

# EUROPE DIPLOMACY & DEFENCE

THE AGENCE EUROPE BULLETIN ON CSDP AND NATO

## ***EU/NATO/NORTH KOREA: EU AND NATO CONDEMN NEW NORTH KOREAN MISSILE LAUNCH***

*Brussels, 29/11/2017 (EDD)* – On Tuesday 28 November, after another missile had been fired earlier in the day, the spokesperson for the European External Action Service (EEAS) once again urged North Korea to give up its ballistic missile programme. The latest missile launch was the first since 15 September.

*“The European Union’s message is unequivocal: the DPRK must abandon its nuclear weapons of mass destruction and ballistic missile programmes in a complete, verifiable and irreversible manner, immediately cease all related activities and return to the Nuclear Non-Proliferation Treaty and the IAEA safeguards”,* the spokesperson states in a press release. She again called on the country to engage in a *“credible and meaningful dialogue”* aimed at pursuing the *“complete, verifiable and irreversible denuclearisation of the Korean Peninsula”* and the full implementation of all relevant UN Security Council resolutions. She reiterated that the EU had a highly restrictive sanctions’ regime in place against North Korea.

The EEAS spokesperson stated that the new latest launch was *“further grave provocation, and a serious threat to international security”* and is a further *“unacceptable violation”* of Pyongyang’s international obligations *“as determined by multiple United Nations Security Council Resolutions”*.

NATO Secretary General Jens Stoltenberg, for his part, said: *“I strongly condemn North Korea’s new ballistic missile test. This is a further breach of UN Security Council Resolutions, undermining regional and international security”*. He went on to add: *“North Korea needs to re-engage in a credible and meaningful dialogue with the international community”*.

The missile launch was followed by North Korean statements declaring that North Korea is now a nuclear power and can reach every point of US mainland. US Secretary of Defence James Mattis stated the missile crashed into the Sea of Japan after travelling some 1,000 km and reached the highest altitude of any launches made by North Korea to date. He said it is a *“threat to everywhere in the world”*, reports *AFP*. This is an *“act of violence”* and *“cannot be tolerated”*, said Japan’s Prime Minister Shinzo Abe. He told the press: *“We shall not give way to an act of provocation. We shall increase our pressure”*.

The Security Council was to meet as a matter of urgency on Wednesday to discuss the situation.

*Twice-weekly publication*

**No. 1039**

**30 November 2017**

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TRANSLATION FROM FRENCH EDITION



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Imprimé à 1160 Bruxelles par  
Imprimerie de l'Europe S.A.

Bureau de dépôt Bruxelles X  
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### **ARAB LEAGUE: CONTINUING DEVELOPMENT OF EURO-ARAB OPERATIONAL COOPERATION**

*Brussels, 29/11/2017 (EDD)* – On Tuesday 28 November, representatives of the EU member states within the Political and Security Committee and the permanent representatives of the League of Arab States hailed the “*strengthening of the Euro-Arab partnership as an appropriate regional response*”. In the same press release from the secretariat of the EU Council of Ministers, they acknowledge “*the importance of joining efforts to address common political, economic, social and security challenges which threaten the stability of their common region*”.

Among other things, the two sides discussed the Palestinian issue and ways to take the peace process forward, as well as developments of the situation in Syria, Libya, Yemen, Iraq and Iran. They also discussed counter-terrorism, illegal migration, refugees and displaced persons.

Expressing their “*determination to work together*”, the ambassadors underlined the importance of the role played by the Arab ambassadors in Brussels in strengthening the Euro-Arab partnership and ways to face common challenges. Since EU-Arab League strategic dialogue was launched in November 2015, it has been agreed to continue with the development of Euro-Arab operational cooperation, especially in areas of conflict prevention, early warning and crisis management, humanitarian aid, counter-terrorism, transnational organised crime, nuclear disarmament and non-proliferation.

In parallel to the ambassadors’ meetings, working groups for cooperation between the League of Arab States and the EU were also convened.

### **EU/CSDP: 18 PROJECTS IN PERMANENT STRUCTURED COOPERATION BASKET**

*Brussels, 29/11/2017 (EDD)* – On Monday 27 November, the 23 member states that recently announced their intention to take part in permanent structured cooperation (PESCO) approved a list of 18 projects to be submitted to the Council of Foreign Ministers on Monday 11 December, with a view to PESCO establishment. In the meantime, some projects may have to be fine-tuned and/or grouped together when they relate to the same area.

It comes as no real surprise that, for now, the list simply puts existing or gestating projects under the PESCO label, with a view to the final list of projects. It includes (with the country that proposed the project and may pilot it in brackets each time): (1) European medical command (Germany); (2) radio software linked to ESSOR programme (France); (3) European logistic hub (Germany); (4) network of logistic structures on the periphery of the Union (Cyprus); (5) simplification and standardisation of cross-border military transport procedures (Netherlands); (6) creation of a centre of excellence for training certification for European armies; (8) support for operations (France); (9) constitution of a deployable military disaster relief package (DMDRP) (Italy); (10) countering mines at sea by using submarine mine-detector and destroyer drones or counter-measures (MCM) or semi-autonomous submarine systems (Belgium); (11) autonomous system for port surveillance (Italy); (12) updating of maritime surveillance system (Greece); (13) information sharing platform on response to cybernetic attacks and threats (Greece); (14) rapid response teams and mutual assistance for cyber-security (Lithuania); (15) standardisation of C2 (command and control) procedures for operations conducted under CSDP (Spain); (16) next generation of armoured infantry fighting vehicles (AIFV), amphibious assault vehicles (AAV) and light transport vehicles (LTV) (Italy); (17) indirect fire support (Slovakia); and (18) constitution of a rapidly deployable crisis response operation core (CROC) as part of the launching of crisis response operations of the EUFOR kind (Germany).

*Carte Blanche*

**PERMANENT STRUCTURED COOPERATION,  
OR BEING TAKEN FOR A RIDE AGAIN**

by Frédéric Mauro \*

The 13th November 2017 should have been an historic day: that when 23 countries of the Union notified the European Council of their determination to establish “permanent structured cooperation” (PESCO) between them, fulfilling a provision of the Lisbon Treaty at the core of common security and defence policy (CSDP). Will European defence be taken forward as member states promise? Alas, it is heart-wrenching for all sincere Europeans with enough lucidity to fear that, yet again, this is merely a false start.

**Objectives are unclear**

Basically, the idea is simple: No more Yugoslavia, and never again the shame of looking on powerless as genocide unfolds “*just two hours from Paris*”! It would mean the Union would have an operational military capability to manage crises in its neighbourhood, when the Americans do not want to intervene. The CSDP and NATO are compatible and even complementary, since the former is “*soft defence*” in the event of crises outside Union territory, without the Americans, while the latter is “*hard defence*” in the event of armed attack on the territory of a member of the Alliance and with the instrumental assistance of the Americans, as well as that of the Turks and Canadians. In this context, PESCO is a process allowing for the establishment of this operational capability. No more, no less. It is a process of integration rather than a legal framework as it will only be effective in the longer term. Initially, such a process can only be carried out with a small number, the “vanguard” of states that can and want to be a part, as unanimity is still the rule within an intergovernmental framework.

Today, objectives have changed. PESCO, we are told, should indeed allow a crisis management capability to be created externally, but should also “*protect the Union and its citizens*” and strengthen NATO’s European pillar in order to rebalance the Alliance’s burden-sharing. And why not? Times have changed, it is true. But the terms of the Treaty have not. Bigger ambitions call for bigger means as it is not the same thing to set up an expeditionary corps and – in addition – to ensure civil protection, border control and cyber-defence.

In reality, one might fear that member states will easily be content with making a vague effort with regard to internal security instead of having an authentic external intervention capability.

**Commitments which are none of the kind**

In order to build such a military capability, the idea of PESCO was to act simultaneously on all elements necessary for constituting an instrument of defence: planning, funding, industrial programmes, capabilities, and, finally, operational availability. It is all inter-related and PESCO will only be effective if the commitments that underpin it are comprehensive and in earnest.

From this point of view, the text of notification leaves us dumbfounded. Member states undertake to step up their efforts when it comes to equipments, albeit in a “*collective*” manner, which does not really commit anyone. This has already been contemplated in the context of the European Defence Agency since 2007! So who are they trying to fool?

And all the rest is along the same lines: when it comes to capabilities, member states undertake to participate at least – hold your breath – in “*one*” cooperation project. Undertake to ..., undertake when one wants and with whom one wants. This is but a sleight of hand that fools no-one: it is the current situation.

**A recipe for failure: unanimity of 23**

Hoping to create an autonomous operational capability simply through cooperation means always doing the same thing but expecting a different outcome. From this point of view, PESCO represents a break as “*cooperation*”, which is not only “*structured*” but also “*permanent*”, is no longer cooperation but rather integration. Unfortunately, the word integration does not even once appear in the letter of notification. This is greatly disappointing, as it is the integration of their Navies that allows Belgium and the Netherlands to still have a naval force while spending only 1% of their GDP on defence. And it is integration of ground forces to make up for the shortfall in its own forces that Germany is seeking through

NATO's Framework Nation Concept.

Let us reassure all those who fear the word that the "*integration*" in question is not the European army or even a remake of the Franco-German brigade. It has never been a question of this in the context of CSDP. No. It would simply be the capacity for Europeans to operate a European intervention force together by planning, financing, building and supporting it together – in short, to do together what they are no longer able to do on their own. And, incidentally, for those who place emphasis on "*best value for money*", it would have been the most effective way to make huge savings and to avoid having 17 different kinds of European armoured vehicles. We still have a long way to go, a very long way.

There is no need to dwell on the subject of governance by a group of 23 states, or perhaps 25, according to the rule of unanimity. We have already lived through that within the European Defence Agency when a single country, the United Kingdom, was able to block all the others for five whole years.

#### **National leaders unable to consider themselves Europeans**

One week before PESCO notification, Sweden chose the American Patriot missile over the European missile, Aster, although the latter was less expensive and just as effective. The choice taken by the Swedish leaders in favour of American equipment is not to be criticised as it was a "*sovereign*" choice. But what the deuce are they doing in PESCO? And what can be said of the conditions imposed by Polish leaders to be part of the system, except that they paid a ridiculously low price for a right of veto on European defence. The fact is that member states are not sincere. Those who are able to be part of the vanguard do not want a European defence, and those that do want it, do not have the wherewithal.

The French and Germans are mainly to blame for this situation. German leaders, by dismissing the notion of vanguard, have not abided by the spirit of the treaty. Are they truly in earnest when it comes to defence? And are the French leaders really ready to integrate? As Joachim Bitterlich, the former adviser to Chancellor Helmut Kohl, has said, France and Germany went far further in 1991 than they do today! That is because, today, they make-pretend, and all the other states follow suit. It is sad to say: they are using PESCO for political ends, to show that they are doing something when, in reality, they are doing nothing at all, or very little. The Germans pose as champions of European unity, but refuse any idea that could bring this about. They could easily increase their defence effort, and will no doubt do so, but their commitment will remain strictly capability and industrial interest oriented. France's only ambition seems to be not to displease the Germans, in the hope of gaining counterparts in economic and monetary areas. When it comes to things military, they entertain the illusion of a "*strategic autonomy*", for which they no longer have the means. All have domestic interests in mind, make great announcements and small, tawdry calculations. It matters little what will happen in ten years' time. None of the current leaders ... except "*Europe*" ... will be around to be held to account.

#### **Ten years from now**

The only hope there is that PESCO will be a success despite it all currently lies in the drafting of a European White Paper which puts some coherence into what would otherwise be no more than a beauty contest, a "projects fair" or – to sum it up in one word – deceit. And yet, the question is a simple one: what defence instrument does the European Union need to meet its level of ambition?

There is currently only the European Parliament, whose vote is needed for the PESCO budget, that is able to demand such a White Paper, a clearer text than the hodgepodge of all in vogue words served up cold, ten years after the Lisbon Treaty. One thing is certain at a time when Europe has doubts about itself, when some nations express their fears by sometimes placing their fate in the hands of leaders who go on to fuel their anxieties, European defence deserves more than a long-winded and wordy text. The best strategies are the shortest and clearest.

One can also hope that the member states will be caught in their own trap and that, to avoid ridicule, they will get down to work. After all, if PESCO fails, it will mean intergovernmental failure and the proof that one cannot build common defence without a federal state. For now, the question is that of knowing to what extent one can appear to be building European defence without destroying the European project? For deceit has its limitations. If the European Union is truly the "*best idea that we have had*", if it is "*the future that we are holding between our hands*", then it will be necessary for the member states and their leaders to do better than that. Much better.

If they truly believe what they are saying, then they must get down to it!