



2020/2080(INI)

2.9.2020

OPINION

of the Committee on Constitutional Affairs

for the Committee on Foreign Affairs

on the recommendation to the Council and the Vice-President of the Commission / High Representative of the Union for Foreign Affairs and Security Policy concerning the implementation and governance of Permanent Structured Cooperation (PESCO)
(2020/2080(INI))

Rapporteur for opinion: Esteban González Pons

PA_NonLeg

SUGGESTIONS

The Committee on Constitutional Affairs calls on the Committee on Foreign Affairs, as the committee responsible, to incorporate the following suggestions into its motion for a resolution:

1. Highlights that PESCO significantly contributes to the convergence of actions by Member States in the area of common foreign and security policy and represents an important step towards achieving the Treaty objective of common defence;
2. Welcomes the interest of Member States in PESCO following its establishment by Council Decision (CFSP) 2017/2315 of 11 December 2017, as shown by the significant number of projects established so far by the Council under PESCO; encourages participating Member States to advance this work and focus on the swift and effective implementation of these projects while ensuring the participation of all Member States; recalls, nevertheless, that PESCO also involves 20 binding commitments that have received far less attention;
3. Welcomes the inclusiveness of PESCO, as reflected in the high number of Member States involved in its projects; is of the opinion that PESCO should favour low entry criteria and be accessible to Member States that are small and/or have low defence budgets;
4. Highlights that the creation of PESCO in the framework of the Lisbon Treaty was seen as the establishment of an avant-garde of Member States willing to pool resources and capabilities to achieve ambitious common objectives in the field of security and defence; considers it necessary for the Union to progressively develop a common framework under the responsibility of the Vice-President of the Commission / High Representative of the Union for Foreign Affairs and Security Policy (VP/HR), within which the Member States would conduct their own national defence policy reviews, share results and pool intelligence as a means of establishing the foundation of a genuine European defence;
5. Calls on the Council and the Member States to continue reinforcing coherence between all instruments and initiatives within the framework of common security and defence policy (CSDP) in order to achieve the required level of effectiveness in ensuring strategic autonomy, and of ambition in the progressive framing of a common Union defence policy in line with the TEU; considers that PESCO needs ambitious projects, in synergy with the CARD, NIPs and the CDP, to deal with present-day threats, and underlines, in this regard, the importance of maintaining an adequate level of financing of the EDF and military mobility in the context of the MFF negotiations; points out the necessity of developing a system of genuine Union own resources as a means of enabling the alignment of the Union's strategic objectives in the field of defence, with funding for programmes and operations on the ground, notably PESCO projects;
6. Calls on the Commission to work on an EU defence and security white book with a view to better aligning specific PESCO project objectives with an updated, coherent and comprehensive EU security and defence strategy; highlights, in this regard, the importance of the PESCO 2020 strategic review and likewise supports the establishment

of a European strategic compass to improve the ability to coordinate Member State defence initiatives that contribute to the common objectives of the Union in a more timely and effective manner;

7. Notes that the COVID-19 pandemic has shown the Union does not have enough competence when it comes to health care; believes that in parallel, an EU common defence strategy needs to be established to respond in the event of an attack on the EU's borders and territories, and considers PESCO a positive step towards this objective;
8. Welcomes in this regard the political guidelines of the Commission regarding defence policy, and in particular regarding the need for bold steps towards a genuine European Defence Union, and for an integrated and comprehensive approach to the EU's security; hopes that the creation of a new Commission Directorate-General for Defence Industry and Space will serve as a catalyst for enhanced coherence, fair cooperation and integrated coordination in the creation of defence capabilities across the Member States, as well as for strengthening EU military infrastructure and improving the efficiency of EU industry and the internal market;
9. Considers it necessary to step up the actual contribution of PESCO projects to the achievement of the EU's ambitions in the area of security and defence, by effectively ensuring that the participating Member States strengthen their collaboration and coordination in significant and ambitious capability development, and that there is coherence between the EU and NATO in terms of priorities, enhanced interoperability and synergies;
10. Acknowledges the crucial role played by the European armed forces in addressing the challenges posed by the COVID-19 pandemic, both in terms of the management of the health emergency and support to civilian missions and operations, and the fact that they also have a cross-border dimension and solidarity function; highlights the potential benefits of new ambitious PESCO projects for the development of common European capabilities in this field, expanding on the work of previous projects, notably the Deployable Military Disaster Relief Capability Package and the European Medical Command;
11. Welcomes the synergy between different EU defence tools and underlines the need to ensure coherence; stresses that a special bonus for PESCO projects under the EDF could have a positive effect as it would incentivise cooperation in the development of capabilities;
12. Calls on the participating Member States to continue making resources available for PESCO projects, while ensuring real ownership of and commitment to PESCO coordinating and pooling processes, especially since no effective compliance mechanism for PESCO is in place; underlines that PESCO should provide a framework to go beyond bilateral cooperation and foster a truly European effort through the meaningful participation of multiple Member States in common projects;
13. Underlines the importance of a small number of strategic projects, in particular strategic enablers (command and control, transport, intelligence); calls on the Council and the PESCO secretariat to consider a cluster structure for PESCO projects in order to guarantee the maximum level of synergy among different projects;

14. Calls on the Council to define strict conditions for the participation of third states in PESCO projects, in accordance with Article 9 of Council Decision (CFSP) 2017/2315; considers that any such participation should not deviate PESCO from its fundamental objectives as an instrument of the EU CSDP, while respecting the obligations under the North Atlantic Treaty;
15. Warns, however, about the risk of foreign interference in the Union's security and defence, which often takes the form of cyber threats or other types of hybrid warfare; suggests that Parliament's newly established special committee on foreign interference in all democratic processes in the European Union should collaborate with the Commission and the Council in analysing how PESCO projects could strengthen the Union's resilience against these types of threats;
16. Believes that the involvement of the United Kingdom in PESCO projects, where invited and where effective reciprocity is ensured, would be in the strategic interest of the Union; expresses its hope that the area of defence will be covered in the EU-UK negotiations on their future relationship, in line with the Political Declaration setting out the framework for the future relationship between the European Union and the United Kingdom;
17. Reiterates that Parliament should play a prominent role in the scrutiny and supervision of the implementation and evaluation of the CSDP; expects in this regard that Parliament will be fully informed and consulted by VP/HR in the context of the current strategic review of the first PESCO phase, which ends in 2020; recalls that increasing defence cooperation among Member States at EU level should go hand in hand with the strengthening of Parliament's power of scrutiny;
18. Calls on the Council and the participating Member States to focus on cyber resilience and prepare a collective strategy and procedures to respond to cyber incidents through PESCO projects in order to create a more resilient environment within the Member States;
19. Recalls Parliament's position on the Conference on the Future of Europe as expressed in its resolution of 15 January 2020¹, namely that security and the role of the EU in the world should be identified among pre-defined but non-exhaustive policy priorities, and reiterates that this would be an opportunity to involve citizens in the debate on strengthening PESCO as a way of making progress toward an autonomous common security and defence policy for our Union.

¹ Texts adopted, P9_TA(2020)0010.

INFORMATION ON ADOPTION IN COMMITTEE ASKED FOR OPINION

Date adopted	1.9.2020
Result of final vote	+: 18 -: 7 0: 3
Members present for the final vote	Gerolf Annemans, Gabriele Bischoff, Damian Boeselager, Fabio Massimo Castaldo, Włodzimierz Cimoszewicz, Gwendoline Delbos-Corfield, Daniel Freund, Charles Goerens, Esteban González Pons, Brice Hortefeux, Laura Huhtasaari, Giuliano Pisapia, Paulo Rangel, Antonio Maria Rinaldi, Domènec Ruiz Devesa, Jacek Saryusz-Wolski, Helmut Scholz, Pedro Silva Pereira, Antonio Tajani, László Trócsányi, Mihai Tudose, Loránt Vincze, Rainer Wieland
Substitutes present for the final vote	Gilles Boyer, Jorge Buxadé Villalba, Cristian Ghinea, Maite Pagazaurtundúa, Nikolaj Villumsen

FINAL VOTE BY ROLL CALL IN COMMITTEE ASKED FOR OPINION

18	+
NI	Fabio Massimo Castaldo
PPE	Esteban González Pons, Brice Hortefeux, Paulo Rangel, Antonio Tajani, László Trócsányi, Loránt Vincze, Rainer Wieland
RENEW	Gilles Boyer, Cristian Ghinea, Charles Goerens, Maite Pagazaurtundúa
S&D	Gabriele Bischoff, Włodzimierz Cimoszewicz, Giuliano Pisapia, Domènec Ruiz Devesa, Pedro Silva Pereira, Mihai Tudose

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ECR	Jorge Buxadé Villalba, Jacek Saryusz Wolski
GUE/NGL	Helmut Scholz, Nikolaj Villumsen
ID	Gerolf Annemans, Laura Huhtasaari, Antonio Maria Rinaldi

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VERTS/ALE	Damian Boeselager, Gwendoline Delbos Corfield, Daniel Freund