

THE STRATEGIC SITUATION AND THE OPERATION OF PERMANENT STRUCTURED COOPERATION AS A EUROPEAN DEFENSE SECURITY INSTRUMENT

LA SITUACIÓN ESTRATÉGICA Y EL FUNCIONAMIENTO DE LA COOPERACIÓN ESTRUCTURADA PERMANENTE COMO INSTRUMENTO DE SEGURIDAD DE DEFENSA EUROPEA

DANIEL MARTÍNEZ CRISTÓBAL*

Sumario: I. THE EUROPEAN UNION'S GLOBAL STRATEGY. II. PESCO AND COMMON SECURITY. III. STRATEGIC PROJECTS WITH THE EUROPEAN DEFENCE AGENCY. IV. COMMON SECURITY AND DEFENCE POLICY ISSUES. V. PESCO'S INTERNAL AND EXTERNAL RELATIONS. VI. FUTURE COOPERATION AND THE PARTICIPATION OF THIRD STATES. VII. THE WAR IN UKRAINE AND THE PROTECTION OF EUROPEAN BORDERS. VIII. CONCLUSIONS.

RESUMEN: La Cooperación Estructurada Permanente (PESCO) ya se contemplaba en el Tratado de Lisboa, aunque su activación comenzó en diciembre de 2017 como un mayor compromiso en defensa de los Estados dentro del marco de la Unión Europea, que reforzaría la Política Común de Seguridad y Defensa. La PESCO incrementó la inversión en defensa y equipamiento militar y se compuso de unas fuerzas armadas de cada Estado Miembro que fuesen fácilmente desplegables para misiones y operaciones mejorando la competitividad tecnológica e industrial. A pesar de ello, y con Francia y Alemania a la cabeza del proyecto europeo, los miembros participantes adolecen de cultura estratégica común, situándose entre la autonomía estratégica europea y la compatibilidad con la OTAN. Tras la invasión de Ucrania por parte de Rusia en febrero de 2022 el germen de una unión militar parece más factible para establecer los medios de disuasión y actuación que garanticen la neutralización de futuros conflictos y amenazas provenientes de cualquier actor, incluyendo la amenaza rusa. El objetivo del trabajo es realizar un análisis de la situación política y normativa en la que se encuentra la UE en materia de seguridad y defensa a fin de determinar las claves de su funcionamiento y su categorización como potencia global en la escena internacional. Es necesario resaltar las relaciones con la OTAN y con terceros estados dentro de lo que sería la estructura de seguridad tanto europea como internacional.

ABSTRACT: *The Permanent Structured Cooperation (PESCO) was already contemplated in the Lisbon Treaty. However, its activation began in December 2017 as a greater commitment to the defence of the States within the framework of the European Union, which would strengthen the Common Security and Defence Policy. PESCO increased investment in defence and military equipment and consists of armed forces from each Member State that are easily deployable for missions and operations, improving technological and industrial competitiveness. Despite this, and with France and Germany at the forefront of the European project, the participating members suffer from a common strategic culture that is caught between European strategic autonomy and compatibility with NATO. Following Russia's invasion of Ukraine in February 2022, the emergence of a military union seems more feasible to establish the necessary means of deterrence and action that would guarantee the neutralisation*

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* Profesor Ayudante Doctor del Departamento de Derecho Público I y Ciencia Política en la Universidad Rey Juan Carlos. Doctor en Derecho por la Universidad de Alcalá de Henares con mención Cum Laude. España. Email: danielmcrystal@gmail.com Teléfono de contacto 677554728.

of future conflicts and threats from any actor, including the Russian threat. The objective of the work is to carry out an analysis of the political and regulatory situation in which the EU finds itself in terms of security and defence in order to determine the keys to its operation and its categorization as a global power on the international scene. It is necessary to highlight the relations with NATO and with third states within what would be the European and international security structure.

PALABRAS CLAVE: PESCO; Unión Europea; Seguridad; Cooperación; Estrategia; Política Común de Seguridad y Defensa.

KEYWORDS: PESCO, European Union, Security, Cooperation, Strategy, Common Security & Defence Policy.

I. THE EUROPEAN UNION'S GLOBAL STRATEGY

The illegal annexation of the Crimean Peninsula in the spring of 2014, Russia's ongoing aggression in eastern Ukraine, and the civil war in Syria and the resulting migration crisis were catalysts for putting territorial defence back on the European agenda after a period of inaction from 2008 to 2015.

One of the beneficiaries of the geopolitical instability has been NATO, following former US President Donald Trump's accusations of unequal contributions within the organisation, while urging compliance with the 2 per cent minimum defence spending commitment agreed upon at the 2014 Wales Summit.

It was no secret that relations between Russia and the European Union (EU) were far from optimal, and the palpable tension was perceived as a potential threat that could threaten territorial integrity and hinder European political stability. It also provoked the uprising of pro-Russian and pro-independence groups in the easternmost Ukrainian regions bordering Russia, Lugansk and Donetsk, who went so far as to control a significant part of the Donbas region.

On February 24, 2022, after weeks of continuous disagreement and multiple threats of war, Russia launched an attack and invasion of Ukraine, confirming to Europe the need to step up its defence efforts. On September 12, 2023, MEPs endorsed the Strengthening of the European Defence Industry through the Common Public Procurement Act (EDIRPA) to support EU countries in the joint purchase of defence products, in order to help cover the most urgent and critical shortages. EDIRPA aims to boost the industrial and technological base of European defence and promote cooperation in public defence contracts.

The austerity measures imposed after the 2007 crisis affected defence spending, and it was not until 2014 that this trend was reversed, accompanied by some economic recovery¹. The result of the Brexit referendum was a further wake-up call for the EU to change its defence policies and strategy. The UK's exit meant the loss of 20 per cent of its military capability

1 EUROPEAN DEFENCE AGENCY, "Defence Data 2017-2018/Key Findings And Analysis", p. 2, retrieved from <https://eda.europa.eu/docs/default-source/brochures/eda-defence-data-2017-2018> (accessed 20/02/2023).

and 40 per cent of its defence industrial capacity, and thus its influence and credibility as a security actor².

Along with the demand for greater cooperation, the term “strategic autonomy” gained momentum in the European defence debate. The first European Security Strategy was presented in 2003, setting out the EU’s strategic objectives. It was described by Javier Solana as a kind of general philosophy of EU action in the world³. At the request of the European Council in June 2016, the EU’s High Representative of the Union for Foreign Affairs and Security Policy and Vice-President of the Commission, Federica Mogherini, presented a new Global Strategy for the European Union’s Foreign and Security Policy (EUGS), in which she clarified the EU’s ambition to become a strategically autonomous actor by being able to act more independently.

The Global Strategy set out four objectives⁴ for the EU to pursue: to promote peace and ensure the security of its citizens and territory; increase the prosperity of its people; foster the resilience of European democracies; and promote a bilateral world order. Among the priorities of European External Action, Sanahuja⁵ highlights the resilience of the states and societies of the East and South in order to collaborate with regions close to the EU and make them more secure through diplomacy and the Common Security and Defence Policy (CSDP). He also stresses the value of the neighbourhood policy and the importance of an effective emigration policy.

On June 16, 2020, EU Defence Ministers agreed to develop a Strategic Compass for the adoption of a common threat analysis for the EU CSDP. They sought to contribute to the creation of a common security and defence culture with concrete policy orientations. The aim of which was to achieve a new Headline Goal⁶ and drive the next iteration of the different branches of EU process capabilities, such as the Illustrative Scenarios, the Progress Catalogue, or the Capability Development Plan (CDP), to decide on the coherent full spectrum force package (term used in the November 2017 PESCO Notification). This package was to allow Member States to engage with NATO and to act autonomously when necessary.

The path towards the implementation of PESCO began with the inclusion of Article 42(6) into the Lisbon Treaty. It provided that Member States that met higher military capability criteria and had made more binding commitments to carry out the most demanding missions could

2 ROUND, P., GIEGERICH, B., Y MÖLLING, C., “European Strategic Autonomy and Brexit”, *The International Institute for Strategic Studies*, 2018, p. 2.

3 ARTEAGA, F., “La Estrategia Europea de Seguridad, cinco años después”, *Real Instituto Elcano*, 2009, p. 20, retrieved from http://www.realinstitutoelcano.org/wps/portal/rielcano_es/contenido?WCM_GLOBAL_CONTEXT=/elcano/elcano_es/zonas_es/ARI15-2009 (accessed 26/04/2023).

4 DE CARLOS IZQUIERDO, J., “La nueva Estrategia de Seguridad Europea”, *Instituto Español de Estudios Estratégicos*, n. 3 (julio-septiembre), 2016, pp. 935.

5 SANAHUJA PERALES, J. A., “La estrategia global y de seguridad de la Unión Europea: Narrativas securitarias, legitimidad e identidad de un actor en crisis”, *Instituto Complutense de Estudios Internacionales (ICEI)*, 2018, p. 12.

6 BISCOP, S., “From Global Strategy to Strategic Compass: Where Is the EU Heading?”, *Egmont Institute*, 2019, retrieved from www.jstor.org/stable/resrep17409 (accessed 10/06/2023).

establish permanent structured cooperation within the Union framework. The initiative would generate more binding commitments to capability development and strengthen the CSDP.

Although it was due to be activated in 2010, discussions on its implementation were not resumed until December 2016. The European Council stressed the need to allocate sufficient additional resources to enable the EU to assume greater responsibility for its own security. It then proceeded in accordance with NATO guidelines on defence spending for those Member States that are also members of NATO⁷. This idea was reinforced at the European Council of 22-23 June 2017, where the meeting concluded that PESCO should be launched. Member States were given three months to draw up a list of common criteria and commitments associated with their participation, in line with Articles 42(6) and 46 TEU, as well as Protocol 10 annexed to the Treaties⁸.

In the Notification to the Council and the High Representative of November 13, 2017, Member States included in the wording of the PESCO principles that the long-term goal was the formation of a common force structure. However, this was not included in the Council Decision, a fact that has continued to hinder PESCO's work. Thus, NATO remains the main actor in collective defence, even though there was a broad consensus on the need for the EU to take the lead in Europe by eliminating dependencies, while continuing to work cooperatively. The balance between the EU's strategic autonomy and compatibility with NATO as a conceptual tool for assessing Permanent Structured Cooperation was launched and approved through Council Decision (CFSP) 2017/2315 of December 11, 2017. It envisaged the participation of 25 Member States, excluding Denmark, Malta, and the United Kingdom.

However, its activation was already foreseen in the Lisbon Treaty as a platform to further develop the EU framework by strengthening the CSDP. It is also a platform for Member States to make a greater commitment to defence and to improve their military capabilities by collaborating on joint projects. This shall be done mainly through the Coordinated Annual Review on Defence (CARD) process in priority areas, being also eligible for funding from the European Defence Fund (EDF).

PESCO was defined as a fundamental legal and political framework for all Member States to develop their military assets and defence capabilities through multi-country initiatives and projects. The 25 participating states welcomed 20 binding commitments, placing particular emphasis on the availability of forces and capabilities for strategic deployment, in addition to the EU Battlegroup, and on the need to ensure the interoperability of Member States' national forces. Following Commitment 19 of Council Decision 2017/2315, all projects should contribute to strengthening the competitiveness of the European defence industry through an appropriate industrial policy, avoiding any unnecessary overlap. In doing so, they should increase the strategic autonomy of the Union and benefit the European Defence Technological

7 EUROPEAN COUNCIL, "Conclusiones del Consejo Europeo (EUCO 34/16) tras la reunión del 15 de diciembre de 2016", 2016, retrieved from www.consilium.europa.eu/media/21913/15-euco-conclusions-final-es.pdf (accessed 02/04/2023).

8 EUROPEAN COUNCIL, "Conclusiones del Consejo Europeo (EUCO 8/17) relativas a la reunión de los días 22 y 23 de junio de 2017", 2017, retrieved from <https://www.consilium.europa.eu/media/23969/22-23-euco-final-conclusions-es.pdf> (accessed 02/04/2023).

and Industrial Base (EDTIB), specifically those entities providing added value. This ambition necessarily goes hand in hand with an increase in defence budgets in real terms, allocating 20% of total defence spending to investment and 2% to research and technology.

While the introduction of the European Security Strategy (ESS), also known as the Solana Strategy, argued that Europe had never been more prosperous, secure, or free⁹, the EUGS presented a reality in which the aims and even the very existence of our Union were being questioned¹⁰. The need for an update is rooted in a different geopolitical context and the numerous challenges faced by the EU. One in which the EUGS represented an evolution by going beyond traditional crisis management operations abroad to the territorial defence of European citizens, which was previously the exclusive responsibility of the Member States¹¹. Within the limits of complementarity and synergy with NATO, it established the need for Europeans to be better equipped, trained, and organised¹², to act autonomously if necessary through generalised defence capabilities to respond to external crises and ensure Europe's security¹³.

Mistrust in the Trump administration, whose focus was beginning to shift towards Asia and whose interests were becoming less and less aligned with those of Europe, acted as an external driver. Brexit was the internal driver, with a complex impact that directly affected European defence capabilities, as it was the Union's largest military power alongside France. It also served to deepen the CSDP, as the UK consistently opposed any progress in this regard.

Following statements by German Chancellor Angela Merkel, in the wake of Brexit and the US withdrawal from the climate change agreement, the times when the EU could be completely dependent on others are over, and Europeans must take our destiny into our own hands¹⁴.

II. PESCO AND COMMON SECURITY

According to Council Decision (CFSP) 2017/2315, the permanent structured cooperation is governed by the Council, which provides strategic coordination for PESCO as a whole. Projects are approved unanimously, with only the representatives of the participating Member States

9 SOLANA MADARIAGA, J., "European Security Strategy: A Secure Europe in a Better World", *Brussels: European Council*, 2003, p. 27, retrieved from <https://www.consilium.europa.eu/en/documents-publications/publications/european-security-strategy-secure-europe-better-world/> (accessed 25/11/2022).

10 EUROPEAN EXTERNAL ACTION SERVICE, "Shared Vision, Common Action: A Stronger Europe-A Global Strategy for the European Union's Foreign and Security Policy", *Brussels: European External Action Service*, 2016, retrieved from https://www.eeas.europa.eu/sites/default/files/eugs_review_web_0.pdf (accessed 21/01/2023).

11 ALDECOA LUZÁRRAGA, F., "La Cooperación Estructurada Permanente: haciendo creíble la Alianza Defensiva de la Unión Europea sin perder la condición de potencia normativa y diplomática", *Anuario Español de Derecho Internacional*, n. 34, 2018, p. 1013.

12 EUROPEAN EXTERNAL ACTION SERVICE, "Shared Vision, Common Action: A Stronger Europe-A Global Strategy for the European Union's Foreign and Security Policy", *Brussels: European External Action Service*, 2016, retrieved from https://www.eeas.europa.eu/sites/default/files/eugs_review_web_0.pdf (accessed 21/01/2023).

13 *Ibid.*

14 BBC, "Merkel: Europe 'can no longer rely on allies' after Trump and Brexit", 28-05-2017, retrieved from <https://www.bbc.com/news/world-europe-40078183> (accessed 26/11/2022).

having the right to vote (Art. 46(6) TEU). At the project level, it is the Member States who agree on how they cooperate, the scope of the project and how it will be managed¹⁵. Another aspect of internal management is the achievement of projects, so taking into account the timetable foreseen for the implementation of the commitments agreed by the States, two phases are established (2018-2021 and 2021-2025). At the end of these phases, a review will be carried out to decide whether the cooperation was effective and whether new commitments can be made.

PESCO also receives evaluations of Member States' operations and can accept new participants by a qualified majority, after consulting the High Representative of the Union for Foreign Affairs and Security Policy (Art. 46(3) TEU), who serves as a contact point to ensure effective coordination between the CSDP and PESCO.

Under the responsibility of the High Representative, an annual assessment is carried out of both the state of implementation of PESCO and the fulfilment of the States' commitments through their respective National Implementation Plans. These should be updated annually under Article 3(2) of Council Decision (CFSP) 2017/2315. The National Implementation Plans are the result of the binding commitment made by the States¹⁶, as they have to be accountable to the other Member States¹⁷, even if they do not plan to meet the objectives set. This is a real problem for the European project, which is characterised by a culture of non-compliance.

Annex III of Council Decision (CFSP) 2017/2315 covered the aspects relating to the administration of PESCO, clearly determining its interstate nature, specific to the CSDP. In these aspects, it is stipulated that the Secretariat functions are assumed by the European External Action Service (EEAS), including the European Union Military Staff (EUMS), to assess the operational character of CSDP mission and operation-oriented projects. The EDA will assist in projects related to defence capabilities development while taking care not to duplicate existing initiatives.

According to the EU's institutions, PESCO should lead to more efficient defence investment and an increase in military equipment. Thus, each Member State would have their own armed forces that are easily deployable for missions and operations, thereby improving the competitiveness of the EDTIB.

PESCO's tendency to focus on industrial benefits for Member States, rather than having military efficiency as an objective¹⁸, can be understood through Article 46(4) of the TEU. This

15 ALDECOA LUZÁRRAGA, F., y PÉREZ CAVA, P., "La Cooperación Estructurada Permanente (PESCO): un nuevo compromiso de los Estados miembros en materia de Seguridad y Defensa europea. Análisis de las implicaciones para España y posibles aportaciones relevantes", *Fundación Alternativas y Ministerio de Defensa*, 2018, p. 57, retrieved from https://www.fundacionalternativas.org/public/storage/opex_documentos_archivos/4754f2339dc6900bdb0e896560f3d99b.pdf (accessed 25/03/2023).

16 *Ibid.*

17 BISCOP, S., "European Defence: Give PESCO a Chance", *Survival: Global Politics and Strategy*, June–July 2018, v. 60 (3), p. 163, retrieved from <https://www.egmontinstitute.be/app/uploads/2018/06/European-defence-give-PESCO-a-change-SvenBiscop-June18-1.pdf> (accessed 18/02/2023).

18 LE GLEUT, M., y CONWAY-MOURET, M., "European Defence: The Challenge of Strategic Autonomy", *Senate, Information Report n° 626*, 2019, p. 39, retrieved from : <http://www.senat.fr/rap/r18-626-2/r18-626-21.pdf> (accessed 25-03-2023).

allows the Council to exclude any Member State that fails to comply with its obligations under PESCO. Yet the absence of consequences for a State's non-compliance, in part due to the lack of specificity in the wording of the commitments, makes it easier for members to focus on their national objectives. By not asking what they can do for PESCO but what PESCO can do for them¹⁹, they seek the answer they expect to get – give them more money.

The most effective method of achieving an integrated defence apparatus and promoting a combination of pooling and division of labour among Member States is a need to shift criteria and commitments towards a desire to build autonomous capabilities collectively²⁰. An example of this is the naval cooperation between Belgium and the Netherlands, whereby the latter provides operational command, buys the frigates and is responsible for their maintenance, while Belgium is in charge of the minesweepers and crew training²¹. However, both countries retain sovereignty over the use of vessels under the Dutch or Belgian flag²², so cooperation leads to a reduction in costs and duplication of effort, as well as a degree of commonality in operational requirements.

The European Defence Cooperation project was launched in 2017 and was expected to be fully operational by 2021. However, due to the COVID-19 pandemic, its implementation has been delayed. The *Ocean2020* project, which aims to strengthen maritime surveillance missions by integrating drones and unmanned submarines into European fleet operations, and *Eurodrone*, which aims to develop a European Medium Altitude Long Endurance Remotely Piloted Aircraft System (MALE RPAS), are now being planned for 2025.

The CSDP is fully integrated into the CFSP, providing the action framework for the Union's armed forces and offering an operational capability based on civilian and military means to be used in missions outside the Union's territory. Defence within the common borders is left to the States themselves and their alliances with NATO. Military missions may also be inter-State operations in which not all members participate. States must report regularly to the Council on their progress and take the necessary decisions in the event of changes to the mission.

In addition, the European Defence Agency assists the Council in assessing military capabilities and proposing multilateral coordination projects, supporting defence technological research and planning joint research activities by implementing measures to strengthen the Defence Technological and Industrial Base. Projects are formally approved by a Council Decision (with the assistance of the Political and Security Committee (PSC) and the European Union Military Committee (EUMC) in the form of permanent structured cooperation.

19 BISCOP, S., "European Defence and PESCO: Don't Waste the Chance", *EU Integration and Differentiation for Effectiveness and Accountability (EU-IDEA)*, n. 1, 05-06-2020, p.7, retrieved from : https://euidea.eu/wp-content/uploads/2020/05/euidea_pp_1.pdf (accessed 10/06/2023).

20 MAURO, F., Y SANTOPINTO, F., "Permanent Structured Cooperation: national perspectives and state of play", *European Parliament's Subcommittee on Security and Defence (SEDE)*, 2017, p. 17, recuperado de [https://www.europarl.europa.eu/RegData/etudes/STUD/2017/603842/EXPO_STU\(2017\)603842_EN.pdf](https://www.europarl.europa.eu/RegData/etudes/STUD/2017/603842/EXPO_STU(2017)603842_EN.pdf) (accessed 03-02-2023).

21 *Ibid.*, p. 73.

22 BISCOP, S., "European Defence: What's in the CARDS for PESCO", *Egmont Institute*, n. 91, 2017, p. 3, retrieved from <http://www.jstor.org/stable/resrep17409> (accessed 10/03/2023).

III. STRATEGIC PROJECTS WITH THE EUROPEAN DEFENCE AGENCY

eDA's activity in PESCO is significant, as one of its functions is to provide solutions to military requirements by promoting armament programmes and planning their implementation. Article 7(3) of Council Decision (CFSP) 2017/2315 foresaw that Member States could use the EDA to assist in developing capability projects and to check for unnecessary duplication. These programmes would later be managed by the Organisation for Joint Armament Cooperation (OCCAR), with whom it collaborates and whose relationship was formalised with the Administrative Agreement of July 2012.

In March 2018, the Council approved an initial list of seventeen PESCO projects, followed by a further seventeen on November 19, 2018, thus amending Council Decision (CFSP) 2018/340. This Permanent Structured Cooperation was established in the European Defence Action Plan endorsed by the Bratislava European Council in December 2016. On November 12, 2019, Decision (CFSP) 2019/1909 further amended and updated Decision (CFSP) 2018/340, increasing the list of projects to 47. These projects include the Maritime Unmanned Anti-Submarine System (MUSAS) on which Portugal, Spain, France, and Sweden are working together.

Not all 47 projects respond to the capability gap identified by the CDP. However, Member States show a predilection for incorporating into the EU framework programmes already originating at the national or bilateral level, or in intergovernmental organisations such as the Organisation for Joint Armament Cooperation (OCCAR)²³.

The flexibility in the commitments assumed allows us to distinguish a policy of small steps in achieving affordable and feasible commitments for all Member States by establishing mechanisms to facilitate the participation of other Member States both in PESCO and in individual projects, and third States, in line with the Global Strategy. The European Council must draw on all the existing practice in the Petersberg operations and from the Framework Agreements on participation in crisis management. Regarding the administrative agreements, they must reflect the participation of these third States, especially when in individual projects it will be the participating States themselves who manage the development and achievement of said projects²⁴.

In the 2018 revision of the CDP, 11 result-oriented EU Capacity Development Priorities were adopted, i.e. they focus on delivering the capacities needed to address existing European shortfalls²⁵.

23 RUÍZ DÍAZ, L. J., "La participación española en la Cooperación Estructurada Permanente: oportunidades y desafíos para la industria de defensa nacional", *Instituto Español de Estudios Estratégicos*, n. 17, 2020, 10/2020, retrieved from https://www.ieee.es/publicaciones-new/documentos-de-opinion/2020/DIEEO10_2020LUCRUI_IndustriaDef.html (accessed 06-05-2023).

24 ACOSTA SÁNCHEZ, M. A., "La Cooperación Estructurada Permanente ¿Un primer paso hacia la integración en la seguridad y defensa europeas?", *Revista General de Derecho Europeo*, n. 45, 2018, retrieved from https://www.iustel.com/v2/revistas/detalle_revista.asp?id_noticia=420142 (accessed 02/11/2023).

25 EUROPEAN DEFENCE AGENCY, "2018 CDP Revision: The EU Capability Development Priorities", 2018, retrieved from <https://eda.europa.eu/docs/default-source/eda-publications/eda-brochure-cdp#:~:text=The%202018%20CDP%20revision%20reflects,adaptation%20of%20national%20defence%20planning> (accessed 04/02/2023).

These priorities should guide Member States' national defence planning, as well as initiatives such as PESCO or the EDF. The aim is to create a set of available and interoperable capabilities and forces at the disposal of EU Member States for national or international missions in the framework of the CSDP, NATO, or the United Nations. The areas covered are enabling capabilities for cyber response operations, space-based communication and information services, cyber superiority, land combat capabilities; enhanced logistic and medical support capabilities, naval manoeuvrability, underwater control contributing to resilience at sea, air superiority, air mobility, integration of military air capabilities, and cross-domain capabilities contributing to achieving the EU's level of ambition²⁶.

While logistics, ground combat or capabilities to achieve the EU's level of ambition are CDP priorities that are being addressed more intensively, some are minimally or not at all represented in PESCO projects. However, a comparison with EU inter-State co-operations shows that these are being covered by EDA activities and projects. Space information and communication services are not represented by any project, although satellite communications are facilitated by the activities of the *EU SatCom Market*, coordinated by the EDA since 2009. In-flight refuelling of aircraft is another weakness of European technology, which has been overstretched in military operations such as Mali, Libya, and Kosovo, where it has had to rely on US capabilities.

Although there is no PESCO project working exclusively on it, the EDA has channelled it through three action lines since 2012: optimisation of existing assets, A400M AAR capability and strategic tanker capability in Multinational Multi-Role Tanker Transport Fleet (MMF)²⁷. The downside, however, was that the presence of major European capability development projects outside the PESCO framework, such as the *Future Combat Air System* (FCAS) or the *Main Ground Combat System* (MGCS), minimised the opportunity for major European defence development²⁸. Also, by the end of 2019, five PESCO projects were receiving support from the EDA: ESSOR, MAS MCM, CRRT, CBRN, and *Divepack*²⁹, and the last two projects would be included in the EDA activity as a request from Member States.

One of the projects on which they are currently actively collaborating is the Medium Altitude Long Endurance Remotely Piloted Aircraft System (MALE RPAS) programme, for which Airbus Defence and Space is the prime contractor, involving France, Germany, Italy, and Spain.

With a large number of projects and Member States involved, there is some concern about the efficiency of their operation. In Biscop's words³⁰, the success of PESCO projects lies not

26 *Ibid.*

27 EUROPEAN DEFENCE AGENCY, "Air-to-Air Refuelling", 2020, retrieved from <https://eda.europa.eu/what-we-do/all-activities/activities-search/air-to-air-refuelling> (accessed 15/03/2023).

28 BISCOP, S., "European Defence and PESCO: Don't Waste the Chance", *EU Integration and Differentiation for Effectiveness and Accountability (EU-IDEA)*, n. 1, 05-06-2020, p. 13, retrieved from: https://euidea.eu/wp-content/uploads/2020/05/euidea_pp_1.pdf (accessed 10/06/2023).

29 EUROPEAN DEFENCE AGENCY, "Annual Report 2019", 2020, p. 6, retrieved from <https://eda.europa.eu/docs/default-source/eda-annual-reports/eda-2019-annual-report.pdf> (accessed 22/02/2023).

30 BISCOP, S., "European Defence and PESCO: Don't Waste the Chance", *EU Integration and Differentiation for Effectiveness and Accountability (EU-IDEA)*, n. 1, 05-06-2020, pp. 12, retrieved from: https://euidea.eu/wp-content/uploads/2020/05/euidea_pp_1.pdf (accessed 10/06/2023).

in quantity, but in quality. The strategy should be to focus on a smaller group of strategically relevant projects that would benefit from a larger share of European funds, prioritising the military needs identified by both the EU and NATO in the CDP and NDPP. The interests of each Member State, according to its geography and strategy, must converge to reconcile opinions and select projects relevant to the EU as a bloc.

A study by Blockmans and Macchiarini Crosson³¹ found that, although the number of projects has steadily increased, the participation of Member States has decreased. In the first selection of projects, all 25 participating States were involved in at least one project, whereas in the third selection, this had been reduced to only 15. Another obstacle that PESCO will have to face is the consequences of COVID-19, which have inevitably reduced defence resources. This is illustrated by the large cut in the amount allocated to the future EDF. Although PESCO is not directly financed by European funds, except for those projects eligible for the EDF, if Member States' defence budgets decrease, so does PESCO's funding.

A report by the European Parliament Research Service (EPRS)³² highlights the suitability of several projects for the EU to be prepared in the event of another public health crisis. The best example is the *European Medical Command*, which aims to provide a centralised medical capability to coordinate Member States' military medical assets. Its mission is to improve the acquisition of critical medical assets and to contribute to the harmonisation of national medical standards. This was communicated by the High Representative, Josep Borrell, at a hearing with the European Parliament's Subcommittee on Security and Defence (SEDE) in May 2020. He emphasised the added value of projects such as the *European Medical Command*, or a network of logistical hubs in future crises. Given the important role played by the military in supporting civilian authorities³³, he called for improved military transport with medical capabilities and better military-civilian coordination. Following the lessons learned from managing the pandemic in Europe, it is up to Member States to fund initiatives to increase European response capacity, an urgency that provides an opportunity for PESCO to move forward more rapidly.

IV. COMMONSECURITY AND DEFENCE POLICY ISSUES

The current reality presents an unprepared security policy, as demonstrated by the Libyan and Syrian crises of 2011, in which EU partners such as France, the UK, Italy, and Spain decided to intervene militarily under the umbrella of NATO and US logistics, despite Germany's opposition. However, in the absence of a common military decision and capability, they did

31 BLOCKMANS, S., y MACCHIARINI CROSSON, D. "Differentiated integration within PESCO – clusters and convergence in EU defence", *CEPS Research Report*, n. 4, 2019, pp. 5-8, retrieved from https://www.ceps.eu/wp-content/uploads/2019/12/RR2019_04_Differentiated-integration-within-PESCO.pdf (accessed 11/01/2023).

32 LAZAROU, E., y LAȚICI, T., "PESCO: Ahead of the strategic review", *EPRS|European Parliamentary Research Service*, 2020, retrieved from [https://www.europarl.europa.eu/RegData/etudes/BRIE/2020/652051/EPRS_BRI\(2020\)652051_EN.pdf](https://www.europarl.europa.eu/RegData/etudes/BRIE/2020/652051/EPRS_BRI(2020)652051_EN.pdf) (accessed 21-04-2023).

33 BORRELL FONTELLES, J., "Committee on Security and Defence", *Multimedia Centre European Parliament (EEAS)*, 2020, retrieved from <https://www.unisci.es/multimedia-2020/> (accessed 01/05/2023).

not intervene. This demonstrates the weakness of the European defence policy and its inability to deal with the conflicts that have broken out on its borders.

The differences between the Member States are varied, particularly in terms of the identification of risks and border conflicts, with Spain and France concerned about the danger in North Africa, and others, such as Poland and Sweden, being wary of Eastern Europe or the Balkans. This is not to say that they are not concerned about the other risks shared by other Member States that also affect them³⁴, including the need to combat the new threats and challenges of jihadism, failed states, and hybrid warfare.

There are different perceptions of the use of force, with France and Germany embodying the two positions. While France is more in favour of establishing a strong European defence policy, Germany has always been reluctant to use force and deploy military troops abroad in high-risk situations. Such divergent positions led to doubts concerning the involvement of States in European defence matters and the absence of a fully-fledged common foreign policy³⁵.

French President Emmanuel Macron, aware of internal differences and Paris's disenchantment with a PESCO that responded to the German format that was moving slower than he would have liked, pushed for the creation of the European Intervention Initiative (EI2) military force. This came into effect after nine European countries (France, Germany, Belgium, Denmark, Estonia, the Netherlands, Portugal, Spain, and the UK) signed the Letter of Intent (LOI). Witney³⁶ compared it to a military Erasmus, in which officers from Member States must work together in a planning and prevention forum, in order to be able to intervene quickly in the event of a crisis of any kind. This was an operational intergovernmental initiative to facilitate burden-sharing in military operations. Its main objective is to intervene in any engagement using previously jointly developed plans and protocols, to promote strategic and long-term autonomy. It also aims to develop a strategic culture that will enable Europe to become a major military actor once again. However, for the time being, it is a forum focused on strategic planning and prevention³⁷.

The strategic scenario posed by EI2 was quite broad, stretching from the Sahel to the Middle East and Eastern Europe. It focused on terrorism and migration crises, but also on natural

34 BLOCKMANS, S. y FALEG G. "More Union in European Defence", *CEPS Paperbacks*, 2015, retrieved from <https://www.ceps.eu/download/publication/?id=8789&pdf=TFonEuropeanDefence.pdf> (accessed 19/02/2023).

35 PERRUCHÉ J. P., "For a European White Paper on Security and Defence", *Fondation Robert Schuman*, 2015, retrieved from : <https://www.robert-schuman.eu/en/european-issues/0360-for-a-european-white-paper-on-security-and-defence> (accessed 25/03/2023).

36 WITNEY, N. "Macron and the European Intervention Initiative: Erasmus for soldiers?", *European Council on Foreign Relations*, 2018, retrieved from https://ecfr.eu/article/commentary_macron_and_the_european_intervention_initiative_erasmus_for_sold/ (accessed 15/04/2023).

37 MOYACÁNOVAS, L. E., "La Iniciativa Europea de Intervención, la Cooperación Permanente Estructurada e ingeniería institucional francesa", *Instituto Español de Estudios Estratégicos*, 79/2019, p. 6 retrieved from https://www.ieee.es/Galerias/fichero/docs_opinion/2019/DIEEEO79_2019LUIMOY_UEDef.pdf (accessed 13/04/2023).

disasters, while underlining the need to address the renewal of open warfare on Europe's doorstep and intimidating displays of force on its eastern flank³⁸.

Formed outside the institutional framework of the EU and NATO, the German reaction was one of mistrust towards the EI2. They argued that France was seeking European support in areas that were of interest to it and would consist of operations serving only French, not European, interests³⁹. These assertions were supported by aspects such as membership, which requires a French invitation. Another reason for German concern was based on the risk of institutional redundancy, where too many parallel initiatives increase the possibility of undermining each other. There was already a very similar German-led *EUFOR Crisis Operation Core* (EUFOR CROC) project within PESCO⁴⁰, aimed at creating a comprehensive and coherent set of capabilities that could accelerate the provision of forces.

The German government eventually joined the EI2. In the Meseberg Declaration, both countries agreed to link the French initiative with PESCO where possible to avoid duplication and encourage complementarity. Critical voices, such as Biscop⁴¹, argued for a merger between EI2 and EUFOR CROC under the PESCO umbrella. The participating states would join different task forces according to the scenarios envisaged by EI2 (Sahel, Caribbean, terrorism, etc.) and contribute to force packages that would be ready to act in the event of a crisis in these areas. Those who are more sceptical about the real potential of the CSDP as a vehicle for ensuring the active role of Europeans, both at home and abroad, are in favour of this initiative outside the framework of the Union⁴².

The absence of a clear purpose for the CSDP sparked a debate in late 2019 with Germany's proposal for a Strategic Compass, a politico-military strategy under the Global Strategy. This Compass would be based on a common analysis of the threats. EU High Representative Josep Borrell, who drew up the proposal, stated that what Europe needs most is a common strategic culture: a shared way of looking at the world, of defining threats and challenges as a basis for addressing them together⁴³. Annegret Kramp-Karrenbauer⁴⁴, Germany's defence minister, also claimed that the greatest threat to security was Germany's own complacency and disunity.

38 *Ibid.* p. 7.

39 SIEBOLD, S., "Berlin und Paris streiten über neue Eingreiftruppe" Reuters, 11/06/2018, retrieved from <https://www.reuters.com/article/deutschland-frankreich-verteidigung-idDEKCN1NB2FR> (accessed 27/12/2022).

40 BISCOP, S., "European Defence: Give PESCO a Chance", *Survival: Global Politics and Strategy*, June–July 2018, v. 60 (3), p. 165, retrieved from <https://www.egmontinstitute.be/app/uploads/2018/06/European-defence-give-PESCO-a-change-SvenBiscop-June18-1.pdf> (accessed 18/02/2023).

41 BISCOP, S., "European Defence and PESCO: Don't Waste the Chance", *EU Integration and Differentiation for Effectiveness and Accountability (EU-IDEA)*, n. 1, 05-06-2020, p. 11, retrieved from : https://euidea.eu/wp-content/uploads/2020/05/euidea_pp_1.pdf (accessed 10/06/2023).

42 WITNEY, N., "Building Europeans' capacity to defend themselves", *European Council on Foreign Relations*, 2019, p. 4, retrieved from https://ecfr.eu/publication/building_europeans_capacity_to_defend_themselves/ (accessed 22/04/2023).

43 BORRELL FONTELLES, J., "Europe security and defence: the way forward", *Multimedia Centre European Parliament (EEAS)*, 2020, retrieved from <https://www.unisci.es/multimedia-2020/> (accessed 01/05/2023).

44 KRAMP-KARRENBAUER, A. "Politico: Interview with Annegret Kramp-Karrenbauer", *Federal Ministry of Defence*, 2020, retrieved from : <https://www.bmvg.de/en/news/politico-interview-with-annegret-kramp-karrenbauer-1716226> (accessed 02/04/2023).

A Strategic Compass could provide PESCO with guidelines by which to be directed, setting out the purpose of shaping this politico-military strategy. The geographical balance of PESCO suggests that, although the German inclusive model was chosen, the practice has followed a trend towards French exclusivity, with a centralised structure to which the other participating States adhere.

If the CSDP was conceived as a section at the disposal of the common foreign policy, it is difficult to take a position on defence issues due to the different positions on conflicts such as Iraq in 2003 or Libya in 2011. As a result, the CSDP has also become a point of internal divergence within the EU.

V. PESCO'S INTERNAL AND EXTERNAL RELATIONS

1. The pacts and agreements within the European Union: the need for a strong core

Firm leadership is needed to ensure PESCO's success and avoid stagnation. The cooperation of the Franco-German axis, together with Italy and Spain, is essential and should serve as an example for the shaping of a Europe of Defence and the achievement of strategic autonomy. Nevertheless, they also represent two ways of understanding it. Germany views PESCO through the prism of European integration and, while aware of the likely emergence of different speeds within it, is reluctant to draw new lines separating the hard core of European defence from other countries.

The projects proposed by Germany within PESCO are illustrative of its areas of interest. They are aimed at strengthening cooperation and capabilities in non-combat areas, such as logistics or medical support⁴⁵. France sees it as an instrument for the operational efficiency necessary to achieve strategic autonomy, in which a small group of European countries prepared to conduct military operations assume greater responsibilities⁴⁶. In the 2019 report to the French Senate, this reality was aptly summed up by the statement that when someone says European Defence, the French hear Defence and the Germans hear Europe⁴⁷.

The different geostrategic visions of each European state, rooted in its own history and geography, make the European process strategically and politically difficult. This problem is noticeable even within the Franco-German axis; Germany looks eastwards, giving diplomatic

45 GOTKOWSKA, J., "The Trouble with PESCO, The mirages of European defence", *Point of view Centre for Eastern Studies (OSW)*, 69, (02.2018), retrieved from https://www.osw.waw.pl/sites/default/files/pw_69_pesco_ang_net.pdf (accessed 11/05/2023).

46 KOENIG, D., y WALTER-FRANKE, M., "France and Germany: Spearheading a European Security and Defence Union?", *Jacques Delors Institut*, retrieved from <http://www.institutdelors.eu/wp-content/uploads/2018/01/franceandgermanyspearheadingaEuropeanSecurityandDefenceUnion-koenigwalter-jdib-july2017.pdf?pdf=ok> (accessed 24/01/2023).

47 LE GLEUT, M., y CONWAY-MOURET, M., "European Defence: The Challenge of Strategic Autonomy", *Senate, Information Report n° 626*, 2019, p. 66, retrieved from : <http://www.senat.fr/rap/r18-626-2/r18-626-21.pdf> (accessed 25-03-2023).

importance to Central Europe, and France looks southwards, preoccupied with Africa and the Middle East⁴⁸.

The participation of 25 Member States was a victory for the German integrationist position, surpassing even initial expectations and predictions that expected a more demanding inclusion based on the need to meet higher criteria in the military field. Considering the attitude of certain European states towards Brussels and European policies, Naumescu⁴⁹ offered two possible explanations: the reluctance to take the risk of being left out, or a desire to control the EU's progress by potentially hindering future steps towards true European military integration, as may be the case with Poland.

The configuration and scope of PESCO have a broad strategic dimension. Most European Member States are NATO members, and it is not surprising that some of them have a preference for NATO as a security guarantor. This is particularly the case in Eastern Europe, which is geographically closer to Russia and was the reason for the creation of NATO.

But differences can also be found in their strategic visions for security and defence, their individual relationship with the United States and their position on the future structure of the EU⁵⁰. Poland is the most vocal Eastern European country in expressing its scepticism and strong stance on a possible withdrawal from NATO or the creation of a two-speed Europe, hence its last-minute entry to PESCO. Its participation has increased since the inception of PESCO. However, it is tied to projects that serve EU-NATO cooperation or its capacity needs.

The US support factor in deterring Eastern European countries also plays a very important role as a key partner in the defence industrial dimension⁵¹. Launched in 2014 following the annexation of Crimea, the European Deterrence Initiative (EDI) is the mechanism through which the US has strengthened its military presence in Central and Eastern Europe. Poland is currently home to a rotating contingent of 5,500 US troops, of which an additional 1,000 troops were added following the Enhanced Defence Cooperation Agreement (EDCA) signed on August 15, 2020, making the US military presence in the country permanent.

It would be necessary to assess whether a body could be placed at a lower level of the PESCO that acts in a similar way to the DARPA agency in the United States to carry out technological research attractive to the Member States, such as HEDI (Hub for EU Defence Innovation), taking into account relationship with NATO's innovation initiative, DIANA (Defence Innovation Accelerator for the North Atlantic).

Finding the fit of PESCO will allow maximizing the success of the projects and providing coherence to the CSDP, since despite the fact that PESCO is active, the EDA continues to

48 MAURO, F., Y SANTOPINTO, F., "Permanent Structured Cooperation: national perspectives and state of play", *European Parliament's Subcommittee on Security and Defence (SEDE)*, 2017, p. 24, recuperado de [https://www.europarl.europa.eu/RegData/etudes/STUD/2017/603842/EXPO_STU\(2017\)603842_EN.pdf](https://www.europarl.europa.eu/RegData/etudes/STUD/2017/603842/EXPO_STU(2017)603842_EN.pdf) (accessed 03-02-2023).

49 NAUMESCU, V., "Administrative and political perspectives of the Eu's reform: Focus on Permanent Structured Cooperation", *Transylvanian Review of Administrative Sciences*, Special Issue, n. 56, p. 68, retrieved from <http://rtsa.ro/tras/index.php/tras/article/view/585/571> (accessed 26/02/2023).

50 *Ibid.* p. 66.

51 *Ibid.* p. 69.

execute its own projects financed by the Member States and which, at times, have ended up becoming PESCO projects. Regarding EDF, 29 of the 60 approved PESCO projects had their manifestation in 43 EDIDP and EDF projects. With the war in Ukraine, it has been necessary to urgently promote and develop the relationship between HEDI-PESCO-EDF with the CARD and the CDP and, more broadly, with the Strategic Compass.

2. Compatibility and legal relations with NATO

Although the former is often subordinate to the latter, the complementary relationship between the CSDP and NATO is based on the fact that Union policy will respect the North Atlantic Treaty obligations for certain Member States who see their common defence realised in the North Atlantic Treaty Organisation. The Union's policy will be compatible with the shared security and defence policy established within that framework.

The Berlin Plus Agreement consolidated this complementarity by allowing the EU to have access to NATO's collective assets and capabilities in those EU-led operations in which NATO itself was not involved⁵². These agreements have been used in both Operation Concordia, in the former Yugoslav Republic of Macedonia, which ended in September 2003 and Operation EUFOR in Bosnia and Herzegovina. Some authors, such as Peco Yeste, argue that resorting to such mechanisms is not a viable option unless one accepts the risk of losing autonomy in planning and control processes at the strategic military level⁵³. This is because most of the key positions at NATO Headquarters are occupied by American officers.

The 2016 NATO Summit in Warsaw resulted in the signing of the EU-NATO Joint Declaration on strengthening practical cooperation between the two, followed by the adoption of 74 joint measures in 7 areas of cooperation: hybrid threats, operational cooperation, cyber security, defence capabilities, industry and research, coordinated exercises and capacity building. A second Declaration was signed in July 2018 to regulate the transparency relationship between the two organisations and develop joint actions in the face of common threats.

In the absence of an Atlantic Alliance army and a European army, military capabilities are left to individual states⁵⁴. In practice, this means that in any international crisis, European Member States will decide whether to act under the umbrella of the EU, NATO, the UN or ad-hoc coalitions. But NATO has no foreign policy of its own, so it cannot determine EU strategy. Instead, NATO acts as a forum for joint decision-making with the US, even though the EU has its own foreign strategy separate from that of the US. As a result, there is a certain tension

52 RAIK, K., Y JÄRVENPÄÄ, P., "A New Era of EU-NATO Cooperation: How to Make the Best of a Marriage of Necessity", *International Centre for Defence and Security*, 2017, retrieved from https://icds.ee/wp-content/uploads/2018/ICDS_Report_A_New_Era_of_EU-NATO.pdf (accessed 05/02/2023).

53 PECO YESTE, M., "Defensa europea: fin del paradigma y los riesgos de dejarse llevar", *Instituto Español de Estudios Estratégicos*, (10), 71/2018, retrieved from https://www.ieee.es/Galerias/fichero/docs_opinion/2018/DIEEEO71-2018_DefensaEuropea_MPecoYeste.pdf (accessed 14/05/2023).

54 RAIK, K., Y JÄRVENPÄÄ, P., "A New Era of EU-NATO Cooperation: How to Make the Best of a Marriage of Necessity", *International Centre for Defence and Security*, 2017, retrieved from https://icds.ee/wp-content/uploads/2018/ICDS_Report_A_New_Era_of_EU-NATO.pdf (accessed 05/02/2023).

and competition in the development of skills and performance which, in Biscop's words⁵⁵, resembles a beauty contest.

The synchronisation between the EU and NATO regarding the collection of information from Member States should align the eleven Priorities set by the EDA Capability Development Plan with the fourteen planning areas of the NATO Defence Planning Process (NDPP)⁵⁶.

Project results with the greatest potential for success are those involving a large number of Member States that focus on both logistical cooperation and the removal of infrastructural barriers hindering the mobility of soldiers and equipment within the EU⁵⁷. For example, the Dutch-led Military Mobility project, which aims to create a Schengen defence area⁵⁸, is one of the priorities set out in the Joint Declaration on EU-NATO cooperation. In addition, the network of logistics hubs in Europe and operational support, led by Germany, will reduce response times and increase the capability and sustainability of military operations.

Despite disagreements within the EU over its foreign policy, there is a consensus on standing up to the US in times of conflict, such as in the 2003 Iraq war, or when faced with demonstrations by a US sceptical of Europeans' ability to provide for its own security or support its global ambitions⁵⁹. Authors such as Biscop⁶⁰ and Barry Posen⁶¹ believe that a more flexible US-EU alliance that replaces NATO by strengthening transatlantic ties could be a long-term solution, although a common NATO worldview is unlikely.

It is indisputable that Europe's security still remains in the hands of NATO in many of its aspects, and in the event that a serious crisis were to occur in Europe, its management would be impossible without the support of the US, which is why efforts must be made whose purpose is greater integration into NATO⁶², and the war in Ukraine confirms this statement since a solid capacity for unilateral decision-making is evident.

55 BISCOP, S., "EU-NATO Relations: A Long-Term Perspective", *Nação e Defesa*, n. 150, 2018, pp. 88, retrieved from <https://www.egmontinstitute.be/app/uploads/2018/11/NeD150.pdf> (accessed 25/02/2023).

56 BRATTBERG, E., "Beyond European Versus Transatlantic Defense. The German Marshall Fund of the United States", 2018, p. 4, retrieved from <https://www.gmfus.org/publications/beyond-european-versus-transatlantic-defense> (accessed 17/05/2023).

57 TERLIKOWSKI, M. "PESCO: Two Years Later", *Center for Security Studies*, 2020, retrieved from <https://isnblog.ethz.ch/defense/pesco-two-years-later> (accessed 21.05.2023).

58 SOCOR, V., "NATO Summit Highlights Partnership With the EU", *The Jamestown Foundation*, 2018, retrieved from <https://jamestown.org/program/nato-summit-highlights-partnership-with-the-eu/> (accessed 21/04/2023).

59 AGGESTAM, L., y HYDE-PRICE, A., "Double Trouble: Trump, transatlantic relations and European strategic autonomy", *Journal of Common Market Studies*, v. 57, Annual Review (issue S1), p. 122, retrieved from <https://onlinelibrary.wiley.com/doi/abs/10.1111/jcms.12948?campaign=wolotoc> (accessed 09/02/2023).

60 BISCOP, S., "EU-NATO Relations: A Long-Term Perspective", *Nação e Defesa*, n. 150, 2018, pp. 89, retrieved from <https://www.egmontinstitute.be/app/uploads/2018/11/NeD150.pdf> (accessed 25/02/2023).

61 POSEN, B. R., "Restraint: A New Foundation for U.S. Grand Strategy", Cornell University Press, 2014.

62 DÍAZ GALÁN, E. C., "Cooperación Estructurada Permanente (PESCO): Algunas consecuencias para España y la OTAN", *Cuadernos de Política Exterior Argentina (Nueva Época)*, n. 136, diciembre 2022, p. 80, retrieved from <https://cupea.unr.edu.ar/index.php/revista/article/view/148/155> (accessed 06/11/2023).

The NATO Summit held in Madrid in 2022 revealed a very different situation from the one that existed just a few years before, where the commitment was made to strengthen the Alliance based on the principles of solidarity and mutual defence. and an “Atlantic Alliance more united and forceful than ever” was emphasized, which continues to be the fundamental pillar to guarantee the security of the Member States⁶³. The text of the Final Declaration containing the strategic concept confirmed that NATO is the unique, essential and indispensable transatlantic forum to consult, coordinate and act on all matters related to individual and collective security, abandoning the previous postulates where the discrepancies between the members of the organization than their common postulates.

Proposing a Defence Europe without collaboration with NATO would even lead to considering the eventual dissolution of this latter organization. In any case, as long as the European States continue to commit to close and essential cooperation with NATO, the complete achievement of the EU's own unique space in the international order in terms of security and defence will be more limited. Although NATO-EU collaboration is required, it could happen that the European defence industry would be conditioned by the membership of the main European countries in the transatlantic organization and that, therefore, there would be an intense geostrategic dependence of Europe in relation to the US. The most convenient thing would be to project a panorama of relations in which both organizations had their role and did not give up any of their objectives.

3. Washington's suspicion of European defence initiatives

Transatlantic ties between Europe and the United States have deteriorated over the years due to latent differences in a complex range of policies, from the Balkans and the Middle East to trade and security cooperation⁶⁴. This frivolous environment in foreign policy was already evident during the Obama presidency, which began to pivot towards Asia. It stemmed from the perceived potential threat of China and its security interests in Korea and the South China Sea⁶⁵. Former President Donald Trump's *America First* policy deepened these differences, clearly showing his lack of predilection for multilateral fora in favour of unilateralism or bilateralism, and withdrawing from several international agreements.

In 2019, the US left the Intermediate-Range Nuclear Forces Treaty, but it was the previous year's withdrawal from the Joint Comprehensive Plan of Action (JCPOA) nuclear deal with Iran that caused a clear rift between the US and the EU. The US administration's sceptical view

63 RUIZ, R., (2022) “Madrid, corazón de una nueva OTAN”, *Revista Española de Defensa*, julio-agosto 2022, p. 8, retrieved from <https://www.defensa.gob.es/Galerias/gabinete/red/2022/07/p-6-19-red-396-coverotan.pdf> (accessed 06/11/2023).

64 AGGESTAM, L., y HYDE-PRICE, A., “Double Trouble: Trump, transatlantic relations and European strategic autonomy”, *Journal of Common Market Studies*, v. 57, Annual Review (issue S1), p. 123, retrieved from <https://onlinelibrary.wiley.com/doi/abs/10.1111/jcms.12948?campaign=woletoc> (accessed 09/02/2023).

65 SWEENEY, S., y WINN, N., “EU security and defence cooperation in times of dissent: analysing PESCO, the European Defence Fund and the European Intervention Initiative (EI2) in the shadow of Brexit”, *Defence Studies*, 20 (3), 2020, p. 230.

of the EU as a supranational organisation that reduces the national sovereignty of its members and competes economically with the US has conditioned the reaction of Americans. They see these defence initiatives as an attempt to replace NATO and limit Washington's influence on the European continent⁶⁶. The use of susceptible terms such as "strategic autonomy", "European army" or "sovereignty" in the discourse of European leaders risks undermining the stability of an already weak status quo.

New European defence initiatives to develop response capabilities argue for investing more efficiently and saving on high costs that could not be borne autonomously, so that no European country could afford to purchase the necessary amount of strategic assets.

In the case of PESCO, NATO's 2018 Joint Statement welcomed the EU's efforts to strengthen European security and defence to better protect the Union and its citizens and contribute to peace and stability in the vicinity and beyond, while the EU's efforts will also strengthen NATO. While welcoming PESCO for its ability to benefit NATO, Jens Stoltenberg⁶⁷ identified three criteria to be met: coherence, availability of European capabilities in the transatlantic framework, and openness to non-European NATO members.

US concerns were reflected in a letter to Mogherini from two US officials, Ellen Lord and Andrea Thompson, who expressed concern that the approval of the EDF regulations and PESCO's general conditions could jeopardise the development of EU capabilities in a way that would lead to duplication, non-interoperable military systems, diversion of scarce defence resources and unnecessary competition between NATO and the EU.

There was also a call for the participation of third countries in PESCO, which is currently only envisaged in exceptional cases and for a limited duration. The potential exclusion of non-European members is perceived by many as an obstacle to acquiring lower-quality capabilities. This would affect technological development and damage interoperability between organisations, which would be contrary to the Joint Declaration. Some EU members have hindered an agreement due to concerns over the possible influence of the US defence industry⁶⁸, and it remains a pending issue on the European agenda.

VI. FUTURE COOPERATION AND THE PARTICIPATION OF THIRD STATES

PESCO's relationship with non-EU third states has caused friction between members, with some seeking to preserve European exclusivity in capability development, while others

66 BRATTBERG, E., y VALÁŠEK, T., "EU Defense Cooperation: Progress Amid Transatlantic Concerns", *Carnegie Endowment for International Peace*, 2019, p. 7, retrieved from https://carnegieendowment.org/files/WP_Brattberg_Valasek_EU_Def_Coop_v3.pdf (accessed 22/01/2023).

67 STOLTENBERG, J. "Doorstep by NATO Secretary General Jens Stoltenberg at the start of the European Union Foreign Affairs Council in Defence format", *NATO*, 2017, retrieved from <http://www.nato.int> (accessed 14/03/2023).

68 BRATTBERG, E., y VALÁŠEK, T., "EU Defense Cooperation: Progress Amid Transatlantic Concerns", *Carnegie Endowment for International Peace*, 2019, p. 16, retrieved from https://carnegieendowment.org/files/WP_Brattberg_Valasek_EU_Def_Coop_v3.pdf (accessed 22/01/2023).

have argued for the benefits of allowing the external countries with strong industry and high technology to participate.

The exclusion of non-European or non-EU NATO states, such as the United States, Canada, Norway, or the United Kingdom, could become inefficient in the future⁶⁹. The complementarity and participation of these countries would help to make projects more ambitious and avoid sub-optimal results in the final capabilities, as well as benefit transatlantic relations. The US expressed its dissatisfaction with the refusal of possible involvement in these pan-European projects, even hinting at the imposition of similar restrictions on European companies operating in the US⁷⁰. In the face of these statements, Federica Mogherini, as High Representative at a press conference in May 2019, bluntly stated that the EU would remain open to US companies and equipment. She also stated that there was no *Buy European Act*, where around 81% of international contracts go to US companies in Europe⁷¹.

In May 2018, Belgium, the Netherlands, and Luxembourg submitted a paper supported by 10 other European countries (Lithuania, Estonia, Latvia, Poland, Slovakia, Czech Republic, Bulgaria, Portugal, Sweden, and Finland) on the participation of third states. The paper noted that certain PESCO projects can benefit from the participation of non-EU countries in terms of providing capacities, specific expertise or financial contributions that are useful for capacity building or operations⁷².

Council Decision (CFSP) 2017/2315 indicated in Article 9 that the formula for allowing the entry of third countries shall be adopted by the Council acting unanimously. Although the Council Decision on the general conditions for the exceptional participation of third states in PESCO projects was expected in November 2018, it was not until the end of 2020 that an agreement was reached in the Council. Council Decision (CFSP) 2020/1639 stipulates that countries wishing to participate in a PESCO project must apply to the project coordinators, who together with the other participants decide unanimously on their inclusion. Once accepted, the High Representative and the Council shall be notified and the final decision on the country's participation shall be taken by the Council on the basis of the general conditions set out in Article 3 of that Council Decision. Following a favourable decision by the Council, a formal response to the request shall be sent by the relevant project coordinator. Once accepted, the project members shall negotiate an administrative arrangement and a review mechanism to ensure that the country continues to meet the required conditions.

69 *Ibid.* p. 21.

70 MILLS, C., "EU defence: the realisation of Permanent Structured Cooperation (PESCO)" *House of Commons Library*, retrieved from <https://researchbriefings.files.parliament.uk/documents/CBP-8149/CBP-8149.pdf> (accessed 24/04/2023).

71 MOGHERINI, F., "Remarks by High Representative/Vice-President Federica Mogherini at the press conference following the Foreign Affairs Council (Defence)" *European External Action Service (EEAS)*, 2019, retrieved from https://eeas.europa.eu/headquarters/headquarters-homepage/62387/remarks-high-representativevice-president-federica-mogherini-press-conference-following_en (accessed 10/02/2023).

72 BARIGAZZI, J. "Door opens to keep Britain in EU (security)", 2018, retrieved from <https://www.politico.eu/article/europe-defense-pesco-military-extend-cooperation-to-non-eu-countries-say-benelux-countries/> (accessed 23/11/2022).

The conditions imposed by the Council allow valuable partners such as the United States and the United Kingdom to participate, while automatically eliminating the possibility of countries such as Russia, China and possibly Turkey from joining. As set out in Council Decision (CFSP) 2020/1639, these countries do not have the capacity to influence the direction of PESCO policy set in the Council, nor would they be full members of the Council. Therefore, their influence would be limited to the scope of the projects in which they participate. Keeping the UK linked to the CSDP is of great interest to the EU, since it maintains a large defence budget in Europe and a huge military capability, including nuclear deterrence.

The revised Political Declaration published on October 17, 2019, which set out the framework for the future relationship between the EU and the UK, laid the basis for future negotiations on cooperation by opting for a flexible path of rapprochement⁷³. As a result, UK participation in PESCO-sponsored projects at the invitation of the Council was considered, although both sides must retain their respective strategic autonomy and freedom of action backed by their respective strong national defence industrial bases.

Irrespective of this, the importance of the German-British arms alliance was to be consolidated, and Kramp-Karrenbauer⁷⁴ declared that Britain could not be categorically excluded from EU programmes, as the guiding principle of all EU measures should be to strengthen Europe. The House of Lords pushed for the negotiation of European Security Observer status because of concerns about losing the ability to influence decision-making and leadership on European defence issues⁷⁵. Despite some support for this proposal, some detractors criticised London's claims, prompting comments such as those of Luxembourg's Prime Minister. He summed up the situation triggered by Brexit: "The British were in many opt-outs, and now that they are out, they want many opt-ins"⁷⁶. However, this opposition was not as important as the need to have an existing agreement with the EU on information security, which would involve additional negotiations, and which could make it difficult for the UK to participate in PESCO projects.

European strategic autonomy in security and defence will inevitably require cooperation with third states, especially non-EU NATO members. Therefore, Council Decision (CFSP) 2020/1639 represented a step forward for the pursuit of PESCO projects due to an increased supply of funding and expertise that can help to achieve European defence autonomy in the long term. The incorporation of third States would contribute to the achievement of the goals established and identified with the twenty most binding commitments signed by the participating Member States. In an optimal scenario of operation of the CEP and in which the

73 MILLS, C., "Brexit and UK defence: an explainer", Briefing Paper 8676, *House of Commons Library*, 2020, retrieved from <https://commonslibrary.parliament.uk/research-briefings/cbp-8676/> (accessed 23/04/2023).

74 KRAMP-KARRENB AUER, A., "Kramp-Karrenbauer in London: Speech by the Minister of Defence", *Federal Ministry of Defence*, 2020, retrieved from <https://www.bmvg.de/en/the-minister-of-defence/akk-kramp-karrenbauer-london-speech-minister-of-defence-175342> (accessed 15/03/2023).

75 SWEENEY, S., y WINN, N., "EU security and defence cooperation in times of dissent: analysing PESCO, the European Defence Fund and the European Intervention Initiative (EI2) in the shadow of Brexit", *Defence Studies*, 20 (3), 2020, p. 235.

76 BCL Solicitors, "Opting In, Opting Out: The Prospects for EU-UK Cooperation in Criminal Cases, Post-Brexit", 2018, interview a John Binns, retrieved from <https://www.bcl.com/opting-in-opting-out-the-prospects-for-eu-uk-cooperation-in-criminal-cases-post-brexit/> (accessed 19/02/2023).

effective development of the projects is achieved, it will be one step closer to achieving a true definition of the strategic autonomy to which the EU aspires and the determination of the role it wants. stand out as a global actor⁷⁷.

No single European industry has the ability to meet major technological challenges compared to the US, China or Russia⁷⁸, due to the increasing technological sophistication of the defence industry, which requires greater investment to maintain the same capabilities. Technological competitiveness in the defence sector leads to an annual increase in the price per unit produced of between 5 and 10%⁷⁹, which is significantly higher than the annual increase in defence budgets. The European solution, to which Spain is committed, is to participate in collaborative projects that allow economies of scale to be exploited to reduce costs and ensure supply.

Both PESCO and EDF projects aim to boost the defence industry by making them more visible within the European single market. The EDF is an opportunity to participate in research projects, where the Fund finances this section 100%. While the development section requires a co-financing commitment, where €1 billion per year of the EDF is shared between the participating countries, out of a budget of €10 billion of the 2022 national budget, only Chapter 6, which covers real investments, is about €3.6 billion⁸⁰.

Spain contributes 9% to the EU budget, which is what fuels the EDF. In the event that co-financing is not secured for projects involving Spanish companies, this percentage will be used to finance companies from other States as part of the Fund. Strengthening the EDF is necessary alongside other sources of funding such as *Horizon Europe* or the *Digital Europe Programme*⁸¹, but requires a commitment to co-financing as well as institutional support.

VII. THE WAR IN UKRAINE AND THE PROTECTION OF EUROPEAN BORDERS

Russia's rationale for invading Ukraine in 2022 is not too far removed from that already put forward in the case of Crimea in 2014, in the sense of defending the pro-Russian population of

77 CÓZAR MURILLO, B., "La cooperación estructurada permanente y la participación de terceros estados", *Revista General de Derecho Europeo*, n. 53, 2021, retrieved from https://www.iustel.com/v2/revistas/detalle_revista.asp?id_noticia=423312&d=1 (accessed 30/10/2023).

78 ARTEAGA, F. y SIMÓN, L., "El Fondo Europeo de Defensa y el futuro de la industria española", *Real Instituto Elcano Policy Paper*, enero 2019, p. 32, retrieved from <https://media.realinstitutoelcano.org/wp-content/uploads/2021/10/policy-paper-2018-fondo-europeo-defensa-futuro-industria-espanola.pdf> (accessed 21/03/2023).

79 IANAKIEV, G- "A Game Changer for European Defence Industrial Collaboration", *ARES Policy Pap.*, v. 48, 2019, retrieved from <https://www.iris-france.org/wp-content/uploads/2019/11/ARES-48.pdf> (accessed 21/03/2023).

80 MINISDEF, Presupuesto de Defensa 2022, retrieved from <https://www.defensa.gob.es/defensa/presupuestos> (accessed 29/05/2023).

81 COUNCIL OF THE EU, "A Strategic Compass for Security and Defence – For a European Union that protects its citizens, values and interests and contributes to international peace and securit". 21/03/2022, retrieved from <https://www.consilium.europa.eu/en/press/press-releases/2022/03/21/a-strategic-compass-for-a-stronger-eu-security-and-defence-in-the-next-decade> (accessed 01/06/2023).

Ukraine, but it also added the express will to demilitarise and ‘denazify’ Ukraine. For Russia, the current Ukrainian government is not legitimate as it is the continuation of the government that emerged after the 2014 Euromaidan uprisings, where civil society successfully forced the resignation of the then Yanukovych government by demonstrating in favour of closer ties with Russia instead of the EU⁸².

In the current conflict, Russia has even invoked the right to legitimate self-defence under Article 51 of the UN Charter against the United Nations, citing similar precedents by Western states in Kosovo, Syria, and Libya⁸³. It should be recalled that Russia has always had dubious motivations in various European territories, especially in the Balkans and much of Eastern Europe due to geostrategic backgrounds. This has highlighted the need to reinforce the European Security Strategy set out in 2016 and to work towards the creation of a joint rapid response mechanism for the possible not-too-distant future.

For the first time, the EU has acted collectively in support of Ukraine, allocating more than €1 billion to the European Peace Facility, created in March 2021, for the supply of military equipment. The question is whether this supply of arms is strategically effective, since the Ukrainian authorities, with more weapons and resources at their disposal, may inexorably prolong the armed conflict and thus the suffering of the population.

Given that diplomacy as a peaceful means of conflict resolution, including through the UN Secretary-General under Chapter VI of the UN Charter, has so far failed to produce the desired results in the current war and humanitarian situation. Direct armed intervention by EU countries would involve NATO in legitimate collective self-defence, which is in any case not desirable for any of the parties. Additionally, no reaction from the EU would have been a clear gesture of neglect and hypocrisy.

While it appears evident that Russia can cause problems of various kinds in the short or long term, positions on relations with Russia are very diverse and disparate, as there is no solid and common foreign policy vision on the Russian issue. A fragmented position is an additional challenge for the EU in establishing an effective foreign and defence policy.

On numerous occasions, the EU’s territorial security has been compromised by Russia to generate uncertainty or put the European defence system to the test. Furthermore, the High Representative of the Union for Foreign Affairs and Security Policy points to the need to resolve crises with its closest neighbours in order to be seen as an important player in the

82 ACOSTA SÁNCHEZ, M. A., “La secesión en derecho internacional: el caso de Crimea”, *Instituto Español de Estudios Estratégicos 142/2014*, 2014, retrieved from https://www.ieee.es/Galerias/fichero/docs_opinion/2014/DIEEEO142-2014_Secesion_DchoInternacional_Crimea_MA.Acosta.pdf (accessed el 11/1/2023).

83 UNITED NATIONS, “Carta de fecha de 24 de febrero de 2022 dirigida al secretario general por el representante permanente de la Federación de Rusia ante las Naciones Unidas”, Document S/2022/154, <https://documents-dds-ny.un.org/doc/UNDOC/GEN/N22/268/19/PDF/N2226819.pdf?OpenElement> (accessed el 21/02/2023).

global geographical and political framework⁸⁴. For example, Pedro Sánchez's visit in 2021 to a Lithuanian military base with the Lithuanian President, Gitanas Nausėda, had to be suddenly cancelled when he was informed of the interception of two Russian planes, forcing the military forces to deploy⁸⁵.

One of the issues that has become evident with the war in Ukraine is the need to enhance European defence capabilities beyond the development of PESCO. In this context, at the European Council of March 11, 2022 in Versailles, Heads of State and Government reaffirmed their commitment to take greater responsibility for their own security, pursue a strategic approach to defence and increase their capacity to act autonomously. In addition, they called for the strengthening and reinforcing EU-NATO cooperation and increased investment in defence capabilities and innovative technologies, through a substantial increase in defence spending.

All this has materialised with the adoption of the new Strategic Compass on security and defence, approved by the Council on March 21, 2022, which not only considers Russia as a direct and long-term threat, and China as an economic competitor and systemic rival, but also includes the creation of a permanent response force. In strong support for the Ukrainian authorities, the possibility of an EU military training assistance mission to Ukraine, which would have a high political value, was raised at the Defence Ministers' meeting on August 29, 2022. Finally, in October, the EU Council established Operation EUMAM Ukraine⁸⁶.

This new political landscape, in addition to the Russian threat, has prompted Denmark, an EU Member State that was outside the Common Security and Defence Policy, to hold a referendum to join said Policy, with an overwhelming majority in favour. In addition, increased defence investment was established, reaching up to 2% of GDP. However, there is no adequate strategic plan regarding greater efficiency in what is provided, which, in parallel with an effective development of PESCO, can lead to enormous problems of uncoordinated and duplicated capabilities on the part of states.

On top of this, Russia has used other forms of disruption to create internal instability within the EU, and has been found to be involved in launching fake news campaigns and cyber-attacks on European computer systems. In this sense, by spreading false news or certain information campaigns⁸⁷, Russia could have influenced the rise to power of the far-right, the rise of independence movements and interfered in European electoral processes.

84 EUROPEAN PARLIAMENT, "Hearing with High Representative/Vice President-designate Josep Borrell", Referencia 20190926IPR62260, 2019, retrieved from <https://www.europarl.europa.eu/news/en/press-room/20190926IPR62260/hearing-with-high> (accessed 23/03/2023).

85 ELORDI CUÉ, C., "¡Es alfa! ¡Es alfa! ¡Es una alerta real!": un aviso por el vuelo de dos aviones rusos obliga a interrumpir la rueda de prensa de Sánchez en una base de Lituania", *Diario El País*, 2021, retrieved from <https://elpais.com/espana/2021-07-08/interrumpida-la-rueda-de-prensa-de-sanchez-en-una-base-militar-de-lituania-por-la-salida-de-un-eurofighter.html> (accessed 26/06/2023).

86 EUROPEAN COUNCIL, "Ucrania: la UE pone en marcha la Misión de Asistencia Militar", comunicado de prensa de 15 de noviembre de 2022, retrieved from <https://www.consilium.europa.eu/es/press/press-releases/2022/11/15/ukraine-eu-launches-military-assistance-mission/> (accessed 16/12/2022).

87 MARTÍNEZ CRISTÓBAL, D. "The current perspective on sharp power: China and Russia in the era of (dis)information", *Revista electrónica de estudios internacionales (REEI)*, n. 42, 2021, retrieved from

EU-Russia relations are delicate, with various stages of brief rapprochements and major tensions that can be used as a motivation to develop an efficient and independent defence policy. Despite the attempt at a complete shutdown towards Russia and beyond the border situation, another concern in the EU is that Russia positions itself as an energy supplier, mainly of gas. The cessation of supplies has been used to generate pressure, forcing the Union to negotiate due to European energy dependence.

The development of the conflict is leading to an uncertain outcome, as initially there was some guarantee of a Russian victory. However, Putin's strategy and the military means at his disposal are failing largely due to the seemingly unwavering support of Western countries, not only economically but also militarily. Five options are presented, all of which are conceivable. They include a complete Russian victory and the overthrow of Zelensky; a partial Russian victory, with Ukraine divided and Zelensky's government or successors in the western part of the country only; a negotiated settlement; Russian withdrawal and Putin's overthrow; a war between Russia and NATO.

The future is, in any case, uncertain, leading to dramatic consequences, especially if the conflict is prolonged. It presents a regional confrontation with immense global effects, especially in economic and geostrategic aspects, with repercussions for society in terms of rising food prices, energy supplies and inflation. Moreover, its resolution is likely to change the balance of power on the international stage between the major powers.

VIII. CONCLUSIONS

The CFSP, and in particular the EU's CSDP, is the area that has made the least progress, marked by a false sense of security provided by NATO's primacy in collective defence. The absence of obvious threats after the end of the Soviet Union led Member States to exclude security and defence from the European integration project. The result is an intergovernmental CSDP in which states retain their national sovereignty and the realisation of a common vision is hampered by divergent strategic cultures. Fragmentation and a degree of protectionism have resulted in a series of isolated national forces with low levels of readiness and interoperability, and a dependence on the US for any significant force deployment.

Today, NATO remains the cornerstone of collective defence and European security. However, following several events such as terrorist attacks on European soil, the EU has awakened from its lethargy by recognising the need to take responsibility for the defence of its own citizens, as expressed in the 2016 Global Strategy. Enthusiastic talk of a European strategic autonomy which would allow the EU to deploy military operations autonomously with its own capabilities has provoked a debate over whether more Europe means less or no NATO.

Following an analysis of their nature, and considering that both organisations have access to the same spectrum of national forces that can be used in the EU or NATO context, it can

<http://www.reei.org/index.php/revista/num42/articulos/the-current-perspective-on-sharp-power-china-and-russia-in-the-era-of-disinformation> (accessed 30/06/2023).

be argued that any enhancement of European capabilities will benefit NATO, while Member States will be able to use them when necessary under the NATO flag. For the US, European strategic sovereignty is a welcomed development, as it allows the EU to assume responsibility in all cases that fall outside the scope of Article 5 of the North Atlantic Treaty, which guarantees NATO's collective defence.

But of course, if Member States were to devote more funds to the development of their own military and civilian capabilities, autonomy would also have an industrial dimension, translating into increased procurement of European equipment. This is not a problem for NATO, as it is for the United States and its sceptical attitude, which is essentially economically motivated. A strengthening of Europe's technological and industrial base may be detrimental to US industry's sales in Europe.

The choice is therefore not between the EU and NATO, but between the national level and the European level. With limited defence spending by individual Member States, it is clear that if the EU is to increase its military and operational capabilities, European collaboration is essential. Thus, in recent years, various European initiatives have been launched in the field of defence. These include PESCO, whose objective is for the 25 participating Member States to collaborate on various projects such as the design and construction of aircraft and ships, the simplification and improvement of military mobility, and cybersecurity.

PESCO has the potential to fill the current gap in the EU's European defence integration capabilities. However, by relying on the will and participation of Member States, it risks falling short of the expectations that prompted its creation, a victim of uneven participation and commitment associated with different strategic cultures.

Industrial and operational progress will not help without a common position that reconciles the different strategic cultures and interests of the Member States. Germany's proposed Strategic Compass can make the EU a more coherent and effective actor, since building capabilities is as important as knowing what you want them for.

Five years on, it is still too early to see tangible results within PESCO. However, it is possible to consider its functioning, assessing the fulfilment of commitments already made by participating States and encouraging the submission of National Implementation Plans for evaluation. Of the 47 projects approved, there are capacity development priorities set by the CDP that are covered by more than one project, while others are not covered within PESCO. In addition, dispersing efforts by undertaking a large number of projects could prove to be a strategic mistake. The European projects signed in the EU-NATO Joint Declaration, and which respond to the needs set out by NATO, are being promoted by France, Germany, Italy, and Spain, key to meeting the objectives set.

Council Decision (CFSP) 2020/1639 has opened the door to the participation of non-European third States belonging to the Alliance in individual PESCO projects. It does, however, establish the exceptional nature of their admission, which will ultimately have to be approved unanimously by the Council of the 25 participating States, and which will require lengthy diplomatic negotiations that could provide additional funding, expertise and experience, particularly in the aftermath of the economic crisis resulting from the COVID-19 pandemic.

The Treaty of the European Union have played a major role in the development of EU defence policy. Together with the coalition with NATO and the joint work with the European Union, even though it is not a community policy but rather a coordinated one, major advances have been promoted. These include the European Union's 2016 Global Strategy, the birth of the MPCC (future General Headquarters) and the *Strategic Compass*, reaching up to the present day with the CSDP.

PESCO has the capacity to bridge capability and operational gaps in the CSDP, coordinated with the other European defence initiatives, with access to EDF funding and guided by a future Strategic Compass. It is the key factor in turning an ambition into a reality with a strong political will, where inaction is no longer an option.

The complexity of current world affairs will require not only peaceful instruments, such as negotiation and diplomacy, but also ultimately the use of military means within the framework of hard power. Any world power must have the economic and military capabilities to demonstrate how it can ensure the security and defence of its territory.

The reluctance of European partners to concede part of their sovereignty to the EU and to provide additional economic funds when there were other bodies guaranteeing European security, such as NATO, sidelined European Defence. In the face of emerging threats and deteriorating relations with the United States, coupled with Brexit, the EU must seek new defence policies to ensure its protection. It must also take integration a step further, putting an end to a period of internal crisis and ensuring greater unity among its members.

The Ukrainian conflict has highlighted the role of international organisations such as the United Nations, which has little force of authority. The European Union is strong and united, despite the fact that the prolongation of the war has caused the first cracks in its union. In addition, NATO and, above all, the United States, continue to play a game of Cold War-like politics.