

PERMANENT STRUCTURED CO-OPERATION KEY FACTOR FOR SECURITY AND DEFENSE IN THE EU**Neno Hristov Hristov**

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Abstract: Permanent defense co-operation is a whole new policy that became possible in 2009. It was excluded from the areas of joint action in the EU after the prolonged and destructive war resulting from the negotiation of a new Europe. PESCO aims to create the modern capabilities of the EU rather than grouping or uniting outdated capabilities. By implementing modern projects, it will be possible to create battle platforms and capabilities that are world-class. The Republic of Bulgaria joined the new Permanent Structured Co-operation (PESCO) - a permanent EU military structure related to the implementation of military cooperation for joint development of armaments and proclamation of joint procurement for the modernization of the army equipment, as well as participation in joint exercises of the armed forces.

Keywords: permanent, defense, co-operation, policy, EU, capabilities, modernization, procurement, modernization.

INTRODUCTION

In line with the changing security environment, the EU's Global Strategy for Foreign Policy and Security Policy (EUGS) has begun a process of closer cooperation on security and defense. The EU Member States have agreed to strengthen the European Union's work in this area and the need for enhanced coordination, increased investment in defense and defense cooperation development as key requirements for achieving it¹⁴⁸.

The Republic of Bulgaria joined the new Permanent Structured Co-operation (PESCO) - a permanent EU military structure related to the implementation of military cooperation for joint development of armaments and proclamation of joint procurement for the modernization of the army equipment, as well as participation in joint exercises of the armed forces.

PESKO was proposed by the European Commission to Jean-Claude Juncker, who is a supporter of the creation of an European army. That was made possible after Donald Trump was elected President of the United States after he announced during the election campaign that the United States might come out of NATO. According to the EU, PESCO does not duplicate NATO but strengthens its European flag.

NATO Secretary General Jens Stoltenberg welcomed the creation of PESKO but stressed that "we do not need competition but cooperation." He reminded that after leaving Britain, 80% of the money and 3 of the 4 NATO military groups would come from countries outside the EU According to Stoltenberg, with the participation of so many EU countries in PESKO, it will be possible to increase defense spending for the Pact and redistribute more evenly the burdens between Member States.

MAIN PART

Permanent defense co-operation is a whole new policy that became possible in 2009. It was excluded from the areas of joint action in the EU after the prolonged and destructive war resulting from the negotiation of a new Europe. PESCO aims to create the modern capabilities of the EU rather than grouping or uniting outdated capabilities. By implementing modern projects, it will be possible to create battle platforms and capabilities that are world-class. The Estonian Presidency actually completed the notification and on 11 December 2017 the Council took a historic step and adopted a decision to set up PESCO with participants from 25 EU Member States and the implementation was practically carried out by the Republic of Bulgaria during the six months of the EU presidency, where implementation is started. The principle of participation in PESKO is that each country allocates financial resources and, it participates if fulfills the eligibility criteria. of. At the moment it stops fulfilling the criteria, an exclusion mechanism is provided. This is the big difference with NATO, where there is no exclusion mechanism, although many member states do not meet their obligations to raise defense spending to 2% of GDP.

Paris and Berlin have lifted two different visions for PESKO. France emphasized the initiative's efficiency potential, insisted on increased eligibility criteria and tightened engagements by the acceding countries - which was somewhat

¹⁴⁸ Permanent Structured Cooperation (PESCO) – Factsheet, Bruxelles, 28/06/2018.

in line with Macron's calls to strengthen European integration within the framework of the most prepared ones, that is to say of the euro area. Germany urged the new structure to be as broad as possible because it worried that setting too high entry requirements would create new dividing lines on the continent and cause alienation from a number of member states.

These differences were eventually overcome by a compromise, with emphasis being placed on the commitments of those who wanted membership. In order to be included, they do not need to have high technical and operational capabilities but must make a clear commitment to achieving ambitious targets. This has made PESKO's ultimate goal - to make Europeans make more efforts in the field of defense, and to improve the coordination of their defense policies¹⁴⁹.

The future of European defense is also discussed at the Munich Security Conference 2018. Taking into account the results of the annual report - European Defense Report - More European, More Connected and More Capable. Building the European Armed Forces of the Future and the statements of the defense ministers of Germany and France - Ursula von der Leyen and Florence Parly, NATO Secretary General Jens Stoltenberg, German Foreign Minister Sigmar Gabriel, UK Prime Ministers, France and Poland - Theresa May, Edouard Philippe and Mateusz Morawiecki, European Commission President Jean-Claude Juncker, and the US President for National Security, General Herbert Raymond McMaster, we can analyze the current situation and forecast future development process. First of all, it should be made clear that the European Defense Initiative (EDI) is primarily an expression of the general concept of France and Germany for the future of Europe (in this case the EU is only a framework). They have shades, but the phrases of von Day Lynn, Parley, Gabriel and Philip describe the basic elements of this concept. Although some perceive EDI as a counterweight to the role of the United States in NATO, the Atlantic link cannot be replaced. The nuclear and conventional potential of the United States in the foreseeable future is indispensable for countering Russia's actions in Eastern Europe. That is why, when it comes to threats from the East, the answer will be within NATO. It is noteworthy that in his speech, Sigmar Gabriel directly mentions China as a next-generation strategy aimed at proposing an alternative to the Western model and thus contradicting Europe's interests.

The immediate aim (perhaps with a 10-20-year horizon) of EDI is not directed externally but inward towards European countries. Von der Leyen points out that the concept of an "Army of Europeans" is a Franco-German idea to which others are invited to join. The coordinated development of the armies, the concentration and coordination of the defense industry and the new "strategic culture" are key elements of security and defense policy, but the even bigger goal is the deepening of European identity and integration. Especially since the United Kingdom left the EU, there is no doubt that the United Europe will be the core of this Franco-German Union. Under the assumed long-term concept, in the interest of their own future development, peripheral countries will gradually begin to put their national interests closer behind those of the community as a whole.

It is hardly ever the EDI to pursue short-term military tasks. A key element in the concept is the word "gradual". The multiple reference to the wide variety of basic systems of armaments and equipment in Europe serves to illustrate the need for coordination and concentration. It is clear that in the next 5-10 years the main equipment will remain in the armament. For this reason, the main effort will initially focus on the so called - Force enablers (with a focus on C4ISR systems and logistics) and new technology spheres - cyber and space. However, when it comes to the next generations of core systems (which are being developed or are in the process of being developed), opportunities will be sought to coordinate and concentrate efforts. However, it should be borne in mind that reducing diversity and duplication of effort does not mean removing them

As noted, France and Germany, even with the help of the other smaller EU countries, cannot achieve "strategic autonomy." This is one of the main elements of EDI that causes misunderstanding and confusion. EDI does not mean "strategic" autonomy, but something far more limited as goals. In addition to global climate change issues, the future development of the West and the global balance of power, France and Germany, obviously perceive two major external threats to Europe (the third major threat is internal and concerns the EU's integrity). These are Russia to the east and instability to the south-southeast.

As it has been said, the first threat has to be framed within NATO, with the help of the United States, and the combination of political and economic pressure will gradually make Russia rethink its policy.

¹⁴⁹ Zapryanov A., G. I. Dushkov, M. Alashki, Programata za razvitiie na obranitelnite sposobnosti na vaorazhenite sili na R. Bulgaria – osnova za nadgrazhdane na obranitelnia potentsial, godishna nauchna konferentsia „Izpolzване na vaorazhenite sili v savremennite konflikti”, 20-21.05.2015, VA „G. S. Rakovski“.

The second threat is more complex. Unlike the smaller European countries, especially those in Eastern and Northern Europe, Germany and France recognize instability in North Africa as a problem that requires a complex and lengthy decision. Migration flows to Europe bring with them specific threats to the security of European countries. They are not a result of accidental conflicts, but a sustainable trend that cannot be overcome only by enhanced security at the external borders. France and Germany agree that they will be engaged in large-scale economic programs in the troubled region (especially in Africa) but will also need military capabilities. Although Germany (von den Lynen and Gabriel) stressed that "comprehensive security" costs include not only defense spending, but also economic and social development funds, Leyen stressed out that there could be no countries "which are limited to humanitarian aid and reconstruction. Florence Parly directly speaks of "Intervention Ability". In this sense, when it comes to autonomy in terms of military capabilities, the ability to expedite operations in conflict zones on the southern periphery of Europe is considered.

The change in the "strategic culture" mentioned to above refers to both the understanding of Europe as a community (a combination of national and European interests), but also in some sense a "re-militarization" of European foreign policy. The latter is related not only to relations between European countries but is also an important political issue within European societies.

It is noteworthy that Rasmussen, the British and American representatives are supporting, but are given also concern mainly related to duplication of efforts. The latter can be summarized as follows: "If countries fail to reach the agreed 2% of defense GDP, how will they meet their commitments to NATO's collective defense and at the same time create and maintain autonomy for NATO-outside operations? "Britain certainly does not want to remain isolated. It is mentioned several times that the country has left the EU, but not Europe.

In practice, the sharpest reaction comes from Poland, through Mateusz Morawiecki. This is probably due to the Franco-German pressure on Poland and the fact that the state exceeds the commitment of 2% of defense GDP, focusing on the threat from the East and showing little interest in operations in Africa.

Morawiecki comes out with a very categorical statement, but in his reflection the focus is shifted from a commentary on the Holocaust. He stresses that Europe can only be self-sufficient once a sense of community is built instead of axes within the EU. Defense has a key role to play in the speech. It is underlined that, following Putin's famous speech at the 2007 conference, Russia fulfilled the promise of its president - the war in Georgia in 2008, the subsequent intervention in Ukraine, the annexation of the Crimea, and so on. Particular attention is paid to the fact that most EU and NATO countries do not reach 2% of defense GDP, of which 20% are investments in equipment. Before these levels can be reached, there can be no question of any autonomy in the military sphere and European defense. Morawiecki uses the expression "free riders" living under American "Pax Americana", but claiming to be self-sufficient, "continuing to prefer to live under "Pax Europea", but that does not correspond to the reality at the moment. Again, he draws particular attention to the need to develop capabilities to counteract non-traditional (especially cyber-) and hybrid threats, but at the same time conventional military capabilities. In his speech he uses characteristic expressions like "we need more steel tanks and not only think-tanks," and speaks of "chair forces" and "power-point rangers." The following main messages stand out in Morawiecki's statement:

1. The main threats to Poland's security are Russia and the uncertainty on the southern periphery of the EU;
2. Poland strongly supports the European defense but will only consider it a serious factor when European countries start to invest sufficiently in their own armed forces;
3. Poland will hardly support the initiatives of the Franco-German Axis until it feels compelled by it.

It should be made clear that under the current presidential administration in the United States, the country is often the source of divergent signals. The structure of power is such that foreign policy is in practice not concentrated in a single center subordinate to the President. However, it can be assumed how the EDI's look from the point of view of the United States. The fact that Germany and France are not looking for "strategic autonomy" in the long and long term is favorable to the United States. But it actually leads to "blocking" US resources to maintain nuclear potential and strengthened military presence in Eastern Europe. These are forces that no one wants to use in practice in a military operation and which have almost entirely restraining effect. But the US takes the price while many European countries refuse to do so.

At the same time, the autonomy of carrying out expedition operations under the leadership of France and Germany may have two negative effects for the United States. First of all, these operations are not in agreement with the US and potentially harm some of America's interests in the region. Behind the intention of France and Germany for greater co-operation with the United States in terms of crisis management, it may be a warning that US policy at the

periphery of Europe must be reconciled with the Franco-German Union and similar cases to Iraq 2003 are already ineligible. Secondly, doubts about "duplication" may mean that if they are engaged in "own" operations, European countries may be less likely to engage in operations under US leadership.

In addition, (although it is unlikely that the European defense market is actually limited to US firms), there is a potential for losing markets as a result of the consolidation of the European Defense Technological and Industrial Base. So the overall effect is: "blocking" Russia's money and resources (which are unlikely to be used), reduced flexibility with regard to North Africa and the Middle East and potential constraints on Europe's markets.

For the time being, the EU does not aim to set up an army, but PESCO is a first step towards creating a European defense alliance, which must be a reality by 2025. The new structure will give EU more strategic autonomy and participants hope to help each with one another common arms purchase and thus fulfill their commitments to NATO to use 2% of defense GDP, which is now only 5 of the members of the organization. They believe that joint efforts will be able to negotiate better prices from manufacturers as a result of the larger volume of supply. Besides, PESCO will serve as a hat for regional military initiatives such as the creation of a common Belgian-Dutch navy or general command of military transport aviation in the EU.

The European Defense Agency, which will monitor defense budgets in the Member States, will also be new and will be able to recommend that states join efforts to achieve the goals set. On 6 March 2018, the Council formally adopted the first set of 17 different projects, the project's members for each of them, and a recommendation setting out a roadmap for the further implementation of the PESCO. The defined cooperation projects at this stage are in the field of capacity development and in the operational dimension and the Republic of Bulgaria is ready to participate in 3 or 4 of them, with up to 10% EU funding. These include the creation of a European Medical Command, an EU Training Mission Competence Center, cyber-fast response teams and cyber security assistance, assistance in military catastrophes and increased maritime surveillance. One of the hopes associated with the new structure is that it will contribute to reducing the overlap of arms systems in the European Union. Or, as European Commission President Jean-Claude Juncker commented, there are 17 different tanks currently in the alliance, while the United States has one and more helicopters than governments are buying. It is indicative that the total defense spending of the EU countries amounts to about 40 per cent of those of the United States, but according to estimates of the community itself, its defense capabilities account for only 15 per cent of the US. The main reason for this is the waste of funds and the unnecessary duplication of activities. Although earlier this year the European Commission launched the ambitious European Defense Fund, which has to spend € 5.5 billion annually to boost the military capabilities of the Union, it is obvious that investing without improving cooperation will not produce the necessary results. In addition, PESCO will serve as a steering structure for regional military initiatives, such as the creation of a common Belgian-Dutch military fleet or a joint military command of EU aviation. The European Defense Agency, which will monitor defense budgets in the member states, will also be new and will be able to recommend that states join efforts to achieve targets.

PESCO has a two-tier structure, which includes the lead role of the Council in charge of overall policy direction and decision-making, including the evaluation mechanism, to determine whether the participating Member States are fulfilling their commitments. Only members of the PESCO vote, the decisions are taken unanimously (with the exception of decisions on suspension of membership and the entry of new members by a qualified majority). The second level relates to the realization of projects. Each project will be managed by a Member State. On 25 June 2018, the Council adopted a decision establishing a common set of rules for the management of PESCO projects. It includes the obligation to report to the Council once a year on the basis of the road map with the objectives and milestones agreed in each project. Each year, the process of generating new projects will begin with a view to updating the list of projects and their participants by November by the Council. Evaluation criteria were developed by the PESCO Secretariat to inform the evaluation of project proposals by the participating Member States. The PSEC Secretariat is the European Defense Agency (EDA), including the EU military headquarters, which jointly perform secretariat functions on all PESCO issues with a single contact point for the participating Member States.

Permanent structured cooperation and the capabilities that will be made available to it by the EU do not in any way replace or duplicate the obligations of EU Member States that are also members of NATO. The Republic of Bulgaria can not afford within the defense budget to build separate commitments and capabilities to NATO, and separate commitments and capabilities for the European defense. PESCO is a permanent framework for closer cooperation and a structured process for the gradual deepening of defense cooperation within the Union. It will be an engine for integration in the field of defense. Each participating Member State shall provide a plan for the national

contributions and the efforts they have made to make. These national implementation plans are subject to regular evaluation. This is different from the voluntary approach currently used in the EU's common security and defense policy.

The PESKO project is also intended to contribute to enhancing the effectiveness of European defense and to making industry more committed by providing enhanced coordination and cooperation in the field of investment, capacity development and operational readiness. Permanent structured cooperation in this area will allow a reduction in the number of different arms systems in Europe and hence strengthen operational cooperation between Member States, linking their forces through increased interoperability and increasing industrial competitiveness.

In order to be able to plan the activities in the process of development of the armed forces, the National Assembly has developed and adopted a "Program for development of the defense capabilities of the armed forces of Bulgaria 2020". In order to be implemented and participated in the development of general defense projects, the Government of the Republic of Bulgaria adopted a National Defense Improvement Plan, which states that by 2024 defense spending will reach 2% of GDP or 2.8 billion, at 1.6 billion now¹⁵⁰.

Analyzing the processes related to the development of the EDI and anticipating the future development of PESKO, the following conclusions regarding the Republic of Bulgaria (as a small EU member state) can be made:

1. It is good for the Republic of Bulgaria to support the deepening of the integration between the EU countries and the development of a common foreign and security policy or a common security and defense policy (CSDP)
2. Bulgaria considers NATO to be the main guarantor of Europe's defense and sees common European defense as an addition and not as an alternative to NATO.
3. By supporting EDI, Bulgaria expects that Bulgaria can attract joint funding to develop its defense potential.
4. Republic of Bulgaria understands that in its present form, EDI is rather a pilot project. Within the next 10 years, it can pave the way for a deeper future defense cooperation between European countries and help to integrate more fully the European Defense Technological and Industrial Base. Permanent Defense Cooperation cannot and does not have the ambition to replace Member States in terms of financing the development and acquisition of basic armaments and equipment systems. As before, cooperation between specific, willing Member States will remain the guiding principle for the implementation of multinational projects.
5. One of the main objectives of the Republic of Bulgaria in connection with the implementation of the defense investment projects will be the transfer of technologies and the development or creation of industrial capacities for production and maintenance on the territory of the country¹⁵¹.
6. Bulgaria recognizes that EDI should be used mainly for the development of the European Defense Technological and Industrial Base. At the same time, the Republic of Bulgaria and other Member States may have interests other than those of the industry in the leading European countries. A situation should not be allowed where EU Member States are limited in their choice of suppliers only by other Member States of the Union. This may be in the interests of the industries in France or Germany but will be too restrictive for Bulgaria and other countries on the periphery of the EU.

CONCLUSION

The Republic of Bulgaria accepts that PESKO should not be limited to EDI. The EU Force Mobility Initiative, known as the Military Schengen, is extremely important and should be a priority in the short and medium term. At the same time, the issue of potentially the greatest controversy is that of using EDI. The interest of countries such as the Republic of Bulgaria does not always coincide with that of the industries in France and Germany related to the specific designation of the project contractor. In addition, we are also a member of NATO, and Europe's collective defense is based on NATO and not on the EU. Therefore, taking into account the national interests of the country, certain considerations need to be respected as follows:

1. EDI is an instrument to pave the way for deepening integration between the European armed forces and European defense industry companies.

¹⁵⁰ Zapryanov A., G. I. Dushkov, M. Alashki, Programata za razvitiie na otranitelnite sposobnosti na vaorazhenite sili na R. Bulgaria – osnova za nadgrazhdane na otranitelnia potentsial, godishna nauchna konferentsia „Izpolzване na vaorazhenite sili v savremennite konflikti”, 20-21.05.2015, VA „G. S. Rakovski”.

¹⁵¹ Dushkov G. I., M. M. Alashki, Pridobivane na novi otranitelni sposobnosti chrez sistemata za otranitelna akvizitsia, nauchna konferentsia „Savremenni predizvikatelstva pred sigurnostta i otranata” na FNSO, 19-20.05.2016., VA „G. S. Rakovski”. Sbornik dokladi ot godishnata nauchna konferentsia na VA „G.S. Rakovski”, FNSO, vtora chast/2016, pp. 170-173, ISBN 978-954-9348-89-7.

2. At the same time, the Republic of Bulgaria assumes that the leading role of the states remains indisputable. The Multinational Development Co-Development Initiative or Capability Acquis, as well as funding, will belong to the Member States. Accordingly, they will have the decisive role in making a decision.

3. The Republic of Bulgaria accepts that when EU Member States take a joint capability initiative, their choice of supplier may be limited only by existing industrial security agreements. Ie. not only companies from NATO member states but companies from partner countries as long as they are eligible for industrial security can participate in the implementation of the project.

4. When a consortium of EU Member States applies for funding for an EDI project, then the choice of supplier is limited to companies from EDI participating countries. This restriction applies only to the part of the project (work package) to be funded by EDI. For the parts of the project (work packages) financed by states, such a limitation cannot exist.

The assumptions, conclusions and analyzes made in the article express the author's personal opinion on the issue and are not official policy of the Republic of Bulgaria.

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