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PESCO: A BETTER WAY TO FIGHT

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Exercise Solo Flight

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PESCO: A BETTER WAY TO FIGHT

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PESCO: A BETTER WAY TO FIGHT

INTRODUCTION

With the recent decision for a Permanent Structured Cooperation (PESCO)¹, the European Union (EU) has taken a historic step towards strengthening the Common Security and Defense Policy (CSDP).² No other policy has had a greater potential influence on CSDP as PESCO in the history of European integration. With this political breakthrough, Europe is responding to a global security environment that is changing dramatically. Over time, the individual nation-state has lost more power in the globalized world. Even the big European states, which in some cases dominated the globe in the 20th century, can only operate with limited autonomy today. Challenges such as climate change, digitization and population migration, along with the requirement to overcome the difficulties of the economic instability, technological advancement and ecological problems of our time will not be surpassed individually in the long term.³ This also applies to the question of security, Europe's neighborhood is as restless as it is uncertain and its crises and problems have a direct impact on the EU. While the world's major powers continue to redefine their global role in many ways, it is not necessarily in the European interest.

¹ Council of the European Union, “COUNCIL DECISION establishing Permanent Structured Cooperation (PESCO) and determining the list of Participating Member States”, Brussels 8 December 2018, last accessed 4 April 2018, <http://www.consilium.europa.eu/media/32000/st14866en17.pdf>

² European Union, External Action, “The Common Security And Defence Policy (CSDP)”, last accessed 4 April 2018, https://eeas.europa.eu/headquarters/headquarters-homepage/431/common-security-and-defence-policy-csdp_en

³ OSCE, “International security in the 21st century: credible responses to real threats”, last accessed 4 April 2018, <https://www.osce.org/sg/91507?download=true>

World political structures have become more complicated in recent years. The alleged "end of history"⁴ or the end of large scale wars, which was expected to be the case at the end of the Cold War, never came to fruition. Wars and conflicts have continued on various scales throughout the world. There is no question that Europe wants to survive these challenge, however, it must be determined to move forward united. French President Emmanuel Macron, in his European speech at the University of Paris Sorbonne, called for the re-founding Europe and emphasized that there should no longer be the maintenance of the status quo.⁵ In other words, this means that European integration must continue to be developed and deepened, especially in the area of internal and external security.

If anything, the idea of PESCO proves that closer and deeper cooperation is possible, if the political will exists. It is all the more important that this process continues to progress towards a European Security and Defense Union (ESDU). For this reason, this essay will prove that through PESCO, Europe's security can be organized more efficiently, effectively and economically and will be an important compliment to the North Atlantic Treaty Organization (NATO) in the future.

This essay will accomplish this by first discussing what PESCO is and its mandate, what has been done thus far and what will need to happen in the future to continue the essential foundation work for achieving better European security. It will also show that this cooperation does not have to be seen as competition to NATO, it can work alongside and with it.

⁴ Francis Fukuyama, "The End of History", *The National Interest*, Summer 1989, https://www.embl.de/aboutus/science_society/discussion/discussion_2006/ref1-22june06.pdf

⁵ ouest france, "Sorbonne speech of Emmanuel Macron", 26 September 2017, last accessed 4 April 2018, <http://international.blogs.ouest-france.fr/archive/2017/09/29/macron-sorbonne-verbatim-europe-18583.html>

WHAT IS PESCO?

The EU Treaty of Lisbon (TEU)⁶ allows individual EU Member States that wish to be particularly involved in CSDP to intensify their cooperation militarily through a "Permanent Structured Cooperation" or PESCO. The basis of the concept is explained and supported by Article 42(6), Article 46 and Protocol No 10 of the TEU.^{7,8} According to this protocol, countries interested in PESCO must fulfill two conditions. Firstly, they need to expand their defense capabilities through the development of national contributions and participation in multinational forces. This includes participation in significant European equipment programs and support in the activities of the European Defense Agency's (EDA) departments of Capability Development, Research, Procurement and Defense. Secondly, they must have the ability to provide armed units and logistical support within 5 to 30 days for a period of 30 to 120 days if required.⁹ According to the PESCO protocol, the cooperation can include the following areas:

- synchronization of national force structures;
- increasing the usability of armed forces;
- binational and multinational cooperation to minimize deficiencies in the mechanism of EU capability development; and

⁶ European Parliament, "The Treaty of Lisbon", last accessed 4 April 2018, http://www.europarl.europa.eu/atyourservice/en/displayFtu.html?ftuId=FTU_1.1.5.html

⁷ Official Journal of the European Union, "CONSOLIDATED VERSION OF THE TREATY OF THE EUROPEAN UNION", last accessed 4 April 2018, http://eur-lex.europa.eu/resource.html?uri=cellar:2bf140bf-a3f8-4ab2-b506-fd71826e6da6.0023.02/DOC_1&format=PDF

⁸ Official Journal of the European Union, "CONSOLIDATED VERSIONS OF THE TREATY ON EUROPEAN UNION AND THE TREATY ON THE FUNCTIONING OF THE EUROPEAN UNION", last accessed 4 April 2018, https://eur-lex.europa.eu/legal-content/EN/TXT/?uri=uriserv:OJ.C_.2008.115.01.0001.01.ENG&toc=OJ:C:2008:115:TOC#C_2008115EN.01020101

⁹ *Ibid.*, Article 1 (b)

- joint procurement programs under the umbrella of the EDA.

Collaboration in these areas, which is the objective of PESCO, is to address the imbalance and incompatibility between nations in the execution of EU joint operations, largely due to individual national capability development solutions, which results in operational and strategic deficiencies. As a result, the PESCO agreement in Lisbon could be an appropriate vehicle for a higher degree of security and defense integration and thus a more binding, effective and efficient CSDP. However, EU member states have been somewhat reluctant to use PESCO to its full potential, taking only minor steps on the path of ever-closer integration in security and defense policy.¹⁰ Although bilateral and multilateral cooperative agreements have been established between individual EU states, they have had no concrete link to the EU overall. As a result, these agreements have amounted to a patchwork of collaborative relationships with none of them having any significant impact on the capabilities of the EU or the goal of increasing the efficiency of the use of the resources of the EU member states. Even with the minor steps taken towards PESCO thus far, 25 out of 28 EU countries currently participate in PESCO, which shows some progress. This essay will now move on to discuss the potential effectiveness and efficiencies that can be realized through PESCO.

DISCUSSION

One can argue that the initiation of PESCO has achieved a breakthrough towards the ultimate goal of more efficient and effective EU security. By several participating nations combining their military capabilities and capacities to CSDP, the sum is greater than its

¹⁰ Ronja Kempin, Ronja Scheler, „Aufloesungerscheinungen in der GSVP vorbeugen“, SWP-Aktuell 62, July 2015, https://www.swp-berlin.org/fileadmin/contents/products/aktuell/2015A63_kmp_sel.pdf

individual parts. This instrument allows a group of member states to pursue joint projects in the field of military capabilities, which in the end is a benefit for the CSDP overall.

With the PESCO initiative aiming bring states more closely together in the development of new capabilities and better coordination or pooling of existing military resources for operations, efficiencies can certainly be found. Despite this collaboration, it must be noted that the developed capabilities still remains under possession and control of the individual member states, which enables it to also use or handover these capabilities to other collective security organizations like NATO and the United Nations (UN).¹¹

PESCO is set to become part of a triad, which includes the European Defense Fund (EDF) to support Joint Research and Capability Development and Coordinated Annual Review on Defense (CARD), which is an annual review of national defense measures.¹² This triad was created by the European Commission's proposed European Defense Fund (EDF) and the Coordinated Annual Review on Defense (CARD), The triad will make the EU better able to counter regional security shortfalls and challenges, including funding and resources, through more coordination by national and community actions in the development and deployment of military capabilities. In this way, the EU can better meet its own aspirations as a reliable and increasingly autonomous actor in security and defense policy.

Research and development is a key to military capability development and was one of the main reasons the European Commission's President, Mr. Jean-Claude Juncker, proposed the

¹¹ European Union, External Action, "Permanent Structured Cooperation (PESCO) – Factsheet", last accessed 4 April 2018, https://eeas.europa.eu/headquarters/headquarters-homepage/34226/permanent-structured-cooperation-pesco-factsheet_en.

¹² Ringo Wagner, Hans-Joachim Schaprian, „Handlungsfähigkeit stärken, - Handlungssicherheit sichern“, *Friedrich Ebert Stiftung*, Bonner Universitätsdruckerei; 2018., 114.

EDF, which was later adopted.¹³ This will enable the European Commission to support joint arms projects in the field of research and development with EU funds if they are operated jointly by several member states. Although the Commission does not require the participation of member states in PESCO as a condition for membership in the EDF, it is useful to combine these two entities. In this way, member states could adopt a more holistic approach, from the identification of the capability gap, to funding, to the provision and use of the capability itself.

Evidence of the benefits of PESCO and the EDF can be seen in the European Commission's reallocation of funds in the budget so that joint research projects can be supported. In 2020, the EDF Multiannual Financial Framework indicates that it will provide € 500 million per year in Joint Research, making it one of the largest European research funds in the region.¹⁴ While in the field of Development and Procurement, the EDF will provide up to € 5.5 billion per year to support joint projects.¹⁵ Further to this, by executing joint projects, efficiencies could be realized in procurement through a consolidation of things like platform requirements, such as helicopters, which will bring the price per unit down through a larger order of units. Money and resources are not the only elements of efficiency and effectiveness, one must also consider the structure of the organization.

It is well-known that the EU needs more efficient governance structures for military engagement. In June 2017, PESCO brought about the Military Planning and Conduct Capability (MPCC) Staff.¹⁶ This new command structure is now responsible for the central management of all non-executive military EU operations such as the training missions in Mali, the Central

¹³ *Ibid.*, 26.

¹⁴ *Ibid.*, 26.

¹⁵ *Ibid.*, 26.

¹⁶ Konrad Adenauer Stiftung, "European Defense", last accessed 4 April 2018, <http://www.kas.de/wf/en/33.50336/>

African Republic and Somalia. Despite the MPCC is not a central EU headquarters that controls all EU crisis management measures, the new structure functions within the existing EU security structure quite practically. This is achieved through enabling the streamlining of the planning and execution of non-executive military missions, leaving other security elements to focus on crisis management.¹⁷ While PESCO has set a positive course for increasing efficiency, the EU continues to face major challenges in achieving its ambitious goal of a European Defense Union (EDU).

It can be argued that PESCO laid down a fundamental cornerstone for a designated EDU and CSDP development. This progression in connection with the advancement of the initiation of PESCO was made possible by two events. Firstly, the election of Donald Trump as United States (US) President in 2017 and secondly, the United Kingdom's (UK) British Exit (BREXIT) from the EU decision.¹⁸

As a result of the negative and confusing statements made by Trump in regard to the EU, the majority of Europeans felt that Europe would have to take care of its own security issues in the future and no longer rely on the protection of the US. In addition to this, the decision of the UK to exit from the EU has opened the door to PESCO as it was one of the main players who resisted the expansion of EU defense in recent years. With the exit of the UK from the decision-making process inevitable, it has given the German and French initiative to progress and develop

¹⁷ Ringo Wagner, Hans-Joachim Schaprian, „Handlungsfähigkeit stärken, - Handlungssicherheit sichern“, *Friedrich Ebert Stiftung*, Bonner Universitätsdruckerei; 2018., 27.

¹⁸ Centre of European Reform, „EU defence, Brexit and Trump- The Good, the Bad and the Ugly“, last accessed 4 April 2018, http://www.cer.eu/sites/default/files/pb_defence_14dec16.pdf

PESCO more greater opportunity for success.¹⁹ This success can be seen most recently with the announcement of 17 joint PESCO projects on 6 March 2018.²⁰

These projects are in the area of competency development within the operational dimension, contributing to a results-oriented implementation of PESCO to ensure a balance between the optimization of available resources and the improvement of the effectiveness in the most demanding assignments and measures.²¹ Strengthening the announcement of these projects was the previously implemented PESCO Council decision from 8 December 2017, which states that all member countries must participate in at least one PESCO project that is designed or developed by a member state and is of strategic importance for relevant capabilities.²² The overall aim of these projects is to increase Europe's strategic autonomy and to strengthen the technological and industrial base of the European Defense Technological and Industrial Base (EDTIB).

Each project has a "lead-nation", which manages the project and is supported by several stakeholders. The list of projects cover a wide range of areas such as the establishment of a European Medical Command, the more intensive exchange of information between states, the development of several vehicle platforms (Armored Infantry Fighting Vehicle, Amphibious Assault Vehicle, Light Armored Vehicle and artillery weaponry) and the establishment of an European Forces (EUFOR) Crisis Response Operation Core.

¹⁹ Besch Sophia, , "HOW THE EU CAN BEND WITHOUT BREAKING", *European Council on Foreign Relations*, December 2016, Page 2. http://www.ecfr.eu/specials/scorecard/the_future_shape_of_europe

²⁰ Council of the European Union, "COUNCIL RECOMMENDATION of 6 March 2018 concerning a roadmap for the implementation of PESCO" last accessed 4 April 2018, <http://www.consilium.europa.eu/media/33064/council-recommendation.pdf>.

²⁰ Permanent Structured Cooperation (PESCO) first collaborative PESCO projects – Overview, last accessed 4 April 2018, <https://www.consilium.europa.eu/media/32020/draft-pesco-declaration-clean-10122017.pdf>

The EUFOR Crisis Response Operation Core is a German-led project that identifies necessary skills and capabilities for EU crisis management operations based on a common threat analysis and deployment planning. This will ensure a shorter reaction time in crisis situations as well as an improvement of EU capacity to act and deal with EU crisis management. This will be accompanied by refining operational effectiveness through projects such as the Spain-led Strategic Command and Control (C2) System for CSDP Missions and Operations, which will enhance C2 at the strategic level through refining the military decision-making process, thus improving the planning and conduct of missions and the coordination of EU forces.²³ While projects such as the ones mentioned above support the claim that the EU has made its commitment to bundle its capabilities in order to be able to act more quickly, there are also other benefits monetarily.

Once could argue PESCO will become cheaper for European countries over time. While the member states of PESCO are committed to increase their defense budgets steadily (Goal is 2 percent of GDP), joint projects as well as stronger integration and the financial support from the EDF, costs will be reduced from a long term perspective.²⁴ Currently, all EU countries are still planning and operating their Armed Forces as an individual national responsibility. When considering all of Europe's national armies, their numbers add up to more than 1.5 million soldiers with their current annual costs at approximately 225 billion euros.²⁵ However, in relation to the high expenditures, the generated defense capabilities are considered to be quite low. While

²³ augengeradeaus, "Mehr europäische Verteidigung: Deutschland führt bei Sanität und Logistik", last accessed 4 April 2018, <http://augengeradeaus.net/2017/12/mehr-europaeische-verteidigung-deutschland-fuehrt-bei-sanitaet-und-logistik/>

²⁴ DW, "Can PESCO provide a new European identity?", last accessed 4 April 2018, <http://www.dw.com/en/can-pesco-provide-a-new-european-identity/a-41362789>

²⁵ Ringo Wagner, Hans-Joachim Schaprian, „Handlungsfähigkeit stärken, - Handlungssicherheit sichern“, *Friedrich Ebert Stiftung*, Bonner Universitätsdruckerei; 2018., 14.

these statistics are from an individual state perspective, it does not mean that there isn't any collaboration.

There are many multinational defense cooperation agreements between some of the states, however, the problem with these arrangements is that they leave the concept of an overall European Armed Force insufficient. For instance, in many European states is still a desire to be as independent and secure as possible with their own resources, which is why they tend to protect their national defence industries. Thus, duplication of effort in capability development and defense research within the EU is common among member states. This duplication affects the interoperability of EU member states with their defense-related products as each completes their own development and procurement. This leads to inadequate preparedness, readiness and execution of regionally based coalitions as it creates gaps in defense capabilities.

For example, currently European state armies have 17 different types of main battle tanks and 20 different fighter aircraft, while the US focuses on only one type of main battle tank and six types of aircraft.²⁶ There are also considerable differences between European and US navies. The EU states have 29 types of Frigates and Destroyers, while there are only 4 different types in the US Navy.²⁷ This inefficiency by European states hampers the intention of a CSDP, which aims to create a common European armaments sector. Like the US, the creation of a European armaments sector would facilitate a common security objective within the region through focused and consolidated requirements for the capability development of European armed forces. While strides are being made with PESCO, the European Commission is calling for increased cooperation supported with many statistics.

²⁶ European Commission, "REFLECTION PAPER ON THE FUTURE OF EUROPEAN DEFENCE", 7 June 2017, Page 9, last accessed 4 April 2018, https://ec.europa.eu/commission/sites/beta-political/files/reflection-paper-defence_en.pdf

²⁷ *Ibid.*, 9.

Today, 80 percent of European defense capabilities are procured nationally and 90 percent of defense-related research and development activities are nationally funded.²⁸ These numbers are further supported when comparing 30 types of weapons systems in the US to 178 equivalent ones in Europe.²⁹ According to the European Commission, PESCO and further European cooperation in the development and procurement of defence related products can achieve an annual savings potential of 30 percent for EU member states.³⁰ The bulk of defense funding will continue to come from national sources, however, the EU budget in conjunction with the EDF, will enable Europe to better target spending and improve cost-effectiveness. On top of this, it must be noted that joint arms projects in Europe mean renouncing national special requirements by individual states. This means that a European main battle tank of the future must meet Europe-wide specifications, not only those of individual states. The realization of insisting on this is due to the lessons-learned from negative experiences from previous “joint” European projects, in which the participating nations insisted on meeting their own specifications. With all of the benefits of PESCO discussed so far, there are still some reservations.

One of the most common arguments to strengthening EU defense policy has always been the fear that PESCO would weaken NATO or could be “to the detriment of NATO” due to the perception of a redundancy in defensive capabilities and development.³¹ In other words, some European countries who decide to support PESCO financially may be reluctant to continue to contribute as much to NATO, which could weaken the organization. However, the past has

²⁸ Ringo Wagner, Hans-Joachim Schaprian, „Handlungsfähigkeit stärken, - Handlungssicherheit sichern”, *Friedrich Ebert Stiftung*, Bonner Universitätsdruckerei; 2018, 14

²⁹ *Ibid.*, 9.

³⁰ European Union, External Action, “Permanent Structured Cooperation (PESCO) – Factsheet”, Last accessed 4 April 2018, https://eeas.europa.eu/headquarters/headquarters-homepage/34226/permanent-structured-cooperation-pesco-factsheet_en

³¹ Independent, „PESCO: Remaining EU countries agree to plan to integrate their military forces after Brexit”, last accessed 4 April 2018, <https://www.independent.co.uk/news/world/europe/brexit-latest-eu-military-pesco-nato-integrate-army-a8111311.html>

shown that the opposite is the case. An initiative between the President of the European Council and Commission and the Secretary-General of NATO has led to the arrangement of 42 cooperative projects between the two organizations, which has not affected member state support to either.³² Therefore, this is an indication that the pursuit of PESCO and greater European consolidation in security and defense policy would by no means equate to a reduction in NATO support or lead to competition between the organizations.

In the context of increased common challenges, both the EU and NATO have moved closer together. At the NATO summit in Warsaw in July 2016, a joint declaration was signed that establishes closer cooperation in seven areas and marks the beginning of an ever-evolving, enhanced cooperation.³³ The Declaration describes what both NATO and the EU refer to as the "New Era of Cooperation".³⁴ This joint statement emphasizes what cannot be overstated: strengthening CSDP is an EU priority and paramount in strengthening the European pillar in NATO.³⁵ If European states expand their defense spending, resources and capabilities in a coordinate manner, efficiency and effectiveness will be realized and therefore NATO will also be strengthened.

In summary, the benefits of PESCO are clear. Some of the strongest arguments against it have proven to be false, evident in the already strong relationship between the EU and NATO. The quest for both organizations is transatlantic "burden sharing", so through PESCO, further cooperation could be realized and value added to both organizations and the European writ large.

³² Ringo Wagner, Hans-Joachim Schaprian, „Handlungsfähigkeit stärken, - Handlungssicherheit sichern“, *Friedrich Ebert Stiftung*, Bonner Universitätsdruckerei; 2018, 27.

³³ NATO, „Joint Declaration“, last accessed 4 April 2018, http://www.nato.int/cps/en/natohq/official_texts_133163.htm

³⁴ European Union EXTERNAL ACTION, „EU and NATO starts a new era of cooperation“, last accessed 4 April 2018, https://eeas.europa.eu/headquarters/headquarters-homepage_en/16643/EU%20and%20NATO%20start%20new%20era%20of%20cooperation

³⁵ DW, „PESCO: EU paves way to defense union“, last accessed 4 April 2018, <http://www.dw.com/en/pesco-eu-paves-way-to-defense-union/a-41360236>

With the discussion complete, this essay will now move on to a consolidation of key points and conclusion.

CONCLUSION

This essay has proven that through PESCO, Europe's security can be organized more efficiently, effectively and economically and will be an important compliment to the North Atlantic Treaty Organization (NATO) in the future. The arguments presented illustrate that PESCO and the resulting improved coordination of defence projects in a more organized fashion have enabled the EU to take an important first step in its desire to become a true EDU and thus have contributed significantly to the strengthening of the CSDP.

As a result, in the future the EU will realize more efficiency through cost-effectiveness and will be able to better respond to the challenges in the region and potentially worldwide through increased interoperability. This will be accomplished through many projects and initiatives that will focus on developing European-wide defense capabilities as opposed to individual interests.

As surprising as it was for the EU and large segments parts of the European population to hear about the UK's eventual exit from the EU as well as President Trump's confusing foreign policy statements, it in a way opened a window of opportunity in European security and defense policy. Along with this, further evidence presented shows that an EDU is not competition to NATO, but rather represents a strengthening of its European pillar and will be a central element of the transatlantic "burden sharing".

Nevertheless, despite the obvious potential benefits of PESCO, it is still in its infancy and its initial projects are new to the EU structure. Having said this, there is no doubt that progress must be made in CSDP and an EDU and if and when more buy-in occurs with PESCO and its full potential is realized, the long-term benefits are limitless.

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