

GERMANY'S ROLE IN THE EUROPEAN UNION'S PERMANENT STRUCTURED COOPERATION

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Abstract: *Germany plays a significant role in shaping the European Union's Permanent Structured Cooperation (PESCO), a defence collaboration framework intended to deepen the European military integration among the member states. This paper analyses the German contributions to the PESCO projects (either as a participant or as a coordinator), suggesting that Germany acts simultaneously as a catalyst for enhanced cooperation, as well as a consensus builder among the various national interests of the member states.*

Keywords: defence collaboration, Germany, member states, PESCO, projects

1. Introduction

The present European security landscape calls for an enhanced military profile of the European Union (EU) and a deeper military integration among the EU member states; one of the ways to achieve progress in this direction is the Permanent Structured Cooperation (PESCO) – an EU collaboration mechanism aimed at developing military capabilities, fostering collaboration and enhancing interoperability.

Established in 2017, PESCO currently encompasses 74 different projects, developed under various areas of cooperation [1]. Also, out of the 27 EU countries, Malta remains the only one that has not yet joined this ambitious initiative [2].

But PESCO's effectiveness and overall success significantly depend on the level of commitment and contributions made by the participating member states. Among them, Germany plays a pivotal role, thanks to its willingness to allocate resources, assume coordination roles or actively participate in the various PESCO projects.

Adopting a quantitative approach, this

study examines Germany's involvement in the PESCO projects and shows that this country positions itself as an important driving force in the process of European military integration.

2. Scientific Methodology

This paper uses the case study method, as described in the book titled “Doing Case Study Research”, written by Dawson Hancock, Bob Algozzine and Jae Hoon Lim and published in 2021 [3]. The method is suitable for the topic of the paper, as it allows for a contextualised and focused examination of Germany's role in PESCO.

Thus, the paper's scientific hypothesis is the following: Germany's significant involvement in PESCO enhances the European military integration process, by increasing interoperability and capability development among the EU member states. In order to assess this hypothesis, the paper will consider, in a quantitative manner, the various PESCO projects to which Germany contributes (as a participant or as a coordinator).

3. Results and Discussion

Among the EU member states, Germany's prominent position in the PESCO architecture can be quantitatively illustrated through two key metrics: the number of projects in which Germany is involved (Figure 1) and the number of PESCO projects coordinated by Germany (Figure 2).

As illustrated in Figure 1, Germany's involvement in PESCO projects exceeds by far that of the EU member states; while EU countries are involved in an average of 14,76 projects, Germany takes part in as many as 32. Thus, Germany's level of engagement is more than two times higher than the EU average.

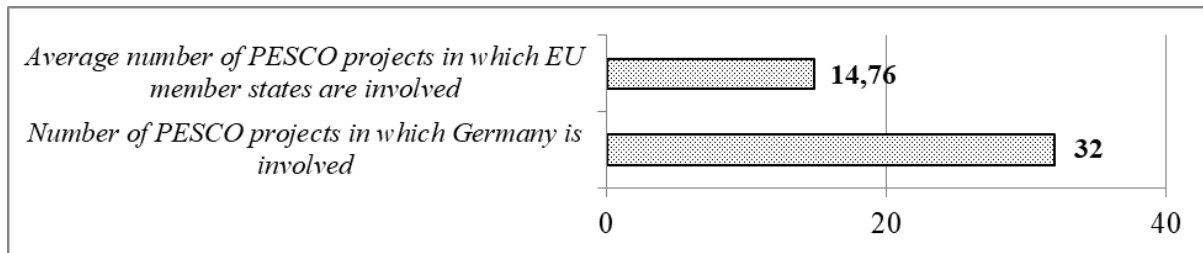


Figure 1: Involvement of Germany and other EU Member States in PESCO projects [4]

Furthermore, as illustrated in Figure 2, Germany's coordinating role in PESCO projects is markedly higher than that of other EU countries; compared to the

average of 2,96, the 14 projects overseen by Germany represent nearly a fivefold difference.

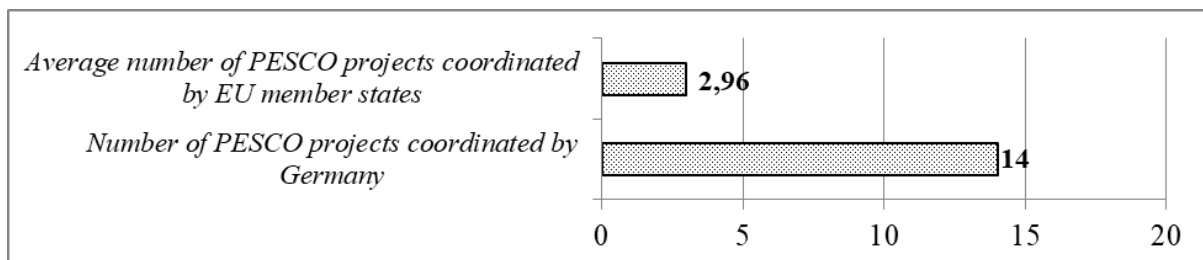


Figure 2: Coordination by Germany and other EU Member States of PESCO projects [5]

Additional findings can be derived by grouping the PESCO projects in which Germany is involved based on the seven official categories listed on the PESCO website, as follows: „Training and Facilities”, „Cyber”, „Land”, „Maritime”, „Air”, „Space”, „Strategic Enablers and Force Multipliers” [6].

As can be seen in Figure 3, Germany's involvement in PESCO projects is predominantly focused on the areas of cooperation „Air” and „Strategic Enablers and Force Multipliers” (7 projects each); the „Cyber” area benefits from 5 projects

with German involvement, followed by areas „Land” and „Space” (4 projects each); Germany's lowest levels of engagement are observed in areas „Training and Facilities” (3 projects) and „Maritime” (2 projects). This distribution is not incidental, as it reflects Germany's defence priorities and interests. For example, the emphasis on „Strategic Enablers and Force Multipliers” highlights Germany's preference for contributing to the foundational dimensions of the EU common defence, such as logistics and military mobility. Then, the relatively substantial engagement in the

„Cyber” area of cooperation reflects Germany’s growing recognition of the

hybrid risks and threats for the EU security landscape.

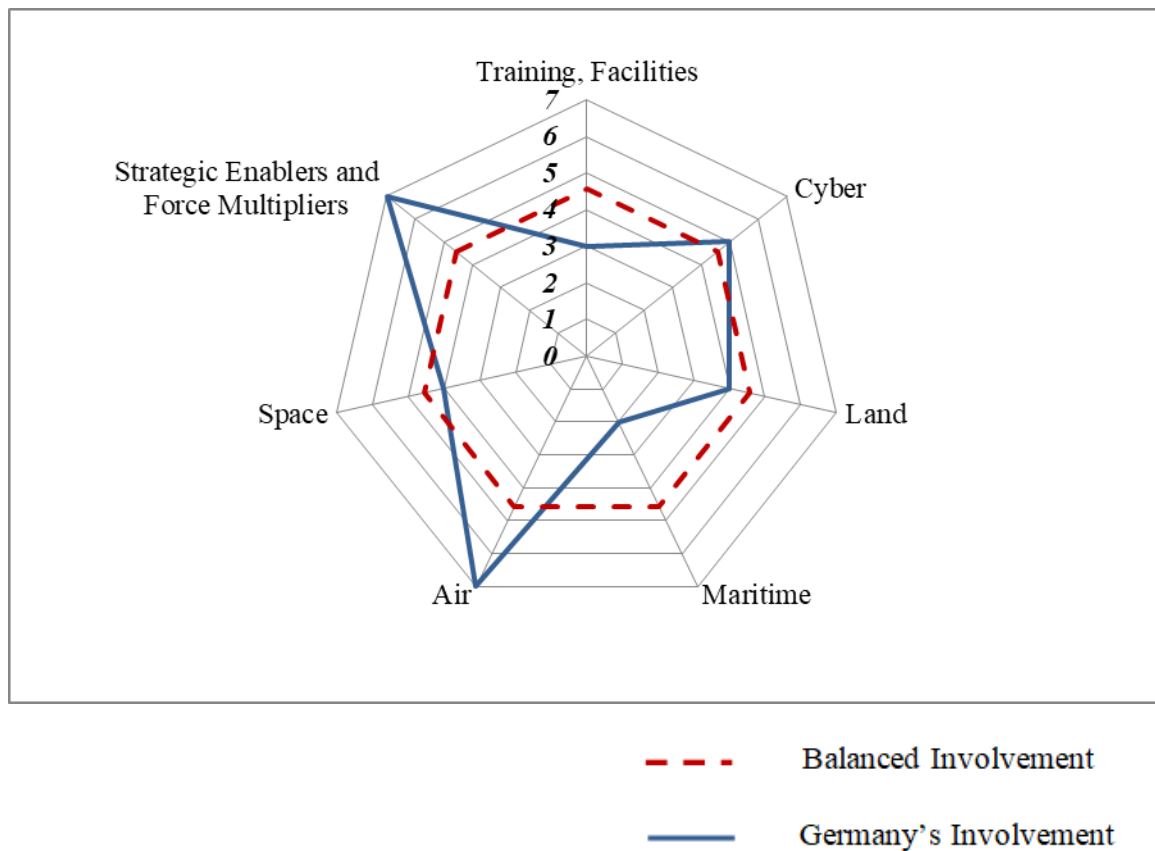


Figure 3: PESCO Projects in which Germany is Involved, Classified by Areas of Cooperation [7]

In addition, Figure 3 illustrates a hypothetical balanced distribution of Germany’s 32 projects across the 7 areas of cooperation, which would correspond to an average of 4,57 projects per area.

Finally, Figure 4 presents the distribution of PESCO projects coordinated by Germany across the same 7 areas of cooperation. The data reveal an emphasis on the area „Air” (4 projects), followed by areas „Land” and „Strategic Enablers and Force Multipliers” (3 projects each); the other 4 areas of cooperation benefit from a minimum

number of projects coordinated by Germany (1 each). Thus, the concentration of German-coordinated projects in the area of cooperation „Air” is particularly noteworthy, as it signals an active responsibility in one of the most technologically demanding and strategically significant areas of modern defence cooperation. Germany’s willingness to assume this position underscores its ambition to shape the development of the future European air defence capabilities.

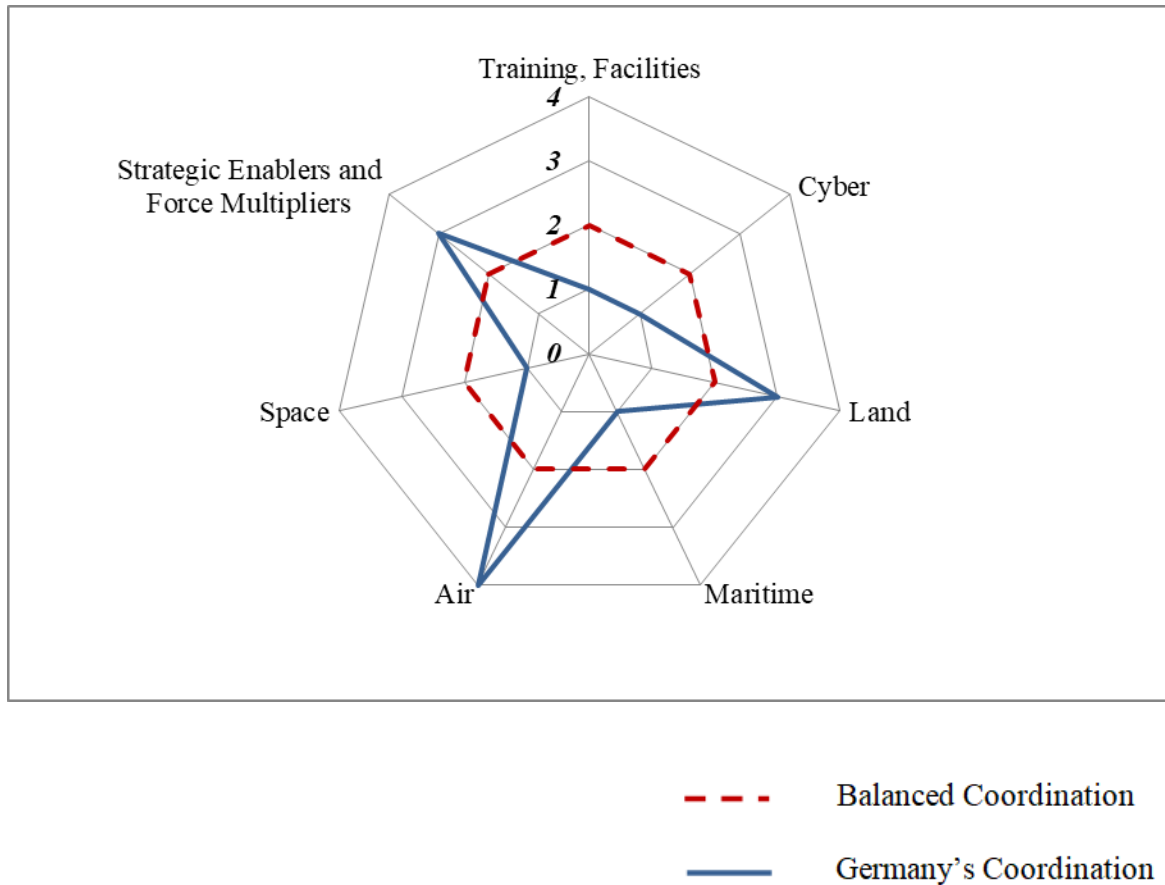


Figure 4: PESCO Projects Coordinated by Germany, Classified by Areas of Cooperation [8]

In line with Figure 3, Figure 4 also includes a hypothetical balanced distribution of the 14 projects coordinated by Germany across the 7 areas of cooperation, yielding an average of 2 projects per area.

4. Conclusions

The geopolitical shifts generated by Russia's invasion in Ukraine and by the evolving dynamics of the transatlantic relations require a more consistent military profile of the European Union. One effective approach to accomplishing this is through the ambitious and strategically coherent Permanent Structured Cooperation.

The quantitative analysis of Germany's involvement in the PESCO projects (as a participant or as a coordinator), across the seven areas of cooperation, demonstrates that the country is an indispensable actor to this cooperation framework, thus advancing

the development and harmonisation of defence capabilities within the EU.

The findings presented throughout this paper provide substantial support that allows for the validation of the scientific hypothesis formulated initially. Germany displays a pattern of selective and strategically coherent engagements with the PESCO projects, concentrating its efforts where they are most likely to yield tangible results and significant positive changes within the PESCO collaboration architecture and thus positioning itself as an important contributor to the European military integration process.

Finally, in terms of prospective scientific research, one particularly relevant direction would involve analysing PESCO's impact on the military interoperability and defence integration among the EU member states.

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