MAY 14, 2019

# PESCO: Defense Cooperation among EU Member States

by Sylvia Lindén , Jens Nilsson

As security environments evolve, the European Union (EU) has started a process of closer cooperation in security and defense — the main initiative of a Permanent Structured Cooperation on security and defense (PESCO), as outlined in the Treaty of the EU, Articles 42 (6) and 46, as well as Protocol 10. Through PESCO, EU member states have agreed to increase their effectiveness in addressing security challenges and in further integrating and strengthening defense cooperation within the EU framework.

**Cooperation Through Binding Commitments**

PESCO is a treaty-based framework and process that will deepen defense cooperation amongst EU member states capable and willing to do so. The framework strives to jointly develop defense capabilities and make them available for EU military operations, which will enhance the EUs capacity as an international security actor and will maximize the effectiveness of defense spending. A total of 25 member states have decided to participate in PESCO.[1]

The difference between PESCO and other forms of cooperation is the legally binding nature of the commitments undertaken by the participating member states. The decision to participate was made voluntarily by each participating member state, and decision-making will remain in the hands of the participating member states.

PESCO is not meant to compete with NATO, but rather encourage cooperation and interconnect national armaments industries; e.g., EU member states are providing 178 different weapon systems, in comparison, the U.S. uses 30 (as of 2017).

**PESCO Projects**

Currently 34 projects will be developed in the context of PESCO. The projects range from the establishment of a European Medical Command, an EU Training Mission Competence Centre, Cyber Rapid Response Teams, Mutual Assistance in Cyber Security, Military Disaster Relief, or an upgrade of Maritime Surveillance to the creation of an European Military Space Surveillance Awareness Network, a joint EU Intelligence School, specialized Helicopter Training, as well as co-basing, which would allow the joint use of national and overseas bases.

Each of the projects is carried forward by varying PESCO participating member states and is coordinated by one or more PESCO participating member states. The project members may agree among themselves to allow other participating member states to join as a project member or as a project observer.

**Notable Projects within the PESCO Framework**

**Indirect Fire Support (EuroArtillery)**

Slovakia, Italy

The Indirect Fire Support (EuroArtillery) will develop a mobile precision artillery platform, which

would contribute to the EU's combat capability requirement in military operations. This platform is expected to include land battle decisive ammunition, non-lethal ammunition, and a common fire control system for improving coordination and interoperability in multinational operations. This project aims at procuring a new capability/platform of a key mission component for land forces in the short to mid-term.

**European Military Space Surveillance Awareness Network (EU-SSA-N)**

Italy, France

The main scope of this project is to develop an autonomous, sovereign EU military SSA capability that is interoperable, integrated, and harmonized with the EU-SST framework initiative for the protection of European MS Space assets and services. It will also enable an appropriate response to natural and manmade threats.

**Footnotes**

[1] The participating EU 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.