



Permanent Structured Cooperation – PESCO

Deepening Defence Cooperation among EU Member States

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.

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.

We have activated a Permanent Structured Cooperation on Defence – ambitious and inclusive.²⁵ Member States have committed to join forces on a regular basis, to do things together, spend together, invest together, buy together, act together. The possibilities of the Permanent Structured Cooperation are immense.

Federica Mogherini
High Representative/ Vice-President
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This will thus enhance the EU's capacity as an international security partner, contribute to the protection of EU citizens 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, decision-making will remain in the hands of participating Member States and the specific character of the security and defence policy of all Member States is taken into account.



Steps towards a Permanent Structured Cooperation

Under the guidance of the European Council, four 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 signed a [common notification](#) on the PESCO and handed it over to the High Representative and the Council – 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 20 binding common commitments the Member States have agreed to undertake, as well as proposals on the governance of PESCO.

Step 3: On 11 December 2017, the Council adopted a decision establishing PESCO and its list of participants. A total of 25 Member States have decided to participate in PESCO and agreed on a declaration identifying the first 17 collaborative PESCO projects. Projects are in the areas 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.

Step 4: On 6 March 2018 the Council formally adopted a first set of **17 different projects** and their participants as well as a Recommendation which sets out a roadmap for the further implementation of PESCO.

Structure and Governance

PESCO will have 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.

PESCO Secretariat: The European Defence Agency (EDA) and the EEAS, including the EU Military Staff, working together, provide a Secretariat function for PESCO, with a single point of contact for the participating Member States.

Assessment process: Each participating Member State is required to communicate every year a National Implementation Plan (NIP) to assess the fulfilment of the binding commitments they have made to one another. The High Representative will present annually a report on PESCO to the Council. On this basis, the Council will – also annually – review whether the participating Member States continue to fulfil the more binding commitments.

PESCO projects: The individual projects will be run by different groups of participating Member States. The general governance rules for PESCO projects will be adopted at Council level, as well as the general conditions under which third states may exceptionally be invited to participate in PESCO projects.

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.

Next steps



By May/June 2018 the Council should adopt the common set of governance rules for the projects, as well as a recommendation to sequence the fulfilment of the more binding commitments and to specify more precise objectives.

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). They are complementary and mutually reinforcing tools contributing to the goal of enhancing Member States' defence capabilities:



CARD, run by the European Defence Agency, through systematically monitoring of national defence spending plans, will help identify opportunities for new collaborative initiatives.



The EDF provides financial incentives for Member States to foster defence cooperation from research to the development phase of capabilities including prototypes through co-financing from the EU budget. PESCO projects may benefit from increased EU co-financing, 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.