



INVOLVEMENT OF EU MEMBER STATES IN PESCO PROJECTS: A COMPARATIVE ANALYSIS

ZAANGAŻOWANIE PAŃSTW CZŁONKOWSKICH UE W PROJEKTY PESCO – ANALIZA PORÓWNAWCZA

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— ABSTRACT —

The European Economic Community/European Union was born as an economy-oriented organization, which was to facilitate rebuilding of the Old Continent after WWII through extensive cooperation, particularly in trade. However, the appetites of the state leaders were growing along the progress of the integration processes; the economic success was an argument for further integration of the European countries. Due to this, the organization was given the ability to make decisions and influence decision-makers at the national level in subsequent spheres that earlier were the sole prerogative of states. Still, for many years EU members determinedly guarded their competences regarding broadly understood security, predominantly defence. Successive attempts to accelerate integration in this area were not effective enough to develop a real common defence policy. One of the last initiatives, Permanent Structured Cooperation (PESCO), is supposed to help change this situation. It is

— ABSTRAKT —

Wspólnota Europejska/Unia Europejska zrodziła się jako organizacja ekonomiczna, która poprzez pogłębioną współpracę, zwłaszcza handlową, pozwolić miała na szybką odbudowę Starego Kontynentu ze zgliszczy wojennych. Apetyty przywódców państw europejskich rosły jednak w miarę postępujących procesów integracyjnych – sukces ekonomiczny napędzał wolę dalszej pogłębionej integracji państw. Ten stan rzeczy pozwolił wyposażać organizację w możliwość decydowania i wpływania na decydentów krajowych w kolejnych sferach dotąd wyłącznej aktywności państw. Niemniej na przestrzeni lat państwa unijne zazdrośnie i z wielką determinacją strzegły kompetencji dotyczących szeroko pojmowanego bezpieczeństwa, w tym nade wszystko obronności. Kolejne próby przyspieszenia integracji w tej materii okazywały się nie na tyle skuteczne, by można było mówić o realnej wspólnej polityce obronnej. Jedną z ostatnich inicjatyw – PESCO – ma pomóc odmienić tę sytuację. Konieczne

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therefore necessary to pose several questions: What is PESCO? What is EU members' attitude towards developing this form of cooperation? What does this cooperation look like at the early implementation stages? What factors determine the involvement of the 'old' and 'new' EU member states? This article is an attempt to answer these questions.

Keywords: PESCO; military security; military cooperation; defense

staje się zatem udzielenie odpowiedzi na pytania: Czym ono jest? Jak państwa UE zapatrują się na rozwijanie tej koncepcji współpracy? Jak ta współpraca wygląda na wczesnym etapie jej wdrażania? Jakie wreszcie czynniki determinują zaangażowanie państw „starej” i „nowej” UE? Niniejszy tekst to próba udzielenia odpowiedzi na te właśnie pytania.

Słowa kluczowe: PESCO; bezpieczeństwo militarne; współpraca wojskowa; obrona

There were three factors that led to closer cooperation in the matters of EU security and defence: a) publication of the European Union Global Strategy (EUGS) in 2016; b) Great Britain's decision to leave the EU; and c) antipathy of some of EU states to President Trump. Since 2016, studies on the common security and defence policy of the EU have been focusing primarily on two aspects: 1) analysing the EUGS (Barbé & Morillas, 2019; Tocci, 2016; Biscop, 2016, pp. 91–100) and 2) functioning of EU defence after Brexit (Duke, 2019; Svendsen, 2019; Deschaux-Dutard, 2019). The EUGS implementation plan, adopted by the Council in November 2016, initiated the process of developing relevant military, civilian and industrial instruments as well as financial mechanisms; a crucial element of the military aspect is to be Permanent Structured Cooperation (PESCO). As noted by Sven Bishop, “[s]uccess is obviously not guaranteed, but seems more likely in this case than in the past” (Biscop, 2018, p. 161). The success of PESCO will depend on many actors involved in shaping EU security and defence policy (Jopp & Schubert, 2019; Blockmans & Crosson, 2019), yet the most crucial components are the will, attitude and involvement of the participating states.

This article aims to study the involvement of EU member states in the implementation of PESCO projects. The first part characterizes permanent structured cooperation, including its legal foundation and premises, commitments that must be met by member states to participate in PESCO, and the management model. The next part presents the involvement of the states in the PESCO projects implemented so far (by November 2021), including the number of such projects, the coordinating state, and the project area. The further parts compare the participation of the most active states; the basic criterion here will be the number of projects coordinated by a given country. A comparison will also be

made between the states that joined the EU before 2004 and the ‘new’ members. The goal of the article is to prove the theses that: 1) all member states strive to fill in the gaps in their military capabilities, and 2) the states that are cooperation leaders strive to show their potential and dominate a specific area. The methods used in this study include analysis of legislative acts and desk research method.

1. PERMANENT STRUCTURED COOPERATION (PESCO)

Permanent Structured Cooperation was introduced to *acquis communautaire* by the Treaty of Lisbon, in particular its Art. 42 Section 6, Art. 46, and Protocol No. 10 on permanent structured cooperation. It facilitates closer military cooperation among the interested group of member states. PESCO was formally established in December 2017 by the decision 2017/2315 of the Council of the European Union. Its two components are strategic commitments and projects. Out of the then 28 member states, 25 became involved in the cooperation, while Denmark, Great Britain, and Malta refused to participate for different reasons. The main objective of PESCO is to facilitate collaboration with regard to internal defence as well as increased efficiency of actions and making use of resource synergy; cooperation is intended to fill gaps in strategic capabilities necessary for carrying out military operations. PESCO is considered to be so far the largest European security project, uniting EU member states, the European Commission, the Council of the European Union¹ as well as the European External Action Service – i.e., the main actors shaping EU security and defence policy². It should be noted that by its nature, PESCO is inclusive³ and modular⁴.

Participation in PESCO involves meeting specific commitments, generally delineated in Protocol No. 10. A more detailed list of 20 commitments was presented in Annex II to the Council Decision (CFSP) 2017/2315 of 11 December 2017, which pointed to the necessity of increasing defence budgets,

¹ In September 2019, Directorate-General for Defence Industry and Space was established within the framework of the European Commission.

² “This strategy has reinforced the role of Brussels-based bodies in external action and become the enabling factor of subsequent initiatives in security and defence” (Morillas, 2020, p. 232).

³ Inclusivity means that PESCO is accessible for any EU member state, whether it decided to join at its foundation (as did 25 states except Denmark, Malta, and Great Britain) or later.

⁴ Modularity means that each state is free to choose which PESCO projects it wants to join. Participation in all projects is not obligatory.

increasing defence investment expenditures, and increasing collaboration on strategic defence capabilities projects. The matters pertaining to fulfilment of these commitments were presented in the Council Recommendation of 6 March 2018 on PESCO implementation plan, and on June 25, 2018, the Council issued Decision 2018/909, which established a common set of governance rules for PESCO projects.

It should be noted here that the last document defined “project members” as EU member states taking part in the implementation of a PESCO project. It stated that by November, each year the Council is to overview and update its Decision (2018/340) concerning the list of implemented projects. In turn, the project members are obliged to deliver to the project coordinator (leader) a report on the progress achieved and their individual contribution. A consolidated report is then sent to the Council. A Secretariat was created to comprehensively support PESCO with regard to formal and administrative matters. The members of a specific project establish for themselves, e.g., the specifics of decision-making and individual contributions (financial, material, technological, personnel), ensuring also the project’s compliance with other PESCO projects. They also decide whether to accept a new project member. The participating states also nominate one of them as a project leader (usually the project initiator) who is responsible for contacts with the Council and other project coordinators as well as for coordination of the collaboration within the group. Decision 2018/909 also states that the member states participating in PESCO can apply, albeit without any guarantee of success, for an observer status with another project (observers are not required to participate in implementing project tasks). The strengths and capabilities developed within a PESCO project can be used individually or jointly as part of activities undertaken, e.g., by the EU, UN, or NATO.

In October 2018, the Council issued recommendations specifying more precise objectives of undertaken binding commitments. Implementation of the decision was to be divided into two phases: 2018–2020, and 2021–2025. The fulfilment of binding commitments by individual states was to be overviewed and their list updated if necessary at the beginning of the second stage in 2021. The goal was to have first concrete achievements regarding the fulfilment of the first 20 binding commitments, and to prepare the planning process before the end of 2020. To that aim, the participating members have been required to deliver to PESCO Secretariat annual national plans of implementing the binding commitments. Together with the European Union Military Staff (EUMS) and the European Defence Agency (EDA), the Secretariat prepares plan assessments

for the High Representative of the EU and the latter presents a compiled report to the Council of the EU, which decides whether a given state has been fulfilling its commitments, and can suspend participation if the assessment is negative. However, the described procedure is included in a recommendation, thus arising doubts as to whether it is legally binding. So far, European states' practices regarding EU and NATO initiatives as well as expected defence expenditures have not been conducive to optimism (Gotkowska, 2019, pp. 29–30).

2. PROJECTS AND THE INVOLVEMENT OF MEMBER STATES

Between December 2017 and April 2020, 47 projects were accepted for implementation. The first wave was presented in December 2017, and 17 projects were accepted by the Council in March 2018. The second wave comprising another 17 projects was presented in May 2018 and accepted by the Council in November 2018. The third wave of 13 projects was accepted in November 2019; and it was decided that no new projects would be accepted in 2020. The projects are classified into 7 main areas.

2.1. The first wave of projects

The first wave of projects was accepted by the Council Decision 2018/340 of 6 March 2018. The list included 17 projects from 5 areas: 2 projects in the “Training, facilities” area, with 14 participating states in total; 4 projects in “Land, formations, systems” (9 states); 3 projects in “Maritime” (12 states); 4 projects in “Cyber, C4ISR” (16 states); and 4 projects in “Enabling, joint” (24 states). The last area included the “Military mobility” project, described as the “Schengen of Defence” (Blockmans & Crosson, 2019, p. 6), where the participants were all PESCO states except Ireland.

The number of states participating in particular projects was changing: 6 states joined the implementation (Poland joined 4 projects, while Estonia, Germany, Hungary, Lithuania, and Latvia each joined one), while Italy and Spain withdrew from one project each. The state involved in the largest number of projects is Italy, which has been working in all project areas. Italy and Germany lead the largest number of first-wave projects (4 each). The participation of the states in the first wave of PESCO projects is presented in Figure 1 below.

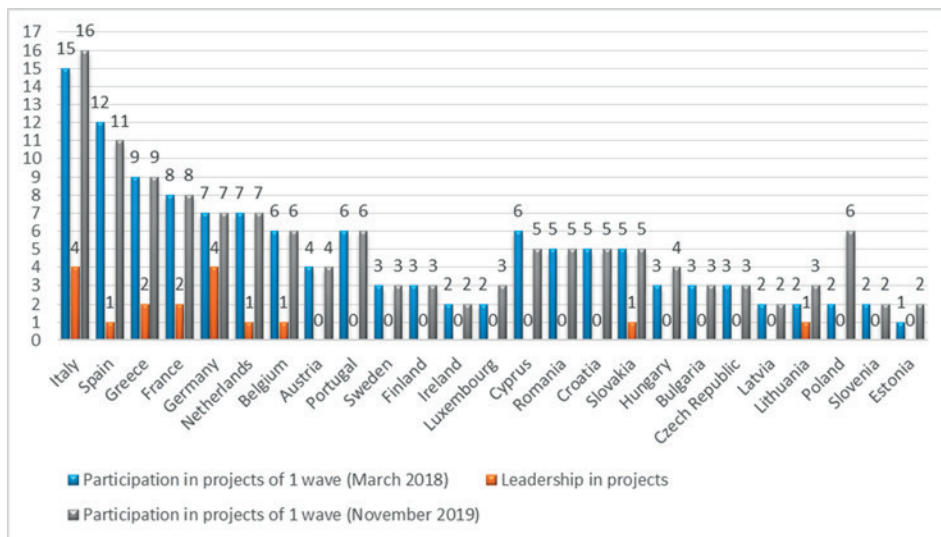


Figure 1. Participation of States in the First Wave (as of March 2018 and November 2019)

Source: Council Decision 2018/340; Council Decision 2019/1909.

A clear disproportion can be observed between the pre-2004 and post-2004 EU members, with the latter group comprising Bulgaria, Croatia, Cyprus, the Czech Republic, Estonia, Hungary, Latvia, Lithuania, Poland, Romania, Slovakia, and Slovenia (further referred to as EU-12). The involvement of Western European states (Belgium, Germany, Italy, the Netherlands, and Spain) was significantly greater; the mentioned states also coordinated most projects. Out of EU-12, only 2 states were project leaders (Slovakia and Lithuania). Based on the Council Decision of November 2019, the arithmetic average of participation of ‘old’ member states in PESCO projects was 6.5, while for the ‘new’ states it was merely 3.75; the average for all 25 states was 5.2. By October 2019, at least one of the EU-12 states participated in 14 out of 17 projects (none joined “European Training Certification Centre for European Armies”, “Energy Operational Function (EOF)”, or “Strategic Command and Control (C2) System for CSDP Missions and Operations”). Only 2 projects included slightly more EU-12 participants: “Indirect Fire Support (EuroArtillery)” (Hungary, Italy, and Slovakia) and “Network of Logistic Hubs in Europe and Support to Operations” (8 ‘new’ states and 7 ‘old’ ones). There was no project in which only EU-12 states participated.

2.2. The second wave of projects

Another 17 projects were accepted in November 2018 by the Council Decision 2018/1797. Two new areas were introduced – “Space” and “Air, systems”. The new projects included 3 in the “Training, facilities” area with 8 states involved in total; 2 projects in “Land, formations, systems” (11 states); 1 project in “Maritime” (3 states); 3 projects in “Air, systems” (5 states); 3 projects in “Cyber, C4ISR” (6 states); 3 projects in “Enabling, joint” (13 states); and 2 projects in “Space” (5 states). Similarly to the first wave, the leadership was mostly in the hands of Western European states – France (5), Greece and Italy (3 each), and Germany (2). Only 3 projects were coordinated by EU-12 states (the Czech Republic, Hungary, and Estonia). The individual state participation in the second wave of PESCO projects is presented in Figure 2 below.

The disproportion between the participation of the ‘old’ and ‘new’ EU members was still evident. The arithmetic average of participation (calculated based on the figures from the Council Decision of October 2019) for the 13 pre-2004 members was 3.6, and for the EU-12 – 1.6. Participation in new projects was clearly lower, and the average for all 25 PESCO states was 2.7. Notably, no EU-12

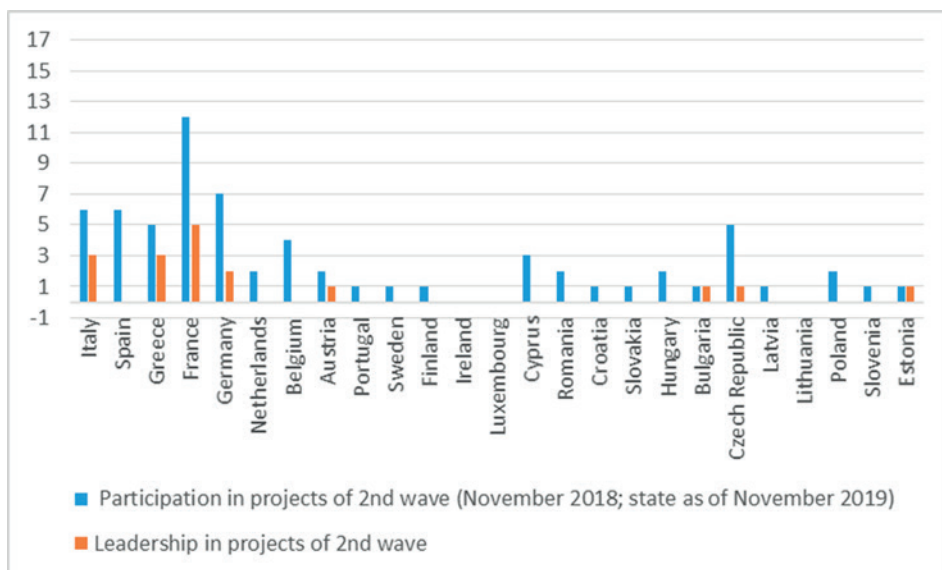


Figure 2. Participation of States in the Second Wave (as of November 2019)

Source: Council Decision 2018/1797; Council Decision 2019/1909.

states were involved in any project in the “Space” area, and they were majority participants only in the project “Chemical, Biological, Radiological and Nuclear (CBRN) Surveillance as a Service (CBRN SaaS)”, coordinated by Austria, with Croatia, France, Hungary, and Slovenia as members. The Czechs also initiated bilateral projects with Italy and with Germany, acting as leaders in the latter.

2.3. The third wave of projects

By the Council Decision 2019/1909, 13 new projects were accepted in 5 areas: 5 projects in the “Training, facilities” area with 10 states involved in total; 2 projects in “Maritime” (5 states); 1 project in “Air, systems” (3 states); 1 project in “Cyber, C4ISR” (5 states); and 4 projects in “Enabling, joint” (10 states). As in the first and second wave, the leaders were mostly the states of Western Europe: France (3), Portugal and Italy (2 each), Germany and Spain (1). EU-12 states coordinated only 4 projects (Romania – 2, Hungary – 1, Poland – 1). The full data on state participation in the third-wave PESCO projects is presented in Figure 3 below.

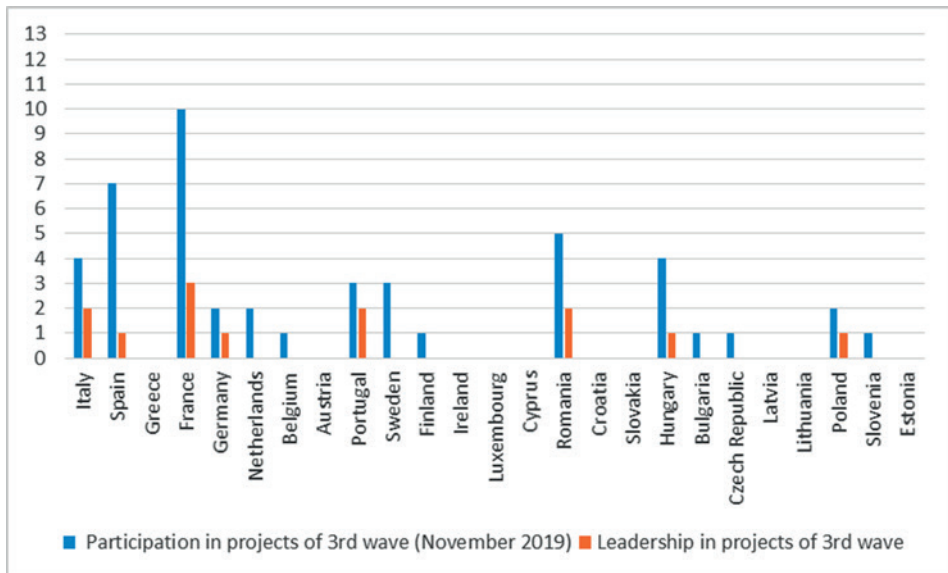


Figure 3. Participation of States in the Third Wave (as of November 2019)

Source: Council Decision 2019/1909.

In the third wave projects, the disproportion between the participation of ‘old’ and ‘new’ EU members was still evident. The arithmetic average for project participation (calculated based on the data from the Council Decision of October 2019) is 2.5 for the pre-2004 EU members, 1.6 for the post-2004 members, and 1.8 for all 25 states. EU-12 states were not involved in any projects from the “Air, systems” and “Maritime” areas. The third wave included the first project run solely by EU-12 states – “Special Operations Forces Medical Training Centre (SMTTC)” (Hungary and Poland). EU-12 states were majority participants in two other projects: “Integrated European Joint Training and Simulation Centre” (EUROSIM – France, Germany, Hungary, Poland, and Slovenia), and “European Union Network of Diving Centres” (EUNDC – Bulgaria, France, and Romania).

2.3.1. Decision of November 2020

On November 20, 2020, the Council of the EU issued Decision 2020/1746, amending and updating Decision (CFSP) 2018/340 establishing the list of projects to be developed under PESCO. It contained an updated and consolidated list of current PESCO projects and their participants (Annex II to the Decision). The document shows that:

- The project “EU Training Mission Competence Center (EU TMCC)” from the “Training” area was closed. It was coordinated by Germany, with Austria, the Czech Republic, France, Ireland, Italy, Luxembourg, the Netherlands, Romania, Spain, and Sweden as participants. Thus the number of PESCO projects dropped to 46;
- Estonia, Hungary, and Poland joined the project “European Medical Command” from the “Enabling, joint” area;
- France joined the project “Upgrade of Maritime Surveillance” from the “Maritime” area;
- Austria left the project “Cyber Threats and Incident Response Information Sharing Platform” in the “Cyber, C4ISR” area;
- Finland and Italy left the project “Cyber Rapid Response Teams and Mutual Assistance in Cyber Security” from the “Cyber, C4ISR” area;
- Romania joined the project “Deployable Modular Underwater Intervention Capability (DIVEPACK)” from the “Maritime” area;

- Germany and the Netherlands joined the project “European Military Space Surveillance Awareness Network (EU-SSA-N)” from the “Space” area;
- Greece and Spain joined the project “European Patrol Corvette (EPC)” from the “Maritime” area;
- The Czech Republic left the project “Cyber and Information Domain Coordination Center (CIDCC)” from the “Cyber, C4ISR” area;
- Germany joined the project “Timely Warning and Interception with Space-based Theater surveillance (TWISTER)” from the “Enabling, joint” area;
- Poland joined the project “EU Collaborative Warfare Capabilities (ECoWAR)” from the “Enabling, joint” area.

2.4. Involvement in all projects

During the three waves, the Council greenlit for implementation the total of 47 projects, in which 25 states became involved. The projects were divided into 7 areas. The largest number of projects has been implemented in the areas of „Enabling” (11) and Training” (10, including the one that was closed), and the lowest number was proposed in “Space” (2 projects). The share of projects in each area is presented in Figure 4 below.

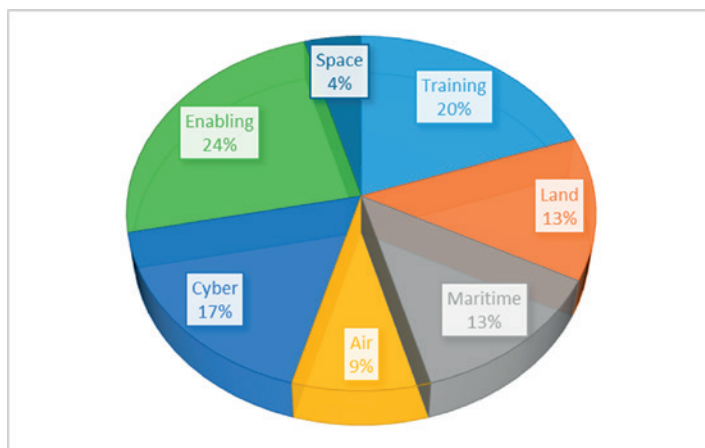


Figure 4. The Percentage of Projects Opened in Specific PESCO Areas

Source: Council Decision 2020/1746.

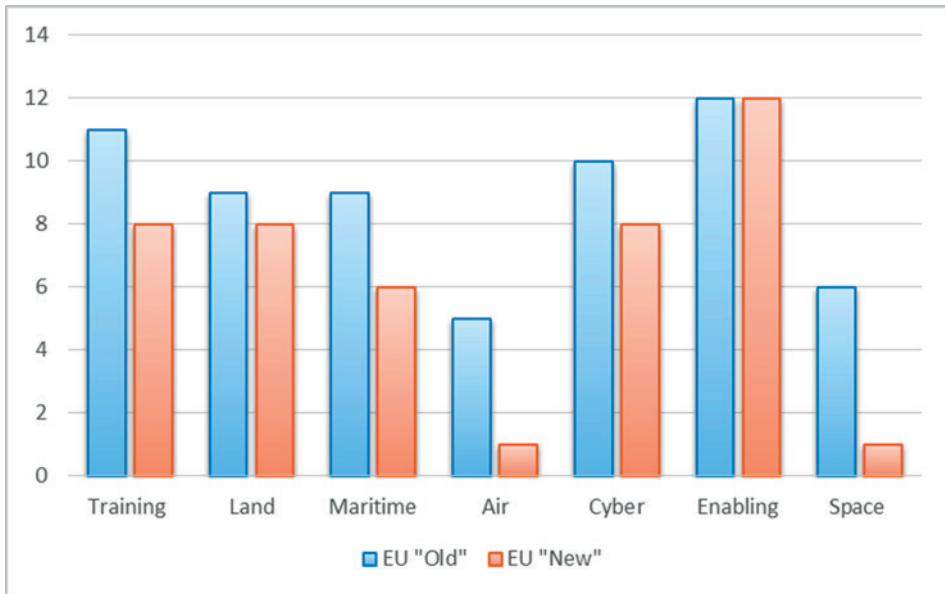


Figure 5. Involvement of ‘Old’ and ‘New’ EU States in PESCO Project Areas

Source: Council Decision 2020/1746.

The involvement of the states of the ‘old’ and ‘new’ EU is presented in Figure 5.

The involvement of ‘old’ EU states in all PESCO project areas is noticeable, with clear dominance in “Air” and “Space”. The balance between the ‘old’ and ‘new’ EU members in the “Enabling” area is due to the mentioned “Military Mobility” project. The Western European states currently lead the majority of projects (37, to 9 coordinated by EU-12 states); the closed project was also coordinated by a Western European state. France is the leader in most projects (10), followed by Italy (9), and Germany (7). Among the new member states, only Romania coordinates more than one project (2 in the “Training, facilities” area). The summary of state participation in PESCO projects is presented in Figure 6 below.

The arithmetic average for project participation is 12.23 for the pre-2004 EU members, and only half of that for the new members (6.75).

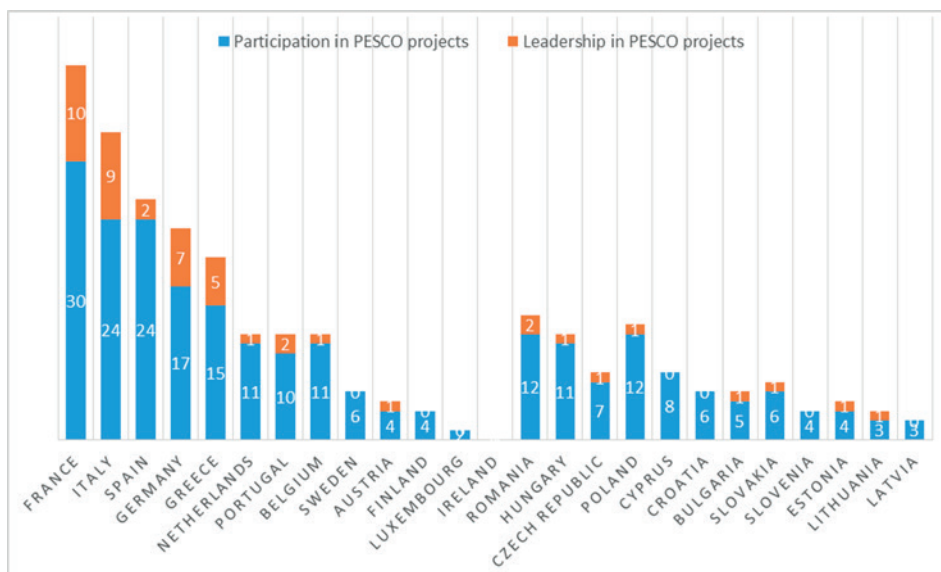


Figure 6. Participation of States in PESCO Projects (as of November 2020)

Source: Council Decision 2020/1746.

3. WESTERN EUROPE

Out of the 30 current member states of NATO, which is the guarantee of the military security of the Euro-Atlantic region, 10 are the states that were a part of the EU before its fifth enlargement in 2004⁵. This fact influenced the premises of the Union treaties, which stated that the EU security and defence policy does not supersede the interests of individual member states, respects their commitments resulting from the North Atlantic Treaty (TEU, 2016, par. 42; Protocol No. 11, 2016), and creates a space designed to expand the (not always easy) cooperation between them. What should be analysed first is therefore the question whether those states fully meet their binding commitments towards NATO, which will illustrate their approach to the matters of defence.

⁵ Due to Brexit, Great Britain cannot be included in this number. What is more, Sweden is NATO's host state; Austria and Finland only cooperate closely with NATO within, e.g., Partnership for Peace (PfP); due to its policy of neutrality, Ireland only cooperates with NATO through such initiatives as PfP.

After a look at the statistical data for 2020 made available by SIPRI (SIPRI, C), several general conclusions can be drawn:

- the greatest (in numbers) defence expenditures were noted in France (\$51.572 B) and Germany (\$51.570 B), and the lowest in Austria (\$3.49 B) and Luxembourg (\$0.48 B);
- with regard to defence expenditures considered GDP percentage (the first significant requirement of NATO), the surprising leader of the ranking was Greece (2.8%), followed by France and Portugal (2.1%), with Luxembourg (0.8%) and Ireland (0.3%) in the last places;
- the ranking of defence expenditures per capita is opened by Denmark⁶ (\$855.2), France (\$808.1) and Luxembourg (\$782), with Spain (\$372.8) and Ireland (\$231.8) at the bottom;
- in the category of defence expenditures as percentage of general public expenditures the leaders are Greece (4.8%) and Portugal (4.2%), with Austria and Luxembourg (1.4%) and Ireland (1.0%) far behind.

This basic information sheds some light on the question crucial for the further analysis. It demonstrates that in each category the 'old' EU states are far behind such states as Great Britain, not mentioning the US. They also have general problem with fulfilling their commitments to NATO (2% of GDP on defence, including 20% on modern equipment), which can result from the conviction that there is no threat of conventional armed conflict, from cynical hiding under the umbrella of American military presence in Europe, from budget problems, or from attempts to appease the pacifist part of the electorate.

Even a quick perusal of EU documents leads to a conclusion that the states of the 'old' EU (except Denmark, as explained) become involved in implementation of PESCO projects with much greater frequency and willingness than the 'new' member states. The most outstanding here are France (participating in 30 projects and leading 10 of them), Italy (24 projects, leading 9), and Spain (24 projects, leading 2) (Table 1).

The above table clearly suggests that the involvement of these three states is quite proportionally spread across all types of PESCO projects. The exception is the "Enabling, joint" area, which can only partially be explained by the greatest number of projects opened in this category in general. France's involvement (it coordinates 5 of them) highlights the importance of this area, further empha-

⁶ As Denmark does not participate in developing EU defence capabilities (including PESCO), it will not be taken into consideration here.

Table 1. Involvement of the 'Old' EU States in Specific Cooperation Areas

| Area | France | Italy | Spain |
|---------------------------|---------------------------------------|------------------------------------|------------------------------------|
| Training, facilities | 4 projects, incl. 1 as co-coordinator | 3 projects, incl. 1 as coordinator | 2 projects |
| Land, formations, systems | 3 projects, incl. 1 as coordinator | 4 projects, incl. 2 as coordinator | 3 projects |
| Maritime | 4 projects | 3 projects, incl. 2 as coordinator | 3 projects |
| Air, systems | 3 projects, incl. 1 as coordinator | 2 projects, incl. 1 as coordinator | 3 projects, incl. 1 as coordinator |
| Cyber, C4ISR | 3 projects, incl. 1 as coordinator | 4 projects, incl. 1 as coordinator | 4 projects, incl. 1 as coordinator |
| Enabling, joint | 11 projects, incl. 5 as coordinator | 6 projects, incl. 1 as coordinator | 8 projects |
| Space | 2 projects, incl. 1 as coordinator | 2 projects, incl. 1 as coordinator | 1 project |

Source: Authors' own work based on Council Decision 2020/1746.

sized by active participation of other states. The three most active states also participate in projects from all seven areas. The level of French participation in the implementation of PESCO projects can be partially explained by the fact that in this aspect France has been the leader of the pre-2004 EU, with greatest expenditures on defence as well as frequent participation and leading in expeditionary operations outside the EU; the country has also been an important exporter of arms and armament. For years, France has been lobbying for maximum strategic autonomy for the EU in all initiatives developing the Common Security and Defence Policy (CSDP). Italy and Spain have lower capabilities in this regard; however, they are among the largest economies within the EU, so they can afford more significant (in quantitative terms) participation in PESCO. They also support the notion that PESCO projects should increase the EU's strategic independence from NATO although they are not so explicit (Maulny & Di Bernardini, 2019, pp. 1–4).

Attention should be also paid to the objectives included in the key documents and strategies of the mentioned states, which can provide an insight as to the reasons behind their actual level of involvement in PESCO. The French documents state that "France and its European partners share a common destiny. Building a European defence and security policy will therefore be a strong pillar

of France's strategy. A pragmatic revitalisation of the Common Security and Defence Policy is necessary, in a context marked both by the critical financial situation of several European countries and the pivot of US policy towards Asia". They also point out that "the European countries must be able to define common security interests essential to the Union", which included creating a new, more mobile model of armed forces, facing cyberthreats, putting more emphasis on intelligence gathering, support for military industry, and the state of public finances (Ministère de la Défense, 2013). What Italy considered to be essential was "to provide a solid conceptual base to guide the general planning process and decisions that will provide funding for the modernization and renewal of the Armed Forces [in order] to sustain the development of a coherent and shared military culture, by means of joint and multinational activity [and] to provide a framework of reference for the development of new concepts and capabilities" (Italian Chief of Defence, 2004). Spain was of the opinion that its "security will be strengthened if the EU becomes consolidated as a global actor. To this end it is necessary to [...] develop the Common Security and Defence Policy (CSDP) equipped with appropriate and credible military resources" (Prime Minister of the Spanish Government, 2013). Thus all three states emphasize the necessity of further integration of states within the CSDP and to develop its components to ensure their safety.

Out of the three discussed states, only France (despite its reservations about US leadership in NATO) meets the basic criterion of participation in NATO, i.e., sufficient annual defence expenditures. In 2020, it was exactly 2.1% of France's GDP, while Italy and Spain spent merely 1.6% and 1.4%, respectively; their expenditures were even lower in the previous years. If these percentages are turned into sums, France is the leader of the 'old' EU in this regard (\$51.572 B), with Italy third (\$28.370 B), and Spain fourth (\$17.160 B) (SIPRI, A). It is thus justified to conclude that the sum of expenditures on broadly understood defence translates into the ability and willingness to become involved in PESCO projects. It is thus highly probable that further increase of defence expenditures in those states, aimed at fulfilling NATO's requirement, will by no means discourage joining further PESCO initiatives.

The scale of defence expenditures in Western European states can be partially explained by higher own costs (such as labour cost) than in the Eastern part of Europe. Another factor is certainly the size of the military forces: France has 208,000 soldiers (1st), Italy 175,500 (3rd), and Spain 122,500 (4th). At least in the cases of France and Italy, this somewhat justifies their level of involvement

in PESCO. However, the Spanish army is only slightly larger than, e.g., Polish military forces (120,000 soldiers), but Spain's activity within joint European projects is far greater than that of the Eastern European partner (NATO Secretary General, 2021).

An interesting question to ask at this point is whether the condition of national military industries (understood as its size and export capabilities) of EU states can influence their involvement in implementation of PESCO projects. As mentioned, France, Italy, and Spain are highly active in all PESCO areas, which could support the above conclusion. According to SIPRI data (trend-indicator value, or TIV index), these three core EU states have been among the largest exporters of conventional arms in the world: in the classification for the period 2000–2020, France ranked 3rd, Spain 7th, and Italy 9th. Thus the export of arms was an important element of those states' income (SIPRI, B). An obvious conclusion is that what is needed to remain at the top of this ranking are products which will attract the customers in a competitive market. This in turn requires investment in research and development of new technologies. Thus the condition of military industry in the discussed states and the will to remain competitive on the global arms market can at least partially explain their involvement in PESCO.

The last issue is the attitude towards NATO. All three states discussed here are members of NATO and at the same time the signatories of EU treaties. They are therefore obliged to support NATO in all aspects of its functioning, so the membership in the EU and the development of capabilities within the CSDP cannot prevent these states from meeting their obligations arising from the North Atlantic Treaty. For years only France openly expressed doubts as to the US' leadership style. Today this has ceased, and France wants to be an important and active NATO member – yet in accordance with “French strategic culture, which promotes strategic autonomy and the diversification of formats of defense cooperation” (Billon-Galland & Quencez, 2017, p. 3). In turn, there are many reasons why “the Italian support to EU defence initiatives like PESCO is deeply rooted, widespread across the political spectrum and the defence policy community. Such an overall posture lets Italy be close to Germany, and places both Rome and Berlin in a middle-ground position between more Atlanticist countries like Poland and lesser ones like France” (Sabatino & Marrone, 2020, p. 12). Meanwhile, Spain supports cooperation and integration within EU security area, and attempts to meet the goals set for members of both organizations (however, failing with regard to NATO). In the wake of Brexit and in consideration of the

interests of its own military industry, Spain also wants to join the group of leaders and decision-makers in such spheres as PESCO (Arteaga, 2018, pp. 3 and 7).

4. EASTERN EUROPE

The analysis of the ‘new’ EU member states’ involvement reveals that there are four states that are most involved in PESCO projects: Romania, which participates in 12 projects and coordinates 1, then Poland, participating in 12 and leading 1, followed by Hungary (11 and 1, respectively), and the Czech Republic (7 and 1, respectively). The number of projects in specific areas and the projects coordinated by individual states are presented in Table 2.

Table 2. Involvement of States in Specific Cooperation Areas

| Area | Czech Republic | Hungary | Poland | Romania |
|---------------------------|-------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|---------------------------------------------------------------------------|-----------------------------------------------------------------|----------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|
| Training, facilities | 0 | 2 • Integrated European Joint Training and Simulation Centre (EUROSIM) | 2 • Special Operations Forces Medical Training Centre (SMTC) | 3 • CBRN Defence Training Range (CBRNDTR) • European Union Network of Diving Centres (EUNDC) |
| Land, formations, systems | 1 | 2 | 1 | 0 |
| Maritime | 0 | 0 | 2 | 2 |
| Air, systems | 2 | 0 | 0 | 0 |
| Cyber, C4ISR | 1 • Electronic Warfare Capability and Interoperability Programme for Future Joint Intelligence, Surveillance and Reconnaissance (JISR) | 2 | 2 | 1 |
| Enabling, joint | 3 | 5 | 4 | 6 |
| Space | 0 | 0 | 1 | 0 |

Source: Authors’ own work based on Council Decision 2020/1746.

The ‘new’ member states are most involved in the projects from the “Enabling, joint” area, where Romania participates in 6 projects, Hungary – 5, Poland – 4, and the Czech Republic – 3. Here all the states participate in the project “Military Mobility” (Blockmans & Crosson, 2019, p. 6). Another significant area is “Training, facilities”, in which Romania implements 3 projects, while both Poland and Hungary implement 2. It should be noted that these two areas require lowest financial input. The area in which all four states are also involved is “Cyber, C4ISR”; within its framework all states have developed national cybersecurity strategies and emphasize the importance of ensuring security in this area: Romania – 2013; the Czech Republic – 2015; Poland – 2017; Hungary – 2018. Here the Czech Republic leads the project “Electronic Warfare Capability and Interoperability Programme for Future Joint Intelligence, Surveillance and Reconnaissance (JISR) Cooperation”, in which the only other participant is Germany. Hungary leads the project “Integrated European Joint Training and Simulation Centre (EUROSIM)” from the “Training, facilities” area, where the other participants include France, Germany, Poland, and Slovenia. Poland leads another “Training, facilities” project “Special Operations Forces Medical Training Centre (SMTC)”, where its only partner is Hungary. Romania coordinates two “Training, facilities” projects: “CBRN Defence Training Range (CBRNDTR)” together with France and Italy, and “European Union Network of Diving Centres (EUNDC)” together with Bulgaria and France (Nádudvari, Etl, & Bereczky, 2020).

As to involvement in other cooperation areas, the Czech Republic, which in its national defence strategy of 2015 considers permanent participation in the NATO Integrated Air Defence System (NATINADS) as one of the main pillars of its defence (Ministerstvo Zahraničních Věcí České Republiky, 2015b), was the only one of the analysed Eastern European states that joined two projects from the “Air, systems” area. For Hungary, as stated in the national defence strategy of 2020, the crucial elements are territorial defence as well as the ability to participate in NATO and other international high-intensity operations. Unsurprisingly, Hungary participates in two projects from the “Land, formations, systems” area. As countries with sea access, Poland and Romania joined the implementation of projects in the “Maritime” area.

Analysing the involvement of individual states in PESCO projects, it can be noted that not all of the most involved states allocate 2% of their GDP for military purposes (although all of them are also NATO members). Both the Czech Republic and Hungary increase their military budgets every year, and their governments have committed themselves to reaching the target 2% of GDP in

2024. However, there is no straightforward relation between the highest spending and involvement in the largest number of PESCO projects.

Table 3. SIPRI Military Expenditure by Country in 2020

| | Czech Republic | Hungary | Poland | Romania |
|---------------------------------------------------------------------------------|----------------|---------|--------|---------|
| Military expenditure by country as percentage of gross domestic product in 2020 | 1.4% | 1.6% | 2.2% | 2.3% |
| Military expenditure by country, in constant (2019) US\$ m. | 3187 | 2463 | 12815 | 5579 |

Source: SIPRI (SIPRI, A).

As in the case of military spending, the army size does not directly translate to the state's involvement either: while its army is larger than the Romanian one, Poland is involved in fewer projects.

Table 4. Size of the Armed Forces

| Czech Republic | Hungary | Poland | Romania |
|-----------------------------------------------------|-----------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|---------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|
| ACTIVE 21,750 (Army 12,250; Air 5,850; Other 3,650) | ACTIVE 27,800 (Army 10,450; Air 5,750; Joint 11,600) Paramilitary 12,000 RESERVE 20,000 | ACTIVE 123,700 (Army 80,000; Navy 7,000; Air 16,500; Special Forces 3,500; Territorial 3,200; Joint 13,500) Paramilitary 73,400 | ACTIVE 69,600 (Army 35,800; Navy 6,600; Air 10,700; Joint 16,500) Paramilitary 57,000 RESERVE 53,000 |

Source: International Institute for Strategic Studies (IISS) (2020).

Considering the character of projects in which the studied states participate, it seems that there is no straightforward relation between the state of the military industry and the given state's involvement, either. While Romania is the most active EU-12 state regarding PESCO initiatives, its arms industry is of medium size and, except for the privatized aerospace sector, remains state-controlled and struggles with its lack of competitiveness in the market (Black et al., 2016, p. 107). Meanwhile, Poland implements fewer projects although its relatively well-diversified military industry sector is not only the largest in the EU-12 group but also larger than the corresponding industries of such pre-2004 EU members as Austria, Finland, and the Netherlands. The involvement of the Czech Republic (which has a relatively strong arms industry, with several historic defence brands, a well-developed production base, and sizeable local workforce), as well

as Hungary (whose defence sector is one of the smallest among the Central and Eastern Europe's EDA member states) in PESCO projects also demonstrates that in the case of this group of states the size of the arms industry sector has smaller input on their participation. The states discussed here are mostly focused on strengthening cooperation between the armies of EU member states, training and establishing systems for cooperation within specific PESCO areas; they avoid the most ambitious projects such as the European Patrol Corvette, led by France and Italy, and the Timely Warning and Interception with Space-based TheatER surveillance (TWISTER), which promotes the European ability to contribute to NATO defence against ballistic missiles.

The 'new' member states also show different attitudes towards EU security and defense policy.

Table 5. Attitude to the EU and NATO: Policy Analysis

| | Czech Republic | Hungary | Poland | Romania |
|-----------------------------------------|----------------------------------------------------------------------|----------------------------------------------------------------------|--------------------------------------------------------|----------------------------------------------------------------------|
| Foreign and security policy orientation | Functional: NATO for collective defence, otherwise preference for EU | Functional: NATO for collective defence, otherwise preference for EU | Strongly advocates for NATO, recently support for CSDP | Functional: NATO for collective defence, otherwise preference for EU |

Source: Authors' own study.

Poland is described as a state that supports the notion of strong NATO, seeks to strengthen the Alliance's eastern flank, and wants a permanent NATO base in its territory. It perceives NATO as a sole guarantor of Poland's security. The National Security Strategy of 2007 stated that "the North Atlantic Alliance is for Poland the most important form of multilateral cooperation in a political and military dimension of security and a pillar of stability on the European continent, as well as the main forum of transatlantic relations". According to Stanisław Parzymies, this attitude underpinned the Polish criticism of the Common Security and Defence Policy (CSDP), which clearly expressed fears that NATO's tasks and capabilities would be doubled by the EU (Parzymies, 2001, p. 287). Another factor influencing the Polish standpoint was that up to mid-2000s, the CSDP had been perceived as an immature policy that did not guarantee genuine security. It should be noted, however, that Polish views on involvement in the CSDP and PESCO projects have been modified to some extent. Marcin Terlikowski considers that "[t]he traditional focus on NATO has shifted and the EU – once devoid of strategic character in the Polish perception – is increasingly seen as a valuable security actor, almost as important as the Alliance" (2013, p.

279). However, Péter Tálas raises the concern that “although Poland participates in all European defence initiatives mentioned – and it could not do otherwise if it views itself as a middle power – it is not as proactive as it could be expected of a European middle power” (Tálas, 2020, p. 65).

Romania, the Czech Republic, and Hungary show a similar approach to NATO: it is supposed to help in matters traditionally regarding military security, while (post)modern threats could, in principle, also be tackled by the CSDP, in strict cooperation with NATO. As Mircea Micu notes, the crux of Romanian security policy is a “certain preference for NATO over the EU in security matters and the centrality of the US” (2013, p. 296). Like Poland, Romania supports strong partnership with the US, and hosts the American ballistic missile defence system Aegis Ashore in Deveselu. With regard to the Czech security policy, it should be noted that post-Lisbon Treaty documents explicitly treat the EU as a collective defence organisation and EU members as “allies” (Jireš, 2013, p. 72). However, the EU is also expected to be an organisation of collective security, specialising at soft security endeavours such as peacekeeping and state-building (Handl, 2010), while military security is to be guaranteed by NATO. The *Koncepce zahraniční politiky České republiky* [Concept of the Foreign Policy of the Czech Republic] states that the Czech Republic is interested in a uniform and strategically functioning Common Security and Defence Policy (CSDP) of the EU. The Czech Republic will actively co-create the CSDP in collaboration with likely minded EU member states (Ministerstvo Zahraničních Věcí České Republiky, 2015a). As to Hungary, according to Gergely Varga, “[e]ven though NATO continues to remain the bedrock of Hungarian security and defence, the importance of EU CSDP has strengthened in recent years. The most significant factor in this shift was the negative change in the European security environment, the concerns about the long-term U.S. role in Europe and the potential financial and military benefits of enhanced European cooperation” (2020, p. 23).

5. CONCLUDING REMARKS

Admittedly, the PESCO initiative is necessary and theoretically can contribute to closer cooperation between the participating states on defence matters as well as in other spheres. However, some doubts have already arisen. Financing is the first issue, and recently it has gained prominence due to the global struggle with the COVID-19 pandemic and its socio-economic consequences. National

governments desperately look for money in their budgets, so PESCO projects can fall victim to budget cuts. Another question is whether at the time of deep internal divisions in the EU and disputes about money, migrants, the rule of law, etc., the states will be able to overcome their prejudices and collaborate with each other despite obstacles – there have already been some arguments over certain states joining specific projects. The third issue regards sharing knowledge, technology, and information. For years defence projects have been considered as key national interests of each EU member state, which the governments were unwilling to replace with broader agreements, joint purchases of arms and armament abroad, etc. The fourth problem is that it is difficult to verify the credibility of the implementation plans for further commitments as well as specific project, while the currently available information is not very optimistic (Béraud-Sudreau, Efstathiou, & Hannigan, 2019). The fifth issue is the evaluation of the selection of PESCO projects – to what extent will they be able to change the security and defence policy of the EU, and what influence will they have, if any, on the needs and capabilities of the EU? The first assessments here lead to a supposition that the probability of significant change is quite low (Billon-Galland & Efstathiou, 2019, pp. 8–9). The sixth problem is the fact that PESCO is not the sole component of EU strategic planning and military capability building. This process involves an entire range of entities cooperating not at one, but four layers – CDM, CDP, CARD, and PESCO – which are not necessarily coherent and compatible with each other (Mauro & Jehin, 2019, p. 6). As Justyna Gotkowska notes, the implementation procedures of PESCO projects are highly bureaucratic, and the administrative matters can overburden the involved states; this can act as a brake for the PESCO initiative (2019, p. 33). However, if PESCO turned out to be a success, all these factors would be negligible in the perspective of genuinely deepened cooperation.

The factors determining the involvement of particular states in PESCO projects are different and their intensity varies. The involvement of a state depends on its current military potential, the development opportunities for its arms industry (including potential foreign markets), its perception of the spectrum of key threats, situation in the near abroad (such as Brexit or the Russo-Ukrainian War), attitude to NATO as well as a variety of political, historical and geographical factors, which may be intangible yet weighty. In the CEE countries, the memory of the socialist past imposed in the 20th century by their Soviet neighbour is still alive – yet this factor is difficult to understand for states which due to their locations did not experience the same problems. The recent events in Donbas and Crimea, hacker attacks on the infrastructure of the Baltic

States, and large-scale military exercises in Belarus worry the leaders of the ‘new’ EU member states and to a large extent determine their actions. The question remains, whether in the face of subsequent breaks in European unity in other spheres (Brexit, Greece’s government-debt crisis, breaches of the rule of law in several states, further EU enlargements, etc.) the EU will have enough political will, funds and determination to further develop the concept of PESCO. Let us hope that the answer is positive as the EU needs such an impulse to continue to operate (Biscop, 2020, p. 3; Zandee, 2018, pp. 11–14).

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