



NEWS STORIES

Part 3 - Permanent Structured Cooperation on Defence PESCO



Today's geopolitical context requires strong EU leadership when addressing both European and global security and defence concerns. The establishment of a Permanent Structured Cooperation - referred to as PESCO - in December 2017 and the subsequent adoption of the initial set of 17 projects in March 2018 has raised cooperation among the 25 participating EU Member States to a new level.

Cooperation among EU Member States on defense is nothing new *per se* and has been

conducted in different formats in the past including on joint training and exercise or acquisition and development of military equipment. **PESCO builds on these positive examples but enhances the scope and outcome in three respects:**



1. Collaboration between participating EU Member States is no longer *ad hoc*, but formal, sustainable and binding. It is a **framework and a structured process to gradually deepen defence cooperation** in line with the identified capabilities needed in order to provide security to EU citizens, as well as our international partners.
1. The **majority of PESCO projects are linked to operational needs**, with several stemming from lessons identified in the field. The projects also tackle security demands in areas of increasing relevance such as **cybersecurity, maritime surveillance and training**.
1. **PESCO is not a stand-alone tool but one designed to complement other tools and instruments.** For example, the [European Defence Fund](#) will support certain projects financially, while the Coordinated Annual Review on Defence ([CARD](#)) will support Member States' efforts to better identify opportunities for new collaborative initiatives (in particular PESCO projects) based on capability shortfalls. Thus, the latter provides a clear overview at EU level of defence spending, national investment and research efforts to avoid duplication and streamline resources.

17 PROJECTS PUT FORWARD BY PARTICIPATING MEMBER STATES:

So far 17 projects have been adopted by participating Member States, covering a wide range of security issues. Further projects are due to follow towards the end of 2018. Every year, a process to generate new projects will be launched with a view of updating the list of projects and their participants by November by the Council. Assessment criteria have been developed by the PESCO secretariat to help evaluate the project proposals by the participating Member States.

17 projects in three areas:



COMMON TRAINING AND EXERCISES

- European Training Mission Competence Centre
- European Training Certification Centre for European Armies



OPERATIONAL DOMAINS (LAND, AIR, MARITIME, CYBER)

- Armoured Infantry Fighting Vehicle
- Indirect Fire Support
- Deployable Military Disaster Relief Capability Package
- European Crisis Response Operation Core (European Force)
- Maritime Surveillance
- Maritime Mine Counter Measures
- Harbour Protection
- European Cyber Information Sharing Platform
- European Cyber Rapid Response Teams



JOINT AND ENABLING CAPABILITIES (BRIDGING OPERATIONAL GAPS)

- European Medical Command
- Network of logistic Hubs in Europe and support to Operations
- Military Mobility
- Strategic Command and Control System for CSDP Missions and Operations
- Energy for Operational Function
- European Secure Software for Radio Systems

PESCO FACT CHECK:

There is still much misunderstanding surrounding the EU Member States' wish to cooperate more on defence and security issues – and PESCO in particular. Here are some of the main misconceptions:

- 1. EU Member States live in peace and thus do not need to work on security and defence issues.**

The security environment in and around Europe has become more complex and contested. Threats have multiplied, and now include a persistent terrorist threat, continuing vulnerabilities in the Sahel-Sahara region, enduring destabilisation in the Middle East, major migration crises, open warfare in the EU's immediate neighborhood and direct aggression through hybrid threats and cyberattacks. EU Member States must be able to tackle these issues in order to protect their citizens. This requires improved coordination of efforts and the fostering of capacities to better anticipate, prepare, plan and act together when and wherever necessary.

- 1. PESCO is yet another 'eurocratic' structure invented by the EU which will cost a lot of money.**

The opposite is the case. The main objective behind recent and ongoing EU initiatives to strengthen European defence is to create conditions which allow Member States to better coordinate and cooperate on defence and security issues. Concurrently joint planning and investing enables Member States to spend more efficiently. It has been estimated that enhanced cooperation could save between €25 and €100 billion every year, while at the same time increasing the security of EU citizens.

- 1. PESCO paves the way for creating of a European army.**

The decision on how much each EU Member State spends or invests on defence lies with their respective national decision-making authorities. PESCO helps to reinforce the EU's strategic autonomy to act alone when necessary and with partners whenever possible. While PESCO is underpinned by the idea that sovereignty can be better exercised when working together, sovereignty remains effectively untouched. Military capacities developed within PESCO remain in the hands of Member States, and can therefore be made available in other contexts such as missions deployed by NATO or the UN.

PARTICIPATING MEMBER STATES:



The EEAS summer series on security and defence puts the spotlight on key EU initiatives in this area. The next article will be published on 23 August and will focus on the EU's military and civilian missions and operations.

In case you missed it: last week we explored enhancing military mobility and why it is considered important by the EU and its Member States. You can read the article [here](#).

See also

- Factsheet PESCO
- Roadmap for the implementation of PESCO
- EU cooperation on security and defence (Council)

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