



German Leadership, Responsibility, Solidarity?

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Outcomes Report

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HELLENIC FOUNDATION FOR EUROPEAN & FOREIGN POLICY

*“A good political leader is one who,
with the interests of all in mind,
seizes the moment in a spirit of openness and pragmatism.*

*A good political leader always opts to initiate processes
rather than possessing spaces.”*

Pope Francis to the US Congress,
September 24, 2015

(Quote contributed by one participant)

CONTENTS

| | | |
|---|---|----|
|  | 1. About the workshop | 4 |
| | 2. Germany – the uncomfortable leader? | 4 |
| | » Thought piece by Daniela Schwarzer | |
| | » Group exploration  | |
|  | 3. Exploring perceptions of Germany's approach to three crises | 6 |
|  | » Euro zone | |
| | » Thought piece by Daniela Schwarzer | |
| | » Group exploration | |
|  | » Ukraine Russia and Syria | 7 |
| | » Thought piece by Jörg Forbrig | |
| | » Group exploration | |
|  | » Refugees | 9 |
| | » Thought piece by Astrid Ziebarth | |
| | » Group exploration | |
|  | 4. What makes Germany act the way it does? | 11 |
| | 5. How might Germany act smarter?  | 12 |
| | 6. Where can we go from here?  | 13 |
|  | 7. Final Messages | 13 |
| | 8. List of Participants  | 14 |

Germany is at the center of three ongoing crises facing Europe: the Euro crisis, the Ukraine/Russia and Syria crisis, and the refugee crisis. In some of these cases, German "leadership" has been praised, while in others it has been criticized. The one-day workshop brought together six national members of parliaments from Germany, Greece, Lithuania and Spain, and 10 experts from five European think tanks in Germany, Greece, Italy and Spain, and lastly, one key actor and shaper of German foreign policy.

The goals of the workshop were to explore, reflect and analyze German leadership within the European Union and to gain new insights into Germany's leadership role. The group was an optimal size to allow and stimulate an open, deep, profound and trusting conversation about perceptions of Germany's role in Europe and ideas about how

Thought piece by Daniela Schwarzer

It was when the sovereign debt crisis put the single currency under existential threat that Berlin became a key player both in crisis management and in reforming the euro zone governance framework. Since 2014, Berlin in cooperation with Paris has also led the EU's efforts to solve the Russia-Ukraine crisis. More recently, Germany has become a key actor in the EU's struggle to find a common approach to the refugee crisis which has been unfolding for years, but reached the core of the EU with the influx of tens of thousands of mostly Syrian refugees only recently. While Berlin came to lead the EU's policy response on the sovereign debt crisis and Russia rather by default than by choice, it was on the refugee crisis that the German Chancellor seized leadership most actively in summer 2015.

Germany can act smarter. The conversations were facilitated by Peter Woodward and Mia Forbes Pirie.

Key questions included

What do recent developments tell us about power structures in the EU, and in particular about Germany's role in Europe? What are the expectations and perceptions of other EU member states regarding the role of Germany? Is Germany learning to "lead"? How can German leadership develop within the existing structures of the EU? And finally, how can Germany act "smarter"?

The workshop was part of the 'Mercator European Dialogue' project and added to the four topical priorities that have been identified during the Berlin meeting in September 2015, which are to be carried forward simultaneously.

Over the past five years, the German government has gathered relevant experience in leading EU policy responses. However, the factors that gave Berlin strength and impact on previous occasions, only partially apply to the current challenge of managing the refugee crisis and solving the underlying deficiencies of the EU's functioning in Justice and Home Affairs. From partners to power resources and leverage, the conditions for Berlin's leadership differ significantly between the three crises. So far, there seems to be little transfer from one to another. As a result, Germany's ability to move things forward in Europe with any sustainability looks uncertain. The German government's strength reflects the weakness of others. At other times and under different domestic circumstances, some of Germany's partners would probably have acted earlier and

1.

ABOUT THE WORKSHOP

2.

GERMANY – THE UNCOMFORTABLE LEADER?

more entrepreneurial to help tackle the problems confronting Europe. France, for example, has traditionally been more active on migration issues or in the shaping of euro zone governance than it has been over the past five years, which is a result of weak political leadership and rising populism. The same is true for the UK, which is traditionally very forward-leaning on foreign policy and defense issues. Since 2014 it has, however, been largely absent from handling the EU's approach to the Middle East or Russia, including the management of the relationship with the United States over the conflicts in Ukraine and Syria, despite the fact that Moscow has done no less than openly violate the rules-based security order of post-Cold war Europe. Also some smaller states that have traditionally been stable and reliable partners of Germany or the Franco-German tandem at the EU level are dealing with more political fragmentation and volatility at home. Meanwhile, the political situation in Germany has been remarkably stable for the past decade, strong right- or left-wing populists or extremist parties have yet to gain significance. Of course, domestic constraints, both political and constitutional ones, shaped Germany's approach e.g. to the sovereign debt crisis, but did not make the government or the vast majority of Parliamentarians adopt euro- or EU-skeptical positions. The country's relative economic strength and financial solidity is underpinned by socio-economic stability and

the trade unions' readiness to accept labor and wage policies which today still sustain Germany's global competitiveness and low unemployment.

And yet, Germany's capacity to move things forward in Europe looks anything but certain. It needs reliable partners, a broad understanding domestically and with its partners that European solidarity is more needed than ever and determined political leadership to help tackle the complex challenges the EU is currently facing.

Group exploration

For the group exploration, the participants split into three small groups to reflect on the introductory thought piece and explore the issue of German leadership further. The following are the key insights of the explorations:

- » Germany's leadership role was conditioned by a leadership vacuum in the EU, not by political choice. Today, traditional leaders in the EU such as France and the United Kingdom are playing a much less prominent and less decisive role than before.
- » Traditional EU dynamics are changing. The Franco-German tandem, once the source of political initiatives and decision-making, has lost momentum.

» With the UK focused on the question of Brexit, and France with internal reform pressures and battling the wide-ranging effects of terrorism, Germany should also reach out to affluent small and medium-sized member states, e.g. Austria, Belgium, Denmark, the Netherlands, Sweden and Finland.

- » Germany's leadership is largely based on its economic clout and leadership, not on a legacy of diplomatic and political leadership.
- » Germany's leadership role is far from consistent, and is more often reactive (eg. euro zone and refugee crises) than proactive (e.g. Ukraine).
- » Germany's current de-facto leadership role is uncontested in the EU.

Questions generated by the group

- » Has Germany's role in EU politics moved from an integrationist approach (Kohl) to an intergovernmental approach (Merkel)? What would be the implications of such a change?
- » Will Germany shift from acting as a reluctant leader to being a clear leader? Does it want to lead?

Euro zone

Thought piece by Daniela Schwarzer

In the euro zone, Berlin's position as the largest guarantor in the rescue mechanisms and its powerful domestic veto players (in particular the German Constitutional court) granted the German government an unparalleled degree of influence over EU policy decisions and hence domestic policy choices in debtor countries. The perception that the single currency faced an existential threat compelled Berlin to take on financial and political risks that had seemed inconceivable to shoulder just a few months earlier. But in exchange, Germany was able to set the pace and conditionality to financial aid. Though some governments, at least in certain phases of the crisis, were highly critical of European policy choices with a strong German handwriting, the gravity of the situation left them with little alternative. Berlin was hence able to push for euro zone governance reforms that, from its perspective, encourage member states to adjust budgetary and economic policies and bring the euro zone closer back to the model of a currency union which Germany had thought was enshrined in the Maastricht Treaty. But at the same time Germany had to accept higher risk sharing and financial solidarity that has substantively changed the political economy of the euro zone.

In the initial phase of the sovereign debt crisis, the German government worked with a coalition of northern and northeastern EU members, and a growing North-South divide seemed to be emerging. But as policies converged in countries struck by the crises and agreement widened that substantive reforms were indeed necessary, Rome, Madrid and Paris lost their appetite to oppose Berlin, not least because of the potential pressure of financial markets. Thus the North-South divide weakened and there was no stark competition with Berlin over policy choices, except for Greece.

However, the absence of vocal and engaged political competition over policies and visions for a deepened EU has not proven to be a blessing for Berlin or Brussels. For instance, the continuous absence of strong French impulses in European discussions about the future of the euro zone has paralyzed the duo's traditional role of forging a consensus and driving debates to compromise between other EU member states. This is so despite the fact that these differences are there and have led to policy approaches at some crucial points in the past five years that have displayed a French touch. Examples for this are the creation of the European Stability Mechanism in 2010 or the increased focus on investment and growth with the Juncker Plan. Currently, there is however little evidence of a broader Franco-German vision for the future of the euro zone. The EU institutions' desperate efforts to push the debate on the euro zone (in particular with the five Presidents' report) have not led to any substantive progress beyond the creation of the Banking Union.

Group exploration

Exploring Germany's role in the euro crisis further, the group discussed Germany's style of working and came up with the following key observations and insights:

Regarding Germany

» While Germany thinks it has more power than it actually has ("Scheinriese" looking like a giant from afar, but becoming smaller the closer the 'giant' gets), Italy and other such member states may think they have less power than they in fact do.

3.

EXPLORING PERCEPTIONS OF GERMANY'S APPROACH TO THREE CRISES

- » Germany feels like/is perceived as a paymaster:
Corresponding to its GDP, Germany guarantees for 27% of the ESM's loans shares and, therefore, its risk exposure is high. Germany did not have a choice but to act in its own self-interest.
- » Germany is sometimes as oblivious to other member states as the US occasionally is to the rest of the world.

Regarding Germany and the EU

- » EU politics and member states' positions are increasingly affected and complicated by domestic/national politics.
- » Germany and the EU need strong institutions for debate amongst equals.
- » As Germany impacts developments in other EU member states considerably, the question arises whether Germany's actions and positions are legitimate. After all, non-Germans cannot vote in German elections.
- » Germany's cross-border impact bears important questions for an emerging European public.

Regarding Greece

- » Germany's approach to Greece can be partially explained by party politics: the CDU-led German government was seen by some participants as being more lenient with Greece's government when Nea Demokratia was in power than when Syriza assumed power.
- » Judging from the Varoufakis-Schäuble relationship, personality, personal sympathies and antipathies may play a role in clashes and successes.
- » A lack of public and media attention helps with the creation of solutions: out of the spotlight, compromise can be reached and reforms can be implemented more quickly and easily.
- » Everybody is tired of crises and conflicts. _____

Ukraine | Russia and Syria

Thought piece by Jörg Forbrig

First and foremost, for Germany, no less than for most other European and Western countries, the two years since the eruption of open confrontation with Russia have been a steep learning curve. What initially seemed to be a constitutional crisis in Ukraine has now fully revealed itself to be a systemic confrontation with Russia. It is increasingly understood, despite many doubters in Germany and the West broadly, that Russia sought out this confrontation as a new source of legitimacy for the powers-that-be in Russia. It has become obvious that this conflict plays out in many different theatres, from conflicts in Ukraine and Syria to direct Russian interference with the politics, economies, societies and security of many a Western state. Understanding the comprehensive nature of the Russian challenge has taken some time and as a result, so have German and Western responses.

By comparison with many in Europe, and despite its long-held hope for a special relationship with Russia, Germany appears to have grasped the nature of the Russia challenge relatively quickly. This has involved shedding long-held legacies, such as a decades-old tradition of Ostpolitik. This has required Germany to overcome opposition from German business with its deep engagement in Russia. This has meant heated public debates, and angry attacks both from within and from without. Once the German government had worked its way through this principal adjustment of its positions on Russia, by early summer of 2015, it assumed a principled and strict position that holds until today. This position eventually shaped the European consensus, although it is a consensus that remains fragile.

Secondly, this learning process was also reflected in experimentation with various negotiation formats utilized in seeking to de-escalate and settle the crisis in Ukraine. Germany has pursued, against frequent accusations of naivety, an approach that placed primary emphasis on negotiations; it has consistently viewed punitive measures against Russia as only auxiliary, and it has ruled out measures such as military engagement and assistance to Ukraine. This reflects a tradition of caution, rapprochement, confidence-building, and negotiation that has been established over decades of German foreign policy.

At the same time, several attempts were needed to find a suitable negotiation format. After an initial strategy with a key role being played by foreign ministers, including the

German one, the Russia challenge eventually became an executive matter. The EU turned out to be ill-equipped to play a lead role, and the United States indicated their belief that settling this conflict was primarily a European matter. Poland was left out of later formats at the insistence of Russia. The OSCE was brought in as a pan-European agency and was backed up by the combined political weight of Germany and France. The resulting Normandy format and Minsk process, while so far showing only modest progress, correspond to the emphasis Germany places on negotiated solutions, and have consequently been endowed with considerable political capital from Berlin.

Thirdly, and again in line with traditional German commitments to European and transatlantic cooperation, Berlin has pursued a multilateral rather than bilateral approach to handling the Ukraine crisis and broader Russia challenge. It has understood from early on that the key to facing this new confrontation was European and transatlantic unity. It did not succumb to the temptations of trying to address problems between Berlin and Moscow, and it has instead nurtured Western unity. This involved persuading European capitals from Athens to Budapest, which advocated for a softer approach to the Kremlin; and also required convincing Washington that rather than forging ahead with more robust U.S. measures, closely coordinating across the Atlantic was worthwhile. Over time, this emphasis on Western unity also became more strategic, not least with the principal decision to link Russian sanctions to the implementation of the Minsk agreements, which owed a lot to the German initiative. This approach by Germany has helped to keep Europe, in particular, unified in its responses to Russia, much to the frustration of the Kremlin and its many attempts to sow discord amongst Europeans and Americans.

Fourthly, Germany has steadfastly rejected tit-for-tats between the various crises facing Europe, which were sought by Russia for its own advantage in its confrontation with the West. This was most obvious in the German opposition to link the Ukraine and Syria crises in a way that would have traded Western concessions, such as a lifting of sanctions, on the former, in exchange for Russian cooperation in addressing the crisis in the latter and the Islamic State threat. This was also reflected in German insistence on acting according to 'principle' towards Greece or Hungary when those countries, in the euro zone crisis and illiberal disagreements with European values respectively, sought rapprochement with Russia to put pressure on EU partners. It is not least to Berlin's credit, and to Moscow's frustration, that such tradeoffs have so far not materialized and are yet to have compromised Western positions vis-à-vis Russia.

Fifthly, Germany's political response was broadly supported by rapidly evolving public opinion. Although long-held views and public debates on Russia may have suggested otherwise, a majority of Germans passed a clear and principled judgement on Russian actions in Ukraine and elsewhere. There was a straightforward understanding of Russian aggression and an express desire to support the victims of that aggression, with political backing, economic aid, and even the prospect of EU membership. In turn, sanctions against Russia have enjoyed increasing support amongst the German public, surprising many who had assumed the primary German focus would be on economic exchange and benefits. It was this unambiguous response of Germans-at-large that paved the way for Berlin's increasingly and unexpectedly strict line on Russia, although opponents to mainstream assessments and government policies on Russia remain a very vocal minority.

Finally, its central role in the confrontation with Russia has also taught Germany an important lesson in leadership, whether wanted or not. It has exposed the country to numerous forms of criticism from within and from without. Inside of the country, accusations have ranged from ignoring Germany's historical guilt to damaging economic and energy interests, to siding with alleged Ukrainian extremists and Western warmongers. Outside of Germany, Berlin has been criticized for doing too much to accommodate Russia and too little to help Ukraine, for ignoring legitimate concerns of its Eastern NATO and EU partners and for seeking a quick way back to business-as-usual with Russia. The crisis has shown that statements and actions by German players, whether government or business, of this or that political affiliation, significant or marginal in importance, are registered and scrutinized by friend and foe alike, and seemingly more intensely than those of other countries. The German response to this exposure has been a significant boost in communications and shuttle diplomacy, with overall positive results to date. In parallel, it appears that the country is developing a new degree of tolerance for such criticism.

Group exploration

Exploring Germany's role in the Ukraine/Russia and Syria crisis further, the group had a conversation about Germany's style of working and came up with the following key observations and insights:

- » Perceptions of Germany are more positive than they were during the euro zone crisis.
- » While Germany's military capacity is belittled, its economic power is overblown.

- » Germany has an insufficient appreciation of its neighborhood and does not provide a political vision for its neighbors' to the East. Germany's leadership in foreign policy is conditional on its leadership on intra-EU issues. Only because Germany took the lead internally in the EU's reaction to Russia's aggression against Ukraine was it able to take the lead in the foreign policy realm.
- » In every crisis the participants analyzed, Germany acted in different coalitions. In the Euro crisis, Germany was part of a Northern European coalition with a relatively clear North-South divide created; in the refugee crisis, Germany is part of a coalition of mostly southern member states with a West-East divide; in the Ukraine/Russia and Syria crisis, Germany was part of a North-Western coalition with North-Western/South-Eastern divides.
- » From a German perspective, Germany's alignments seem consistent and straight-forward, for non-German observers they may seem erratic or fickle.
- » There are different coalition constraints: for non-Germans, there appears to be a cacophony of positions within the government coalition. This cacophony is sometimes misconstrued as open dissent and as political quarrels. In the case of the refugee crisis, it was falsely seen as Merkel's weakness.
- » Germany is insufficiently geopolitical*

Questions generated by the group

- » Just like in the euro zone crisis group reflection, the issue of legitimacy was raised when the question of whether or not Germany has mandate/authority to act was posed.
- » What will German leadership look like in the post-Merkel era?

*One participant objected to the use of this term in this context, as it refers to a period when Germany was making pacts with Russia.

Refugees

Thought piece by Astrid Ziebarth

First, geographic proximity should not mean geographic responsibility. The refugee crisis is thus not just a European crisis, but a global one that warrants global action. Secondly, it is not just a refugee crisis, it is also a migration crisis, as it also includes people on the move that are not fleeing from fear of persecution. Especially the first half of 2015 about 40% of people coming to Germany were born in the Western Balkans. Thirdly, migration is not a very fancy leadership topic, as it is very complex, highly sensitive and polarizing. It is often polemical and politicized before it is analyzed. Germany has not really stood out in the past couple of years as a leader on this topic in Europe, in fact no one really has.

Germany - the reluctant leader

Germany has certainly enjoyed the benefits of the Dublin Regulations for a long time, not listening to the calls of Italy or Greece to help with the responsibility and show solidarity beyond Dublin. Germany has been one of the most ardent defenders of Dublin in the past years, despite knowing that the system was not working properly for others. Only when Germany was feeling more and more of the strain itself, when city officials started an outcry about growing numbers of people coming through Italy and Greece to Germany, did Germany start to take action. Backing the Commission proposals for quotas for the relocation of 40.000 people back in July 2015, and getting more active and restrictive on the issue of Western Balkan migration, Germany began to require solidarity from others to manage the increased flows.

Germany - the almost solitary leader

On August 29, Merkel took a historic decision, when thousands of people were marching from the train station in Hungary towards Austria, and ultimately Germany, on the motorways. Merkel, together with the Austrian chancellor, made the decision to not send them back to Hungary, and thus not to apply the Dublin regulations for those marching along the roads. This did not present a breach of the Dublin rules per se, as member states can also choose to take people in. However, Merkel did not properly build solid alliances with other countries before making this decision. This decision led to both - mostly quiet - admiration on humanitarian stances and to - more loudly - headshaking by other European leaders due to the significant pull effect they foresaw this having on other refugees and migrants deciding to head to Europe (and to Germany and Austria in particular). But the job as a leader is to act in a crisis situation and make decisions, and the question remains whether Merkel wanted to stay away from road blockages, border fences and

tumultuous scenes within Europe, or if she just felt that this was the humanitarian stance to take. What is certain is that Merkel is still backed at home in Germany: even though her support is decreasing, it is still higher than any other leaders in Europe. She knows that she has to bring down the numbers though in the next couple of months in order to show that she and her government have things under control. For that to happen though, to bring down the numbers, she is greatly dependent on third countries, as she does not want to build a fence around Germany and completely dismiss Schengen.

Germany - the European leader?

This is indeed a question. Chancellor Merkel has said that Europe has a responsibility to help and manage the situation for the asylum seekers, but so far European leaders have not provided a coherent approach and response. So far, Merkel's attempts to find one and bring leaders together have failed. Worse still, the migration and refugee crisis has put the European Union to an ultimate stress test, much more so than the euro crisis, as fundamental principles of Schengen and Dublin are endangered - without a new system that could replace Dublin in sight and with conversations about a mini-Schengen area having begun. The crisis has created a rift between member states, with Eastern Europeans mostly worried and opposing any type of responsibility sharing or pitching-in with funds, and even using legal means to oppose EU rulings on relocation plans that were agreed to by a qualified majority. The attacks in Paris have added a further security layer and a sense of greater anxiety to the refugee and migration crisis, which complicates the 'solution' even further. The next couple of months will prove decisive on the future of Europe and the type of leadership it will have.

Group exploration

Exploring Germany's role in the refugee crisis further, the group had a conversation about Germany's style of working and came up with the following key observations and insights:

- » Just like in the Ukraine-Syria group reflection, Germany's perception was viewed more positively than during the euro zone crisis.
- » Similar to an argument made in the euro zone group exploration that domestic politics increasingly affect EU-level decision-making, this group reflection diagnosed a European Union where no-one thinks as an European.
- » There is a lack of foresight regarding problems and issues, which renders Germany unprepared, and without plans or ideas for solutions.
- » Germany fails to understand that not all EU member states are equipped economically and structurally to follow lead. This argument corresponds to some extent to the euro zone group's observation that Germany is as oblivious to other member states as the US can be to the rest of the world.
- » Germany did not convince other member states to follow her lead on "solidarity", it just acted unilaterally by admitting a large number of refugees walking along Hungarian and Austrian highways to Germany.
- » There is a lack of political vision in Germany about the future of the European Union. Merkel is not a visionary politician; she is rather a process manager.
- » If Germany wants to get the support of member states and wishes to create the sense of solidarity it has requested, it would need to reach out to all member states: in other words, if Merkel wanted to establish solidarity between member states, she would need to travel there. _____

4.

WHAT MAKES GERMANY ACT THE WAY IT DOES?

After exploring Germany's approaches in the three crisis areas - euro zone, Ukraine/Russia and Syria, and refugees - the participants examined the underlying characteristics and impulses of what makes Germany act the way it does in plenary. The key observations and insights of this conversation were:

- » National stereotypes (e.g. an appreciation for order, principledness, rigidity, efficiency as a source of happiness, predictability, etc.) were quickly shared and were soon followed by more profound conversations.
- » Germany, as a large country located at the center of Europe, is at times a complacent and confident neighbor.
- » There is a tendency in German politics to set policy preferences into principles, which in turn are set into rules, which then are to be observed and enforced (e.g. euro Stability and Growth Pact).
- » Germany likes to think of itself as a model nation - socially, politically and economically. As the model, Germany takes the liberty to bend the rules (e.g. the very same euro Stability and Growth Pact).
- » Germans adore their constitution and turn to it for guidance on many political, social and even foreign policy issues. For instance, after the terrorist attacks in France, there was a constitutional debate whether or not the attacks could be qualified as an "act of war" according to the German constitution, and what that meant for Germany's ability to offer help to France. Positively, this can be coined "constitutional patriotism"; negatively, "constitutional conservatism".
- » German history is all too often reduced to the Holocaust, both within Germany and outside of it. Some participants argued that

World War II and the Holocaust serve less as a moral compass and point of reference for political decision making than in the past. Others disagreed. There was no consensus established on this issue.

- » Some participants argued that Protestantism has left its mark on Germany culture: a strong work ethic, appreciation for rules and independent thinking were seen as the result of this. Others observed that Germany is demographically half Protestant and half Catholic and that, therefore, Catholicism must have left a mark as well.
- » There is a social and political need for consensus and a belief in an objectively good/right solution in Germany. The flip side of this need and belief is an inherent mistrust in politics and political compromise. Yet, in a democracy, there needs to be compromise.
- » The last point led to the discussion of how democratic Germany in fact is.
- » It was observed that, historically, Germany had the rule of law long before democracy.

5.

HOW MIGHT GERMANY ACT SMARTER?

Based on the insights of the analysis of Germany's role in the three crisis areas and why Germany acts the way it does, the participants identified and developed new approaches for smarter and more effective ways of action. For this exercise, the participants broke into three small groups with approximately five members in each. Each group reported back to the plenary following their discussion.

The key observations and insights of this conversation were the following:

- » There was a strong desire in the group for Germany to develop an appreciative, participatory, inquisitive, understanding, adaptive - in short, a "soft" - style of leadership vis-à-vis other member states.
- » Germany needs to increase and intensify its efforts in reaching out to and collaborating with other member states by developing partnership policies for more, better, and stabler partnerships and cooperation. Germany needs to learn to better understand the other countries and their capacities. Ways to achieve this could include a more continuous and deeper engagement with other member states, and/or the construction of thoughtful, well-structured relationships through diplomacy.
- » Germany's government, especially Chancellor Merkel, must learn to speak to European citizens of other member states, even those that are not German citizens and voters. Germany's government and Angela Merkel should learn to shape the EU public discourse.
- » Germany could (re-)take ownership of the European project and rethink how it relates to Europe.
- » Germany must overcome its constitutional conservatism.

A participant advocated for bold thinking, and suggested Germany could write and assent to a new constitution, one that would be more compatible with European law and European processes.

- » One participant suggested to restore the significance of the Foreign Office and to bring back Foreign Ministers into top-level European decision-making. This would avoid concentrating European decision-making and communication of European issues with one person per member state (the head of state or head of government) and would thus enlarge the leadership capacity in relation to European issues.
- » Germans need to be more honest with themselves that not everything is perfect.

More general suggestions that were put forth:

- » Leaders should be more generous and understand other countries' needs.
- » Politicians should listen more and should learn to understand political processes in other countries.
- » Have German MPs attend more GMF dialogue events.

In a next step, the participants reflected on their suggestions and collected key observations:

- » It's all about Germany's soft power.
- » Germany would need to change its political leadership mind-set, a huge task.
- » Germany should re-invent its leadership style and be more uniting in times of crisis.
- » In a reform and change process, (old) culture eats (new) structure

for lunch. In other words, no change process is successful without changing the culture as well. Changing the political culture or mind-set is a very comprehensive task.

- » Germany should learn partnership and coalition building skills.

As the last step in this participatory and interactive workshop, the participants were asked to come up with concrete ideas and suggestions that would help Germany learn to act smarter and more effectively:

- » A Munich Security Conference or World Economic Forum (Davos) just for the topic “Europe”. Every year, at the same venue, at the same time. For members of government and parliament, business leaders, experts from academia and think tanks as well as representatives of civil society. This would provide a time and place to have conversations about the future/engine of Europe.
- » Include decision makers (MPs, government and ministry administrators, party representatives, etc.) in an enlarged reflection process/series.
- » More reflection meetings of this kind would help sensitize German politicians about this crucial issue.

- » Making the soft power capacity, coalition building and an appreciative and participatory leadership style part of the higher education curriculum.
- » Make 2016 the year of the “European interest”, during which Germany works with other member states on creating a shared positive narrative for Europe.
- » Creating pressure through news articles and debates for such a leadership review process.
- » Launch a European patriotism program.
- » Find mechanisms to boost interest and develop greater expertise in foreign policy, e.g. parliamentary policy assessment institution (supported or run by Mercator?).
- » Report and follow-up on the Mercator European Dialogue meeting and dissemination effort.



6. WHERE CAN WE GO FROM HERE?

Before the close of the workshop, participants shared their final messages regarding the day’s conversations. This is a collection of them:

- » It’s time for soft power.
- » Continue meeting, have conversations on the issue, and learn to understand each other better.

- » Let’s get serious and work on launching the Europe Conference (A Davos for Europe) in 2016-17.
- » There was a positive view of Germany’s leadership role amongst the participants.



7. FINAL MESSAGES



LIST OF PARTICIPANTS

- » Balsys, Linas (LZP, Lithuanian Green Party), Lithuania
- » Beste, Ralf (Federal Foreign Office), Germany
- » Forbrig, Jörg (GMF), Germany
- » Gessner, Ansgar (GMF), Germany
- » Greve, Thea (GMF), Germany
- » Hatzidakis, Konstantinos (New Democracy), Greece
- » Hommelhoff, Kirsten (Stiftung Mercator), Germany
- » Janecek, Dieter (Alliance '90/The Greens), Germany
- » Janning, Josef (ECFR), Germany
- » Kundnani, Hans (GMF), Germany
- » Marbán de Frutos, Marta (Citizens), Spain
- » Panagiotarea, Eleni (ELIAMEP), Greece
- » Poß, Joachim (SPD), Germany
- » Rosselli, Chiara (IAI), Italy
- » Sanchez Margalef, Héctor (CIDOB), Spain
- » Schwarzer, Daniela (GMF), Germany
- » Theocharis, Theocharis (To Potami), Greece
- » Ziebarth, Astrid (GMF), Germany



A EUROPEAN DIALOGUE BY A EUROPEAN NETWORK OF PARTNERS

STIFTUNG MERCATOR

Stiftung Mercator is a private foundation which fosters science and the humanities, education and international understanding. It specifically initiates, develops and funds projects and partner organizations in the thematic fields to which it is committed: it wants to strengthen Europe, improve integration through equal

educational opportunities for everyone, drive forward the energy transition as a trigger for global climate change mitigation and firmly anchor cultural education in schools. Stiftung Mercator feels a strong sense of loyalty to the Ruhr region, the home of the founding family and the foundation's headquarters.

G | M | F The German Marshall Fund of the United States STRENGTHENING TRANSATLANTIC COOPERATION

The German Marshall Fund of the United States (GMF) strengthens transatlantic cooperation on regional, national, and global challenges and opportunities in the spirit of the Marshall Plan. GMF contributes research and analysis and convenes leaders on transatlantic issues relevant to policymakers. GMF offers rising leaders opportunities to develop their skills and networks through transatlantic exchange, and supports civil society in the Balkans and Black Sea regions by fostering democratic initiatives,

rule of law, and regional cooperation. Founded in 1972 as a non-partisan, non-profit organization through a gift from Germany as a permanent memorial to Marshall Plan assistance, GMF maintains a strong presence on both sides of the Atlantic. In addition to its headquarters in Washington, DC, GMF has offices in Berlin, Paris, Brussels, Belgrade, Ankara, Bucharest, and Warsaw. GMF also has smaller representations in Bratislava, Turin, and Stockholm.

IAI Istituto Affari Internazionali

The Istituto Affari Internazionali (IAI) was founded on 11 October 1965 on the initiative of Altiero Spinelli. The Institute's main objective is to promote an understanding of the problems of international politics through studies, research, meetings and publications, with the aim of increasing the opportunities of all countries to move in the direction of supranational organization, democratic freedom and social justice (IAI Bylaws, Article 1). It's main research areas include: EU Institutions

and Politics, the EU's Global Role, Turkey and the Neighbourhood, International Political Economy, Mediterranean and Middle East, Transatlantic Relations, Security and Defence, Italian Foreign Policy, Energy. A non-profit organization, the IAI is funded by individual and corporate members, public and private organizations, major international foundations, and by a standing grant from the Italian Ministry of Foreign Affairs.

CIDOB BARCELONA CENTRE FOR INTERNATIONAL AFFAIRS

The Barcelona Centre for International Affairs (CIDOB) is an independent and plural think tank based in Barcelona, dedicated to the study, research and analysis of international affairs. Created in 1973 as an International Documentation Centre of Barcelona, it is a private foundation since 1979. CIDOB promotes global governance and good practices – based on local, national and European democratic government – to ensure

that people possess the basic elements to live their lives free from fear and in liberty, by facilitating a dialogue that includes all diversities and which actively defends human rights and gender equality. CIDOB is a dynamic community of analytics that works to produce and offer to all political actors – from individual citizens to international organizations – information and ideas to formulate and promote policies for a more secure, free and fair world for everyone.

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ELIAMEP is an independent, non-profit and policy-oriented research and training institute. It neither expresses, nor represents, any specific political party view. It is only devoted to the right of free and well-documented discourse.

ELIAMEP's mission is to provide a forum for public debate on issues of European integration and international relations to conduct scientific research that contributes to a better informed and documented knowledge of the European and international environment.

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Please r.s.v.p. to Thea Greve at tgreve@gmfus.org.

More details to follow.

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