
Recenzovaný článek

EU Permanent Structured Cooperation – a New Momentum for Streamlining Interaction Between the EU Operations Planning and Capability Development

Stálá strukturovaná spolupráce EU – nový impuls k zefektivnění vzájemné interakce mezi plánováním operací a rozvojem schopností

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Abstract:

The authors' intention is to present findings to which they came while analysing the implementation process of the EU Permanent Structured Cooperation (PESCO), especially in the area of EU operations planning and development of capabilities required for achieving the EU level of ambition. Only issuing the EU Global Strategy in 2016 and its subsequent implementation process seems to be a momentum for specifying commitments stemming from PESCO. At present, there is a list of common binding commitments which 25 of 28 EU member states have signed to. This list includes specific commitments as for development of required capabilities needed for achieving expected objectives of CSDP operations. Nevertheless, a very critical point related to the current PESCO implementation process is whether the present level of EU member states integration allows fully completing all highly ambitious commitments as declared by political leaders.

Abstrakt:

Autoři v článku prezentují poznatky, ke kterým dospěli při analýze procesu implementace Stálé strukturované spolupráce (PESCO), a to především v oblasti plánování operací EU a rozvoji schopností, které jsou nezbytné k naplnění politicko-vojenských ambicí EU. Zdá se, že teprve vydáním Globální strategie EU v roce 2016 a její následnou implementací by mohlo dojít ke konkretizaci závazných požadavků, vyplývajících ze znění PESCO. V současné době existuje přehled společných závazků, k jejichž se zavázalo 25 z 28 členských zemí EU. Tento přehled obsahuje i konkrétní závazky v oblasti realizace požadovaných schopností k efektivnímu vedení operací EU. Cílem článku je i hledání odpovědi na otázku, zda současná míra integrace členských zemí EU dovolí plně realizovat deklarované závazky.

Key Words: EU; PESCO; Lisbon treaty; EU Global Strategy; capabilities; CSDP operations planning.

Klíčová slova: EU; PESCO; Globální strategie EU; schopnosti, plánování operací CSDP.

INTRODUCTION

This article offers considerations on factors influencing the transformation of Permanent Structured Cooperation (PESCO) in relation to the recent development of the Common Security and Defence Policy (CSDP). Since the Lisbon Treaty entered into force, in December 2009, the EU has been striving for conceptualising and activating the Protocol on Permanent Structured Cooperation (PESCO)¹ with a view to provide the EU with more operational ability to act as a global actor in the area of security and defence. PESCO has been regarded as a significant contribution to fulfilling the EU Level of Ambition (EU LoA), including the most demanding missions and operations. It could facilitate the development of capabilities through an intensive involvement in multinational procurement projects and with appropriate industrial entities including small and medium sized enterprises, and strengthen European defence cooperation. Nevertheless many ideas concerning the implementation of PESCO principles have been often hitting the wall of member states doubting whether it should be activated at all. The crucial impetus as for the restart of PESCO arrived in June 2016 with the publication of the EU Global Strategy², the Implementation Plan on Security and Defence³ followed by the European Defence Action Plan⁴ and the European Defence Fund⁵. All of this shall demonstrate the EU desire to move forward from vision to action on security and defence. However the question

- 1 COUNCIL OF THE EU (ed.). *Consolidated versions of the Treaty on the functioning of the European Union. Protocol N° 10 on Permanent Structured Cooperation established by article 42 of the Treaty on EU*. Official Journal of the European Union C 326/47. Brussels, Belgium, 2012. Available at: <http://eur-lex.europa.eu/legal-content/EN/TXT/PDF/?uri=CELEX:12012E/TXT&from=EN>
- 2 COUNCIL OF THE EU (ed.). *European Union Global Strategy: Shared Vision, Common Action: A Stronger Europe*. General Secretariat of the Council. Brussels, Belgium, 2016, 60 p. Available at: <http://www.iss.europa.eu/publications/detail/article/a-global-strategy-for-the-european-unions-foreign-and-security-policy/>
- 3 COUNCIL OF THE EU (ed.). *Implementation Plan on Security and Defence*. 4392/16. Brussels, Belgium: Council of the European Union, 2016, 31 s. Available at: https://eeas.europa.eu/sites/eeas/files/eugs_implementation_plan_st14392.en16_0.pdf
- 4 EUROPEAN COMMISSION (ed.). *European Defence Action Plan*. European Commission. Brussels, Belgium, 2016. Available at: https://eeas.europa.eu/sites/eeas/files/com_2016_950_f1_communication_from_commission_to_inst_en_v5_p1_869631.pdf
- 5 COUNCIL OF THE EU (ed.). *Launching the European Defence Fund*. COM(2017) 295 final. Brussels, Belgium, 2017. Available at: https://era.gv.at/object/document/3313/attach/COM_Launching_the_European_Defence_Fund.pdf

is: To which extent the introduction of PESCO can be considered as a significant step forward to consolidate the EU member states' integration process within the CSDP?

1 IMPLICATIONS OF PESCO ON NATIONAL PLANNING PROCESSES

If PESCO is about enabling to achieve the EU LoA as defined in the EU Global Strategy, then what type of military operations the EU needs to achieve this goal? How demanding, robust, coercive or risky should these operations be? *"As set out in the EU Global Strategy, the EU must contribute to responding to external conflicts and crises, building the capacities of partners, and protecting the Union and its citizens. The proposed Level of Ambition outlines the goals that the EU and its Member States set out to achieve, including through CSDP and using the full potential of the EU Treaty, in order to contribute to these strategic priorities from a security and defence perspective."*⁶

In accordance with the EU Global Strategy and the subsequent Implementation Plan on Security and Defence⁷, the identification of the strategic priorities for the EU was accompanied by a typology of operations. With a view to undertake rapid and decisive action in support of the EU LoA across the whole spectrum of crisis management tasks covered by the Lisbon Treaty, the EU needs to have highly operational force package to undertake all types of CSDP missions and operations in accordance with respective illustrative scenarios produced by the EUMS in the context of the Capability Development Plan (CDP).⁸ In this context, PESCO is to establish direct connection between development of required capabilities and their use in CSDP operations.

Nevertheless a question remains - what kind of operation is PESCO preparing for? Although it is difficult to predict how this will unfold at this stage, there are instruments already in place that have the potential to move CSDP towards a more operational posture. The operational dimension of PESCO itself is aimed at so-called comprehensive approach to CSDP operations.

As the Lisbon Treaty specifies, in the article 42, par. 1, the role of the EU: *The common security and defence policy shall be an integral part of the common foreign and security policy. It shall provide the Union with an operational capacity drawing on civilian and military assets. The Union may use them on missions outside the Union for peace-keeping, conflict prevention and strengthening international security in accordance with the prin-*

⁶ COUNCIL OF THE EU (ed.). *Implementation Plan on Security and Defence*. 14392/16. Brussels, Belgium: Council of the European Union, 2016. p.2 Available at: https://eeas.europa.eu/sites/eeas/files/eugs_implementation_plan_st14392.en16_0.pdf

⁷ COUNCIL OF THE EU (ed.). *Council conclusions on implementing the EU Global Strategy in the area of Security and Defence*. General Secretariat of the Council doc. 14149/16, Brussels, Belgium 2016.

⁸ COUNCIL OF THE EU (ed.). *Council conclusions on implementing the EU Global Strategy in the area of Security and Defence*. General Secretariat of the Council doc. 14149/16, Brussels, Belgium 2016. Available at: <http://www.consilium.europa.eu/media/22459/eugs-conclusions-st14149en16.pdf>

*ciples of the United Nations Charter. The performance of these tasks shall be undertaken using capabilities provided by the Member States.*⁹

In accordance with the EU LoA, as specified in the Presidency Conclusions of December 2009, Annex 2, the EU “*should be actually capable to deploy 60 000 men in 60 days for a major operation, within the range of operations envisaged within the Headline Goal 2010 and within the Civilian Headline Goal 2010, of planning and conducting simultaneously:*

- *two major stabilisation and reconstruction operations, with a suitable civilian component, supported by a maximum of 10 000 men for at least two years;*
- *two rapid response operations of limited duration using inter alia the EU’s battle groups;*
- *an emergency operation for the evacuation of European nationals (in less than ten days);*
- *a maritime or air surveillance/interdiction mission;*
- *a civilian-military humanitarian assistance operation lasting up to 90 days;*
- *around a dozen civilian missions (inter alia police, rule of law, civil administration, civil protection, security sector reform and observation missions) of varying formats, inter alia in a rapid reaction situation, including a major mission (possibly up to 3 000 experts), which could last several years.”*¹⁰

2 DIVERSIFICATION OF NATIONAL SECURITY AND DEFENCE CONCERNS

Without any doubts, one of the most critical points which do not allow the EU to entirely exploit its potential has been a persisting lack of commonly oriented cooperation. Despite of EU proclamations that the member states are closely consolidated around the CSDP¹¹, diversification of national approaches to development of military capabilities and their operational use to get expected strategic objectives is more than flagrant. Nevertheless most member states fully accept the idea that only an effective CSDP can provide the European continent with more stability and European citizens with stronger security.

The recent evolution of security and defence situation in the word clearly shows that closer and enhanced cooperation between respective EU member states is indispens-

⁹ COUNCIL OF THE EU (ed.). *Consolidated versions of the Treaty on the functioning of the European Union*. Official Journal of the European Union C 326/47. Art. 42, par. 1. Brussels, Belgium, 2012. Available at: <http://eur-lex.europa.eu/legal-content/EN/TXT/PDF/?uri=CELEX:12012E/TXT&from=EN>

¹⁰ COUNCIL OF THE EU (ed.). *Presidency Conclusions, Brussels 11 and 12 December 2008*. 17271/1/08, REV 1. Brussels, Belgium. 2008. Available at: <http://www.consilium.europa.eu>

¹¹ COUNCIL OF THE EU (ed.). *Council conclusions on implementing the EU Global Strategy in the area of Security and Defence*. General Secretariat of the Council doc. 14149/16, Brussels, Belgium 2016. p. 2.

able.¹² Is the EU mature enough to proceed with as complex and sensitive concept as the PESCO cooperation in the area of CSDP is? The former architecture of the EU, modified as an outcome of the Lisbon Treaty, was based on 3-pillar structure, represented a mutual interrelationship between common economic communities, common foreign and security policy and police and judicial cooperation.¹³ After having established the monetary union with the common European currency and the Schengen area allowing people and goods to pass freely across the borders of each country without passport or other controls, the EU arrived to a conviction that it was strong enough to play a role of a global actor in the area of international security and defence. Nevertheless the surprise happened when catlike problems in the first and the third pillar escalated, i.e. rising debt crisis in some member states, especially in Greece, and an illegal migration from Northern Africa and Middle East countries. These two moments undermined the reliance of Europeans on correct functioning of the Eurozone with the common currency and mechanisms set up for protecting and internal control of Schengen area. Under this situation, it is legitimate to ask a question concerning a credibility of the second pillar, i.e. Common Foreign and Security Policy (CFSP), which is so complex as for the united and coordinated approach and mutual trust of all member states.

While looking at the whole scope of the EU integration ambition, it is just the scope of CSDP, especially as for national approaches to defence planning and capability development, where a large range of discrepancies can be identified.¹⁴ The point is that EU member states perceive current security threats in a different way and in a different intensity. Persisting problems originating from this diversity in combination with the diversification of national security policies obstruct a progress in introducing a common trust and solidarity among the EU member states. Thus, the diversification of national ambitions and divergences of how to react against current security threats is the crucial concern due to which the EU is not yet able to act as a credible provider of the worldwide security stability.

¹² MISSIROLI, Antonio, ed. *Towards an EU global strategy: Background, process, references*. Paris, France: European Union Institute for Security Studies, 2015, p. 123-152. ISBN 978-92-9198-370-4. DOI:10.2815/953786. Available at: http://www.iss.europa.eu/uploads/media/Towards_an_EU_Global_Strategy.pdf

¹³ This structure was introduced with the Treaty of Maastricht in November 1993, and was eventually abandoned in December 2009, when the Treaty of Lisbon entered into force. The first pillar, called as the European Communities, handled economic, social and environmental policies. The second one was the Common Foreign and Security Policy (CFSP) and the third one was named Justice and Home Affairs. Within each pillar, a different balance was applied between the supranational and intergovernmental principles.

¹⁴ PETRÁŠ, Zdeněk; LETENS, Geert; SOARES, Joaquim; YOUNG, Chad; LAWRENCE, Anthony; GLAERUM, Sigurd; HAYNES, Christopher; VANZEEBROECK, Francois; PIKNER, Ivo. *Capability Planning*. Paris, France: NATO Science and Technology Organization, 2018. ISBN 978-92-837-2153-6.

3 WHICH CAPABILITIES ARE NEEDED TO FULFIL CHALLENGING CSDP OPERATIONS?

As one component of the broader CFSP, CSDP has been originally and primarily designed as a platform for framing operational activities, for making the EU more efficient and for providing enhanced coordination and collaboration in the areas of capability development and operational readiness. As for the CSDP missions and operations, they are often regarded as the most visible expression of European security and defence co-operation and the most tangible contribution of member states to international crisis management efforts. Since the entry into force of the Lisbon Treaty, the EU has strongly focused, in the CSDP, on:

- improving the capacity to conduct CSDP missions and operations;
- strengthening the EU's ability to rapidly deploy the appropriate civilian and military capabilities to EU-led missions and operations;
- developing adequate, future-oriented civilian and military capabilities;
- improving the EU's rapid response capabilities, including the EU Battlegroups;

Nevertheless CSDP military operations have also faced a series of political and operational difficulties that, in some cases, question their very relevance or comparative advantages. In particular, the degree of political support from member states and the consensus on their added-value, as well as on the adaptation of those operations to contemporary threats, have often been challenged. Nonetheless, CSDP operations have shaped the identity of the EU in the security domain and more than any other policy development they have given to CSDP its profile and meaning. As for the second component of the CSDP, the concept of capability development has been given renewed attention during the process of revitalisation of the EU defence agenda. It is pivotal to the concept of strategic autonomy, as defined in the EU Global Strategy, and both the European Defence Fund and PESCO have focused on the importance of developing military capabilities. So, besides capability development process, the EU accentuates an operational dimension of PESCO. To begin with, Lisbon treaty on PESCO states that member states will cooperate with a view to the most demanding missions, which clearly defines an operational objective for PESCO. Member states have diverged on the primary objective of PESCO. But for the proponents of an ambitious PESCO, its operational dimension remains essential. This operational dimension is introduced in the Protocol n°10 of the Lisbon Treaty, where article 1 defines objectives and article 2 respectively specifies how these objectives should be achieved in order to meet the EU LoA. In this context, it is the article 1 a) stipulating that member states participating in PESCO will *“proceed more intensively to develop its defence capacities through the development of its national contributions and participation, where appropriate, in multinational forces, in the main European equipment programmes, and in the activity of the Agency in the field of defence capabilities development, research, acquisition and armaments (European Defence Agency).”* According to the article 1b) member states participating in PESCO should *“have the capacity to supply by 2010 at the latest, either at national level or as a component of multinational force groups, targeted combat units for the missions planned, structured at a tactical level as a battle group, with support elements*

including transport and logistics, capable of carrying out the tasks referred to in Article 43 of the Treaty on European Union, within a period of five to 30 days, in particular in response to requests from the United Nations Organisation, and which can be sustained for an initial period of 30 days and be extended up to at least 120 days.”¹⁵ The following article 2 then specifies respective modalities through which member states participating in PESCO shall achieve the objectives as previously defined in the article 1.

4 INSTITUTIONALISATION OF PESCO WITHIN CSDP STRUCTURES

In November and subsequently in December 2017, 25 member states from the 28-EU officially signed Joint Notification on the PESCO¹⁶. Only the UK, Denmark and Malta abstain from participating in PESCO activities. By signing this document, signatory member states engaged to fulfil commitments as described in the Council Decision of 11 December 2017¹⁷.

These commitments also contain the framing of a database of available and rapidly deployable capabilities, the review of national decision-making procedures, the interoperability of forces or a revision of the funding of military operations, i.e. revision of the currently applicable financial procedures (ATHENA Mechanism¹⁸). All these binding commitments have apparently an operational aimed at mitigating difficulties that European military forces have been regularly facing.

PESCO shall be a member state-driven process, meaning that the main decisions and activities are the responsibilities of participating member states. But as a part of the broader CSDP framework, PESCO will benefit from the support of various EU bodies, primarily the European Defence Agency (EDA) and the European External Action Service (EEAS). While the EEAS will support the operational dimension of the common commitments as well as operational projects, the EDA will play a key role in relation to the capability dimension of the common commitments and to the capability related projects. PESCO will be the subject of a regular assessment of its implementation through several processes which will be running alongside. One of them will annually evaluate the extent

¹⁵ COUNCIL OF THE EU (ed.). *Consolidated versions of the Treaty on the functioning of the European Union*. Official Journal of the European Union C 326/47. Brussels, Belgium, 2012. Available at: <http://eur-lex.europa.eu/legal-content/EN/TXT/PDF/?uri=CELEX:12012E/TXT&from=EN>

¹⁶ *Joint Notification on the PESCO to the Council and to the High Representative of the EU for Foreign Affairs and Security Policy*. In: <http://www.europa.eu/> [online]. [cit. 2018-08-07]. Available at: <http://www.consilium.europa.eu/media/31511/171113-pesco-notification.pdf>

¹⁷ COUNCIL OF THE EU (ed.). *Council Decision on establishing permanent structured cooperation (PESCO) and determining the list of participating Member States*. 2017/2315. Secretariat General of the Council. Brussels, Belgium. 2017. Available also at: <https://eur-lex.europa.eu>

¹⁸ Art. 41 of the Lisbon Treaty sets the principles for the financing of EU civilian and military crisis management operations. Operations having military or defence implications cannot be financed from the Union budget. For the common costs of such operations, the Council of the EU has established a special mechanism called Athena.

to which the commitments are being fulfilled by member states – Coordinated Annual Review on Defence (CARD). Another one will focus on projects related to capability development. In both cases, alongside the EDA and within the EEAS, it will be the EU Military Staff (EUMS) together with the Crisis Management and Planning Directorate (CMPD) that will have the lead on assessing progress from an operational point of view. Issues of availability, interoperability, flexibility and deployability of forces units will be particularly scrutinised, in reference to each of the binding common commitments.

5 IMPLEMENTATION OF PESCO PRINCIPLES

The starting point is an analysis of all CARD relevant information on national capabilities and assets already available in EU databases, including NATO Defence Planning Capability Survey for those who are also NATO nations. Subsequently the EDA will produce a CARD analysis that will present aggregate data and identify trends regarding national defence spending plans, implementation of priorities resulting from the CDP and relevant to defence research programmes, as well as opportunities for defence cooperation.

The final CARD report stemming from outcomes of the previous steps, will present the main results of the review as well as associated recommendations. The CARD is not meant as a stand-alone tool. Together with the revised Capability Development Plan (CDP), the PESCO and the European Defence Fund should become a cornerstone of a coherent EU mechanism to larger collaborative planning process oriented on getting those capabilities which are identified as priority for accomplishing political and military end-state of CSDP operations.

To this end, participating member states have been required to complete individual National Implementation Plans to display in which they are able and willing to meet the common binding commitments listed in *Joint Notification on the PESCO*. In line with the agreed procedures¹⁹ the participating member states will submit their National Implementation Plans every year in January. Based on the assessment done by the PESCO secretariat (EDA, EUMS, EEAS) will present the annual PESCO report to the Council in spring, in view of the Council's review of the fulfilment of the commitments by the individual participating member states. National plans are to be seen as a way through which EU authority will be able to review individual national commitments. List of projects reflecting ambitious and more binding common commitments to be undertaken by participating member states will be issued and updated on regular basis.

¹⁹ COUNCIL OF THE EU (ed.). *Council recommendation concerning a roadmap for the implementation of PESCO*. 6588/1/18 REV 1. Brussels, Belgium: Council of the European Union, 2018. Available at: <http://data.consilium.europa.eu/doc/document/ST-6588-2018-REV-1/en/pdf>

6 PESCO AND INTERACTION BETWEEN CAPABILITY DEVELOPMENT AND OPERATIONS PLANNING

Based on previously agreed goals and commitments, the EU should thus be capable to undertake the above mentioned types of CSDP civilian missions and military operations outside the Union, a number of which may be executed concurrently, in different scenarios, including in situations of higher security risk. From this perspective, the EU will organise crisis management operations where military element would act alongside with non-military elements, i.e. intergovernmental agencies such as police, justice, diplomacy, NGOs etc. The specific character of CSDP operations is aggregating military and civilian elements.

Within the context of capability and operations planning, it is worth mentioning the fact that the EU has a specific perception of capability and capability planning. For the EU the term of capability has a broader connotation than for NATO. The EU specifically splits the definition of capability into the following areas:

- military capability which is used for achieving exclusively military tasks during an EU CSDP operations as specified in Headline Goal 2010²⁰;
- military capability which can be used for supporting civilian protection and humanitarian aid operations to relieve consequences of a terrorist attack, natural or man-made disasters. The capability database management is under responsibility of the European Commission (Common Emergency Communication and Information System – CECIS);
- civilian capability used for achieving exclusively civilian tasks during EU CSDP operations. Capability requirements for this purpose are specified in the Civilian Headline Goal 2010²¹.

A proper perception of EU capability requirements and subsequent reflection of these requirements in national contributions in terms of military capabilities is an essential step of the EU capability development process. This step should enable a qualitative and quantitative measurement of each national contribution translated into capability terms. It also provides an understanding of the total forces and related capabilities that could potentially be made available to the EU. That means that even within the existing Headline Goal 2010, more strategic enablers are needed. And in reality it also means that the EU has to go beyond the 60 000, because Europe will have to have its own re-

²⁰ COUNCIL OF THE EU (ed.). *Headline Goal 2010*. General Secretariat of the Council. Brussels, Belgium, 2004. Available at: http://eeas.europa.eu/csdp/capabilities/military-capabilities/index_en.htm

²¹ COUNCIL OF THE EU (ed.). *Civilian Headline Goal 2010*. Doc. 14823/07. General Secretariat of the Council, Brussels, Belgium, 2007. Available at: www.consilium.europa.eu/uedocs/cmsUpload/Civilian_Hheadline_Goal_2010.pdf

serves as well. Moreover, on the day when Brexit will happen, the British contribution, which amounts to a full 20%, will have to be deducted from the EU Force Catalogue²².

Of course, British forces will not disappear, and when Europeans decide to launch operations, in whichever framework (CSDP, NATO, UN, or ad hoc), the UK is more likely to be part of the action than not. But for the purpose of stepping up the EU effort, it is better to discount them, so that even if the current Headline Goal 2010 is maintained, the remaining EU member states must contribute more in order to fill the gaps left by the UK. Following the common notification on PESCO, signed by 25 participating member states of the 28-EU, the future centres of gravity will be focused on respective National Implementation Plans which will take into account also actions in the areas of operations (i.e. the availability, deployability and interoperability of forces) and corresponding capabilities (i.e. the development, effectiveness and interoperability of defence assets).

Nevertheless, the success of PESCO in terms of enhancing the capability to conduct EU operations will entirely depend on to which extent participating member states adhere to the common binding commitments. A lot of questions are on the agenda regarding PESCO and its supposed role of an effective instrument for the CSDP. One of them concerns the operational effectiveness, i.e. the interaction between operations planning and development of capabilities which are required for conducting these operations. The combination of both factors represents a *condicio sine qua non* for achieving the EU LoA. In this context it is necessary to mention that the way how to fulfil the EU's military level of ambition is still subject of discussion. This is likely to require further specification how to improve EU operational effectiveness, especially as for the compatibility and complementarity between the EU and NATO's operational efforts. In this respect, related projects launched under PESCO may give an indication of member states' seriousness in tackling CSDP challenges against their national security concerns.

CONCLUSIONS

An important aspect, which can be regarded as a real added value of CSDP, lies in the Lisbon Treaty requiring adaptation of national operations planning processes towards respective EU and NATO operations planning and standard operational procedures. PESCO can be used in a constructive manner however to streamline the various nation's clusters and frameworks in which other member states also take part. This could create opportunities for widening and deepening existing formats while ensuring their relevance for the overall EU LoA. If PESCO is activated, it will also have an impact on the participating member states' cooperation with those who have not yet chosen to

²² According to the capability related terminology in the framework of the EU Capability Development Process the Force Catalogue presents EU member states contributed forces and capabilities against the required capabilities as defined in the Requirement Catalogue. The Force Catalogue is one of the main products of the Capability Development Mechanism (CDM). The Supplement to the Force Catalogue contains the contributions from the European non-EU members of NATO and other countries, which are candidates for accession to the EU.

join. A nation can engage in military cooperation (i.e. render its forces interoperable) with different sets of nations in different frameworks. But once it integrates its forces with one set of nations in PESCO, it cannot integrate them again with another set of nations in another framework. This will be due to difficulties involved in working closely together and achieving interoperability, but might also arise from lack of trust and mutual understanding.

PESCO will be the predominant focus for the participating member states. On the difference between PESCO and other previous forms of cooperation, such as pooling and sharing. PESCO is legally binding and the commitments with regards to the participating member states enforceable. The decision to participate was made voluntarily by each participating member state, and decision-making will remain in the hands of the participating member states in the Council. This is without prejudice to the specific character of the security and defence policy of certain EU member states.

Nevertheless some degree of uncertainty surrounds the intention to conduct the most demanding missions and operations with a view to fulfil the EU LoA. Given the challenges associated with capability development process outside of the EU framework, there is a need to ensure that PESCO does not fall in the same scenario like pooling and sharing initiatives in the past. It is important that PESCO capability projects meet the objectives of prospective CSDP operations and missions. Capability development is a long-term process spanning multiple years, even decades. Success through PESCO has to be measured with this factor in mind. Achieving a mutually reinforcing relationship between PESCO and national plans is still a work in progress.

Member states participating in PESCO could plan together, as if for one force, and then decide which contribution every individual state will make. However, PESCO must reflect the need for complementarity between NATO and the EU. Nevertheless, neither Lisbon Treaty nor PESCO makes clear how this should be done. The aim would be to arrive at a single coherent full-spectrum force package – Single Set of Forces Concept – that could deliver a significant share of the NATO Defence Planning Process (NDPP) and the EU target. This would make PESCO the core of European defence and, at the same time, the European pillar of NATO and the armed branch of the EU.

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