

# The evolution of the German concepts of military cooperation in Europe

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## Abstract

Germany's military cooperation with European partners is undertaken either within the European Union or outside its structures. The cooperation within the European Union takes place mainly on two levels: inter-governmental and supranational. The cooperation outside the EU is also focused on two levels: bilateral and multilateral. The author's intention is to identify the direction of the evolution of the German concepts of military cooperation in Europe during the reign of Angela Merkel using a multi-level approach.

Concepts co-created or co-implemented by Germany assume that strong and united Europe can counteract external threats by development of its own military component. It is clear, that there is conceptual asymmetry, that is why there are more intergovernmental concepts (military missions, PESCO, strengthened CSDP, E12) than transnational concepts, from which we distinguish the only one, e.g. the concept of the European army. The influence on the evolution of the German concepts can have an integral federalism, which this country adheres to, and which was implemented after the Second World War into the political and administrative system, i.e. system based on multilevelness and cooperation of authorities, that has proved effective, so it can also be effective in multi-level military cooperation in the EU.

**Keywords:** Germany, military cooperation, Common Security and Defense Policy (CSDP), European Union, the European army

## Ewolucja niemieckich koncepcji współpracy wojskowej w Europie

### Streszczenie

Współpraca wojskowa Niemiec z partnerami europejskimi podejmowana jest albo w ramach Unii Europejskiej, albo poza jej strukturami. Współpraca w ramach Unii Europejskiej odbywa się głównie na dwóch poziomach: międzyrządowym i ponadnarodowym. Z kolei współpraca poza UE skoncentrowana jest także na dwóch poziomach: bilateralnym i multilateralnym. Zamiarem Autora jest zidentyfikowanie kierunku ewolucji niemieckich koncepcji współpracy wojskowej w Europie w okresie rządów kanclerz Angeli Merkel z jednoczesnym wykorzystaniem wielopoziomowego podejścia. Koncepcje współtworzone bądź współrealizowane przez Niemcy zakładają, że silna i zjednoczona Europa może odeprzeć zagrożenia zewnętrzne, gdy będzie rozwijała własny komponent wojskowy.

Wyraźnie widać asymetrię koncepcyjną, dlatego jest więcej koncepcji międzyrządowych (misje wojskowe, PESCO, wzmocniona WPBiO, EI2) niż koncepcji ponadnarodowych, z których można mówić właściwie o jednej, czyli o koncepcji armii europejskiej. Wpływ na ewolucję koncepcji niemieckich może mieć integralny federalizm, jakiemu to państwo hołduje, i który implementował po drugiej wojnie światowej do ustroju politycznego i administracyjnego, czyli oparty o wielopoziomowość i współdziałanie władz system, który się sprawdził, przynosi efekty, więc także może przynieść efekty w wielopoziomowej współpracy wojskowej w UE.

**Słowa kluczowe:** Niemcy, współpraca wojskowa, Wspólna Polityka Bezpieczeństwa i Obrony (WPBiO), Unia Europejska, armia europejska

## Theoretical and methodological basis of the research

Germany's military cooperation with European partners is undertaken either within the European Union or outside its structures. On the one hand, cooperation within the European Union takes place primarily at two levels: intergovernmental and supranational. On the other hand, cooperation outside the EU is also focused on two levels: bilateral and multilateral. This multi-level stratification of military cooperation in Europe (two-tier within the EU and two-tier outside the EU) can also be referred to its conceptual approach, i.e. attempts to examine the direction of the evolution of German proposals regarding more or less institutionalised European military connections (Ruszkowski 2013).

The author hypothesises that German concepts of military cooperation have evolved in two ways: the first one was from the intergovernmental military cooperation to the supranational, and the second one – from the outside the institutional and legal system to the cooperation in the institutional and legal system of the EU.

The author also asks the following research questions: What does military cooperation look like as part of sectoral policies, can it bring defense benefits? How does the external environment influence the evolution of the concept of military cooperation? Why do Germany and France want closer military cooperation? Will the European army compete with NATO (North Atlantic Treaty Organization)? How will the development of the military component strengthen the EU's defense power?

First of all, the author's intention is to identify the direction of evolution using a multi-level approach, which will further emphasise the scope of the impact of these concepts and help organise them. The selection of the research sample was dependent on two criteria. The first one is chronological and it relates to the evolution of aforementioned concepts under Chancellorship of Angela Merkel, i.e. in the years 2005–2018. That is why the author does not discuss the concept of the *European Battle Groups* or the *European Rapid Reaction Force*, as they were created earlier, in the 1990s. The second criterion is related to the role played by the Federal Republic of Germany. The concepts that have been proposed only by Germany (in this case, this country is the sole author of the initiative) or by the other EU countries, but in cooperation with Germany (in this case Germany is a co-author of the initiative) will be analysed.

For the above mentioned reasons, the main approach in the research will be the *Multi-level Approach* (MLA), which consists of several varieties (e.g. *Multi-level Governance*, *Multi-level Membership*, *Multi-level Europeanisation*). The MLA concept was created from a critique of *intergovernmentalism*. The intergovernmentalism underlines the leading role of the nation-state in integration processes and argues that such a state is a major player in the European Union. The development of the intergovernmental approach is *liberal intergovernmentalism* (LI), which indicates the main role of states in the process of European integration (Moravscik 1993: p.480).

The intergovernmental approach does not fully reflect the dynamics of the integration process, especially after the Maastricht Treaty. Contemporary interactions within the EU take place simultaneously on and between many levels. Thus, the multi-level nature of the EU political system can be seen. At the beginning of the 1990s, in the framework of European studies were created the foundations of a multi-level approach, then in a variety of *Multi-level Governance* (MLG) (Marks 1993: p.391–410), which is a specialised analytical approach (Borkowski 2007: p.162–163; Ruszkowski 2013: p.7). Liesbet Hooghe and Gary Marks, considered the main initiators of multi-level governance, described it as dispersion of power at many levels of political order (Hooghe, Marks 2001: p. 28). At the same time, they prove that in the last fifty years power and sovereignty in Europe have gone from national governments not only to the supranational level of the EU, but also to the level of lower regional unions or local authorities.

According to Luiza Wojnicz, the process of the European integration has resulted in a political configuration characterised by the decentralised policy structure, in which several entities are involved in various fields, and the area of foreign policy, security and defense is no exception to this rule. The evolution of the *Common Foreign Policy* (CFP) and the *Common Security and Defense Policy* (CSDP) demonstrates the growing synergy between the national, international and supranational levels, within which a wide range of entities cooperate (Wojnicz 2013: p. 220).

Gary Marx defines multi-level governance as a system of permanent negotiations between governments at several territorial levels, which is the result of a wider institution-building process and reallocation of decision-making, consisting in shifting previously centralised functions "up" to a supranational level, and others "down" – to the regional level (Marks 1993: p.407). It can be assumed that MLG is a multi-level management system, in which there is a combination of supranational, intergovernmental, national and subnational institutions and a certain degree of centralisation and decentralisation. The author distinguished five groups of MLG typologies: MLG development concept, MLG trajectory, sectoral MLG, participatory MLG, systemic MLG (Żurek 2013: p. 92). It seems that the participatory MLG type will be particularly useful for considering the German concepts of European military cooperation in Europe.

## **German concepts of military cooperation within the EU**

In accordance with the adopted stratification of multi-level governance, the analysis of the evolution of the German concepts of military cooperation in Europe was based on

two levels: intergovernmental and supranational, with priority detailing the concepts that Germany was a co-author.

### Intergovernmental concepts

#### **a). The concept of the reinforced Common Security and Defense Policy**

On September 26–27, 2016, before the meeting of the EU defense ministers in Bratislava, the heads of these ministries from Germany and France – Ursula von der Leyen and Jean-Yves Le Drian – presented a document entitled “*Revitalizing CSDP. Towards a comprehensive, realistic and credible defence in the EU*” (germ.: *Erneuerung der GSVP. Hin zu einer umfassenden, realistischen und glaubwürdigen Verteidigung in der EU*). These proposals from Germany were based on the *White Paper 2016 on the security policy and the future of the Bundeswehr* (germ.: *Weißbuch 2016 – zur Sicherheitspolitik und zur Zukunft der Bundeswehr*). It emphasised that the integration of the armed forces in Europe takes place within the EU and NATO and is very advanced in many areas, decades of practice and cooperation in many EU–NATO joint operations contribute to this. Germany has made as its long-term goal the pursuit of a common European security and defense union, which it wanted to achieve through the consistent implementation of the European Council’s mandates for the gradual, concrete further development of the CSDP; making use of all the possibilities offered by the Lisbon Treaty, such as permanent structured cooperation; compact and diverse bilateral and multilateral defense and military policy.

According to the aforementioned *White Paper 2016* (germ.: *Weißbuch 2016*), three main areas of CSDP development should be worked out, such as: further development of its structures, integration of civil and military capabilities and strengthening of the European defense industry (*Weißbuch 2016*: p.73)

The German–French initiative presented proposals for strengthening the CSDP, as well as increasing the operational efficiency of the CSDP, developing joint military capabilities, especially by revitalising the concept of the EU Battle Groups, conducting research and development in the European defense sector and within European Defense Agency (EDA). The Ministers drew attention to the development of multilateral organisational cooperation and the establishment of a permanent EU military staff with the possibility of operational planning in the short and medium term (*Erneuerung der GSVP.. 2016*)

It is a co-author concept of Germany and France of an intergovernmental nature, located in the sphere of the EU sectoral policies.

#### **b). European Security Council concept**

In response to the new strategy of Federica Mogherini, which was entitled “*Shared vision, common action: A stronger Europe. A global strategy for the European Union’s foreign and security policy*”, as well as the outcome of the referendum in Great Britain, the French and German foreign ministers Frank-Walter Steinmeier and Jean-Marc Ayrault presented a proposal to strengthen the CSDP: “*A strong Europe in a world of uncertainties 2016*”. In a nine-page document, they supported activities aimed at implementing the new European strategy and announced that they would promote an integrated EU

foreign and security policy, combining all EU policy instruments. To implement these efforts, France and Germany propose that the European Council meet once a year as the European Security Council to address EU internal and external security and defense issues. This council should be prepared at the meeting of ministers of three ministries: foreign affairs, defense and home affairs (*A strong Europe...* 2016: p. 5). Ministers pointed out that the EU must take more action to manage crises that directly affect its security, and therefore the EU needs stronger and more flexible tools for crisis prevention and management. The EU should be able to plan and conduct more effective civilian and military operations, with the support of a permanent civilian-military command structure. It should rely on high preparedness forces and ensure joint financing of its operations. If necessary, EU Member States should consider establishing a permanent naval force or acquiring combat capabilities within the EU in the other key areas (*A strong Europe...* 2016: p. 4). The establishment of the European Security Council was supported by the German Chancellor Angela Merkel during her speech to the European Parliament in Strasbourg in November 2018. The new Council would have a rotating presidency that would help to improve the European defense and security policy (Dempsey 2018). Whether it would look as initially presented by the Foreign Ministers of France and Germany in 2016, it is not yet known. Chancellor Merkel in the interview with *Frankfurter Allgemeine Zeitung (FAZ)* said that "she can imagine the European Security Council, which consists of some EU countries" (*Europa muss...* 2018). That means, not all the countries will participate in its work, but only those that express such a desire. The number of the Council members will be changed. The benefit of the establishment of the European Security Council will be faster action, close cooperation with the High Representative for Foreign Affairs and European members of the UN Security Council (*Europa muss...* 2018). The German side is quite serious thinks about the new formula of the CSDP meetings. The new body, the European Security Council, would allow more effective security operations both at the EU forum and with other international organisations. The initiative to create the European Security Council is a co-author concept of Germany and France, it is intergovernmental and is located in the institutional sphere.

### **c). The concept of using the Bundeswehr in the EU military operations**

Germany was already a member of the international military structure – NATO at the time when the country began creating the EU defense policy, and, eventually, also the EU army. Moreover, the country's activity in the area of military cooperation is determined constitutionally. There is a restriction that does not allow the *Bundeswehr* to carry out operations outside Germany, except situations where the *Bundestag* has given its consent. Article 87a of the Basic Law concerns the armed forces that the state creates for defense and not for another purpose. Article 87a (2) states: "Armed forces may be used outside of defense only if the Basic Law expressly allows this" (*Ustawa zasadnicza...* 2007: p. 201).

However, with the adaptation of NATO, the European Union and the United Nations to the changing world at the turn of the 20th and 21st centuries, the tasks of the Member