Strategic Power Europe: A Contradiction in Terms?

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Abstract

The increasing number and severity of security crises around the European periphery have called into question the preparedness and capability of European states. Civil wars, mass migration, unstable institutions, and direct kinetic conflict are features of a degrading security order in which European states must provide a strategic response. One such response has seen the European Union (EU) become increasingly involved in security issues, namely the defence industry. Programs such as the Permanent Structured Cooperation (PESCO) are now enabling Member States to organize civil-military responses to crises and coordinate the defence-planning cycles of 25 European countries through the EU. This article examines why Member States have begun to use the EU to develop military capabilities and assets at scale. Furthermore, it investigates the role of differentiation in enabling these developments and how both individual geopolitical and economic factors contribute to this collective institutional development.

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Introduction

In 2022, the European security order faces multiple crises of collective defence far more dangerous and potentially escalatory than those seen during the Cold War. Around Europe lies a neighbourhood marked by open conventional warfare, political instability, and rising extremism. In response to these crises of security, efforts have been undertaken to increase the political coherence and military capability of European states under the European Union (EU) through its Common Security and Defence Policy (CSDP). 2017 was a milestone year that saw the establishment of a legally binding Permanent Structured Cooperation (PESCO) – a culmination of efforts to reimagine the EU as a security actor in international affairs, enabled to influence the direction of the European military procurement process while being given crisis response mechanisms. PESCO's goal, as defined by Article 42 of the Lisbon Treaty, is to "take concrete measures to enhance the availability, interoperability, flexibility and deployability" of EU national forces (Council of the EU 2017). This article explores why, in the current context, Member States have opted to use the EU to enable their capabilities and manage ongoing security crises when such efforts have not made such headway in the past. Furthermore, it explores whether this transformation signifies that the EU is developing into a 'strategic power,' an actor able to rationalize its security environment and act upon it in the context of intergovernmental differentiation. Can this form of intergovernmentalism shape the EU into a strategic power or is this a contradiction in terms?

The Implication of Differentiation in Understanding Member State Responses to EU Defence Policy

Early theories on the development of the EU assumed that integration would not include aspects of defence, otherwise known as 'high politics' (Verdun 2018). Nevertheless, over time, a series of steps were taken towards a more integrated security policy, from the Petersberg Declaration calling for integration to develop joint European peacekeeping capabilities to the St. Malo Declaration's call for autonomous action backed by credible military forces. These early achievements culminated in 1999 with the European Security and Defence Policy (ESDP), renamed the Common Security and Defence Policy (CSDP) under the Lisbon Treaty in 2009.

While the EU has attained degrees of 'actorness' in some areas of international relations, most notably trade, the development of the EU as a security actor remains Member-State driven, resulting in a general lack of coordination and ability to collectively manage security crises. Cottey notes that it is important to understand the EU as an 'astrategic actor,' defining 'astrategic' as the lack of "(1) clear assessment of the external environment, (2) the identification of priorities and pivot points where an actor may hope to have a decisive impact and (3) the development of the ways and means to implement the strategy" (2019, 280). Initiatives lack agreed on priorities to unify the security agenda; large multinational initiatives are based on consensus between states that have differing conceptions of their strategic priorities relative to one another (2019). The development of the Permanent Structured Cooperation (PESCO) has exemplified, in part, this reality, being comprised of 60 projects including Training, Facilities; Land, Formations, Systems; Maritime; Air, Systems, Cyber, C4ISR, Enabling, Joint, and Space. What is key is that in each project, Member State involvement remains differentiated, with individual countries involved in several PESCO projects. This differentiation thereby allows for diverse experiences and approaches to facilitate integration, forgoing the idea of a Europe moving at a single pace (Howorth 2019a). In the presence of

differentiation, multiple variables will impact each Member State's decision-making, a reflection of the diversity that is permissible in security affairs within the EU.

Two features of recent security-relevant developments in the EU relate heavily to the interests of the Member States: an accommodation of strategic preferences through differentiation and its nexus with military-economic interests. Schimmelfennig writes that differentiation is a remedy to the political stagnation seen in EU-level policies: "It mitigates the stark choice between uniform and no integration. It allows governments to cooperate at a level of integration that is closer to their respective preferences than either uniform or no integration" (2019, 180). This follows a liberal-intergovernmentalist logic in which state preferences are made more certain when domestic actors are strong enough to shape policies. The assumption is that integration is not driven by concerns about sovereignty but by social welfare concerns (2019). Hoeffler offers a perspective that goes beyond this, explaining that the presence of differentiation itself does not explain why policy-making will take place; it is the construction of that interdependence being seen at the European level that matters (2019).

Theories of EU integration can then be understood in terms of how they layer upon one another to describe emergent structures between Member States. Fundamentally, liberal intergovernmentalism (LI) is such a theory, layering the three principles of national preference formation through the competition of societal actors, the efficiency and outcomes of interstate bargains by way of asymmetrical interdependence (the uneven distribution of gains), and institutions that help to implement, elaborate, enforce, and extend contracts between states (Moravcsik 2018). It can be argued that LI is a collection of theories rather than one, referred to by Moravcsik as "theoretical elements" that aim to explain not just why integration occurred but how and why it continues (2018). Explanations of integration focusing on preference formation have certainly created a better understanding of EU defence integrations, such as the structure of armaments organizations in pursuing preferences (DeVore 2014), the increasing marketization of the European military-industrial complex (Britz 2010), and defence conglomerates' growing influence on political processes (Kluth 2017). LI, therefore, allows for a systematic appraisal of the domestic factors that contribute to the formation of Member State preferences regarding EU defence cooperation, including the role of economic actors that permeate defence areas. It must be questioned, however, whether preference formation under an LI framework really remains state-based, given the presence of pan-European defence actors. Structural realities created by the presence of both a single market and an integrated political space indeed influence policy formation in all European capitals; it is a question of which structural realities matter to those states.

While this study relies on the assumptions of LI in analyzing national preferences and domestic dynamics in the formation of PESCO, concepts from other theoretical frameworks are also useful in understanding institutional change with regard to European strategic autonomy. Examining interdependence requires an appreciation of non-economic policy domains (Hoeffler 2019), namely the security interests of states. Realism stresses the global structural realities of security in a world without any supranational authority to manage relations between states. Individual EU Member States react differently to these structural factors, which affects their ranking of security priorities such as the degree of concern about unilateral American actions (Posen 2004; Walt 2009), the unreliability of American hegemony in defending Europe's security concerns (Hyde-Price 2006), the priority of efforts to constrain the German power (Jones 2003), or assessments of the threat from Russia. As will be discussed in the concluding

section of this article, the neo-functionalist concept of spillover may also be helpful in understanding the dynamics within the EU once initiatives like PESCO take hold. Following Manners and Rosamond (2018), this analysis recognizes that dialogue and interdisciplinarity yield richer discussions on research strategies, helping to create multiple unique accounts of the EU (2018).

This article begins with an overview of the developments that have occurred within the CSDP in recent years, outlining the security, economic, and institutional dynamics that have helped shape the process. It then focuses on the drivers of EU policy – the Member States themselves. This section will utilize the framework proposed by Svendsen, outlining that in studying differentiated policies such as PESCO it is helpful to use practices of actors as identifications of intent and policy preference (2019). Practices are defined as "socially competent performances" that "situate knowledge in what people do or say" (Svendsen 2019, 996). In doing so, this analysis will examine state actors based on three characteristics: (1) their security and threat conception; (2) their economic restructuring and military-industrial framework; and (3) their participation in PESCO[2] as an indicator of how and why these states are using these new institutional mechanisms to respond to the previous two previous variables. Three states were selected based on their relative positions in European defence: France, being the strongest supporter of an autonomous EU capability and heavily involved in the EU's Southern neighbourhood; Germany, being the cautious mediator in managing European political affairs and holding concerns for EU's security; and Poland, as an adamant supporter of NATO and a traditional skeptic of these initiatives (Franke and Varma 2019). Semi-structured interviews with Member State officials were utilized to better understand the perspectives of these states. National documentation and current involvement in defence initiatives were also examined. Furthermore, this analysis used existing literature on these nations' respective arms industries to situate economic rationales, supplied in part by the Stockholm International Peace Research Institute, national think tank publications, and Transparency International documentation.

Strategic Preferences and Domestic Interests: Forces Realizing the EU as a Security Actor

Although earlier institutional mechanisms were created at the EU level to facilitate security cooperation between European states, notably the creation of the Military Committee of the European Union (EUMC) and EU Military Staff (EUMS) in 2003, many of these mechanisms remained unable to fully manage Europe's increasingly insecure neighbourhood. EU external missions under the early CSDP (then ESDP) were limited in both scope and size, with 14 missions launched within the first three years between 2003 and 2005 and an additional 12 missions from 2006-2008. These missions were not based on any form of EU command structure but were managed through NATO or a national command, never having their own operational headquarters (Howorth 2019). According to Biscop, nations had in part "lost the habit and the expertise to analyze the world around them in geopolitical terms" (2015, 170), with few external conflicts directly threatening the security of the EU.

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[2] Data on PESCO involvement is of the author's own formulation based on data taken from the PESCO website, https://pesco.europa.eu/. accessed on January 5, 2021. See Appendix I.

Notwithstanding the Neighbourhood Policy (2004) and later regional institutional attempts[3] to build a 'ring of friends' through diplomacy, by mid-2014, the peripheral situation became what former Swedish PM Bildt called "a ring of fire" (Taylor 2015). In the South, the Arab Spring dramatically shifted the political climate of the Greater Middle East. Notably, the collapse of Libya after a successful NATO air campaign saw European states limited in their ability to deploy ground forces due to equipment shortages (Hallams and Schreer 2012), only approving the symbolic EUFOR Libya operation, which was never activated (Fabbrini 2014). This further destabilized North Africa and the Sahel, with unguarded weapons caches in Libya giving armed groups the equipment necessary to expand in the region. The instability included the near collapse of Mali on multiple occasions due to successive coups and helped to make the Sahel a haven for violent extremist groups and routes for human trafficking to Europe, with 50,000 fatalities occurring between 2014-2019 due to these conflicts (Kuperman 2013). To the East, European states met with an increasingly worrying hybrid threat from Russia when it invaded Georgia in 2008 and Ukraine in 2014 after both endorsed a foreign policy directed toward Europe. Notably, Russia further began to conduct an increasingly hostile cyber warfare campaign that involved at least 27 European states as well as the US and Canada as early as 2004 (Limnell 2018). The European Parliament has identified "evidence of organised social media manipulation in 70 countries, compared to 48 countries in 2018, and 28 countries in 2017" by foreign actors such as Russia (EPRS 2020), which has targeted Western democratic systems in a series of information warfare campaigns. Aside from its 'hybrid war' on European nations, Russia's invasion of Ukraine in 2022 reintroduced the threat of direct kinetic conflict to the European continent. This event has called into question notions of a strategic status quo with Moscow and has added to the urgency of a needed collective response, which includes the lend-lease of military assets.

The security challenges faced by Europeans can be described as divided in strategic directions between the South and the East. Haroche has called these asymmetric crises, which unevenly affect European states and thereby generate less interdependence as different responses are required (2017, 228). Southern challenges mainly deal with hybrid threats from non-state actors, being enabled by conditions of instability in the parent country. Maintaining stability in these regions means shielding Europe from state failure, terrorism, piracy, organized crime, or uncontrolled migration flows (Simon and Pertusot 2017). Analysis by the European Parliamentary Research Service suggests that the Southern neighbourhood is "prone to an explosive domino effect that could still undermine the EU's security and internal political order with irregular migratory flows and humanitarian emergencies" (EPRS 2021). This correlates with concerns raised within Member States, specifically France, pointing to the multiple crises that result from state failure, especially in Northern Africa and the Middle East. Fears in this domain are only increasing due to contributing factors such as climate change, the proliferation of weaponry, and demographic trends in the Southern neighbourhood (Jolly and Olivier 2018). Crisis management tools are therefore sought after by states worried about the state of affairs in this region; as one EU official commented, most EU states cannot perform the military component of a comprehensive approach efficiently. "Contrary to NATO, the EU can actually do independently an integrated approach. So they have the full range of tools necessary to do a comprehensive approach from diplomacy, trade, humanitarian, sport, development,

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[3] For example, the Eastern Partnership and the Union for the Mediterranean.

cooperation, mediation, whatever you want" (Interview A with EU Security Official, Online, 2020). This makes increasing the intervention component of the CSDP enticing at a strategic level, especially given the reality that NATO's expeditionary era came to an end. By the time of the Wales (2014) and Warsaw (2016) summits, NATO began to effectively abandon any idea of establishing new expeditionary forces and focused on creating a tripwire in Eastern Europe and establishing the Very High Readiness Joint Task Force to present a deterrent to direct Russian aggression against Central and Eastern European countries, taking valuable EU forces away from CSDP missions elsewhere (Howorth 2018; Zima 2018). NATO functions differently from the EU; as it is the key defensive institution against classical threats, it is not an organization built to manage hybrid or systemic threats from non-state actors. It is also dominated by American industry, which to some Member States, especially France, represents a strategic issue rectified by the encouragement of a European military industrial capacity (Interview D with EU Security Official, Online, 2020).

States focused on the Eastern neighbourhood equally face hybrid threats but from a centralized authoritarian state in the form of Russia. Since Vladimir Putin's 2007 Munich speech, which openly expressed disapproval of NATO expansion,[4] Russia has made increasingly hostile moves to 'contain' perceived American expansionism, culminating in its invasion of Ukraine in 2022. Even before Russia's attempt to eliminate Ukrainian statehood in 2022, Central-Eastern EU Member States, such as the Baltic States, Poland, Slovakia, and the Czech Republic, feared an increasingly hostile posture from the Kremlin. This has created the preference for NATO to lead the way in managing collective security, being an organization with a primary purpose of defending against conventional threats. For these states, the role of the EU is then to build capabilities. Zima has suggested a strategic coherence between the new NATO configuration and EU initiatives such as PESCO that are able to stimulate industrial production that would be seen as supporting alliance efforts (2018, 51).

The strategic incoherence seen is best explained by an EU practitioner who believes that the EU is differentiated by Member States' strategic priorities:

> Countries like Poland, the Baltic states, to a lesser extent Romania, still feel quite threatened by Russia, and therefore, they see their military more for territorial defence, and are therefore also more focused on NATO on many occasions…There are, however, a number of countries who also look at what was happening in Yugoslavia, for instance in Kosovo, but also in Africa, and they would like to see the EU to be capable of handling such a crisis on their own. If you look at the crisis in Libya, where, once again, the US said, 'well, it's your problem in the end.' Europe was not able to do anything without support of strategic assets from the US. More and more European countries are saying 'okay, at least for that type of relatively limited military engagement, we should be able to act independently without first having to go across the ocean to beg Uncle Sam if he could lend us a couple of air-to-air refuelers, perhaps an aircraft

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[4] "I think it is obvious that NATO expansion does not have any relation with the modernisation of the Alliance itself or with ensuring security in Europe. On the contrary, it represents a serious provocation that reduces the level of mutual trust. And we have the right to ask: against whom is this expansion intended?" (Putin 2007).

carrier or two, and satellite communication, and so forth.' (Interview A with EU Security Official, Online, 2020).

The EU security architecture is emerging as a product of these collective policy preferences, with the institutionalization reflecting the need to tackle divergent and diverse security crises perceived by Member States. While NATO remains the key security organization against traditional threats, it is limited in three major ways. First, NATO may not always be available, such as in the case of the EU embargo against Libya where the action was vetoed by Turkey. Second, NATO may not be welcome in a region such as the Maghreb. Third, NATO does not have the right toolkit since law enforcement, rule of law, financial and diplomatic support, sanctions, and development are all things that are unavailable directly through NATO (Interview C with EU Security Official, Online, 2020). As such, the perception by select Member States and practitioners is that another mechanism is required.

Since 2015, in response to the EU's degrading security situation, Member States have reinvigorated the transition that the EU began in 1999 with the founding of the CSDP. The EU has moved from being primarily an economic organization into a political entity that could actively support the foreign and security policies of its members. An important development was the EU Global Strategy (EUGS), outlining guiding principles for EU action and identifying key threats (Council of the European Union, 2016). Important to this was the acknowledgement that an integrated approach to conflicts and crises specifically suited the EU as its civil-military tools would be able to build state resilience and counter hybrid threats (Tomat 2021, 150-151). Furthermore, EUGS was a comprehensive exercise in EU policy coherence, the details of the document being developed in consultation with Member States, think tanks, and other organizations (EUGS 2016). The increased coherence and communication between stakeholders further aided in establishing the 2016 EU Level of Ambition (LOA) that set out three Member State goals to enable the EU in security: responding to external conflicts and crises through crisis management tools, building the capacities of partner countries surrounding the EU, and protecting the Union from external threats (Council of the EU 2016).

With a policy foundation created, reforms then began to focus on the operationalization of EU missions to achieve the LOA. Between 2012 and 2016, efforts to create a formal operational command were embodied in the EU Operations Centre – an ad-hoc formation not formerly part of the EU chain of command. In 2017, the Military Planning and Conduct Capability (MPCC) was established, which is a permanent command and control structure within the EU Military Staff. It currently manages EU efforts in Somalia, Mali, and the Central African Republic. According to interviews with EU practitioners and EU documentation, the end goal is for the MPCC to take control of all non-executive CSDP missions and up to one EU Battlegroup-size executive military CSDP operation decided by the Council (EEAS, 2018). With its own integrated qualified military body, the EU could now independently manage operations at scale, forming a qualified command and control (C2) structure. This aspect is currently being enhanced by the EUMILCOM project to create the capacity for scaling the C2 structure for larger operations. In 2019, at the political level, the EU created a directorate called The Integrated Approach for Security and Peace (ISP), the goal of which is to coordinate the political-strategic planning of military and civilian CSDP operations while managing activities on all parts of the conflict cycle from conflict prevention and mediation to disarmament. During the COVID-19 pandemic, the ISP has already engaged in creating an integrated approach to

repatriating stranded EU citizens (Tomat 2021). ISP represents a significant step in facilitating foreign and security policy coherence in both diplomatic and operational fields.

The second aspect of the EU's transformation has been the establishment of a military-industrial field within the EU. Even though the EU could politically organize missions abroad, it has not done so and it continues to lack the capability to conduct them without risking lives. One EU official mentioned a distinct lack of transport, air refuelling, and intelligence capabilities: "If you look at the number of personnel, they [Member States] are actually able to do major military warfare, but not at the level that we have come to expect without any casualties…Those assets we are lacking"[5] (Interview A with EU Security Official, Online, 2020). Some EU states remain reliant on the US for basic military assets, while the majority are unable to conduct anything outside of basic warfighting, let alone a civilian-military approach to conflict (Biscop 2018). In one example, an EU official commented that during a deployment in the Sahel, an EU military mission was unable to identify a suspected surveillance drone over its own base of operations for a significant period (Interview B with EU Security Official , Online, 2020). To tackle these issues in capability, the EU has been mandated to aid research and procurement of these capabilities. This fulfilled two long-term goals Member States shared: to have the ability to act against security challenges and to build an autonomous European defence industry (Interview E with EU Security Official, Online, 2020). This process began officially in 2017 with the launch of PESCO. Twenty-five EU Member States activated the PESCO framework, which was, until that point, dormant in the Lisbon Treaty[6] PESCO aims to increase the ability of EU militaries to deal with security crises and bolster their national militaries. Compared to the initiatives of the past, PESCO legally binds EU Member States to take part in at least one capability project such that countries are free to associate themselves with any projects they deem fit. At the beginning of this study, PESCO had 46 active projects[7] in areas like Training, Facilities; Land, Formations, Systems; Maritime; Air, Systems; Cyber, C4ISR; Enabling, Joint; Space. What is important to understand is that PESCO projects are not meant to create capabilities controlled by the EU, but instead they will be Member State-owned (Interview C with EU Security Officia,l, Online, 2020). A central initiative within PESCO is the Crisis Response Operation Core (CROC), a project meant to create "a coherent full spectrum force package" at the EU level (PESCO Secretariat 2021). Biscop notes that this "could become the central PESCO project and serve as a guiding framework for the other projects" (2020, 3). This sentiment is further echoed in other interviews conducted with EU security officials, with one stating that it could be the "core of the European integrated forces," with work already started on an EU 'Rapid Response Database', a list of available assets and capabilities (Interview (e) with EU Security Official, Online, 2020). This means that PESCO is not just about building capabilities but also about coordinating Europe's diverse militaries.

A series of other initiatives have been built in conjunction with PESCO to promote further autonomy for the European defence industry. This architecture begins with the Capability Development Plan (CDP), a document that is constructed by the European Defence Agency

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[5] This could be in reference to assets such as long-range air and sea transport, intelligence, surveillance, target acquisition and reconnaissance, air-to-air refuelling and deployable networks.

[6], with the exception of Denmark and Malta. The former is not a member of the CSDP and the latter chose to opt-out of the PESCO framework.

[7] As of March 2022, the number of projects is 60.

(EDA) and Member States to prioritize the development of needed capabilities (European Defence Agency 2018). The next stage in the process is the Coordinated Annual Review on Defence (CARD), which provides an overview of existing capabilities in Europe and identifies opportunities for cooperation (2018). CARD, PESCO, and the new European Defence Fund (EDF) then coordinate the funding of projects to develop required capabilities. Before 2020, this process was managed by the European Defence Industrial Development Programme (EDIDP), a precursor to the EDF, and the ongoing Preparatory Action on Defence Research (PADR), the former providing significant funding[8] towards capability development (European Commission 2020b). These initiatives paved the way for the modern funding apparatus under the EDF, which, as of 2021, had eight billion euros at its disposal to invest into capability development projects (European Commission 2020a). As a result, the EU is increasingly becoming an organization that deals directly with the military industrial development cycle, developing the projects that European states require.

The most recent initiative by Member States and the EU began in 2020 with the development of the Strategic Compass. The impetus for this project was driven by the idea that while a global strategy exists, the EU does not have a way to implement the strategy (Interview (a) with German Defence Official, Online, 2020). The Compass represents a strategic turn and definitive guide for EU security and defence, a unified threat analysis that sought to operationalize the LOA (Fiott 2020). Earlier versions of the Compass focused on crisis management, a comprehensive threat analysis, and areas of action focused on diplomatic, intelligence, military, and economic tools, forming "the foundation of a robust European self-image [that] could enable the EU to not only cope with the security policy realities of the 21st century but also play an adequate role in shaping the world" (Europe's Strategic Compass: A Critical Reflection 2020).[9] The 2022 edition of the Compass shifted away from this language, acknowledging that the EU is surrounded by instability and conflicts: "We are confronted with a dangerous mix of armed aggression, illegal annexation, fragile states, revisionist powers and authoritarian regimes" (Council of the European Union 2022, 8). To address this, the Compass outlines four policy 'strands': (1) Act, involving the creation of an EU Rapid Deployment Capacity of 5000 troops and operationalization of an EU command and control framework to conduct CSDP missions; (2) Secure, committing to a consistent three-year EU Threat Analysis, a single intelligence capacity, joint cyber defence policy, and joint EU hybrid threat coordination; (3) Invest, committing to the completion of one-third of PESCO projects by 2025, the augmentation of the European Defence Fund to make EU defence industrial cooperation the norm, and increase incentives for Member State procurement in key areas identified by the European Defence Agency; (4) Partner, aiming to deepen cooperation with regional organizations and multilateral defence partnerships including NATO, while working bilaterally to provide security assistance to partners in the EU periphery (Council of the EU 2022). What has been described is a strategic turn for the EU developed in response to an increasingly unstable and dangerous world order.

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[8] Investing 500 million Euros in 16 military projects targeting the development of the European defence industry and to research and development.

[9] Note: This source remains unpublished due to privacy concerns. It was obtained and used with permission from interviewees.

Notwithstanding the nature of the Compass itself, the manner of involvement of particular Member States in these EU-level defence initiatives has thus far not challenged the principle of differentiation and attempts to do so by creating high-level standardized involvement have been met with failure. Once states became involved in such initiatives, national economic interests started to aid in the rationalizing of policy preferences. PESCO is not just a coordination project; it is a series of initiatives that looks to develop new capabilities, enable their production, and prepare them for sale in a European defence market. It reflects the move of most European countries to 'Europeanize' their procurement, with domestic bias dropping from 65 percent in early 1991 to 43 percent in 2017 and inter-EU procurement increasing from 10 percent to 53 percent in the same period (Kluth 2017). Rufanges et al. have written extensively on the presence of both national and transnational lobbyists who have been heavily involved in adding the Section 2 provisions in the Lisbon Treaty, which affirm that "Member states shall undertake progressively to improve their military" and help to facilitate the EDA's creation in 2004 (2016, 317). This includes the largest EU defence firms who have formed themselves into the European Organisation for Security (EOS)[10] – a lobbying group that includes Thales, Naval Group, Airbus, and Leonardo, the top 25 arms companies in the world by sales (SIRPI 2019). Clearly, the liberal-intergovernmentalist logic of interest groups also applies to decision-making. Due to the high cost of research and development for military capabilities, it is often impossible for companies to acquire enough funding from banks or capital markets, necessitating states to pay up-front for the products they will purchase (DeVore 2014). Mawdsley has also brought attention to the reality that in most national contexts, it is the structural constraints brought upon by the largest military industries in Europe that have aided in the European preference formation (2019). Indeed, it is those large corporations that now dominate the policy-making and regulatory process (2019). The nexus between economy and security then meets the differentiated nature of the EU's new initiatives. To fully understand why cooperation occurred as it has, an analysis of the security and economic considerations of key Member States is required, along with an understanding of their practice in existing institutional arrangements such as PESCO.

Germany's Mediation of the Union Under its Differentiated Approach to Security

Against the initial French suggestion that the PESCO mechanism should be a 'two-speed' model involving only those countries most committed, German officials countered by suggesting that this approach would divide the EU (Maulny and Bernardini 2019). Germany thereby championed the idea that, in principle, every Member State must join EU operations and missions: "if somebody could have stepped out, because he is not part of PESCO, we would have created a problem at the beginning" (Interview B with German Defence Official, Online, 2020). PESCO became inclusive and diverse yet coordinated. Member States could pursue their own national objectives while collectively meeting minimal EU guidelines to synchronize capability development and avoid duplication. As one German defence official commented: "we only can survive if everybody is happy" (Interview C with German Defence Official, Online, 2020). Furthermore, PESCO would aid in giving Germany the impetus to develop

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[10] European Organisation for Security (EOS). "EOS Members" Accessed September 15, 2022. http://www.eos-eu.com/members

neglected armed forces, simultaneously strengthening its economy through the defence sector (Major and Molling 2019).

Germany's goal to further integrate European defence is driven by its deteriorating security environment. Its 2016 White Paper mentions an 'arc of crisis' stretching from North Africa through the Horn of Africa and towards the Middle East that impairs the security of trade routes (BMVg 2016). For its part, Germany has slowly increased its involvement in this theater, deploying over a thousand personnel from the armed forces to Mali (DW 2020b) and being further involved in 11 other operations, notably in Syria, Iraq, and Afghanistan (DW 2020a). In addition, German leaders recognize that Russia represents a disunifying force in Europe, even though it sought economic arrangements in energy trade (DW 2020c). Interviewees stressed that the Russian threat had prompted Eastern EU members to look elsewhere for credible security guarantees, namely the US. One interviewee commented: "what Russia can do on very short notice…60,000 troops in one week. How do you want to bring the Spanish division to Poland? It will take months to do so, but the Americans are able to do it" (Interview A with German Defence Official, Online, 2020). Germany does not have the capabilities to ensure its forces are safe when conducting crisis management or even standard military operations, with its armed forces facing structural issues, including personnel shortages, neglected equipment, and inefficient procurement (Menon 2020). With the ambition to create an EU 'force package' by 2025 (Interview A with German Defence Official, Online, 2020), Germany will require new political impetus and support. Creating commitments at the EU level then facilitates needed rearmament at a national level and bridges the gap between strategic cultures by focusing on interoperability between similarly committed Member States. This will allow Germany to build on its idea of 'strategic autonomy' that involves the EU being able to act on its own in conflict zones and capable enough to replace the US in strategic areas where it is withdrawing (Interview C with German Defence Official, Online, 2020).

Reflecting this mindset of EU interoperability and capability, Germany has involved itself in 38 percent of active PESCO projects. It is supporting initiatives such as the Tiger Mark III attack helicopter, the new EURODRONE project, an Integrated Unmanned Ground System (UGS), and initiatives to coordinate EU countries in joint operations, including CROC, the Networks of Logistics Hubs in Europe (NetLogHubs), and Co-Basing. The latter looks to create shared basing rights between project partners, including shared overseas facilities for future naval deployments abroad (Jonnet 2020). According to German officials, CROC represents the central force package that will utilize developed capabilities in EU missions abroad (Interview A with German Defence Official, Online, 2020). The sum of these projects will enable EU forces to be deployable and efficiently coordinated, translating into coordination between NATO countries for territorial defence.

Germany's involvement in European defence is further driven by key economic actors that have aided in the development of these initiatives. Its defence market is both highly privatized and highly Europeanized, with large pan-European defence firms such as Airbus and MBDA being prominent players. The latter two are partially owned by the German government, with an 11 percent stake in Airbus and MBDA being partially owned by Airbus itself (Transparency International 2020). This makes procurement a transnational affair. Germany's largest defence company, Rheinmetall, only ranked 27th in terms of global arms sales as of 2020 (SIPRI 2020) and remains mostly privatized, with the majority of shareholders being large financial

institutions.[11] Additionally, the privatized nature of the industry has created opportunities for consolidation, with Rheinmetall looking to purchase Krauss-Maffei Wegmann, its second-largest domestic company, limiting the procurement options for the government (TIDS 2020). In response to the ongoing pandemic, Germany has chosen to support its defence industry using relief money and buying new ships and fighter platforms from domestic companies and multinational companies like Airbus (Sprenger 2020). According to Transparency International, the current procurement process in Germany is vulnerable to corporate actors because the process itself is partially outsourced to the private sector (TIDS 2020). Similarly, according to the EU Transparency Register, German-based companies are also prominent lobbyists in the EU, including Airbus,[12] Rheinmetall,[13] ThyssenKrupp,[14] and Krauss-Maffei Wegmann[15] (European Commission and European Parliament 2020). The large presence of multinational corporations and privatized interests means that there is an interest to become involved in EU defence initiatives for their economic benefit. The surge in EU-wide defence spending through PESCO creates opportunities for companies to generate profits. Additionally, Germany's arms industry is too heavily globalized to conduct capacity-building projects on Germany's own terms. DeVore has noted that the capacity to pursue state preferences has diminished due to the increasing ability of corporate actors to impose their own preferences for greater profit margins (2014). New armament programs benefit powerful corporate actors, which operate within Germany and are already linked internationally to other EU countries.

Balancing between the expectations of its Western and Eastern allies while attempting to settle affairs at home will continue to be a problem for Germany into the future. Yet the benefits outweigh the cost of managing this cooperation. Transnational firms benefit from increased economic activity, while the differentiated nature of PESCO means that all EU Member States can meet their security needs and aid in the development of each other's capabilities. If successful, this would result in the augmentation of EU cooperation under a common framework while increasing the interoperability of European forces to better secure both the Southern and Eastern flanks of the EU itself. In sum, Germany is managing the process simply because the EU is its largest strategic enabler and will be for the foreseeable future.

French Challenges to National Security and the Necessity of Collaborative Intervention

Contrary to its early aversion to a PESCO based on inclusivity, future commitment, and lenient benchmarks (Fiott et al 2017), France has continued to champion the concept of 'strategic autonomy' in order to safeguard its interests in a differentiated EU security architecture. Emmanuel Macron has defined the term to mean that Europe needs to "rethink itself politically and act politically to define common objectives that are more than merely delegating our future to the market" (2020). For Macron, 'strategic autonomy' is not merely about developing the

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[11] For more information on the shareholder structure see: Rheinmetall. 2020. "Rheinmetal Shareholder Structure." December 31 2020. Accessed June 30 2021.
https://ir.rheinmetall.com/websites/rheinmetall/English/1040/shareholder-structure.html
[12] Investing 1,750,000€ - 1,999,999€ in lobbying.
[13] Investing 400,000€ - 499,999€ in lobbying.
[14] Investing 700,000€ - 799,999€ in lobbying.
[15] Investing 300,000€ - 399,999€ in lobbying.

ability to intervene abroad but also about developing a European political identity that will reduce the costs of its foreign entanglements (Erforth 2020).

This policy comes at a time when France is becoming increasingly entangled in foreign conflicts across North Africa and combating a form of Islamic extremism that is effective at mobilizing terrorist attacks on French soil (Jankowski et al 2018). In response, France has deployed 5100 troops across the Sahel, 740 in the Congo and Central Africa, and over 3000 across different partners in Africa (Ministère des Armées 2021). In Libya, France also aids in the maintenance of the EU-backed arms embargo, coming into direct conflict with Turkey in 2020 over its maintenance (Marcus 2020). Overextended across its many military theatres, France has tried to create multilateral responses to ease its burden. Yet in interviews, Haroche has documented that other EU countries considered France's conflicts in Africa its own responsibility (2017). From France's perspective, many Eastern EU countries were "obsessed with Russia," unwilling to commit to operations elsewhere, with a French diplomat commenting that "EU missions are increasingly less robust, and we often reach operational capacity thanks to non-Member States' support" (cited in Haroche 2017, 244-245). In an attempt to modify its role in the Sahel, France has ended Operation Barkhane, with its forces being lowered to 2500 in 2022 from the original 5000, in favour of a European and regional coalition to secure the region (Roussy 2021). To coordinate this, France will require the commitment that it has long sought from its EU allies. France thereby faces the double challenge of lacking coordinated civil-military capabilities and an institution to create the political will to use them.

In addition to seeing the CSDP as being geopolitically necessary, France also represents the third largest defence exporter in the world, with exports growing by 59 percent between 2012-2016 and 2017-2021 (SIPRI 2022). The French armaments industry represents an important lobby to justify policy action being taken. Just like Germany, France undertook a massive phase of privatization and internationalization during the 1980s. It saw the creation of new pan-European defence firms such as the European Aeronautic Defence and Space Company (EADS)-Airbus, which was an aggregate of French, German, and Spanish national industries as well as the privatization of firms such as Dassault Electric and Thomson-CSF, now known as Thales Group (Calcara 2017). However, as Calcara indicates, unlike the privatized defence industry in Germany or Spain, the French government has maintained a great deal of influence on its defence industry. France controls 11 percent in Airbus (Airbus, 2021), 25 percent of Thales Group (Thales Group, 2021), 11 percent in Safran (Safran, 2021), and continues to own Naval Group and Nexter Systems (Calcara 2017). This has placed the state near public-controlled groups, enhancing government oversight but providing "avenues for managers to bargain for compensation when state policy adversely impacts companies' profits" (2017, 531). The EOS lobbying group, for example, includes many French defence companies such as Airbus, Naval Group, and Thales.[16] This does not necessarily mean that the French state has control over its arms industry but the market structure of the industry represents mutual dependence: "The proximity of the state to public-controlled groups enhances government oversight but also it provides avenues for managers to bargain for compensation when state policy adversely impacts companies' profits" (2017, 532). French firms have therefore been

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[16] European Organisation for Security (EOS). "EOS Members" Accessed September 15, 2022. http://www.eos-eu.com/members

able to 'capture' the government's preferences and to persuade French policy-makers to strongly engage in EDA's institutionalization and in day-to-day collaborative projects. Thales, a national champion in France, has accounted for the majority of the transition and purchases in the development of EU systems (Kluth 2017, 171). In 2020, France's arms exports increased by 72 percent due to it selling advanced fighter and naval equipment to the developing world (Makenzie 2020). A flexible international policy will thereby allow France to continue to sell its arms abroad competitively, something it has not shied away from in the past, as exemplified by the Mistral deal with Russia before the 2014 Ukraine crisis (Le Monde 2014). France has also not been immune from increased European integration in military equipment despite this stance. Its adoption of the HK416 rifle as of 2020 from a consortium involving French manufacturer Heckler & Koch SAS France and Heckler & Koch GmbH represents a European-level consolidation of a key piece of equipment – the standard rifle (ASAF 2020).

Demonstrating these European-facing interests, France has become PESCO's most involved nation, participating in 70 percent of active projects. Significant for the French defence industry, many of these are developing a multitude of new capabilities, such as the European Patrol Corvette (EPC), Airborne Electronic Attack plane, and Tiger Mark III attack helicopter. France is furthermore involved in all ten enabling and joint cooperation programs, coordinating five of them, such as Co-Basing, the Energy Operational Function, and Timely Warning and Interception with Space-Based Theater Surveillance (TWISTER). To meet its expeditionary needs, it has further involved itself in CROC while also taking the lead in the EU Military Partnership Project meant to integrate EU military strategic cultures. France is therefore driving much of PESCO's interoperability development, signalling a high interest in enabling multilateral responses under the EU.

France represents a concerned party involved militarily in the EU's Southern neighbourhood. Geopolitically, it has a key interest in obtaining the support it needs to protect its forces and meet its political objectives. Economically, its extensive defence industry sees the development of EU capabilities as projects that will increase its share of the global defence market. That marriage between the geopolitical and economic aspects of integration has given France a position within the EU to coordinate its own response with partner countries in developing that 'exclusive club,' which the EU was originally intended to be.

Poland's Threat Conception and National Utilization of EU Defence

Above all other countries, Poland's strategic thinking hinges upon preserving NATO and US security guarantees. Unlike France and Germany, Poland initially remained tepid over the reinforcement of an EU security policy. During the negotiations for PESCO's adoption, Poland maintained two key positions: NATO should not be undermined by new EU security structures, and a 'two-speed' Europe in defence should not become a reality (Terlikowski 2018, 4). In interviews, Polish officials mentioned that certain Member States began to add the concept of 'strategic autonomy' to foundational EU documents without defining the term. It was only in 2020 that its content was formally discussed in the formation of the Strategic Compass (Interview with Polish Defence Official, Online, 2020). The unclarified term led Poland to delay its commitment to PESCO, with them joining it three days before the EU Council's enactment (Terlikowski 2018). PESCO has given Poland two major positive results: it has allowed Poland to pursue its own interests and maintain a relationship with Washington.

Polish involvement in EU affairs has been a pragmatic one. The 2020 National Security Strategy of Poland mentions Russia's buildup of offensive military capabilities in both conventional forces and in hybrid warfare, including cyber-attack and disinformation (Polish National Security Strategy 2020). Events in Georgia and Ukraine helped to convince Polish military leadership that previous non-military mechanisms to manage Russia are no longer sufficient, with hard power being seen as necessary to counter external threats (Moldovan 2018). NATO and the US have been major pillars of Poland's sovereignty through deterrence. However, threats in hybrid warfare and cybersecurity have also prompted Poland to involve the EU in helping to establish NATO-EU task forces in those fields (Biskup 2020). Less talked about are Poland's concerns with Europe's Southern neighbourhood, which has led to the establishment of Frontex (Szymańska 2017). This is in concert with responses to perceived terrorist threats in the South, a major reason why Poland has remained one of the most involved countries in CSDP operations and capability-building initiatives (Terlikowski 2018).

According to an interviewee, once Poland joined PESCO, the Polish conception became focused on its national objectives: "Our participation in projects was most driven by our national military capability development process. So, whenever we joined the projects, it was solely based on the added value from our national point of view" (Interview with Polish Defence Official, Online, 2020). The defence industry in Poland is an anomaly within the EU, being its last truly nationalized defence industry. As of 2014, the majority of the Polish military industry had been consolidated into the Polish Armaments Group (PGZ), its holdings being almost entirely state-owned and its sales reliant on the home market (Terlikowski 2017, 4), representing only the 68th largest defence company in the world by total sales (SIPRI 2020). This means for the development of its defence technological base, Poland is also reliant on technology and knowledge transfers from other countries, in contrast with the larger multinational firms that have the competitive edge (Terlikowski 2017, 4). Therefore, having an entirely state-owned and controlled defence industry directly links Poland's geopolitical policy to its military industry, unlike Germany or France where the relationship can be seen as reciprocal.

In this aim, Poland initially involved itself in PESCO projects that looked to benefit its homeland defence industry, currently involved in 22 percent of active projects. Capability development has focused on three key projects, namely the Integrated Unmanned Ground System (UGS),[17] Maritime (Semi-) Autonomous Systems for Mine Countermeasures (MAS-MCM), the Harbour & Maritime Surveillance and Protection (HARMSPRO),[18] and the Integrated European Joint Training and Simulation Centre (EUROSIM).[19] Unlike Germany and France, many of Poland's logistical involvements thus far have focused on those projects most operable within a NATO framework. This includes Military Mobility (MM), the Network of Logistics Hubs (NetLogHubs), and the European Medical Command. Poland's limited participation in PESCO is due in large part to the already established political-industrial links between Poland and the US. Notwithstanding the difficulties that third-state participation in EU

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[17] Providing Poland with a key technology transfer in the realm of unmanned ground vehicles for fire support, transport, and other force enablers.

[18] These two focused on the securitization of near-coastal maritime environments aiding in Baltic security.

[19] The latter being a capability which will give access to advanced simulation technology, aiding in the training of Polish soldiers.

defence initiatives creates, Poland has sought to involve the US as much as possible: "we want to keep them also open for the partners from outside of the EU…our military industry is both connected to [the] European Framework as well as we have particular close contact with our American partners" (Interview with Polish Defence Official, Online, 2020). Even outside of PESCO, Poland has gone against 'buying European' to purchase F-35 fighter jets (Brozowksi 2020). When asked about the purchase, a Polish defence official commented: "the F35 is the most blatant example of what the EU doesn't have to offer. It's the only fifth generation fighter aircraft available worldwide" (Interview with Polish Defence Official, Online, 2020). With Poland's involvement in PESCO, it is foreseeable that American involvement will be present in at least some of its projects. Notwithstanding the global pandemic, Poland has undertaken a substantial rearmament program consisting mainly of American equipment with the exception being a new Main Battle Tank being proposed as a PESCO project (Terlikowski 2021).

Interviews with Polish officials revealed interesting perspectives about the development of the Strategic Compass, which they evaluated as being very productive: "We already have it more or less agreed or compiled…we have it available now. It was quite surprising for me but the list of threats and challenges the EU can see right now, it's highly convergent. I mean there are 27 states, which largely agree, there is no disagreement on that…The main goal is…having the list of actions inclusive enough to accommodate all of the concerns of the Member States, so we're being realistic" (Interview with Polish Defence Official, Online, 2020). To justify its own security spending, Poland needed to emphasize its own security challenges in the Compass. It followed the National Security Strategy's position that Poland should "seek greater involvement of the European Union in activities directed at improving security in the Eastern Neighbourhood" (Polish National Security Strategy 2020). Placing all of the Member States under an EU project further ensured that Poland could control its development. The differentiation seen in PESCO had thereby allowed Poland to selectively develop its own defence industry. Differentiation further allowed a level of coherence in policy, which would ensure Poland's security partners would enhance their own capabilities. With the advent of the Ukraine war, Poland was able to further emphasize its own security challenges in the Compass. The EU formally acknowledged the Russian threat in the Eastern neighbourhood and PESCO was firmly placed to augment aging pan-European capabilities against it.

Discussion

The three cases described have demonstrated the results of positive differentiation and the bargaining present within those states. In the German case, the EU was seen as the basis for its continued economic and political security. The push for differentiation by Germany allowed for the diverse experiences of other Member States while also facilitating its own defence needs in the process. For France, the EU provided an institution that could mobilize the funds and the political will necessary to assist in its geopolitical struggles. The current government in Paris looks favourably on the development of new capabilities and institutional functions, especially those that can enable the EU to work more efficiently in crisis situations. Poland, while initially skeptical, has embraced EU-level cooperation as a way to increase its defence industry's prowess and to counter existential threats from Russia. Its involvement in PESCO, with the possibility of third-state cooperation, allowed Poland to include Washington in the new defence process as its staunch ally. There also exists a strong lobby for the development of military capability, with Germany and France presenting cases of private interests shaping the defence

narrative at both the domestic and EU levels. While security concerns are important, the type of cooperation that has emerged is also defined by primary interests present within particular Member States, which often have a key economic dimension. The PESCO framework is first and foremost about ensuring that the EU LOA is fulfilled, not strategic autonomy (Interview E with EU Security Official, Online, 2020). This ensures that Member States can meet basic security expectations while also allowing those states that wish to achieve the full spectrum force package to generate usable forces under the EU. This development, therefore, does not imply that the EU is developing any form of actorness but rather involves the EU taking on the role of a coordinator. Despite disagreement of what is needed to be done, Member States have begun to, at least in part, adopt the idea that the EU, as an economic entity, can help solve stagnant military industrial developments in the face of an international system becoming less certain and more volatile.

The EU is now a part of the military development and planning process of European states and there exists a requirement to maintain this new framework. Initial moves towards this integration were fraught with issues due to a focus on national preferences over functional requirements. However, differentiation allowed key policy frameworks to be developed and spillover into new policy areas may occur to enhance this institutional capability (Schimmelfennig 2018). Guay had described the early efforts in the 1990s as driven by spillover. The first component of this was an expectation that integration in one policy area would lead to pressures for further integration in other related areas. A second component was the role of non-state actors and institutions in pushing integration beyond the lowest common denominator between Member States (Guay 1997). Finally, as Meyer explains, 'sociological spillover' between political-industrial actors can occur when groups that interact with one another develop a shared identity (2006). EU security officials interviewed for this article commented on the socialization of Member State military staff through programs like Military ERASMUS, which facilitates the "conditions for exchanges of young officers during their initial education and training." One interviewee described the process:

> Let's say mid-level officers ranked Majors, Lieutenant Colonels who come back from an orientation course say, 'well, I wasn't aware of what the European Union was doing in security and defence. Wouldn't it be great if this were to be taught at the national staff courses?' And then, of course, I say yes, and actually, there are a number of Member States where we have already convinced them to integrate an orientation course in their national staff colleges (Interview A with EU Security Official, Online, 2020).

In the case of the EU's newest military initiatives, it is possible to see the emergence of a limited common understanding of security concerns among EU states. As shown by this analysis, ongoing threats have prompted action by Member States, driven by internal economic and market interests. Spillover requires pressure to maintain this momentum. Now that the Member States have been spurred by ongoing crises, internal factors and institutional realities can begin to intervene.

Functional spillover could very well occur as the EU is granted increased authority over defence matters. While PESCO is Member State-driven, those states are increasingly seeking consultation with EU actors in the selection of projects. The PESCO Secretariat is a joint EDA, EEAS, and the EUMS body that provides an assessment of the capabilities in operational aspects, coordinates the assessment of project proposals, and seeks to prevent the duplication

of existing initiatives. According to an EU security official, the secretariat now assesses all new PESCO projects based on a cooperative angle (what they can bring towards the development of EU industrial autonomy) and an operational angle (how far the project will deliver in making a difference towards future missions and operations) (Interview E with EU Security Official, Online, 2020). It was even mentioned that Member States saw a larger role for the secretariat, the exact role, however, being unclear (Interview E with EU Security Official, Online, 2020). The very inclusion of Member States in these initiatives has resulted in their defence industries coming to expect EU funding for the development of increasingly more expensive capability development projects. The EDA itself was created due to increasing costs and the need for greater efficiency in procurement (Barrinha 2010). The trends show that future research and development costs are becoming so inflated that the development of next-generation platforms is becoming impossible domestically, especially in the face of economic uncertainty (Kleczka et al. 2020). This could very well prompt both industrial actors and military officials to increase collective development and the funding of pan-European initiatives, notwithstanding the clear monetary benefits these non-state actors gain from an expansion of domestic defence industries.

Sociological spillover may very well be the most important factor in driving the future of EU initiatives. As the EU becomes more involved in military affairs, so will its practitioners, leaders, and corporations. The EU has embarked upon a formative and functional change of tone as an institution, and as Member States experience additional security crises abroad and across Europe, greater security cooperation will be incentivized. The EU is one institution that has the capacity to facilitate that function. The status quo still embraces differentiation in specific projects, but a principled change is underway, namely a commitment to manage security concerns collectively and to create conditions for strategic action. Until this change happens, however, the idea of an EU as a strategic power will remain a contradiction in terms.

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Interviews (Conducted Virtually)

- Interview with EU Official (a), November 26, 2020.
- Interview with EU Official (b), December 10, 2020.
- Interview with EU Official (c), December 9, 2020.
- Interview with EU Official (d), December 14, 2020.
- Interview with EU Official (e), November 24, 2020.
- Interview with EU Official (f), November 21, 2020.
- Interview with German Official (a), November 19, 2020.
- Interview with German Official (b), November 19, 2020.
- Interview with German Official (c), November 19, 2020.
- Interview with Polish Official, January 29, 2021.

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