

Defence: European Commission welcomes steps towards Permanent Structured Cooperation

The Commission strongly welcomes the move by Austria, Belgium, Bulgaria, Czech Republic, Croatia, Cyprus, Estonia, Finland, France, Germany, Greece, Hungary, Italy, Latvia, Lithuania, Luxembourg, the Netherlands, Poland, Romania, Slovenia, Slovakia, Spain and Sweden towards launching Permanent Structured Cooperation (PESCO) on defence, by signing today a joint notification and handing it over to High Representative Federica **Mogherini**.

President **Juncker** has been calling for a stronger Europe on security and defence since his election campaign, saying in April 2014: *"I believe that we need to take more seriously the provisions of the existing Treaty that allow those European countries who want to do this to progressively build up a common European defence. I know this is not for everybody. But those countries that would like to go ahead should be encouraged to do so. Pooling defence capacities in Europe makes perfect economic sense."* This same ambition was set out in his three-point plan for foreign policy, which was incorporated in the Political Guidelines – the Juncker Commission's political contract with the European Parliament and the European Council.

PESCO is a Treaty-based framework and process to deepen defence cooperation amongst EU Member States who are capable and willing to do so. It will enable Member States to jointly develop defence capabilities, invest in shared projects and enhance the operational readiness and contribution of their armed forces. Following today's notification the Council should adopt a formal decision establishing PESCO by the end of the year, with the first projects to be identified in parallel.

The [European Defence Fund](#) launched by the Commission in June 2017 will boost collaborative projects in the area of defence research, prototype development and joint acquisition of capabilities. Today's joint notification marks an important step towards creating a fully-fledged European Defence Union by 2025, as President **Juncker** stressed in his [State of the Union address on 13 September 2017](#).

For more information on PESCO please see a factsheet [here](#). See [here](#) the Strategic Note: In Defence of Europe by the European Political Strategy Centre. You can watch the PESCO signing ceremony on [EbS](#).