



GLOBAL GOVERNANCE INSTITUTE

National Backgrounders – European Foreign Policy

Country Profile

Germany

Capital:	Berlin
Geographical Size:	357 137.2 km ²
Population:	80 780 000 (2014)
Population as % of total EU population:	15.9% (2014)
GDP:	€ 2737.6 billion (2013)
Defense Expenditure:	€ 33.784 million (2013)
Official EU language(s):	German
Political System:	Federal parliamentary republic
EU member country since:	1 January 1958
Seats in European Parliament:	96
Currency:	Eurozone member since 1 January 1999
Schengen area member?	Schengen Area member since 26 March 1995
Presidency of the Council:	11 times between 1958 and 2007

Source: Europa.eu

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The Global Governance Institute
Pleinlaan 5, Brussels
B-1050 Belgium
Email: info@globalgovernance.eu
Web: www.globalgovernance.eu

a. Political System

Germany is a federal parliamentary republic built on lessons learned from the Second World War. It is divided into sixteen federal states (*Länder*). The German constitutional Basic Law (*Grundgesetz*), the fundamental legal and political order of Germany, establishes the country as a constitutional representative democracy. It also sets principles and basic rights, the democratization of sovereignty, and the federal and welfare state, which cannot be altered by any changes in the constitution. The head of state is the Federal President (currently Joachim Gauck), who represents Germany internationally and holds powers such as dismissing the government and dissolving the parliament, in case of great political instability.

The German Parliament (*Bundestag*) exercises legislative power in the country. It is usually made of a coalition of political parties. The German Parliament is composed of 630 members from different political parties, currently: the Christian Democratic Union/Christian Social Union (CDU/CSU) with 311 seats, the Social Democratic Party of Germany (SPD) with 192 seats, the Left Party with 64 seats, and the Alliance 90/the Greens with 63 seats¹. The Parliament passes legislation, selects a president among them (currently Norbert Lammert, CDU), and elects the Federal Chancellor. The federal states of Germany are represented in a second chamber (*Bundesrat*), which also has a role in passing German legislation, mostly to be enforced by administrative bodies of the federal states.

The Federal Chancellor (currently Angela Merkel, CDU/CSU) is elected by the German Parliament for four years and heads the Federal Government (*Bunesskabinett*), which exercises executive power. The Chancellor determines the cabinet's ministers and their responsibilities, and lays down the guidelines of government policy. He/She holds the most important political authority in the country. The Chancellor can also propose a vote of no confidence in the German Parliament. Since December 2013, the Government is made of a coalition between the CDU, the CSU and the SPD.²

b. Foreign Policy

After the Second World War, Germany built its foreign policy cautiously. At first, the country rejected power politics and rather idealistically focused on multilateralism and was completely averse to the use of military force. However, these two visions have been moderated with time. Germany is currently focusing on **national interests** as the motor of its foreign policy and carefully making use of its military force.³

According to the current German Foreign Minister F.-W. Steinmeier, “Germany is widely appreciated for its commitment to promoting peaceful conflict resolution, the rule of law, and a sustainable economic model” and is characterized by a “close partnership with France within a united Europe and a strong transatlantic alliance in terms of both security and economic cooperation”⁴. He also argues that the country will have to face specific challenges in the years to come as a result of globalization, namely: crisis management, the changing

¹ “Parliamentary Groups”, *German Bundestag*, Web. Accessed June 11, 2015.

https://www.bundestag.de/htdocs_e/bundestag/groups

² “Political System”, *Facts about Germany*, Web. Accessed June 11, 2015. <http://www.tatsachen-ueber-deutschland.de/en/political-system.html>

³ Lehne, S., “The Big Three in EU Foreign Policy”, *Carnegie Europe*, July 2012, p. 10-11, Web. Accessed June 10, 2015. http://carnegieendowment.org/files/eu_big_three1.pdf

⁴ Steinmeier, F.-W., “The DNA of German Foreign Policy”, *Politics & World Affairs*, Project Syndicate, February 25, 2015, Web. Accessed June 11, 2015. <http://www.project-syndicate.org/commentary/german-foreign-policy-european-union-by-frank-walter-steinmeier-2015-02>

global order, and Germany's position within Europe. Enhancing and developing global cooperation is one of the country's main goals (especially throughout the UN), together with improving its crisis management and prevention mechanisms.

As a member of the "Big Three" tacit alliance and as the leading economy of Europe, Germany's foreign policy is quite **influential**. It is willing to strengthen the role of the EU in the establishment of a common foreign policy, as recently confirmed by Steinmeier during his 2014 presentation assessing German foreign policy⁵. The country thus pursues an **Europeanist** foreign policy, influenced by the Chancellor's rather intergovernmentalist than integrationist point of view. However, German public opinion seems to be a barrier to the Foreign Minister's aspirations, as a 2014 poll indicated that 60 percent of Germans believe that the country should not take on more international responsibility.⁶

European Union (EU)

Germany was part of the founding members of the EU, and thus is a member of the organization since 1958. Together with France, it notably rejected the idea of a constitutional treaty for the EU in 2005, which put an end to the ratification process of the latter document. Like France, it firstly opposed Turkish membership within the EU, and rather advocated a privileged partnership with the country.⁷ Chancellor Merkel has now strongly advocated Turkish accession to the EU.

In spite of its Europeanist foreign policy, Germany's support for European integration is **cautious**, mainly because of the consequences of the Euro crisis. Within the EU decision-making process, Germany opts for the **intergovernmental approach**, in accordance with its French ally's preferences. Germany is hesitant to take leadership in EU foreign policy. This behavior is congruent with the tacit agreement between France and Germany that the former leads political matters while the latter manages economic matters within the EU.⁸

Germany is supporting the status quo of power. It has not developed a strategic culture and global perspective like its French and British colleagues. As a result, the country has always followed its allies' ambitions, and developed a European and global influence due to its economy. Therefore, Germany's main priority in its foreign policy is to remain in a favorable international economic environment, in order to maintain the **economic power** it has today. In the economic and financial circumstances created by the Euro crisis, Germany's economic influence has gained even more weight. However, the Chancellor's focus on the economic situation of Europe resulted in an **apparent lack of ambition** with regard to the country's foreign policy.⁹

Germany had the potential to gain more power within the EU, but failed at taking advantage of its superior position in international relations within Europe. This is also explained by the lesser-known German efforts to enhance the European External Action Service (EEAS), Common Foreign and Security Policy (CFSP) and Common Defence and Security Policy

⁵ Techau, J. "The Steinmeier Review of German Foreign Policy", *Judy Dempsey's Strategic Europe*, Carnegie Europe, March 19, 2015, Web. Accessed June 11, 2015. <http://carnegieeurope.eu/strategieurope/?fa=59422>

⁶ Techau, J. "The Steinmeier Review of German Foreign Policy", *Judy Dempsey's Strategic Europe*, Carnegie Europe, March 19, 2015, Web. Accessed June 11, 2015. <http://carnegieeurope.eu/strategieurope/?fa=59422>

⁷ Hill, C. and Smith, M., *International Relations and the European Union*, 2nd Ed., New York: Oxford University Press, 2008, p. 315-317.

⁸ Lehne, S., "The Big Three in EU Foreign Policy", *Carnegie Europe*, July 2012, p. 11, Web. Accessed June 10, 2015. http://carnegieendowment.org/files/eu_big_three1.pdf

⁹ Lehne, S., "The Big Three in EU Foreign Policy", *Carnegie Europe*, July 2012, p. 12, Web. Accessed June 10, 2015. http://carnegieendowment.org/files/eu_big_three1.pdf

(CSDP), which produced a state of disillusionment in Berlin. Consequently, Germany started focusing more on bilateral relations with European countries, the US, and BRICS countries (Brazil, Russia, India, China, and South Africa). According to Stefan Lehne from *Carnegie Europe*, the country's assets are however **determinant for the EU's future** in international politics and security. The EU's fate will surely depend on Germany's agenda and will to actively strengthen the Union's foreign policy and international capabilities, which will be strongly needed due the enhanced role of EU institutions in a growing global multipolar world.¹⁰

c. Peace & Security Policy

The current German Defense Minister Ursula von der Leyen and Foreign Minister F.-W. Steinmeier decided to cut with the previous military reserve of the country, and advocate for an **increased role abroad**, based on the idea of deterrence built on powerful combat units and heavy weapons. This radical change in the German security policy is mainly explained by the current conflicts and challenges threatening the liberal international system, crucial for Germany's stability and (economic) power.¹¹

At the 2014 Munich Security Conference, the country's representatives – Foreign Minister, Defense Minister and President – jointly declared that Germany was now taking a **new direction** and will be more involved in European and international security policy. As a result of criticism regarding German foreign and security policy, the Federal Foreign Office decided to undertake more political leadership in conflicts. This initiative was taken in order to have **greater influence** on discussions about the future of European military co-operation. The country will no longer feel committed to supporting military intervention of its close allies, which it perceives as being motivated by national interests. Specifically, Germany will avoid supporting independent French operations (e.g. in Mali and Central African Republic).¹² The last Munich Security Conference (January 2015) continued in this course, as confirms the 2015 Munich Security Report¹³. Steinmeier and von der Leyen's new rhetoric aims at improving Germany's international political activity in a **comprehensive approach**, while only slightly increasing its military involvement abroad¹⁴. This adjustment will still affect the state budget, as the Federal Defense Forces (*Bundeswehr*) and the German Intelligence Agency will increase their activities¹⁵. The present innovation is tempered by the fact that it will still be Chancellor Merkel who will make decisions regarding security and defense, and that public opinion appears to not support further German military involvement abroad.¹⁶

¹⁰ Lehne, S., "The Big Three in EU Foreign Policy", *Carnegie Europe*, July 2012, p. 12-13, Web. Accessed June 10, 2015. http://carnegieendowment.org/files/eu_big_three1.pdf

¹¹ n.a. "Germany – Military Policy", *GlobalSecurity.org*. Web. Accessed June 18, 2015. <http://www.globalsecurity.org/military/world/europe/de-policy.htm>

¹² Gotkowska, J. "More engagement? German security policy of the CDU/CSU-SPD coalition", *Centre for Eastern Studies (OSW)*, February 5, 2014. Web. Accessed June 18, 2015. <http://www.osw.waw.pl/en/publikacje/analyses/2014-02-05/more-engagement-german-security-policy-cdu/csu-spd-coalition>

¹³ Munich Security Conference (MSC), *Munich Security Report 2015: Collapsing Order, Reluctant Guardians?*, 2015. Web. Accessed June 19, 2015. <http://www.eventanizer.com/MSC2015/MunichSecurityReport2015.pdf>

¹⁴ Gotkowska, J. "More engagement? German security policy of the CDU/CSU-SPD coalition", *Centre for Eastern Studies (OSW)*, February 5, 2014. Web. Accessed June 18, 2015. <http://www.osw.waw.pl/en/publikacje/analyses/2014-02-05/more-engagement-german-security-policy-cdu/csu-spd-coalition>

¹⁵ Drechsel, A. "Germany's new security policies come with a price tag", *Deutsche Welle*, November 14, 2014. Web. Accessed June 18, 2015. <http://dw.de/p/1DnsJ>

¹⁶ Gotkowska, J. "More engagement? German security policy of the CDU/CSU-SPD coalition", *Centre for Eastern Studies (OSW)*, February 5, 2014. Web. Accessed June 18, 2015.

In the Konrad Adenauer Foundation's article *Strategic Deliberations about the Future of German Security Policy*, it is argued that the West's lack of confidence in its own power to shape events is encouraging challengers and threat-producers as well as restricting its own capability to take actions to counter those actors. Thus, Germany's economic supremacy is to be used as a first step towards **European leadership**. Indeed, France and the UK, being in a less comfortable economic situation, are restricted in their foreign and security policy actions. The primary strategic goal of Germany should thus be to strengthen the West, by reinforcing NATO and the EU, in order to ensure global stability. It should focus on improving its crisis-management abilities and long-term strategic capabilities.¹⁷

European Union (EU)

As Germany is a member of the EU, it takes part in the CFSP and CSDP. Consequently to the new direction taken by Germany in foreign and security policy, the country currently aims at strengthening its influence on the organization of military co-operation within Europe. The CFSP meets German interests in many ways, as it goes in line with the country's comprehensive approach to crisis management, preference for crisis prevention, and inclination for multilateralism. Due to Germany's reliance on a stable international order, European security is on the top of the agenda for Berlin, which particularly emphasizes the need for enhanced cooperation, transparency and risk assessment within the CFSP.¹⁸

According to Hilmar Linnenkamp (advisor at the Stiftung Wissenschaft und Politik), the country **could do more**. Germany's tradition of humanitarian operations provides it with the necessary assets for CSDP military and civilian missions (e.g. transport, communication,...), to which the country does not participate at its maximum. This is explained by its view of the CSDP as "a framework for policy coordination, a platform for harmonizing capability developments, and an instrument of measured independence of the EU"¹⁹.

Germany currently sees NATO as the dominant framework for European security, and is more attracted towards bilateral or multilateral cooperation in the field of security and defense. As a result, it works on enhancing NATO-EU cooperation, as both organizations present advantages for Germany.²⁰ It approaches CSDP from a **conceptual point of view**, in contrast with France and the United Kingdom. The country focuses on clear concepts and working methods in CSDP, in contrast with its French ally, who focuses on operational aspects.²¹

<http://www.osw.waw.pl/en/publikacje/analyses/2014-02-05/more-engagement-german-security-policy-cdu/csu-spd-coalition>

¹⁷ Keller, P. "Facts & Findings: Prospects for German Foreign Policy – Strategic Deliberations about the Future of German Security Policy", *Konrad Adenauer Stiftung*, April 2015. Web. Accessed June 18, 2015.

http://www.kas.de/wf/doc/kas_41124-544-2-30.pdf?150602092554http://www.kas.de/wf/doc/kas_41124-544-2-30.pdf?150602092554

¹⁸ Tettweiler, F. "The CSDP from a German Vantage Point" In Fiott, D. (ed.) *The Common Security and Defence Policy: National Perspectives*, Egmont Institute, No. 79, May 2015, p. 35. Web. Accessed June 22, 2015.

<http://www.egmontinstitute.be/wp-content/uploads/2015/05/ep79.pdf>

¹⁹ Linnenkamp, H. "Germany and the CSDP" In Fiott, D. (ed.) *The Common Security and Defence Policy: National Perspectives*, Egmont Institute, No. 79, May 2015, p. 31-32. Web. Accessed June 22, 2015.

<http://www.egmontinstitute.be/wp-content/uploads/2015/05/ep79.pdf>

²⁰ Tettweiler, F. "The CSDP from a German Vantage Point" In Fiott, D. (ed.) *The Common Security and Defence Policy: National Perspectives*, Egmont Institute, No. 79, May 2015, p. 36. Web. Accessed June 22, 2015.

<http://www.egmontinstitute.be/wp-content/uploads/2015/05/ep79.pdf>

²¹ Kempin, R. "From Reluctance to Policy: A New German Stance on the CSDP?" In Fiott, D. (ed.) *The Common Security and Defence Policy: National Perspectives*, Egmont Institute, No. 79, May 2015, p. 34. Web. Accessed June 22, 2015. <http://www.egmontinstitute.be/wp-content/uploads/2015/05/ep79.pdf>

North Atlantic Treaty Organization (NATO)

Germany joined NATO in 1955 as West Germany, and then with Eastern Germany in 1990, following the country's reunification. It currently views NATO as a primary actor for defense cooperation in Europe. In 2013, Germany introduced the **Framework Nation Concept** (FNC), aimed at establishing permanent groups of NATO member states as deployable force packages.²² In the period 2014-2015, Germany participated in about 14,5% of NATO's common-funded budgets and programmes, the highest contribution in the EU²³.

Germany expressed its willingness to increase German armed forces' participation in NATO-led missions, in accordance with its newly established foreign and security policy. The country has always been reliable for NATO operations, with the exception of Libya. In 2011, it decided to not support military action against the Libyan leader Moammar Gaddafi. Domestic issues have consistently limited Germany's involvement.²⁴

As a result of the ongoing conflict in Ukraine, Germany presently faces the remaining consequences of its past division. Indeed, the strong need for territorial defense resurfaces within the population, as its Eastern neighboring countries are close to the conflict. Consequently, Germany is strongly supporting in NATO defensive measures within Eastern NATO member states (i.e. Baltic states, Poland, Romania, and Bulgaria).²⁵

United Nations (UN)

Reunited Germany fully joined the United Nations in 1973, after its divisions were admitted as observer states for 18 years (West Germany) and one year (East Germany). Many UN offices are located in Germany, mostly in Bonn, such as the UN Volunteers Programme (UNV) and the Secretariat of the UN Framework Convention on Climate Change (UNFCCC).²⁶ It is worth noting that Germany received the most asylum bids (173.000) in 2014, which was met with resistance due to its complex system of funding and share responsibilities, according to a UN report.²⁷

Germany has a multi-faceted engagement within the UN, and contributes to various tasks including peacekeeping, sustainable development, human rights and humanitarian assistance. It is the fourth largest contributor to the UN, with a peacekeeping budget of about € 550 million for the year 2014-2015. As of September 2015, the country had 181 nationals involved in UN Peacekeeping operations (including in UNIFIL, MINURSO, MINUSMA,

²² Linnenkamp, H. "Germany and the CSDP" In Fiott, D. (ed.) *The Common Security and Defence Policy: National Perspectives*, Egmont Institute, No. 79, May 2015, p. 31-32. Web. Accessed June 22, 2015. <http://www.egmontinstitute.be/wp-content/uploads/2015/05/ep79.pdf>

²³ "NATO Common-Funded Budgets & Programmes", *The North Atlantic Treaty Organization*, Web. Accessed September 22, 2015. http://www.nato.int/nato_static_fl2014/assets/pdf/pdf_2014_06/20140611_20140601_NATO_common_funded_budgets_2014-2015.pdf

²⁴ Erdmann, M. "What's Up With Those Germans?", *Judy Dempsey's Strategic Europe*, Carnegie Europe, May 7, 2015. Web. Accessed June 22, 2015. <http://carnegieeurope.eu/strategieurope/?fa=60009>

²⁵ Erdmann, M. "What's Up With Those Germans?", *Judy Dempsey's Strategic Europe*, Carnegie Europe, May 7, 2015. Web. Accessed June 22, 2015. <http://carnegieeurope.eu/strategieurope/?fa=60009>

²⁶ "The United Nations in Germany", *Permanent Mission of Germany to the United Nations in New York*. Web. Accessed June 22, 2015. <http://www.new-york-un.diplo.de/Vertretung/newyorkvn/en/un-and-germany/the-united-nations-in-germany.html>

²⁷ n.a. "UN reports shows Germany tops overall list for asylum bids", *Deutsche Welle*, March 26, 2015. Web. Accessed June 22, 2015. <http://www.dw.com/en/un-report-shows-germany-tops-overall-list-for-asylum-bids/a-18342277>

UNMISS, UNAMID, UNMIL, UNMIK and UNAMA)²⁸. During the year 2011-2012, Germany had a seat in the UN Security Council as a non-permanent member. Also, it is noteworthy that Germany abstained from voting on the Security Council Resolution 1973, which authorized a no-fly zone over Libya.²⁹

Organization for Security and Co-operation in Europe (OSCE)

Germany joined the OSCE in 1973, when it was named the *Conference for Security and Co-operation in Europe*. In 2014, it had a total of 53 nationals working for the OSCE and participated in 11% of the organization's unified budget with €15.677.727³⁰. In 2016, Germany will hold the chairmanship of the OSCE, and have a unique chance to back its shift in foreign and security policy rhetoric with concrete and smart actions. It particularly aims at supporting furthermore the **Special Monitoring Mission (SMM)** in Ukraine, where twenty-two German nationals are positioned as OSCE observers and one federal police officer is operating as a strategic advisor. Together with French President Hollande, Merkel strongly called for implementation of the **Minsk Agreements (Minsk I & II)**, and initiated the signature of the second ceasefire (Minsk II, February 2015).³¹

Council of Europe (CoE)

Germany has been part of the Council of Europe since 1950. In 2015, it contributed to the CoE's budget with € 35.415.188³². The Council of Europe was recently concerned about rising racism in Germany, especially considering the arrival of refugees in the country. It issued a report in October 2015 on this issue, referring to racist and xenophobic demonstrations in Germany such as far-right, anti-Muslim, anti-immigrant, and anti-Semitic events (e.g. anti-Islam marches in 2014).³³

Strategic Culture

Germany's strategic culture is highly influenced by the post-war period, when the country's foreign policy was characterized by pacifism, redundancy of militarism, aversion to the use of force, and rejection of nationalism and statism, which are core values embedded in the German Constitution. Regarding Germany's security policy, the scholar Kerry Longhurst says the country is known to prefer multilateral solutions by consensus as well as non-confrontational defense and deterrence, to promote stability in the field, to restrain the use of armed forces, and to have strong anti-military sentiment. According to Dr. H.W. Maull, Germany is known to be a "**civilian power**" promoting multilateralism, institution-building, and national integration with the Western powers.³⁴

²⁸ "UN Mission's Summary detailed by Country", *United Nations Peacekeeping*, September 30, 2015. Web. Accessed October 13, 2015. http://www.un.org/en/peacekeeping/contributors/2015/sep15_3.pdf

²⁹ "Germany in the UN", *Germany's Federal Foreign Office*. Web. Accessed June 22, 2015.

http://www.auswaertiges-amt.de/EN/Aussenpolitik/VereinteNationen/DundVN/Uebersicht_node.html

³⁰ Organization for Security and Co-operation in Europe (OSCE), *Annual Report 2014*, July 2015. Web.

Accessed September 1, 2015. <http://www.osce.org/secretariat/169971?download=true>

³¹ n.a. "Germany's part in the OSCE Special Monitoring Mission", *The Federal Government of Germany*, June 3, 2015. Web. Accessed June 22, 2015. https://www.bundesregierung.de/Content/EN/Artikel/2015/06_en/2015-06-02-osze-ukraine_en.html

³² "Germany", *The Council of Europe*, 2015. Web. Accessed June 22, 2015.

<http://www.coe.int/en/web/portal/Germany>

³³ AFP, "Rising racism worries Council of Europe", *The Local*, October 1, 2015. Web. Accessed November 22, 2015. <http://www.thelocal.de/20151001/council-of-europe-worried-by-germanys-rising-racism>

³⁴ Andersson Elfgren, M. "The German Dilemma: A bachelor's thesis about strategic culture and Germany's involvement in the CSDP", *Helmut Schmidt Universität*, June 2014, p. 23-26. Web. Accessed June 22, 2015. <http://www.diva-portal.se/smash/get/diva2:729485/FULLTEXT01.pdf>

These characteristics however contrast those of the recent German rhetoric used by the Defense and the Foreign Ministers. As a result of the Euro crisis and multiplying threats for Europe, Germany has to play a stronger role than before. In the Ukraine crisis, for instance, Germany is the ideal actor to negotiate with the conflict's parties. It however **lacks strategic action**, due to Merkel's **focus on conflict prevention**, not conflict solving. This is what German philosopher Ulrich Beck named "Merkiavellism".³⁵

d. Economic Policy

Germany is one of the few Eurozone countries to relatively not have been affected by the Euro crisis. It currently has the **biggest economy of Europe**, with a GDP of about €3.340 trillion in 2013³⁶, which seems to be in good shape according to recent economic indicators (e.g. low unemployment rate, stable economic growth, balanced federal budget). However, critiques have recently emerged with regard to the current Merkel cabinet's economic policy. One of the primary critiques of Minister of Economic Affairs Sigmar Gabriel's policy is the country's **low public investment rate** (2% of GDP), which results in a crumbling national infrastructure (bridges are particularly concerned). Germany prefers to save rather than to invest money, and consequently had a current account surplus of €220 billion in 2014 (the largest in the world). In addition, private investment is low, a result of anxiety and uncertainty emerging from the current economic situation of Europe and ongoing conflict in Ukraine, which make incentivize German private companies to invest abroad. Another critique is the economy's **stagnance**. GDP growth is on average of 1,2% a year, which places Germany behind fourteen other countries of the Eurozone. Wages have stagnated in the past years due to competitiveness race and export obsession, which weakens domestic demand.³⁷

The European Commission's 2015 report on Germany confirms these comments made by British economist Philippe Legrain. It however adds that the country's economic activity is expected to gradually strengthen, thanks to circumstances boosting private consumption and business investment (e.g. low interest rates and wage growth). The European Commission also predicts that the current account's high surplus will continue to increase and reach 8% of GDP in 2015. Furthermore, it points out that various factors might threaten private consumption growth (e.g. high tax burden on labor and surging costs of renewable energies) as well as economic growth (e.g. weak private investment and insufficient public investment). Also, it states that the country's close integration with the Eurozone and economic spillovers implies that economic development in Germany can positively and/or negatively **affect other member states**. The report concludes that overall, Germany has made limited progress in addressing the previous recommendations of the Commission, and will have to address challenges such as low private investment, job disincentives, low working time, weak educational outcomes, and sectorial policies issues (especially regarding energy) in order to strengthen long-term growth and incomes.³⁸

³⁵ Dempsey, J. "Judy Asks: Is Germany Discovering Strategy", *Judy Dempsey's Strategic Europe*, Carnegie Europe, February 11, 2015. Web. Accessed June 22, 2015. <http://carnegieeurope.eu/strategieurope/?fa=59044>

³⁶ "Germany", *The World Bank*, 2013. Web. Accessed June 23, 2015. <http://data.worldbank.org/country/Germany>

³⁷ Legrain, P. "Germany's sickly economy", *Europe's World*, February 23, 2015. Web. Accessed June 23, 2015. <http://europesworld.org/2015/02/23/germanys-sickly-economy/#.VYlpRM4RImB>; n.a. "German Economy: No New Deal", *The Economist*, February 14, 2015. Web. Accessed June 23, 2015. <http://www.economist.com/news/europe/21643193-germany-investing-too-littlehurting-europe-world-and-itself-no-new-deal>

³⁸ European Commission, "Country Report Germany 2015 Including an In-Depth Review on the prevention and correction of macroeconomic imbalances", *Commission Staff Working Document*, Brussels, March 2015. Web. Accessed June 23, 2015. http://ec.europa.eu/europe2020/pdf/csr2015/cr2015_germany_en.pdf

e. Other Diplomatic Priorities

Priorities at the European Level

Nationally speaking, Germany faces **internal division** with regard to the country's foreign policy path, between the political elite and the public at large. Whereas Merkel, von der Leyen, and Steinmeier agree on the need for a more active German foreign policy, the country's population seems to be reluctant to such policy because of uncertainty and anxiety emerging mostly from the Euro crisis, the refugee flow, and the conflict in Ukraine. This prevents Germany from taking strong actions in foreign and security policy. When the country was reunified in 1990, it was made clear by Chancellor Helmut Kohl that Germany will be fully integrated into Europe and the EU, which was a prerequisite for the country's economic and political recovery. However, Germany is now the leading economic power on the continent and firmly impacts European political affairs. It is expected to have a more proactive position than previously, despite the population's unpreparedness for such change.³⁹

A great example of internal division regards the **refugee crisis**. As Germany has been one of the top recipient countries of the EU, the topic is sensitive and complex. In August 2015, Merkel firstly ignored the Dublin Regulation⁴⁰ she previously supported, by establishing an open-door policy to Syrian migrants. In early November 2015, the CDU led by Merkel and the CSU led by Seehofer released a joint position paper recommending the implementation of "transit zones" at borders. The disagreement over the limit on the number of refugees to be allowed in Germany, an idea to which Merkel strongly opposes, remained unsolved⁴¹. However, the Chancellor has proven to be able to please the right, seeing the rising popularity of far-right parties in Germany. On November 6, Merkel announced that the Syrian migrants allowed in the country would no longer be granted asylum or refugee status but enjoy subsidiary protection for one year.⁴² On November 10, forced to take into account the EU law and the complaints of the opposition, Merkel eventually closed the German borders to Syrian refugees in accordance with the Dublin Regulation⁴³. These unilateral decisions generated confusion and frustration at the EU level, and revealed internal opposition on the subject.

Priorities at the Global Level

Germany has enjoyed cordial **diplomatic relations with Israel** for fifty years, and is currently Israelis' favorite European country, according to the Konrad Adenauer Foundation. After many years of restraint on criticism, Germans are for their part starting to release negative opinions about the latter country. Actually, the Bertelsmann Foundation found that 48% of Germans are critical about Israel, mainly because of their treatment of Palestinians⁴⁴.

³⁹ Janes, J. "Germany's Policy Preoccupations: Taking Stock Ahead of the German Foreign Policy Review", *American Institute for Contemporary German Studies*, February 24, 2015. Web. Accessed June 24, 2015. <http://www.aicgs.org/issue/germanys-policy-preoccupations/>

⁴⁰ The Dublin Regulation states that migrants' application for asylum or refugee status must be examined in the first country in which they entered the EU.

⁴¹ Delcker, J. "Merkel strikes migration truce on German right", *Politico*, Nov. 4, 2015. Web. Accessed Nov. 22, 2015. <http://www.politico.eu/article/merkel-and-seehofer-common-ground-coalition-migration-crisis/>

⁴² Traynor, I. "Confusion as Germany announces curbs on Syrian refugees", *The Guardian*, November 6, 2015. Web. Accessed November 22, 2015. <http://www.theguardian.com/world/2015/nov/06/germany-imposes-surprise-curbs-on-syrian-refugees>

⁴³ Maurice, E. "Germany makes U-turn on Syria refugees", *EU Observer*, November 11, 2015. Web. Accessed November 22, 2015. <https://euobserver.com/migration/131062>

⁴⁴ n.a. "Germany and Israel: A very special relationship", *The Economist*, January 31, 2015. Web. Accessed June 24, 2015. <http://www.economist.com/news/europe/21641270-post-war-friendship-germany-israel-strong-fraught-very-special-relationship>

The two countries have indeed very contrasting mentalities and opinions shaped by their past. For instance, 82% of Israelis want Germany to sell their country more weapons, while 68% of Germans are against such action⁴⁵. Following the “Israel taboo” in Germany, open criticism and tensions are increasing, as illustrated by Merkel’s worries about Israeli Prime Minister Netanyahu’s good faith, especially with regards to the promise of a two-state solution. German Foreign Minister Steinmeier defined the situation in Gaza as “catastrophic”, after his visits of the occupied territory, and called for the reopening of the discussion about a two-state solution⁴⁶. This **opening of the discussion** and nascent honesty could improve German-Israeli relations, only if some restraint is continued, concerning German rhetoric.

Author Sophie L. Vériter, Vesalius College (VUB).
Language Revision Joseph Aumuller, University of Denver.

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⁴⁶ n.a. “Germany’s Steinmeier visits Gaza Strip”, *Deutsche Welle*, June 1, 2015. Web. Accessed on June 24, 2015. <http://www.dw.com/en/germanys-steinmeier-visits-gaza-strip/a-18489867>

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