



Federal Ministry
of Defence

GERMANY'S PRESIDENCY OF THE COUNCIL OF THE EUROPEAN UNION – A REVIEW FROM AN FMOD PERSPECTIVE





Foto: Bundeswehr/Tom Twardy

| | |
|---|----|
| I. Introduction | 5 |
| II. Key Objectives | 8 |
| Strategic Compass | 8 |
| European Medical Cooperation 2.0 | 10 |
| EU-NATO Cooperation | 12 |
| III. Other Objectives | 13 |
| Military Planning and Conduct Capability (MPCC) | 13 |
| Digital and Cyber Competencies | 15 |
| Strategic Capability Planning | 17 |
| Improved Coordination on Legal Matters | 17 |
| IV. Ongoing Processes | 18 |
| PESCO: Third-State Participation, Strategic Review, Projects | 18 |
| European Peace Facility (EPF) | 20 |
| European Defence Fund | 20 |
| Coordinated Annual Review on Defence (CARD) | 21 |
| V. Events | 22 |
| Informal Meeting | 22 |
| Dialogues with Experts and Think Tanks | 23 |
| Editorial Information | 25 |

I. INTRODUCTION

What opportunities and what challenges does the Presidency of the Council of the European Union present? What can be achieved in just six months? In the following, these and other questions will be answered from the perspective of the Federal Ministry of Defence.

On 1 July 2020, Germany assumed the Presidency of the Council of the European Union. It had become clear in the run-up to this date that other EU Member States had high hopes for Germany's Presidency. The Federal Government and the Federal Ministry of Defence (FMoD) had been working towards this event for a long time. Priorities had been identified, initial programmes drafted, and individual events planned. Germany intended to make the most of the opportunities presented by the EU Council Presidency in order to make a significant contribution to the Common Security and Defence Policy of the European Union (CSDP).

The COVID-19 pandemic added to the challenges faced by Germany and, if nothing else, raised expectations even further. The programmes for the EU Council Presidency that were finally published in June 2020 were markedly different from the first drafts.

The year 2020 was completely dominated by the global pandemic and its health effects, social impact, and economic consequences. The Federal Government and the Federal Ministry of Defence reacted to these challenges by prioritising crisis response, since the pandemic was affecting the already volatile global security situation. Against this background, it was crucial to continue to dynamically advance developments in important areas of security and defence policy, especially in these times of crisis.

The ambition to create a responsible and strong Europe on the global stage was the basis on which Germany's EU Council Presidency formulated its goals in the area of security and defence. The focus was on increasing the resilience of the European Union and strengthening its ability to act. For it is the EU's responsiveness and its ability to act that will determine whether it can live up to its role as an international anchor of stability and a global player in international crisis management.

Naturally, the pandemic affected not only the topics, but also the organisation of the Council Presidency. A professional broadcasting studio was installed at the Federal Ministry of Defence, which became our main communication platform and enabled us to conduct the numerous virtual events that compensated for the physical meetings which had to be cancelled.

In the following, we will look back on major events of Germany's EU Council Presidency. A Council Presidency that did not go as planned, owing to the pandemic, but which did make significant contributions in the area of the Common Security and Defence Policy of the European Union.

With the completion of the first common threat analysis, an important milestone was achieved within the Strategic Compass process during the German Presidency of the Council of the EU. Other major successes were the agreements on the third-state participation in PESCO projects and the finalisation of the European Peace Facility, which signify great advancements for the EU in the area of security and defence. In addition, considerable progress was made both in terms of the key objectives of the Federal Ministry of Defence and regarding the ongoing processes of the EU.

Concrete contributions were for instance made at various levels to further increase the European Union's resilience and ability to act. This can only be done in cooperation with partners. We will therefore continue to collaborate closely with the European External Action Service and the EU Member States, specifically with our Trio partners Portugal and Slovenia in 2021.



Foto: Bundeswehr/Andrea Bienert

II. KEY OBJECTIVES

Strategic Compass

If Europe is to act globally and assume global responsibility, it needs clear goals. It is important that we are able to respond and make decisions quickly in the event of a crisis. The EU must define which capabilities it needs to pursue its interests as a player in international crisis management, and which it does not.

During Germany's EU Council Presidency, the FMoD actively worked towards developing the Strategic Compass, launching and successfully completing the first milestone, the first ever common threat analysis of the European Union. It provides a 360-degree view of the world, analysing all threats and challenges the EU faces today and will have to tackle in the coming years. Together we managed to compile a comprehensive intelligence document that extensively describes the political, economic, and military as well as the complex hybrid risks and threats to the European Union.

The lessons learned will form the basis of the political dialogue between EU Member States in 2021. The aims and interests to be pursued within the European Union given the threats identified will be a matter of discussion here. In this upcoming dialogue phase, four main topics will be considered: crisis management, resilience, capabilities, and partnerships. The Strategic Compass provides clarity for both the EU and its partners. It will thus contribute to increasing the EU's ability to act and enhance its overall credibility.



The Strategic Compass gives a common strategic direction to the CSDP. The completion of the first ever threat analysis at EU level is a great success.



Foto: Bundeswehr/Lisa Butz

European Medical Cooperation 2.0

Images from the beginning of the pandemic are still vivid in everyone's minds: Individual EU Member States were attempting to manage the crisis and procure urgently needed protective medical equipment for themselves. As national crisis management progressed, it emerged very clearly that individual Member States were stronger when acting in concert and in solidarity. In order to enable the EU to react to existing crises better and more rapidly, thus further enhancing its ability to act, the FMoD has worked towards expanding cooperation between the military medical services of European armed forces during Germany's EU Council Presidency, initiating two projects subsumed under the term European Medical Cooperation 2.0.



Foto: Bundeswehr/Lisa Buitz

A total of 15 nations participated in the virtual tabletop pandemic exercise Resilient Response 2020.

One project was the development of an improved storage concept for medical materiel specifically during pandemics. The result is impressive and used not only by the EU, but also by NATO. The other project was tabletop exercise Resilient Response 2020, conducted to draw lessons from the COVID-19 pandemic.

” The initiative makes a significant contribution towards fighting the pandemic and is living proof of European solidarity.

In the short term, this helped fight the current pandemic as well as successfully contribute to long-term pandemic preparedness. This way, the European Union will be better equipped to handle future crises, enabling it to act in concert and in solidarity right from the start. Both projects were implemented at the European Medical Command / Multinational Medical Coordination Centre. This is an example of the interconnection of a PESCO project with a project of NATO's Framework Nations Concept. European Medical Cooperation 2.0 thus makes a sustainable contribution to deeper cooperation between the EU and NATO as well.

EU-NATO Cooperation

Deepening EU-NATO cooperation was a key objective of Germany's EU Council Presidency for the FMoD. Both organisations are indispensable elements of European security architecture. Only if they collaborate, can they ensure that their citizens are protected. The focus is on close cooperation in core areas such as military mobility. This is intended to facilitate the deployment of personnel and military materiel. Another aim is to improve responsiveness to crises and conflicts through joint exercises. Cyber defence and resilience building are further areas in which existing cooperation is to be intensified.



EU-NATO cooperation is crucial for us. Both organisations are indispensable elements of European security architecture.

Remarkable progress was made through the agreement on third-state participation in PESCO projects. It enables NATO Allies to participate in important cooperation projects of EU Member States in order to close existing capability gaps. Additionally, an expert workshop was conducted which produced practical options for further deepening cooperation, especially at the project and working levels.

The project European Medical Cooperation 2.0 provides a special opportunity for joint efforts. Also, concrete and practical results are continuously produced for both organisations in a number of PESCO projects. Even greater harmonisation could generate even more progress in EU-NATO cooperation. We should maintain our ambitions beyond Germany's EU Council Presidency.

III. OTHER OBJECTIVES

Military Planning and Conduct Capability (MPCC)

The EU must be capable of effective and responsive action on military deployments. To achieve this, it is essential that the command structures of the EU are developed to suit existing as well as future CSDP missions and operations. One of the objectives pursued by the FMoD as part of the German EU Council Presidency was therefore to adapt the Military Planning and Conduct Capability (MPCC) in terms of structure and personnel. It has existed since 2017 and is nearing certification.



Further development of EU command structures is essential to CSDP operations and missions.

The Military Planning and Conduct Capability is located in Brussels and enables the command of CSDP missions and operations in line with the integrated approach, simplifying formerly complex planning and command processes. It also provides a rapid and permanent crisis response capability. What is more, it is integrated in the Brussels structures in a way that ensures a permanent exchange with civilian planning and command elements as well.

Owing to the current pandemic, the certification of the MPCC had to be postponed to 2021. What is important now is that EU Member States send the necessary personnel to Brussels quickly and join efforts to enable the MPCC to fulfil the tasks it has been designed to do.

Digital and Cyber Competencies

EU Member States increasingly face new challenges and threats from the cyber and information domain. The FMoD therefore set out to further strengthen the digital skills and cyber defence capabilities of the armed forces of EU Member States during Germany's EU Council Presidency. One of the aims was to protect ourselves against attacks by creating comprehensive resilience. Another was to make better use of the opportunities presented by new technologies.



Foto: Bundeswehr/Andrea Bienert

” In order to meet the challenges in the cyber and information domain, we strengthen the European armed forces' capabilities in this domain.

The PESCO project Cyber Information Domain Coordination Centre (CIDCC) is working on further improvement of mutual exchange in this area. The Centre serves as a point of coordination that synchronises situation pictures from cyber and information space for CSDP operations

and missions. During Germany's EU Council Presidency, the multinational concept was signed, by which this PESCO project achieved what is referred to as Initial Operational Capability.



Foto: Bundeswehr/UniBw M/Ch.Siebold

The 2020 annual conference of the Cyber Operations Defence (CODE) research centre was entitled "European Digital Sovereignty – Road to Success?"

Moreover, the FMoD organised two conferences on the subjects of digitalisation in the armed forces and digital sovereignty. With the conduct of the Defence CIO Council, a meeting of the Cyber Directors from all EU Member States, an institutionalised dialogue was established. It will enable us to address and overcome future challenges in the cyber and information domain together, at the European level.

Strategic Capability Planning

Developing necessary military capabilities of EU Member States is essential for strengthening the ability to act in the area of security and defence. The FMoD therefore aims to increase strategic coordination of the required processes in order to ensure their coherent development. If the EU Member States join forces, processes can be developed in a more targeted and efficient way in order to close existing capability gaps as quickly as possible.

At a workshop conducted on this topic during Germany's EU Council Presidency, all participants agreed that a more coherent approach was necessary. Further work on the topic will be carried out in the context of compiling the Strategic Compass, in the respective Capabilities basket.

Improved Coordination on Legal Matters

A network of legal experts at the defence ministries of the EU Member States was established as part of the German EU Council Presidency. It aims to support efficient solutions to issues of European law in the area of defence as well as the implementation of political decisions.

An informal meeting of the Legal Directors of the Member States' defence ministries was the first event organised by the network. This network is to become a permanent forum for exchange beyond the German EU Council Presidency.

IV. ONGOING PROCESSES

PESCO: Third-State Participation, Strategic Review, Projects

The Permanent Structured Cooperation (PESCO) is one of the key EU defence initiatives. This is why it was important for Germany's EU Council Presidency to further develop ongoing PESCO processes. The greatest success in this regard is the agreement on third-state participation in PESCO projects. It is a major milestone as it shows that EU Member States intend to further increase cooperation among each other to bolster their capabilities, yet remain open for cooperation with partners, in particular with NATO Allies.

” PESCO exemplifies the increasingly close cooperation among EU Member States in security and defence. We have reached important milestones.

Negotiations had been ongoing since 2018, but agreement on the details had not been reached. In early November 2020, after extensive exploratory talks by the German Council Presidency, a potential decision was back on the table. We were able to identify some common ground between the Member States. The compromise presented by Germany finally led to a breakthrough. Now third states, i.e. non-EU Member States, can participate in PESCO projects. This is a landmark decision for cooperation between the EU and NATO and an important signal to partners and Allies.

Moreover, the PESCO Strategic Review (PSR) was concluded during the German EU Council Presidency. After the first project cycle (2018-2020), the Member States and the High Representative developed options for improved and more sustainable cooperation. The next phase of PESCO aims to generate even greater operational benefit in the short term and thus continue to strengthen the EU's ability to act. The adoption of the final document concluded the review process at the end of 2020, setting the course for the 2021-2025 PESCO project cycle.

Ongoing PESCO projects, including those where Germany acts as project coordinator, are already generating clear added value. For example, the project Network of Logistic Hubs reached its initial operational capability in November and has created a network of military logistic centres throughout Europe.



Foto: Bundeswehr/Anne Weinrich

European Peace Facility (EPF)

The European Peace Facility is an off-budget funding instrument that closes a substantial gap in the large spectrum of civilian and military CSDP tools. It pools the Member States' financial contributions to CSDP missions and engagements in areas of crisis. Most significantly, however, the EPF allows comprehensive capacity building in partner countries.

In addition to training measures in the areas of operation, it will now be possible to provide our partners with military equipment. This is an important new tool for EU crisis management, as it will make CSDP missions and operations much more sustainable and thus increase the credibility of the EU as a whole.

During the German Council Presidency, critical steps forward were made in the negotiations on the establishment of the EPF. After two and a half years of negotiations, political agreement on the specifics of the EPF has been reached, thanks to many bilateral and multilateral coordination processes and on the basis of a compromise proposed by Germany. Now, the EPF has to be implemented and operationalised. The FMoD will remain closely involved in this process.

European Defence Fund

The European Defence Fund (EDF) is a major catalyst for increased defence cooperation between the EU Member States. This important EU defence initiative supports industry and research, and focuses on strategic investments by the EU Member States. It is funded through the EU's Multiannual Financial Framework (MFF). It is the first time

that the MFF includes funds for the area of defence. These funds are intended for both the EDF and for Military Mobility.

During the German Council Presidency, the draft regulation on the EDF was prepared and agreed. We reached consensus among the EU Member States and successfully concluded the trilogue procedure on the EDF. This, too, brought years of negotiations to a close. Now, the proposed regulation just needs to be adopted by the European Parliament and the Council.

Coordinated Annual Review on Defence (CARD)

The objective of the Coordinated Annual Review on Defence (CARD) is to provide an overview of the development of the European capability landscape and to further improve European cooperation in military capability development. CARD is coherent with PESCO and the EDF, the other EU defence initiatives, and NATO Planning Processes. A first CARD trial run in 2017/2018 showed that there was room for improvement concerning cooperation on capability development among the member states.

The first full CARD cycle was completed during the German EU Council Presidency and a final report was submitted. This report identified further potential for more efficient and cost-effective capability development should European cooperation be intensified.

V. EVENTS

Informal Meeting

The Informal Meeting of EU Defence Ministers in Berlin on 26 August 2020 was the main event organised by the Federal Ministry of Defence in the context of Germany's EU Council Presidency. It was the first in-person meeting of EU defence ministers since the start of COVID-19-related restrictions in spring 2020. Josep Borrell, the High Representative of the Union for Foreign Affairs and Security Policy, chaired the meeting. Federal Minister Annegret Kramp-Karrenbauer also welcomed NATO Secretary General Jens Stoltenberg and United Nations Under-Secretary-General for Peace Operations Jean-Pierre Lacroix to Berlin.

In several sessions, participants discussed the development of the CSDP. The meeting has once again shown that a direct, in-person exchange is invaluable. In addition to the official sessions, there are many conversations in the margins of a ministerial meeting. This accounts for the unique atmosphere at such meetings and facilitates compromise. The milestones achieved in the second semester, such as the threat analysis or PESCO third-state participation, underline the importance of this successful informal meeting of defence ministers.



The Informal Meeting of EU Defence Ministers in Berlin was a great success. Personal exchange is invaluable.

Dialogue with Experts and Think Tanks

Negotiations with EU Member States and cooperation among the EU bodies in Brussels are the core elements of our work. However, policy also has to be communicated and discussed to be filled with life. Significant input can be collected when a wide audience is involved and enabled to participate.

Under pandemic conditions, the usual work processes of a Council Presidency are severely restricted, so that many events had to be held digitally. To this end, the FMoD had set up its own professional studio for the EU Council Presidency early on. Over the past six months, this studio was used as an online communication platform and as a virtual gateway to the world. Many workshops, both large and small, with representatives from EU institutions and Member States were held here.

Everyone used the studio: the Minister, the State Secretaries, the Directors-General, and the working level. There was an open exchange of ideas and opinions, which proved fruitful as it generated new and impactful insights for the future of security and defence in the EU.

Moreover, there was a vivid dialogue on the priorities of the German EU Council Presidency with a number of security and defence experts from universities, think tanks, and foundations. The opening event, for example, was particularly memorable: Selected experts from prestigious think tanks had the opportunity to engage in a direct conversation with the Federal Minister. There was also a series of workshops co-hosted with the German Council on Foreign Relations (DGAP) on the priorities of the Council Presidency. A first brainstorming in this context culminated in a report that offers valuable ideas and suggestions for developing the Strategic Compass.

This is an excellent example of how an open dialogue between policy-makers and academia creates very tangible results. Further workshops with national and European think tanks on the goals of the FMoD and the ongoing processes at the European level will be held in 2021, after the German Presidency of the Council of the EU.

EDITORIAL DETAILS

PUBLISHED BY

Federal Ministry of Defence
Press and Information Office
Stauffenbergstraße 18
10785 Berlin

Last updated

December 2020

Design and layout

Bundeswehr Editorial Service/
Catharina Deflou

For further information, please visit

www.bmvg.de

This is a public relations document of the Federal Ministry of Defence.
It is issued free of charge and is not intended for sale.

