

**„Making Sense“ of PESCO – What can Practices of Collaborative Military Capability Development Contribute to European Cooperation in Defense?**

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In my dissertation project I analyze how military and diplomatic practitioners embody international cooperation in the development of military capabilities within the European Union's Permanent Structured Cooperation (PESCO) framework and the closely linked European Defence Fund. My project focusses on how PESCO practitioners "make sense" of the framework's routines and procedures through a reconstruction of the conceptualizations of "cooperation" and "integration" they have developed as part of their work.

To examine the micro level of intergovernmental cooperation in PESCO, I am applying a reconstructive grounded theory approach based on data collected through qualitative interviews with officials in member states' Ministries of Defense and EU institutions. By investigating what these practitioners regard as the purpose and future potential of the (kinds of) projects they work on, my project contributes to a better understanding of how practices developed within collaborative PESCO projects and the lessons drawn from them can enable future European cooperation in defense.