



# THE ROLE OF PERMANENT STRUCTURED COOPERATION IN THE DEVELOPMENT OF DEFENCE CAPABILITIES

*Dragoş ILINCA, PhD\**

*European cooperation in the field of defence has registered significant progress in the last years, both from an operational perspective as well as in terms of developing security and defence capabilities. Against this background, several initiatives have been launched to address the issue of capabilities development by gearing multinational cooperation formulas towards filling the gaps identified in the defence planning under the aegis of the Common Security and Defence Policy (CSDP). The Permanent Structured Cooperation (PESCO), an initiative launched on November 13, 2017, through the Joint Notification signed by the ministers of foreign affairs and defence from 25 EU Member States, plays a decisive role in the success of this endeavor.*

*As an expression of the intergovernmental nature of the security and defence dimension at EU level, PESCO has rapidly evolved into a platform for cooperation between Member States in the development of defence capabilities, covering a wide range of areas. Thus, in less than five years, PESCO encompassed 60 cooperation projects. Moreover, at the end of February 2022, the first capability developed under this initiative was activated in an operational context. These aspects were meant to highlight the potential that the Permanent Structured Cooperation can employ in supporting the process of developing the EU's security and defence profile and contribution.*

**Keywords:** *capabilities; PESCO; CSDP; Lisbon Treaty; European Defence Agency; Military Committee; EU Military Staff.*

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**\* Dragoş ILINCA, PhD, is research coordinator within the Institute for Political Studies and Military History of the Ministry of National Defence, Bucharest, Romania. E-mail: dilinca@yahoo.com**



## Introduction

Entry into force of the Treaty of Lisbon (December 1, 2009) has significantly strengthened the normative support of European cooperation in the field of defence, especially by diversifying the options for development options of this dimension within the European Union. The new elements concerned both institutional aspects as well as practical initiatives meant to ensure the flexible approach between Member States in operations and capabilities development. Without altering the intergovernmental of Common Security and Defence Policy (CSDP), the innovations introduced by Treaty of European Union focused on creating the necessary normative framework for additional opportunities to deepen the cooperation against in the critical areas for EU commitment in crisis management.

In this context, the Lisbon Treaty brought Permanent Structured Cooperation as an initiative<sup>1</sup> designed to ensure a superior level of ambition in the field of defence for interested countries. Nevertheless, full use of its potential was never achieved in the coming years, mostly because of global economic crisis that induced severe cuts on defence resources, especially in Europe. This evolution changed significantly following the European Council of 19-20 December 2013. The European leaders asked the High Representative for Security Policy and Foreign Affairs (HR/VP), Federica Mogherini, to initiate, together with Member States and the European Commission, a comprehensive analysis on the implications and opportunities posed by evolutions of security environment (European Conclusions, 19-20 December 2013).

The rationale for this approach must be seen in the particular context of the Common Security and Defence Policy development. The context was marked by the crisis situations erupted in various areas (Iraq, Lybia, Afghanistan), and culminating with Russia's aggression in Ukraine (2014), followed by the annexation of Crimea. Against this background, there were overall pressure exerted on defence budgets, the quest for optimizing the way in which defence resources. Under these auspices, general interests of the Euro-Atlantic community aimed at preserving the adequate capacity of NATO and EU Member States for managing security challenges. Simultaneously with the reflection process that was materialized into EU Global Strategy, the European Council initiated, during 2012, a thorough debate focused on managing the implications of the complex context of this period at the level of capabilities development. The main direction of action which could overcome

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<sup>1</sup> The particular context generated by the failure of Constitutional Treaty ratification in France (20 March 2005) and Netherlands (1 June 2005) affected deeply the substance of Lisbon Treaty. It took over almost all new initiative promoted by Constitutional Treaty, thus maintaining the parameters of flexible approach for development of cooperation in the field of defence. It is the case of Permanent Structured Cooperation which will be fully included in the new Treaty (for exemplification see the text related to Permanent Structured Cooperation within Constitutional Treaty in Official Journal of European Union C310, vol.47, 16 December 2004, p. 140-141 and pp. 364-365).



financial difficulties was to optimize the generation and maintenance of defence capabilities by concentrating on priorities, remedying deficiencies and avoiding redundancies in terms of EU-NATO complementarity.

On these coordinates, the priorities established for the development of European cooperation was focused on strengthening the efficiency, visibility and impact of CSDP, and consolidation of the capability development process and European defence industry. The main ways to achieve these objectives targeted two components namely pooling and sharing the required capabilities for sustaining the operational potential of EU, and develop the collaborative approach through which the interested countries could generate a specific type of capabilities. At the same time, these approaches could potentially bring financial savings.

Preliminary elements of these reflection processes were presented by the High Representative to the European Council in May 2015, the most important aspects being focused on the EU Treaty provisions regarding the development of European cooperation in the field of security and defence. The patterns endorsed in this context were taken within EU Global Strategy of European Union (EUGS), adopted by the European Council, in 28 June 2016. Starting from the results of the rapid reaction capabilities (EU Battle Groups) which became operational in 2007, the EUGS indicated the need for deepening cooperation between Member States by employing the full potential of Lisbon Treaty with a special note on structured cooperation.

By embarking on this approach, the way was opened for the activation of EU Treaty provisions regarding the Permanent Structured Cooperation. Moreover, adopting, through EUGS, a new EU Security and Defence Ambition Level (response to crisis situation, strengthen the capacity of partner states, protecting the EU and its citizens) further contributed to this trend. The EUGS implementation plan forwarded by High Representative in November 2016 underlined the potential use of the EU Treaty provisions regarding Permanent Structured Cooperation, known as PESCO.

Within this framework, the potential of this instrument for development of modular approach as regards Member States cooperation on various topics, especially defence spending, capability development and operational commitments. The proposed approach was approved by the European Council on December 15, 2016, with a special note of interest on acceleration the PESCO operationalization based on the inclusivity principle and through a modular typology in projects development. Thus, on November 13, 2017, a number of 25 Member States<sup>2</sup> formalized the joint decision to initiate cooperation under PESCO aegis. The procedural framing of this approach was made through a notification of these Member States, addressed to the

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<sup>2</sup> States that signed the Notification for PESCO activation were: Austria, Belgium, Bulgaria, Czech Republic, Croatia, Cyprus, Estonia, Finland, France, Germany, Greece, Hungary, Italy, Latvia, Lithuania, Luxembourg, Netherlands, Poland, Portugal, Romania, Slovenia, Slovakia, Spain and Sweden.



High Representative, which includes 20 commitments regarding the investments for defence, capability development, operational capacity, which are the very substance of this initiative being legally binding for PESCO participating countries.

## 1. Principles and Criteria of Operation

The debate which accompanied the activation of PESCO was endorsed by high expectations regarding the potential impact of this initiative for the development of the EU's role in security and defence. As is known, the problem of EU consistency in this domain was a recurrent theme for the entire evolution of European cooperation. The polls<sup>3</sup> conducted in the last decades indicate consistent support of public opinion for developing the role of EU in defence. As mentioned, The Treaty of Lisbon brought certain improvements on the CSDP development framework, which evolved towards a more ambitious platform in which PESCO was one of the most important elements<sup>4</sup>.

The EU Treaty provisions for PESCO functioning included various aspects with general character regarding the participation in this form of cooperation, which is open to all Member States based on their contribution within CSDP (e.g. cooperation programs in the field of capability development; participation in operations and establishment of rapid reaction capabilities – Battle Groups (Art. 1, Protocol on Permanent Structured Cooperation – EU Treaty). The exceptional nature of PESCO was consolidated through concrete commitments to which Member States subscribed being the main outcomes of this initiatives. Basically, these commitments were focused on deepening the integration in the field of defence between participating Member States. This approach was most visible through the common approach and institutional symmetry on capabilities development and decision-making process for associated budgetary aspects (Art. 2(a) and (b) - Protocol).

The potential harmonization of national approaches in the field of defence was the one of the main features of cooperation in the PESCO context. Thus, EU

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<sup>3</sup> For exemplification, the polls conducted in the context of The Treaty of Maastricht adoption and, subsequently, creation of the European Union, indicate the significant support (77% for comparing with only 13% against) for development of a “common defence policy” (Eurobarometer 39, 1993 available at [https://ec.europa.eu/commission/presscorner/detail/en/IP\\_93\\_387](https://ec.europa.eu/commission/presscorner/detail/en/IP_93_387)). This approach was maintained in the coming years reaching significant peaks during various crisis situations that occurred in the decades following the EU establishment. In this sense, there were favorable trends in 2014 (75-81%) for the development of an EU role in defence. This perception was influenced by the conflict in Ukraine, especially annexation of Crimean Peninsula by Russia (Standard Eurobarometer 89).

<sup>4</sup> Besides PESCO, The Treaty of Lisbon brought relevant provisions in the field of security and defence such as: mutual defence clause (Art.42.7); optimization of institutional cooperation between European Defence Agency and European Commission; flexibility mechanism for operations (Art.44); solidarity clause (Art.222); defining the armaments policy and defence capabilities in the European context.



Treaty provisions indicate the ways in which Member States could pool relevant capabilities, simultaneously with the identification of specialization/niche options in order to use more efficiently existing resources. The PESCO priorities in the field of capabilities aimed at overcoming the gaps identified within defence planning process in connection of the Global Headlines<sup>5</sup> adopted by EU between 1999-2004. From this perspective, the focus was placed on advancing the collaborative formulas under PESCO in the field of logistics and training. This approach was to be fully integrated in the modular profile of cooperation that was to be developed under this initiative. At the same time, it was underlined the significance of synergy consolidation between Member States, especially on financing aspects related with capabilities development. The level of defence resources was approached in particular as being one of the most important criteria which participating Member States have to fulfill. At the same time, the interest for consolidation of European profile of cooperation in the PESCO context was also visible especially by the obligation of participating states in the collaborative projects in the CSDP context and under the coordination of EDA.

Operational aspects in the PESCO context were approached from the same perspective on development the cooperation in support of common objectives with a focus on interoperability, availability and deployment capacity (Art.2 (c) – Protocol, EU Treaty). At this point, it is worth to mention additional details on the relation between PESCO and CSDP operational component. The activation of specific clauses of EU Treaty on defence structured cooperation corresponded with a certain maturization of institutional and procedural of EU profile in this area, which allowed the generation and sustainment of multiple operational commitments. Practically, between 2000 and 2017, EU conducted 35 civil and military operations in different geographical perimeters. More than in the case of capabilities development, the approach used on operational aspects benefited from the significant achievements made by EU in the previous years. From this perspective, the main course of action aimed to refining the way in which operational generation process worked in the sense of development the EU potential to generate full spectrum forces, concurrently with deepening of political convergence on how the EU operational role will evolve.

Obviously, the framework provided by EU Treaty for the operation of PESCO had a general character meant to provide the strategic benchmarks of this cooperation format, while the technical procedural aspects were to be approved through the decisions of the Council. This procedure will be used in the context created by PESCO activation involving adoption of subsequent documents that will complete the overall procedural framework, including the functional parameters and dynamic of cooperation projects. In this perspective, the notification adopted in November 2017 brought more clarity as regards applicability of PESCO. Based

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<sup>5</sup> Headline Goal 1999 – creation of Rapid Reaction Force and Headline Goal 2004 – establishment of EU Battle Groups.



on the overall guidelines provided by the Treaty, there were developed 20 detailed commitments that increased the granularity of PESCO implementation in the above-mentioned domains. At the same time, the adoption of these commitments must be seen also from the perspective of a much better integration of PESCO within the overall context of CSDP development, especially as regards other initiatives that were launched in the same period (Coordinated Annual Review on Defence/CARD, launched in November 2016 and European Defence Fund/EDF, June 2017). In the same logic, detailing the cooperation procedural framework was meant to coordinate PESCO with the achievements made in the field of EU rapid reaction capabilities (Battle Groups). Moreover, it was taken into account the increase the utility of the new initiative in exploiting the lessons learned from the various crisis management operations. Thus, a particular interest was placed on the way in which Member States contribution will improve the force generation process as well as the deployment ability, with a special focus on military mobility within European Union (PESCO Notification, p. 4).

## 2. Governance

The model agreed by the Member States for defining the type of governance that will be used for the operation of PESCO initiative was inspired by the typology used by European cooperation under the aegis of CSDP. Selecting this option was dictated by the Member States interest to avoid additional bureaucracy and financial burden. At the same time, it was taken into consideration the need to comply with the intergovernmental profile of security and defence component as it was regulated by the EU Treaty. According to this, at the center of decision-making process were Member States which will decide independently on the way in which various cooperation projects are financed. At the same time, the PESCO functioning patterns were to be matched in synergy with the CSDP institutional setup allowing full integration in the general design.

However, it could not be made on the expense of the specific character of PESCO and, above all, of the variable geometry regarding the participation of states that was not necessary to include all EU members. The participation in PESCO was a matter of individual choice. Setting-up the governance involved a particular role of High Representative for Security Policy and Foreign Affairs in PESCO activities. Through its central role in the coordination of CSDP, the cooptation of the HARP ensures the conditions for harmonizing the political and practical aspects of PESCO with the ongoing processes with the participation of all Member States. At the same time, the HRVP contribution has to be seen from the perspective of ensuring the necessary transparency of the activities developed in PESCO format towards the other Member States that choose not to participate in this initiative. In support of HRVP activities in the context of PESCO, the participating states agreed the creation



of a Secretariat consisting of European Defence Agency (EDA), European External Action Service (EEAS) and the EU Military Staff (EUMS). Within the Secretariat the responsibilities to manage the PESCO activities were assumed by EDA, as regards capabilities development in compliance with specific provisions of the EU Treaty (Art.42(3) and Art.45(2)). At the same time, operational aspects associated with HRVP involvement were placed under the joint coordination of EEAS and EUMS.

From the perspective of internal dynamics of PESCO, the governance system was structured on two levels, in order to preserve the practical coherence with other strands of work and to use the existing EU institutional setup. Thus, the higher level is centered on EU Council, in defence format (with participating states only), which was responsible for adopting decisions and formulate recommendations for strategic guidance of PESCO, governance of subsequent levels and adopt cooperation projects (COUNCIL DECISION (CFSP) 2017/2315, Art.4). It also includes the unanimous approval of participation of other Member States in PESCO (with QMV procedures). In the same vein, the Council is responsible to suspend the participation of Member States that did not fulfil the obligation steemed from biding commitments. Within this context, the common normative framework related to the cooperation projects included the observer status for Member States, while third countries could participate according the PESCO criterias and the full consent of EU Member States.

The second level was related to the governance for cooperation projects, regulated through specific set of norms and principles that allow a coherent approach, while reflecting the multinational character across the areas of PESCO applicability. Thus, the governance of projects was based on the participating Member States. According to the cluster typology, PESCO provides the platform for development of cooperation formulas having a flexible geometry. The practical reflection of this approach can be seen in formation of groups of Member States interested in forwarding the specific projects and, subsequently, assumed the implementation process based on the EU Council approval.

Participation in the projects involves certain obligations for the involved countries in termes of resources (human and financial), equipment, expertise a.s.o. The way in which these requirements were formalized aim at the conclusion of cooperation arrangements according to the typology of memorandum of understanding between participating Member States. It is worth to underline at this point of discussion that PESCO is an initiative based exclusively on the Member States s contributions without benefiting from the support of the EU budget. At the same time, the autonomy in the project's management is the basic principle for their operation, with the participating countries retain the right to frame the internal decision-making process or to decide the way in which responsibilities are shared. This approach should be seen as another modality to harmonize the intergovernmental nature of CSDP with the flexible nature of PESCO, including the binding commitments. Practically,



the high degree of autonomy of which cooperation within the projects benefited corresponds to a similar degree of responsibility which participating states subscribe to. In the same vein, one must pay specific attention to the harmonization between PESCO projects with the other similar undertakings made under other institutional auspices (COUNCIL DECISION (CFSP) 2018/909, Art. 4 (6)).

Also, the interaction between the project's internal dynamic and decision-making level of EU Council is comprised in the perimeter of a periodic information mechanism which provides updates on the development in implementation process. The main interface is provided by the cooperation between project coordinator and the PESCO Secretariat, which is the main framework for exchanging relevant data and information. To an equal extent, this cooperation is the platform of evaluation mechanism on the progresses achieved by PESCO. Considering the binding character of the commitment assumed by participating countries, the review process is equally relevant from the perspective of quantifying national contributions and overall progress.

These are the major differences between PESCO and other initiatives<sup>6</sup> in the field of capabilities development launched before the Lisbon Treaty. The particular relevance of PESCO lays in providing a comprehensive evaluation mechanism focused both on national contributions, as well as the general progress. In this scope, the evaluation mechanism is conducted regularly on those two levels, corresponding to the central role of participating countries as well as the specific character of PESCO. At national level, the evaluation process is implemented through several National Implementation Plans made by Member States and concentrated on the implementation of PESCO binding commitments (COUNCIL DECISION (CFSP) 2017/2315, Art. 3(2)). The national perspective is augmented with the regular report drafted by the High Representative on the progress achieved in the evolution of PESCO. The report focuses also on the coherence between PESCO and the other initiatives and process conducted in UE on defence and security. (Council Recommendation 2019, (PESCO) (2019/C 166/01), p. 2).

### **3. Capability Projects**

In structuring PESCO a special focus was placed on the implementation of a staged approach for the development of cooperation projects. As in the case of the other levels previously analyzed, the principle of flexibility oversights the development of PESCO functional matrix, as to ensure a pragmatic connection of the cooperation projects with the specifics of each commitment. Practically, each of the commitments assumed that underpinned PESCO has a particular character in terms of timeframe, comprehensiveness, level of resources involved a.s.o. In this sense, it becomes necessary to adopt a phased approach needed for the implementation of

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<sup>6</sup> European Capabilities Action Plan / ECAP in 2002 and Capability Action Plan /CDP in 2008.





thresholds and to ensure the realistic character in assuming the level of ambition of PESCO.

For a proper correlation, it was taken into account the integration of the implementation process related to the bidding commitments as part of the general framework of fulfilling the level of ambition advanced through Eu Global Strategy. Not in the least, the development of PESCO had to be correlated with the process of drafting the Multianual Financial Framework (2021-2027), in order to ensure an adequate synchronization with the financial effort, especially at the level of Member States. Within this context, PESCO was structured in two stages/phases, 2018-2021, respectively 2021-2025. Almost simultaneously with the PESCO Notification in 2017, participating Member States adopted a Declaration which included the first batch of 17 projects that will be launched starting from the following year. This approach on designing first projects reflected the sustainability of political consensus on Member States support for PESCO, even from this initial stages (Blockmans, Steven & Crosson, Dylan Macchiarini, p. 93). The main feature of the first wave of PESCO projects was the multidisciplinary character by approaching an extended list of topics in capabilities development and operational sustainment fields (Declaration on PESCO Projects). Subsequently, the projects assumed by the participating Member States will be approved by the EU Council. This procedure will be used constantly for approval of the next batches of projects.

As regards the substance of the first projects, there are some aspects that need to be highlighted. As previously mentioned, the creation of PESCO was placed in support of the overall development of European cooperation under CSDP, without creating duplications. Based on this principle, the guidance for developing projects were to be found within strategic framework associated with CSDP, namely EU Global Strategy and the priorities forwarded through the Capability Development Plan (CDP). The latter is a planning document for capabilities development which is updated every four years by the European Defence Agency. The main purpose of CDP is to provide the guiding targets for defence requirements in European context for short and medium term. The first CDP was endorsed by the EDA Steering Board, in defence ministers' format that took place in July 2008. Consequently, the first projects adopted under PESCO answered to priorities advanced through CDP (Fiott, Daniel, p. 2). Nevertheless, there was a gap between those processes generated by the fact that the revision of CDP was finalised only in mid-2018, including the adopting of new priorities for capability development in EU.

These basically represent a comprehensive platform, which includes 11 domains associated with both the specific capabilities for force categories as well as those necessary for managing the asymmetric threats (cyber, hybrid), informational superiority, space communication a.s.o. (EU Capability Priorities, pp.6-7). The batches of PESCO projects adopted by the EU Council in November 2018 (17),



November 2019 (13), and November 2021 (14) were much better connected to the priorities agreed through CDP. At the same time, the profile of the cooperation projects gradually acquired more and more distinct contours in terms of the operational dimension, thus, responding to the options assumed by participating Member States within the PESCO Strategic Review. This process was conducted in the scope of a better capitalization of the lessons learned from PESCO first phase (2018-2021) and to guide the activities for the second one. The Council adopted the conclusions of this reflection process in November 20, 2000, revealing the Member States interest for obtaining practical results in PESCO and for optimizing the operational effectiveness, including development of the required capabilities for implementation. Another component addressed with priority in the revision process was focused on consolidating the connection between cooperation projects and investment dimension in the field of defence, including on the industrial output for cooperative undertakings in capabilities development (Council Conclusions on the PESCO Strategic Review 2020).

Also, it is important to underline that the cooperation projects benefited from multiple sources of inspiration, which answer to the CDP priorities and correspond with the areas indicated by Member States interest for cooperation. The discussion on the guidelines for projects development process in PESCO should be deepened by taking into account the role of interaction between Member States under CSDP. It includes the perceptions and national approaches as regards the implementation of CDP with a special focus on potential cooperation formulas between Member States, which can generate the expected results against agreed priorities. This could not be seen as a very new element, not even in the context of PESCO activation. In fact, it was one of the themes constantly addressed during the development process of European cooperation in the field of security and defence, since its initial stages in December 1999. The interest in the development of cooperative approaches in the capability areas has been resumed with more intensity in the context of EU Global Strategy being considered an option with significant potential to contribute to the elimination of capability deficits, and to optimize the use of available resources. The first guidelines for the level of ambition regarding collaborative programs in the European context were adopted by EDA Steering Board meeting in November 19, 2007. In this context there were adopted four benchmarks related to the defence spending at national level as regards individual acquisition (20%) and collaborative (35%). In the same vein, there were agreed targets for defence expenditures related to research (2%) and technology (20%). They are voluntary in nature, and translation into internal defence plans being a sovereign decision (Defence Data 2007, p. 1).

However, the achievements of next years failed to meet the expectations on increasing the share of collaborative projects and multinational approaches at EU level. EU Global Strategy addressed this situation by launching the idea to develop



a cooperation mechanism between Member States in the shape of a Coordinated Review on Defence that could stimulate the interaction between Member States. The anticipated benefits of this approach should have been reflected in increasing the coherence between national endowment plans, and on the harmonization of defence planning process (EU Global Strategy, p. 46). In May 2017, the EU Council approved the implementation of this approach through a new instrument called the Coordinated Annual Review on Defence (CARD). The first cycle of this initiative took place between 2019-2020, after which some potential areas of interest for Member States in the development capabilities were identified, such as: Main Battle Tanks; Soldier Systems; Patrol Class Surface Ships; Counter Unmanned Aerial Systems (Counter-UAS); Defence applications in Space; Military Mobility. As for operational effectiveness, CARD conclusions underlined the importance of several domains, such as force projection, non-kinetic future support capabilities and force projection (2020 CARD Report, pp. 6-7). The relevance of these areas is even more important in analyzing the projects profile. Practically, the first CARD Cycle was, together with CDP and EUGS, the third inspiration area for defining the PESCO cooperation projects. Consequently, the connection between cooperation opportunities identified through CARD and PESCO is most visible in the last tranche of projects adopted in November 2021, especially on military mobility<sup>7</sup>, maritime surveillance, space based capabilities.

### **Conclusions**

As can be seen, the implementation of EU Treaty provisions on Permanent Structured Cooperation was conducted in an efficient and pragmatic manner. In a very short period of time, significant progress was registered, especially through the consistent package advanced by participating Member States in the four waves of projects approved in recent years. This certifies, primarily, the attractiveness of PESCO for Member States, which contributed extensively to the political support of the initiative. Equally, the achievements should be also looked at from the functional perspective in a larger framework of the processes and initiatives developed under CSDP. Practically, the interaction between PESCO and CDP or CARD has become a reality, which is generating concrete results while ensuring the adequate premises for avoiding duplications and ensure coherence.

However, the specific character of PESCO that represents the practical manifestation of flexibility in the field of defence should not be omitted. The main objective of this approach was to develop a new instrument meant to stimulate the European cooperation. Ever since the launch of PESCO, expectations regarding

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<sup>7</sup> It is noticeable that Military Mobility is by far the most attractive PESCO project. It includes participation of 24 Member States and 3 third countries (US, Canada and Norway).



its impact for the overall dynamic of defence cooperation were on a higher level, even exceeding the potential and scope of the initiative. Obviously, this approach is common to the initial stages of every process and initiative that involves certain complexity such is the case for capabilities development and sustainment of operational commitments.

Assessment of the first PESCO phase indicates several clear conclusions regarding the consolidation of the initiative profile as an integratory framework of the efforts for improving the efficiency of EU in capabilities development. The interest of the Member States in addressing the capabilities shortfalls in PESCO context is on an upward trend, both in terms of quantitative perspective (number of projects), and their complexity. Obviously, it can be eluded from this discussion the evolutionary character of the security environment and its implications for capabilities. From this perspective, the next years will have a particular importance on the way in which PESCO agenda will be adapted in the sense of generating relevant cooperation projects.

The sustainability of PESCO initiative is the main challenge for the next period, especially from the perspective of financial sustainment of cooperation projects. This also includes the participating Member States, especially by taking into account the maturity phase reached by cooperation projects and the consistent perspective of industrial outcome. In this sense, certain opportunities were to be grasped in the context of the operation of the European Defence Fund (2021-2027), which could contribute to the financial sustainment of PESCO projects.

In addition to these aspects related to the internal dynamic, PESCO should be seen from the perspective of its role in ensuring the complementarity with other processes and initiatives developed within other organisations, especially NATO. The synergic approach is a requirement generated both by the shared membership of the majority of the member states, as well as by the need for an efficient management of defence resources.

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