

**The Capability Priorities of the EU in light of the establishment of the
Permanent Structured Cooperation (PESCO) and the European Defence
Fund**

Essay

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Abstract

Ever since Europe, not just as a continent, The Old Continent, but as a group of allied states, together in the name of political, economic and cultural harmony, overcame the atrocities of the wars that still haunt its past, through the creation of multiple treaties and the arranging of numerous organizations between states, it has been a primary objective of the European Union (EU) to emphasize and develop the most efficient ways to keep, not only the member states' inhabitants, but also those of allied countries, safe and secure.

Taking this into account, and with the EU's influence and responsibility, within itself, as well as with neighbouring states, there has been a continuing need to develop programs and courses of action such as the Common Security and Defence Policy (CSDP), and to establish sections of the EU's foreign policies and external relations such as the more encompassing Common Foreign and Security Policy (CFSP), regarding the EU's defence and security, a subject of the utmost importance for the highest ranks of the political leadership.

These policies and programmed courses of action have taken to action in order to project the EU's intentions on to the world, originating the space of opportunity for the creation of deeper frameworks that develop a more involved collaboration between member states in the defence and security subjects, as we will see the prime examples of the Permanent Structured Cooperation (PESCO) and the European Defence Fund (EDF).

Keywords: Cooperation; Defence; Framework; Security; Union.

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2. Preface

Defence and security are subjects which are seeing an increase in the frequency at which they are debated, along with new programs and projects being created every year, it was only fitting for this topic to be studied and investigated upon by the author, a fourth-year Cadet at the Portuguese Military Academy, enrolled in the course to become an Officer of the Guarda Nacional Republicana (GNR).

There has been a continuing effort by the higher ranks of the EU to establish greater spanning partnerships and agreements in the fields of defence and security, due to the ever-growing dangers of diffuse threats, with the departure from the classic “state vs. state” approach to warfare, and the unpredictability of world leaders, that will be studied throughout this essay, particularly the establishment of the PESCO, and the EDF and how the EU’s capabilities and foreign relations will be affected by these.

3. Introduction

Cooperation between member states was always one of the most valued assets and goals for the EU. Ever since 1951, after the signing of the Treaty of Paris, consequently forming the European Coal and Steel Community, by the nations of Belgium, The Netherlands, France, Germany, Luxembourg and Italy,¹ and, following that, in 1957, with the coming into force of the Treaty of Rome, thus creating the Economic European Community (EEC) or “Common Market”,² that the states that were committed to this long-term project laid down the foundations for what would later be a prosperous and developed, albeit challenged organization, as is the present day EU.

In order to seek a stable peace, to build upon a strong and reliable relationship between the countries of the Old Continent, these neighbours came together with the notion, as written in the Treaty of Paris, “*that world peace may be safeguarded only by creative efforts equal to the dangers which menace it*”.³ This idea of a collective effort directed towards a continental peace was one of the utmost importance and was to be carried on to every future treaties and agreements that should, from amidst these organizations, arise.

The PESCO, being one of these organizations, has garnered more attention coming into light as an ambitious step towards increasing the defence capabilities of the EU, combining both the North Atlantic Treaty Organization (NATO) and non-NATO in itself, and focusing, primarily, on the military aspect of countries working together in the pursue for a common goal, the better defence and security of the EU.

The EDF presents itself as the proposed solution, to the problem of the increasing spending by the member states in defence and security areas, often exceeding their own budgets. The EDF is also valuable in a strategic sense, by directing the states involved in better applying resources when it comes to defence and security development.

¹ Gabel, M. (2019) European Union. Encyclopaedia Britannica. Online article. URL: <https://www.britannica.com/topic/European-Union> [15-11-19]

² Homepage of the Official website of the European Union. Page of the History of the EU. URL: https://europa.eu/european-union/about-eu/history_en. [15-11-19]

³ Homepage of the Digital Research of European Studies. Page of the Treaty of Paris. URL: https://www.cvce.eu/content/publication/1997/10/13/11a21305-941e-49d7-a171-ed5be548cd58/publishable_en.pdf. [15-11-19]

4. Current State of Research

With this chapter the author aims at presenting the reader with the state of the art regarding the subject at hand, it being the capability priorities of the EU in light of the establishment of the PESCO and the EDF. Another goal is also to properly show the foundation and the defining features of the programs and frameworks on which the EU embarked, in the fields of defence and security, the treaties and documents that legally support these very programs.

4.1 The European Union's Role in the World

Seeing the collective group of member states as one, the EU is the largest economy of the world⁴ and, as so, being the role model when it comes to international cooperation, technological, scientific, cultural, economic and civilizational advancements, human development conditions, and keeping the vanguard when it comes to building and setting laws that respect and uphold Human Rights, as well as enforcing them, within its external borders and beyond them is a responsibility that, consequently, falls on the EU's shoulders. However, this is no easy task as according to Jean-Philippe Scherer, "*poverty, criminality, corruption, famine and violence, amongst many other factors, are often interlaced in modern crises*".⁵

4.2 Military and Civilian Missions Conducted by the EU

With this added responsibility, as it is not only our duty, as Europeans, to protect our continent and Union, but also, to protect those oppressed and to aid those in need. The EU seeks to fulfil these goals by carrying out many diversified missions around the world, such as peacekeeping, humanitarian aid or border control and vigilance, as we have seen in recent years, in missions developed alongside NATO, which is still the largest and lead transcontinental defence structure in which most of the member states of the EU are inserted, as well as missions in Somalia, Mali or FRONTEX missions around the Mediterranean sea.

⁴ Scherer, J. (2015) Handbook on CSDP Missions and Operations. The Common Security and Defence Policy of the European Union. Vienna. Armed Forces Printing Centre. P.43

⁵ Cf.:Ibid.

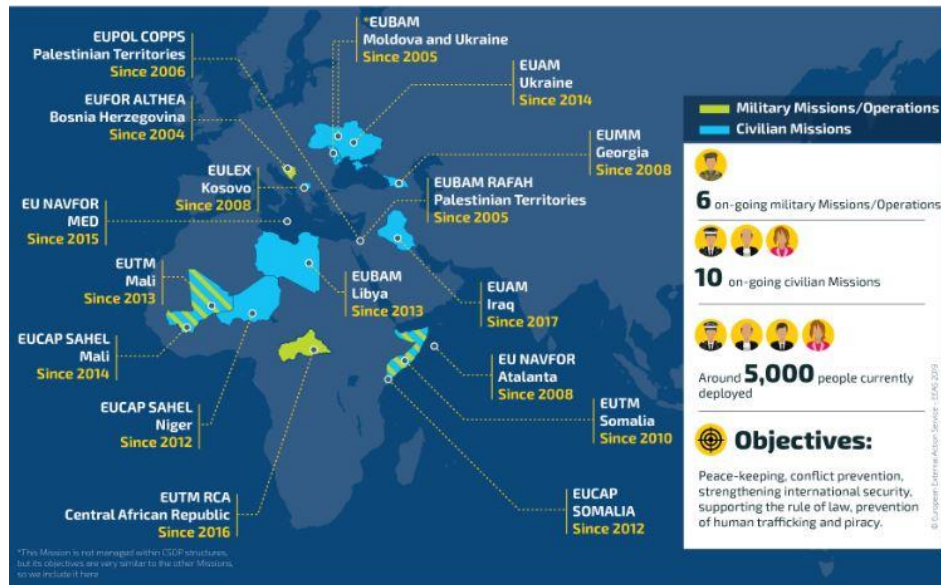


Figure 1: Active CSDP missions as of 2019⁶

4.3 CSDP and the CFSP

In 1993, with the coming into force of the Maastricht Treaty, being the founding treaty of the European Union, later reformed by the Treaty of Lisbon, coming into effect in 2009, the EU was built on three pillars that supported its structure, in a political, thus functional way and also in a segmented way, as a sort of division of powers, within this organization.

These were the European Community, primarily focused on economic trade, the CFSP, which is the one most relevant for this essay, for it is the one that holds and orients the foreign policy and external action of the EU when it comes to both military and civilian missions, and, lastly, the Cooperation in the Fields of Justice and Home Affairs, which dealt with the more security focused objectives of the EU, particularly, the creation of the Europol and the keeping of our external borders.⁷

The CFSP is of course the pillar to which the author will be most referring to, throughout this essay, given the fact that it is the EU's main policy, an organised one and also agreed between its members, that focuses on defence, security and diplomacy actions. As its main and more active body it has the CSDP, which, as described in the official European External Action Service (EEAS) website, "aims to strengthen the EU's external ability to act through the

⁶ Homepage of the EEAS. Page of the Military and Civilian Missions. URL: https://eeas.europa.eu/headquarters/headquarters-homepage/430/military-and-civilian-missions-and-operations_en. [15-11-19]

⁷ Homepage of the European Parliament. Page of the Maastricht and Amsterdam Treaties. URL: <http://www.europarl.europa.eu/factsheets/en/sheet/3/the-maastricht-and-amsterdam-treaties>. [15-11-19]

development of civilian and military capabilities in Conflict Prevention and Crisis Management.”⁸

The CFSP makes its decisions based unanimity of all the members of the Council of The European Union and is headed by the High Representative of the Union for Foreign Affairs and Security Policy (HR/VP), who is, since December 1, 2019, Josep Borrell.

⁸ Homepage of the EEAS. Page of the CFSP. URL:https://eeas.europa.eu/topics/common-foreign-security-policy-cfsp/420/common-foreign-and-security-policy-cfsp_en. [15-11-19]

5. Research Gap

Plenty of information surrounding the current and past state of international missions and security and defence priorities of the EU is provided from official documents and framework factsheets.

In 2016, the EU's Global Strategy (GS) was published, and in it were present the EU's priorities towards the safekeeping of the citizens of Europe as well as the guidelines regarding the EU's external action and foreign affairs. This publication is of value to the activity of all the bodies that comprise the departments of the EU that deal with the military capabilities of the member states and how their means are applied in crises management operations abroad, such as the previous mentioned CSDP, that will, in the future, deal with the changes of the implementation of policies such as the PESCO and EDF, as we will see ahead.

In short, a lack of study in the field of these future alterations, particularly, in the way in which they will affect the course of the missions being carried out constitutes the research gap for this essay.

6. Research Questions

Given the subject of this essay, the author proposed to answer the main research question, which presents itself as the focus and final goal of all the steps of investigation that are taken, functioning as a beacon that guides all of the author's efforts. That question is "What are the Capability Priorities of the EU with the Establishment of PESCO and the EDF?"

In order to be able to conduct a properly framed thought process, the author first needs to answer 3 other sub-questions, which are:

- Sub-question 1: What is the current scenario of EU defence and security policies?
- Sub-question 2: What is PESCO?
- Sub-question 3: What is the EDF?

7. Methodology

Keeping in mind the goal of maintaining the most rigorous investigation method, information was gathered almost exclusively from official sources, such as official EU websites, the Treaties that give the legal basis for the governing bodies and established programs, official EU documents, such as the GS or the official notification regarding the creation of the PESCO. This information was then shifted through and analysed through a lens that obeyed to the subject that this essay is subordinated to, in order to avoid any deviations from the matter at hand. This collected data set the foundation to provide answers to the sub-questions, which, later themselves offered, together, the answer for the Research Question.

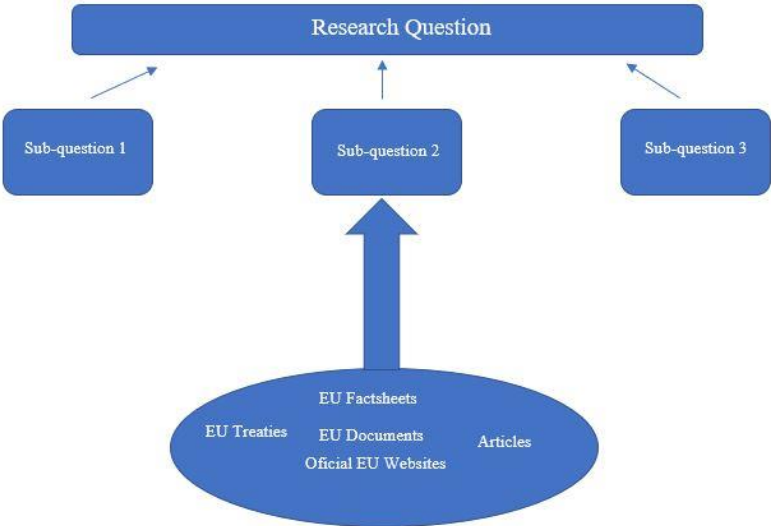


Figure 2: Methodology for collecting information⁹

⁹ Figure created by the author on 16 November 2019

8. Research and Results of Research

Subjects such as EU policies and agreements were brought to light due to the research necessary for answering the research question. However, before one can answer the main research question, the sub-questions that compose the train of thought behind it must, themselves, be answered. Given this fact, the present chapter details the results of the research in providing a general description on the overall state of the art in matter of EU external action, as well as the description and objectives of the PESCO and the EDF.

8.1 Capabilities

The first major step into setting a number of concrete objectives that dealt with military capabilities was taken in 1999, at the European Council of Helsinki, when one of the goals was that to create a European Rapid Reaction Force, or EUROFOR. The Helsinki Headline Goal was defined, and, as of January 1, 2007, fulfilled, with 60,000 troops ready to deploy at 60 days' notice, to embark on whatever mission they were needed, ranging from humanitarian aid, evacuation of EU nationals, and conflict response.

In the wake of this goal, the 2003 European Security Strategy (ESS) was published, and with it came more general guidelines related to the EU capacity to respond to conflict situations that needed its participation. The ESS aimed at increasing activity, capabilities and coherence, and maintained that “*systematic use of pooled and shared assets would reduce duplications, overheads and, in the medium term, increase capabilities.*”¹⁰

This notion of shared responsibility of the defence and security matters stayed and remained one the main focuses on future meeting and agreements. Given this, in 2016 the GS was published, and, under the direction of the HR/VP, presented itself as more multifaceted and, as its name suggests, global in nature, setting five priorities regarding the EU's foreign action:

- The Security of our Union
- State and Societal Resilience to Our East and South
- Integrated Approach to Conflicts
- Cooperative Regional Orders
- Global Governance for the XXI Century

¹⁰ Homepage of the Digital Research of European Studies. Page of the European Security Strategy. URL: https://www.cvce.eu/content/publication/2004/10/11/1df262f2-260c-486f-b414-db8dc112b6b/publishable_en.pdf. [16-11-19]

The main priority being the Security of our Union, which, in itself, contains a number of sub-principles.

The first being security and defence, in which this document sets the standard of translating this will to evolve in field of security, to better maintain and keep our countries safe. It speaks of the unprecedented period of peace and prosperity in which we currently live, and how these very feelings of safety and security will serve as the foundation for a better, safer Europe.

We will have to face many diverse threats to our security, and we will have to do it with the notion that, as it is expressed in the GS, “*we must be ready and able to deter, respond to, and protect ourselves against external threats*”,¹¹ as these ambitions, together with the changing nature of the threats dictate the evolution of our defence and security capabilities. From what it is possible to understand from the 2016 GS, when it comes to the fields of capabilities in security of the EU, three basic principles are to be kept, that of autonomy, credibility and competence. The EU has to have its militaries better equipped, better trained and organised, in order to maintain and improve upon the competence to defend itself from any foreign threats, and to stimulate autonomy, to enhance the notion that the main responsibility to defend the EU belongs to none other than ourselves, as Europeans. We also need to keep improving our credibility, to build and develop work structures as well as the means to keep the EU as a bastion of military and civilian cooperation, particularly, regarding NATO and the EU’s most powerful ally, the United States. The principles of mutual assistance, consecrated in the Solidarity Clause, article 222 of the Treaty of Lisbon, are to be upheld, along with the development of industrial and technological capabilities, to strive forward in these fields and keep the EU as a valuable asset within frameworks such as NATO.

One of the other major threats to our safety, as Europeans, is the spread of terrorism. The use of violence to achieve political or religious goals is becoming the weapon of choice of extremists to push their ideologies and it is becoming more of a societal phenomenon, with an increase in social media related radicalization. The EU must face this problem and deepen its bonds with private organizations, with societal agencies and has to improve its positive influence in the fields of education, culture, religion and youth.¹² Another present day problem that sees itself on the rise is cybersecurity. The investment in cyber technologies is paramount and plays a key role in the readiness and modernization of the EU’s defence industry, due to

¹¹ Homepage of the EEAS. Page of the European Global Strategy. URL: http://eeas.europa.eu/archives/docs/top_stories/pdf/eugs_review_web.pdf. [16-11-19]

¹² Cf.:Ibid.

the increasingly cyber-dependent communications, as well as the way of operating defence and security measures, and as a general way of governing nations through the cyber world, which gives a cyberattack consequences on an unprecedented scale, capable even of bringing entire nations to a halt. Given this, the GS asserts that “*the EU will support political, operational and technical cyber cooperation between Member States, notably on analysis and consequence management, and foster shared assessments between EU structures and the relevant institutions in Member States*”.¹³

8.2 What is PESCO?

On December 11, 2017, the Council of the European Union decided, with the keeping of the idea of deepened cooperation, to establish the PESCO, which, comprised of 25 member states, only 3 short of the entirety of the EU’s member states, those not participating being Malta, Denmark and, due to Brexit, The United Kingdom, presents itself as a framework meant to deepen military cooperation, unity and defence capabilities of the EU, by binding those who integrate it to share and work together towards a more capable and credible European defence.¹⁴ It was created based on articles 42.6, article 46 and the Protocol created by these, Protocol 10, of the Treaty of Lisbon. What differentiates this structure from other forms of defence agreements, or any other field, for that matter, is its legally binding nature,¹⁵ granting that all member states voluntarily signed themselves into it and it is expected that control over decisions influencing the future of this framework continue within the grasp of its members, in the Council. On March 1, 2018, there was another Council decision, this time regarding the first list of actual projects to be conducted under the structure’s oversight and control. This list was comprised of 17 projects, among those there were projects such as a European Medical Command, an Upgrade to Maritime Surveillance, and a Cyber Threats and Incident Response Information Sharing Platform, among others. On November 19, 2018, a second set of projects, again 17 of them, was approved and started to develop. This list, was again oriented to cover, as presented in the official European Defence Agency, “*areas such as training, capability development and operational readiness in the field of defence*.”¹⁶ This second batch of projects included endeavours such as a Joint EU Intelligence School, the European Military Space

¹³ Cf.:Ibid.

¹⁴ Homepage of the official PESCO website. URL: <https://pesco.europa.eu/>. [16-11-19]

¹⁵ Homepage of the official PESCO website. Page about the member states. URL: <https://pesco.europa.eu/about/>. [27-11-19]

¹⁶ Homepage of the European Defence Agency. Page of the PESCO projects. URL: [https://www.eda.europa.eu/what-we-do/our-current-priorities/permanent-structured-cooperation-\(PESCO\)/current-list-of-pesco-projects](https://www.eda.europa.eu/what-we-do/our-current-priorities/permanent-structured-cooperation-(PESCO)/current-list-of-pesco-projects). [27-11-19]

Surveillance Awareness Network and the European Attack Helicopters TIGER Mark III, among 14 other projects. Most recently, on May 8, 2019, a third list of PESCO projects was submitted, and with it, the total number of projects under this frameworks guidance came to 47, these last 13 also being in the fields of training, collaborative actions and capability building, mainly, on sea, air and space.¹⁷

8.3 What is the EDF?

Although going through the longest period of peace in its recorded history, the European continent, has, as well, been faced with its greatest challenges in the fields of security and defence, in the more recent periods of its life. And, as such, in September 2016, the then President of the European Commission, Jean-Claude Juncker announced the creation of an EDF. This Fund would serve to, greatly, enhance the member states' opportunity of investment in the fields of defence and security, as it would decrease the need for these same states to rely on foreign aid, mostly financial aid, as it aimed as better channelling taxpayers money towards the defence industry, in a coordinated effort, thus increasing the EU's autonomy. The EDF will work in a two faceted way, with a research component, fully financed by the EU, and a development and acquisitions area, which would find its funds, mostly, originating from pooled contributions of the member states, although also having a part of EU funding in the mix, up to 20%,¹⁸ to incentive progress and to better leverage the development process.¹⁹ It is expected to gather around 2.590.000.000€ in total up until 2020, and, after that, 5.500.000.000€ every year.²⁰ In order to motivate its members to combine their projects in PESCO and the EDF, projects developed in the scope of the PESCO will garner an extra 10% EU funding.²¹

¹⁷ Homepage of the European Council. Page of the new PESCO projects. URL: <https://www.consilium.europa.eu/en/press/press-releases/2019/11/12/defence-cooperation-council-launches-13-new-pesco-projects/>. [27-11-19]

¹⁸ Homepage of the official website of the European Commission. Page of the EDF factsheet. URL: <https://ec.europa.eu/docsroom/documents/34509>. [28-11-19]

¹⁹ Homepage of the official European Commission website. Page of questions and answers about the EDF. URL: https://ec.europa.eu/commission/presscorner/detail/en/memo_17_1476. [28-11-19]

²⁰ Cf.: Ibid.

²¹ Cf.: Ibid.

9. Discussion of Results and Personal Conclusions

Firstly, the study of the history behind the EU, as well as its governing bodies and capability building frameworks, adding to the guidelines written in the founding treaties, leads us to a point where we can see that defence and security always had its place, and a privileged one at that, on the agenda of the EU. Several programs were created, conventions held, and strategies implemented in order to develop both military and civilian missions, particularly, under the control and direction of the CSDP and the HR/VP.

These missions contribute for the image the EU projects into the world, as a bastion of security, a thoroughly competent defence and a hub of civilizational progress. Along with this progress come many challenges, presenting themselves in several official documents, such as the 2003 ESS or the 2016 GS, that range from power imbalances in the world, energy crises, demographic changes, the increasingly diffuse nature of threats to the member states' sovereignty, or cyber-attacks.

Understanding these issues, the EU has dedicated itself to the cause of deeper and more closely knitted cooperation between states, creating frameworks as the PESCO and ways to better maintain them, as the EDF is the point in case.

This will all culminate in the answering of the research question posed in the beginning of the essay, "What are the Capability Priorities of the EU with the Establishment of PESCO and the EDF?"

The author concludes that this question hides a nuanced answer, for, depending on the context, the issue at hand and the field of investment, the priorities sway. The first easily identifiable priority, as it has been one the keywords of this essay and several official EU documents, is cooperation. Every one of the measures taken into effect by the many bodies of the EU now define themselves as having always an underlying notion and purpose of cooperation between actors. This notion of cooperation will encompass all other priorities, an example being the training. The nature of many of the PESCO programs are in the preparation of the military personnel, by means of joint exercises, purchasing of equipment or even the creation of international military organisations, all for the better defence of Europe's interests. Another priority considering the PESCO and EDF is technological development. The EDF finds its purpose, particularly in the field of research, in developing and evolving Europe's military capacity by keeping up with the technological advancements that mark our time. These advancements will serve as the object of many PESCO projects as the members states' military

forces will be able to assert themselves as more modern, better trained and equipped forces. Finally, the last priority is the entering and setting new ground in cyber-defence. As the threats to the security of the EU keep evolving, the cyber world is one that keeps mutating faster than whatever effective counter measures can be implemented. However, this is to be changed, as several programs within the PESCO list of projects deals, in some manner, with cyber threats.

9.1 Differing points of view

One can take the setting of these frameworks in one of two ways. While it is undeniable that cooperation is the main key concept in all of these efforts, one could argue this collective approach to defence and security issues, something that has always been so individual of each nation, contributes to the mainly referred issue when discussions over EU measures arise, and that is that of a lack of individual thought and self-determination by each member to deal, develop and maintain defence and security capabilities as it would please. PESCO and the EDF could be seen in a less than positive light, due to the legally binding nature of the first, and the continued need to commit to the joint defence projects, in order to be able to participate in the funding of the EDF. This could be even seen as a limitation on the sovereignty of a nation. However, this argument falls short when it comes to a closely analysed discussion, as the participation in these programs and projects has been, entirely, voluntary, by the nations that chose to enter in them, as well as any contribution when it comes to monetary terms.

This brings us to the other side of the discussion, the praise and incentive for the continuation of programs such as the previously discussed. They can be viewed as a positive endeavour for the EU, in the sense that collaboration is almost always a good thing, and that the more we work together, the stronger, more cohesive, and more unified we will be as a union of states, thus making the EU the example setter it is. The organization of projects the likes of those created in the PESCO and the pool funding in the manner of the EDF helps smaller states, with less potential for financial expansion and engaging in large-scale military development programs to reach a level of technological sophistication once impossible, or, in the very least, very difficult to achieve, on their own.

9.2 Final remarks

Due to these reasons, the author's opinion on the matter is that these programs, frameworks, funds and agreements are to be looked at in a positive light. While cooperation should not always be seen as an inherently good thing at face value, in this aspect, the upsides greatly upstage the downsides, and cooperation between countries that strive towards a more capable,

stronger, more secure EU should always be appreciated and pushed for. The creation of the PESCO originated the implementation of new defence and security programs, ranging from cyber defence to space, air or land capabilities, that would otherwise take years to develop, and would be exclusive to the most powerful nations within the EU. Not only that, but the creation of the EDF also brought a system of collective effort, where every state participating in the program plays a part in the advancement of the technological capabilities and better military capacity of the EU that take it one step closer to becoming a group of states brought together by a past filled with war and desolation and now striving for a future of peace, security and prosperity.

10. Annexes

10.1 List of Abbreviations

CFSP.....	Common Foreign and Security Policy
CSDP.....	Common Security and Defence Policy
EDF.....	European Defence Fund
EEAS.....	European External Action Service
EEC.....	Economic European Community
ESS.....	European Security Strategy
EU.....	European Union
EUROFOR.....	European Rapid Operational Force
GNR.....	Guarda Nacional Republicana
GS.....	Global Strategy
HR/VP.....	High Representative of The Union for Foreign Affairs and Security Policy
NATO.....	North Atlantic Treaty Organization

10.2 List of Figures

Figure 1: The missions currently active in the scope of the CSDP all around the world

Figure 2: The authors representation of the methodology used in gathering information for this essay

10.3 List of Literature

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 15. Scherer, J. (2015) Handbook on CSDP Missions and Operations. The Common Security and Defence Policy of the European Union. Vienna. Armed Forces Printing Centre.

11. Affidavit

I declare that I have written the present essay independently and on my own. I have clearly marked any language or ideas borrowed from other sources as not my own and documented their sources. The essay does not contain any work that I have handed in or have had graded as a previous scientific paper earlier on.

I am aware that any failure to do so constitutes plagiarism. Plagiarism is the presentation of another person's thoughts or words as if they were my own – even if I summarize, paraphrase, condense, cut, rearrange, or otherwise alter them.

I am aware of the consequences and sanctions plagiarism entails. Among others, consequences may include nullification of the essay, exclusion from participation in the CSDP Olympiad. These consequences also apply retrospectively, i.e. if plagiarism is discovered after the essay has been accepted and graded. I am fully aware of the scope of these consequences.



4th Year GNR Infantry Cadet Miguel Gonçalves

Lisbon, Portugal in December 2019