Performance and Outlook*

CRS In Focus IFI2150, *Ukrainian Military Performance and Outlook*

CRS In Focus IFI2735, *U.S. Extended Deterrence and Regional Nuclear Capabilities*

Hannah D. Dennis, Analyst in U.S. Defense Policy

Anyia L. Fink, Analyst in U.S. Defense Policy

IF11130

Disclaimer

This document was prepared by the Congressional Research Service (CRS). CRS serves as nonpartisan shared staff to congressional committees and Members of Congress. It operates solely at the behest of and under the direction of Congress. Information in a CRS Report should not be relied upon for purposes other than public understanding of information that has been provided by CRS to Members of Congress in connection with CRS's institutional role. CRS Reports, as a work of the United States Government, are not subject to copyright protection in the United States. Any CRS Report may be reproduced and distributed in its entirety without permission from CRS. However, as a CRS Report may include copyrighted images or material from a third party, you may need to obtain the permission of the copyright holder if you wish to copy or otherwise use copyrighted material.