
Permanent Structured Cooperation (PESCO) - Factsheet

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Factsheets

Deepening Defence Cooperation among EU Member States

PESCO Factsheet, December 2017

Towards more security for the EU and its citizens

In light of a changing security environment, the EU Global Strategy for Foreign and Security Policy (EUGS) started a process of closer cooperation in security and defence. Member States agreed to step up the European Union's work in this area and acknowledged that enhanced coordination, increased investment in defence and cooperation in developing defence capabilities are key requirements to achieve it.

This is the main aim of a Permanent Structured Cooperation on security and defence (PESCO), as outlined in the Treaty of the EU, Articles 42 (6) and 46, as well as Protocol 10. Through PESCO, Member States increase their effectiveness in addressing security challenges and advancing towards further integrating and strengthening defence cooperation within the EU framework.

"We did it. In the most ambitious and inclusive manner, with 25 Member States, we launched PESCO together. The 25 have taken binding commitments to improving their cooperation, and we will start with a first set of very concrete 17 projects spanning from common military training, to providing medical support to our operations. The possibilities of the PESCO are immense."

High Representative/ Vice-President Federica Mogherini, 12 December 2017

Deepening defence cooperation through binding commitments

PESCO is a Treaty-based framework and process to deepen defence cooperation amongst EU Member States who are capable and willing to do so. The aim is to jointly develop defence capabilities and make them available for EU military operations. This will thus enhance the EU's capacity as an international security partner, also contributing to protection of Europeans and maximise the effectiveness of defence spending.

The difference between PESCO and other forms of cooperation is the binding nature of the commitments undertaken by participating Member States. However, participation remains voluntary and decision-making will remain in the hands of participating Member States.

Structure and Governance

PESCO has a two-layer structure:

- **Council Level:** Responsible for the overall policy direction and decision-making including as regards the assessment mechanism to determine if Member States are fulfilling their commitments.

Only PESCO members are voting, decisions are taken by unanimity (except decisions regarding the suspension of membership and entry of new members which are taken by qualified majority).

- **Projects Level:** PESCO's effectiveness will be measured by the projects it will develop. Each project will be managed by those Member States that contribute to it, in line with general rules for project management to be developed at overarching level.

Steps towards a PESCO

Under the guidance of the European Council, three major steps have now been successfully completed to establish PESCO:

Step 1: Member States presented a list of common commitments in September 2017 in the main areas of Protocol 10 to the Treaty, notably defence investment, capability development and operational readiness.

Step 2: On 13 November 2017, Ministers from 23 Member States signed a common notification on the PESCO and handed it over to the High Representative and the Council. The **common notification** is the first formal step to set up the PESCO. It sets out the principles, in particular underlining the binding and inclusive character of the legal framework, a list of binding common commitments the Member States have agreed to undertake, as well as proposals on the PESCO governance.

Step 3: On 11 December 2017, the Council adopted a **decision** establishing PESCO and its list of participants. With Ireland and Portugal also notifying their decision to join, a total of 25 Member States have decided to participate in PESCO^[1]. The participating Member States also agreed a declaration identifying the first **17 collaborative PESCO projects**, in the area of capability development and in the operational dimension ranging from the establishment of a European Medical Command, an EU Training Mission Competence Centre, Cyber Rapid Response Teams and Mutual Assistance in Cyber Security, to Military Disaster Relief and an upgrade of Maritime Surveillance.

Next steps

In the beginning of 2018 Member States participating in PESCO will adopt a Council decision on the list of projects to be developed under PESCO.

A common set of governance rules for projects, as well as general conditions under which third States could be invited to participate in individual projects, will be further discussed and decided by the PESCO Member States in the Council.

PESCO – an instrument relevant for the security of the EU and its citizens

- PESCO is both a permanent framework for closer cooperation and a structured process to gradually deepen defence cooperation within the Union framework. It will be a driver for integration in the field of defence.
- Each participating Member State provides a plan for the national contributions and efforts they have agreed to make. These national implementation plans are subject to regular assessment. This is different from the voluntary approach that is currently the rule within the EU's Common Security and Defence Policy.
- PESCO is designed to make European defence more efficient and to deliver more output by providing enhanced coordination and collaboration in the areas of investment, capability development and operational readiness. Enhanced cooperation in this domain will allow decreasing the number of different weapons' systems in Europe, and therefore strengthen operational cooperation among Member States, increase interoperability and industrial competitiveness.
- PESCO will help reinforce the EU's strategic autonomy to act alone when necessary and with partners whenever possible. Whilst PESCO is underpinned by the idea that sovereignty can be better exercised when working together, national sovereignty remains effectively untouched
- Military capacities developed within PESCO remain in the hands of Member States that can also make them available in other contexts such as NATO or the UN.

PESCO as part of a comprehensive defence package

PESCO is closely connected to the new Coordinated Annual Review on Defence (**CARD**) and the European Defence Fund (EDF), which is currently being developed under the European Defence Industrial Development Programme. They are complementary and mutually reinforcing tools contributing to the same political goal:

- CARD, to be run by the European Defence Agency, through systematically monitoring of national defence spending plans, will help identify opportunities for new collaborative initiatives.
- The EDF will provide financial incentives to foster defence cooperation from research to the development phase of capabilities including prototypes. In this regard, both the Commission proposal and the Council General Approach on the European Defence Industrial development Programme provide the possibility for PESCO projects to benefit from increased funding, which could amount to 30% - instead of 20% - for prototypes.
- PESCO will develop capability projects, identified notably through the CARD process in priority areas. Eligible projects could also benefit from financing under the EDF, as explained above.

[1] The participating Member States are: Austria, Belgium, Bulgaria, Czech Republic, Croatia, Cyprus, Estonia, Finland, France, Germany, Greece, Hungary, Italy, Ireland, Latvia, Lithuania, Luxembourg, the Netherlands, Poland, Portugal, Romania, Slovenia, Slovakia, Spain and Sweden.

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