

Defence cooperation: Council establishes Permanent Structured Cooperation (PESCO), with 25 member states participating

On 11 December 2017, the Council adopted a decision establishing Permanent Structured Cooperation (PESCO), less than a month after receiving a joint notification by member states of their intention to participate.

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. On 13 November 2017, ministers from 23 member states signed a joint notification on the Permanent Structured Cooperation (PESCO) and handed it over to the High Representative and the Council. On 7 December 2017, Ireland and Portugal also notified their decision to join PESCO.

Permanent Structured Cooperation in the area of security and defence policy was introduced by the Lisbon Treaty. It foresees the possibility of a number of **EU member states working more closely together in the area of security and defence**. This permanent framework for defence cooperation will allow 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 decision establishing PESCO sets out:

- the list of participating member states
- the list of ambitious and more binding **common commitments** undertaken by the participating member states, including "**regularly increasing defence budgets in real terms** in order to reach agreed objectives"
- the PESCO **governance**, with an **overarching level** maintaining the coherence and the ambition of the PESCO, complemented by specific governance procedures at **projects level**
- administrative arrangements, including the secretariat functions for PESCO at project level and financing

Member states participating in PESCO also adopted a declaration at the same time as the adoption of the decision establishing PESCO. The declaration welcomes the political agreement identifying **an initial list of 17 projects** to be undertaken under PESCO. The projects cover areas such as training, capability development and operational readiness in the field of defence. These initial projects are expected to be formally adopted by the Council in early 2018.

Next steps

The decision establishing PESCO foresees that the Council, by unanimity of the representatives of member states participating in PESCO, will adopt, further decisions and recommendations in a number of areas, including to establish:

- **the list of projects** to be developed under PESCO (expected early 2018)
- a common **set of governance rules for projects**, which could be adapted for individual projects
- the general conditions under which **third States** could be invited to participate in individual projects.

- [Decision establishing Permanent Structured Cooperation \(PESCO\) and determining the list of Participating Member States](#)
- [Declaration on PESCO projects by member states participating in PESCO](#)
- [Defence cooperation: 23 member states sign joint notification on the Permanent Structured Cooperation \(PESCO\)](#)
- [EU cooperation on security and defence](#)
- [Permanent structured cooperation factsheet \(EEAS\)](#)

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