



## Press Release

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Promoting a more transparent and accountable NATO

### Call for NATO running costs to be made public on 'International Right to Know Day' 10<sup>th</sup> Anniversary

NATO Watch was recently contacted by a researcher looking to find information on NATO's annual budget. If you thought that something as basic as this would be accessible via the NATO website, think again. It isn't.

On the 10<sup>th</sup> anniversary of [International Right to Know Day](#) NATO Watch is calling for NATO to publish an annual financial report showing figures on NATO revenue and expenditure. This is routinely done by other intergovernmental bodies, such as the EU and World Bank.

First celebrated by access to information advocates from around the globe on 28 September 2003, the annual Right to Know Day aims to raise awareness of every individual's right of access to government-held information: the right to know how elected officials are exercising power and how tax-payers' money is being spent.

NATO Watch director, Ian Davis, said: *"The public's right to know is the most effective and inexpensive way to stop corruption and waste, and enhance efficiency and good governance. The scale and importance of the NATO security apparatus demands that it ought to be subject to close scrutiny. But NATO is the only major intergovernmental body not to have even a basic information disclosure policy"*.

He added *"One way for the public and parliamentarians to really understand what's happening in NATO is to follow the money. But without a publicly available annual budget it is often impossible to grasp the significance of what's being proposed or implemented within the Alliance"*.

The costs of running NATO and implementing its policies and activities are [officially met in two ways](#)—contributions to a common funding pool and participation in NATO-led operations—a third way of looking at the issue is to assess the extent to which nationally procured military forces also contribute to NATO's deterrence posture and Article 5 (collective defence) commitments. As regards the officially recognised budgetary process, direct contributions to the NATO common funding pool are made by members in accordance with an agreed [cost-sharing formula based on relative Gross National Income](#). There are three budgets within the common funding arrangements: a civil budget, a military budget and the Security Investment Programme, which pays for NATO installations and facilities.



While the NATO website does provide some background on the process (as indicated via the links above) the actual budget amounts and respective member state contributions are not given. A US Congressional Research Service (CRS) [report](#) is very helpful in shedding some light (although CRS reports are themselves not publicly available, but some are posted online by the US Federation of American Scientists' [Project on Government Secrecy](#)). It shows that in 2010, the US financial contribution to these three budgets was \$84.1 million, \$430 million and \$197 million respectively – or about 25% of the total common NATO budget.

From these figures, we can guesstimate that the NATO annual budget is about 2.5 billion Euros. Of course, these direct contributions to NATO represent a very small percentage of each member's overall defence

budget. It is in contributing to NATO-led operations where the serious money begins to get spent, since member countries incur all their own deployment costs whenever they volunteer forces for such operations. With a few exceptions, it is nationally procured military forces and military assets such as ships, submarines, aircraft, tanks, artillery or weapons systems that are or have been deployed in NATO missions in Kosovo, Afghanistan and Libya. To our knowledge, no one has provided a detailed breakdown of how the costs stack up for each of these missions, although the US is widely perceived as the largest contributor to the first two.

NATO Watch is an independent, not-for-profit 'virtual' think-tank which examines the role of NATO in public life and advocates for more openness, transparency and accountability within the Alliance. See our detailed [Frequently Asked Questions](#) and our [Vision and Mission](#). For further details [contact](#) NATO Watch.

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