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A political agreement reached for the FCAS demonstrator [EN DE](#)

On May 17th, the Minister of Defence from France, Germany and Spain announced the finalisation of an agreement on the NGWS/FCAS programme. This agreement contains a list of rights on the intellectual property and the financial contribution of each State.

This allows the funding of the Phase 1B of the development of an aircraft demonstrator for a €3.5 billion budget, until 2024. The financial contribution will be shared equally between the three parties. It is also stated that the demonstrator would realise its first flight in 2027 after the development of phase 2. This will happen one year off delay, since the original schedule had planned the first flight in 2026.

The NGWS/FCAS (or Next Generation Weapon System / Future Combat Aircraft System) aims to develop a new interconnected aerial system, with multiple effectors, and with at its centre the Next Generation Fighter NGF. The demonstrator step is essential for a project of this scale and ambition, in order to experiment and prove new concepts and technologies.

However, the recent industrial discussions highlighted some difficulties between the two main partners, mainly on the governance and on the intellectual property issues. Airbus asked for an extended access to some work packages and Dassault Aviation, the aircraft technical leader, refused, to protect its own experience, skills and leadership. The governmental level through the French DGA, the German BMVg and the Spanish DGAM managed however to reach this “balanced” agreement that now needs to follow the national administrative course for a final validation

Industries: Programme financing in Germany, P-3C Orion replacement [DE DE DE FR](#)

The German Ministry of Defence could submit unfinanced programmes to the Bundestag

In Germany, all the defence programmes worth more than €25 million have to be approved by the finance committee of the Bundestag. This is the case of many planned programmes, including those developed in cooperation.

However, recent documents seems to suggest that the German Ministry of Defence will submit to the Committee agenda programmes whose financing is not guaranteed. The foreseen list indicates clearly that if the financing is not guaranteed, the mention “Federal Budget” is written instead of a precise budget source. This comes from the strong decrease in budget funds decided in the post-2022 planification.

These comments apply, among other national programmes, to the FCAS, the MGCS, the 212CD Submarine Class project with Norway, and the purchase of Boeing P8 Poseidon to replace their P-3C Orion. Despite the political will for those joint developments, this could prevent the Bundestag from giving its approval without more guarantees.

Germany could refuse France's offer to replace their P3C Orion

As their Boeing P-3C Orion are aging and less able to perform their operational duties, and as the MAWS programme with France to develop its successor is not due until 2030, Germany is looking for a replacement to their Maritime Patrol Aircrafts (MPA). The recent talks on the acquisition of brand new Boeing P8 Poseidon has raised worries on the French side for the future of the MAWS programme and led France to suggest the acquisition of its current MPA Atlantique 2 to the latest version.

However, Thomas Silberhorn, a member of the German Bundestag and Parliamentary State Secretary for the Federal Ministry of Defence, gave answers in a public question that showed signs of a refusal. He pointed out three main drawbacks:

- the aircrafts, not initially included in the latest modernisation, are to buy or to rent and not for loan
- the aircrafts had been in service since 1984 and that he had no details on their structural state,
- four units will not be enough for operational duties and personnel training

Germany also rejected the other European MPA, the Airbus C295, their capabilities being inferior to the P-3C Orion.

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The vision of the Portuguese Minister of Defence on EU military challenges [EN](#)

João Gomes Cravinho details how EU military means could contribute to its geopolitical ambitions

In a recent interview to Euractiv, the Portuguese Minister of Defence, coordinating under the Portuguese Presidency of the EU Council the discussions on defence, underlined the importance to “have a military dimension” and “develop new instruments” for the EU to be geopolitically relevant. To that purpose, the EU “should be looking closer at Article 44 of the EU Treaty, which has been a little neglected”. This article allows the EU to entrust its missions to a group of Member States.

He however recognised that the EU’s “political ambitions are greater than our capacity to put boots on the ground, a problem that needs to be addressed”. The resources needed for the missions should be clearly identified prior to its launch, and the lessons-learned of the 1500 men EU Battlegroups, never used, be exploited to avoid the same fate to future forces.

On the Strategic Compass, due to be approved under French Presidency in early 2022, he stated that “We need to create a document that everybody feels a little bit uncomfortable about in one sense because that is what is going to take us forward.” He hopes it will allow “to capture this new sense of urgency and of commitment to a geopolitical Europe”.

European Union military cooperation and external operations [EN](#) [EN](#) [DE](#)

ATALANTA – First EU-Japan-Djibouti joint exercise

The EU conducted a joint exercise in the frame of the Operation Atalanta with Japan and Djibouti on May 10th. Based on a anti-piracy scenario, a Italian frigate, an German maritime patrol aircraft, a Japanese destroyer and Djibouti Navy and Coast Guard patrol boats. The exercise included cross-deck helicopter landings, tactical evolutions at sea and a night-time joint patrol.

It fell within the new Indo-Pacific strategy of the EU, published last month, welcomed by some EU partners intervening in the region. This strategy aims to reinforce the Union’s strategic focus, presence and action in the region through enhanced cooperation, to tackle its intense geopolitical competition and economic stakes.

Poland and Germany sign a mutual air policing agreement for protection of their airspace

After placing the operational control of their submarine under a joint authority in 2016, Germany and Poland signed a technical agreement to allow their forces to operate in the other’s airspace for air policing missions. It falls within in the framework of the NATO Integrated Air and Missile Defense System NATINAMDS. Belgium and the Netherlands also concluded a similar agreement in 2016.

International relations : Israel/Palestine escalation, Foreign Affairs Council [EN](#) [EN](#)

EU Diplomacy reacts to the escalation between Israel and Palestine

The High Representative for Foreign Affairs Josep Borrell issued a statement on the recent escalation in violence between Israel and Palestine. He stated that it “must stop” and deplored the civilian casualties. He however described “the indiscriminate launching of rockets from Hamas and other groups towards Israeli civilians” as “unacceptable”. “While recognising Israel’s legitimate need to protect its civilian population, this response needs to be proportionate and with maximum restraint in the use of force.”

An urgent Foreign Affairs Council is planned for Tuesday May 18th to discuss this matter.

Foreign Affairs Council, May 10th: EU-Russia diplomatic escalation, sanctions on Belarus

In his statement following the Foreign Affairs Council from May 10th, Josep Borrell quickly came back on the recent escalation in diplomatic relations between the EU and Russia, saying that the “pattern of negative actions continues”.

He also pointed out that Belarus “continues its repression” and that therefore the EU is “working on the next sanctions package”. The Belarus regime started to put pressure on its Polish community.