



PERMANENT STRUCTURED COOPERATION - PESCO

WHAT IS PESCO?

It is a legally binding, ambitious and inclusive framework to deepen defence cooperation among the EU Member States that are capable and willing to do so. It was introduced by the Lisbon Treaty. It is driven by Member States who are making more binding commitments to each other in the area of defence, while respecting national sovereignty.

This permanent framework for defence cooperation is a crucial next step in the development of the EU common defence policy. It introduces a new mindset, one that privileges cooperation among EU Member States.

PESCO is output oriented: it should lead collectively to increased and more efficient defence investments in military equipment, to make Member States' armed forces more easily deployable for missions and operations and to strengthen the European defence industrial base.

Enhanced defence capabilities of EU Member States will also benefit NATO and will strengthen its European pillar.

Which countries participate?

The 25 Member States participating in PESCO 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.

WHY PESCO?

Opinion polls show that security has become the top concern for citizens across the EU. The common defence and security policy among EU Member States is one of the most appreciated EU policies, with 75% citizens supporting it.

Although collectively EU countries are the second largest military spender worldwide, duplications and lack of interoperability reduce efficiency.

Through PESCO, Member States will increase their effectiveness in addressing security challenges. This will contribute to the protection of European citizens and increase the efficiency of defence spending.

The establishment of PESCO shows that the EU delivers on the real challenges that matter to its citizens. It also signals in the current geopolitical context that the EU is taking greater responsibility, also in the area of defence.

Are there already specific projects?

Member States participating in PESCO have identified an initial list of 17 projects. These initial projects are expected to be adopted formally by the Council in early 2018.

What are the projects about?

The projects are aimed to cover EU defence capability gaps and should improve the EU's responsiveness to crises. They focus either on building-up EU defence capabilities including in the maritime and cyber security domains or they improve the EU's operational readiness, for example through a network of logistic hub and a European medical command, or by removing obstacles to transit of military personnel and equipment throughout the EU territory.

See the table attached for further information.

Governance

The Council decision establishing PESCO sets out its governance, with the Council maintaining the coherence and ambition of the PESCO, complemented by specific governance procedures at projects level.

Timeline

In December 2016, the EU leaders agreed that Europeans needed to take greater responsibility for their security and asked High Representative Mogherini to come forward with proposals, including on PESCO. Meanwhile the EU Global Strategy for Foreign and Security Policy (EUGS) had started a process of closer cooperation in security and defence.

In June 2017 the European Council agreed on the need to launch an ambitious and inclusive PESCO. On 13 November 2017, ministers from 23 Member States signed a joint notification on the Permanent Structured Cooperation (PESCO) and handed it over to the High Representative and the Council. On 7 December 2017, Ireland and Portugal also notified their decision to join PESCO.

On 11 December 2017, the Council adopted a decision establishing Permanent Structured Cooperation (PESCO), less than a month after receiving a joint notification by Member States of their intention to participate.

December 2016	European Council conclusions Leaders agree that Europeans must take greater responsibility for their security and ask High Representative Mogherini to come forward with proposals, including on PESCO.
June 2017	European Council conclusions Leaders agree on the need to launch an inclusive and ambitious PESCO
September 2017	List of common commitments presented by Member States
November 2017	Notification First formal step to set up PESCO
December 2017	Council decision establishing PESCO and list of first projects