

Defence cooperation: Council assesses progress made in the framework of PESCO after first year of implementation

The Council today discussed PESCO after its **first full year of implementation**. It adopted a recommendation **assessing the progress made** by the participating member states to fulfil commitments undertaken in the framework of Permanent Structured Cooperation (PESCO).

The Council underlines that participating member states have **made progress in increasing the level of defence budgets and joint defence investment** with an increase of the aggregated defence budgets of 3.3% in 2018 and 4.6% 2019. Another positive trend is the fact that participating member states are increasingly **using EU tools, initiatives and instruments in national defence planning**, such as the revised Capability Development Plan (CDP), the Coordinated Annual Review for Defence (CARD) and the European Defence Industrial Development Programme (EDIDP). They have started preparing for the European Defence Fund which should replace the EDIDP for the period 2021-2027.

The Council invites participating member states to continue to make progress in fulfilling the more binding commitments related to bringing their respective defence systems more in line with each other, in particular **to strengthen collaborative capability development**. It also encourages them to make further efforts as regards the commitments related to **strengthening the availability and deployability of forces**, including for military Common and Security Defence Policy (CSDP) operations and missions.

Participating member states are also encouraged to advance the work and **focus on the swift and effective implementation of the 34 PESCO projects** in which they participate in order to deliver tangible outputs and products. As a high number of PESCO projects respond to EU capability development priorities which also reflect NATO priorities, **coherence between EU and NATO** respective processes will continue to be ensured. The recommendation also foresees that after 2019, the next call for PESCO projects would take place in 2021.

Background

The Council adopted a decision establishing Permanent Structured Cooperation (PESCO) on 11 December 2017. PESCO enables participating EU member states to work more closely together in the area of security and defence. This permanent framework for defence cooperation allows willing and able member states to develop jointly defence capabilities, invest in shared projects, and enhance the operational readiness and contribution of their armed forces.

The Council agreed on 17 initial projects on 11 December 2017 and formally

adopted them on 6 March 2018. The Council adopted 17 additional projects on 11 November 2018. The projects cover areas such as training, capability development and operational readiness on land, at sea and in the air, as well as cyber-defence.

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.

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