

FCAS Cancelled, FCMS May Survive

By Andrew White

At the Berlin Air Show in June, the Future Combat Air System (FCAS) – the Franco-German-Spanish effort to design a sixth-gen jet by 2040- was unsurprisingly cancelled, following lengthy disputes between [Airbus](#) and [Dassault Aviation](#).

However, it appears the Future Combat Mission System (FCMS) – a critical part of FCAS designed to integrate sensors, effectors, communications and mission management into a unified combat architecture – could be one of the only survivors of the program, as industry participants seek to find alternative homes for the technology.

At the Eurosatory show in Paris the following week, industry sources explained how elements of the FCMS (designed by **ESG**, [Rohde & Schwarz](#) and [Hensoldt](#)) could instead be rolled into a variety of legacy and future platforms instead of the FCAS Next Generation Fighter.

Possible homes for the technology could include the latest Eurofighter tranches, as well as collaborative combat aircraft (CCA) still in development by the likes of Airbus.

Following the Berlin Air Show, Rohde & Schwarz made the decision to rebrand its phased array communications solution for FCMS as NEMACS, the 'Networked Multipoint Array Communications System,' with a company spokesperson stating it is ready to be integrated on board crewed and uncrewed platforms alike.

Describing the German Air Force's aspiration to fly Eurofighter beyond the 2037 timeframe, the spokesperson suggested the aircraft could be equipped with additional

capabilities which would enable it to control CCAs and other crewed/uncrewed platforms across the future battlespace.

Specifically, NEMACS provides the low probability of intercept / low probability of detection (LPI/LPD) communications required by modern day and future combat air platforms. Operating in Ku Band and C Band and supporting SATCOM, modular NEMACS flat panels can be integrated around the body of an aircraft, as well as on board surface vessels and even ground vehicles to create a secure combat cloud, even in contested environments.

The Rohde & Schwarz spokesperson suggested that NEMACS is already being tested on board a variety of legacy and future combat air platforms, although he was unable to comment on exactly which aircraft are involved at this stage. "What we can say is tests are ongoing across air, land and sea platforms," he explained.

NEMACS was first unveiled at the Berlin Air Show in 2024 as a 'Hybrid Communications Backbone' capable of optimizing a combat cloud and maximizing data throughput as high as 15 Mbps across the FCAS Next General Fighter. Using Active Electronically Scanned Array (AESA) antennas, NEMACS ensures crewed/uncrewed platforms benefit from secure and resilient communications with multi-domain users who might also be using legacy VHF and UHF radios, for example.

It remains to be seen whether NEMACS could also feature in 'Team Gen 6,' a consortium of eight German defense and aerospace companies which immediately came together after the collapse of FCAS to consider a sovereign design of a next-generation combat jet.

Rohde & Schwarz is already a part of Team Gen 6, alongside Airbus, Autoflug, Diehl Defence, Hensolt, Liebherr Aerospace, MBDA Germany and MTU Aero Engines.