

The Role of Germany in an Enlarging and an Enlarged Europe

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Introduction

Germany has played a significant role in Europe, both in a positive and a negative sense for centuries. Also today, the size of the state, the size of the population, and most of all, its political importance and impressive economic and military potential predestine it to play such a role. Since its beginning in 1949, the Federal Republic of Germany (FRG), remembering the tragic results of two lost world wars, at the same time tending to eliminate, or at least weaken, the negative associations from the last war in the perception of its neighbours, has made a constructive contribution to building democratic European structures, while maintaining considerable constraint in the international arena. This happened under the conditions of Germany's limited sovereignty, due to the decisions of the victorious superpowers, although, as time went by, the imposed limitations were removed, or, acquired, in fact, a symbolic character. The notion "economic giant, political dwarf" stopped being adequate for Germany's real status a long time ago.

Currently, however, Germany is facing a turning point in history again. This state of affairs began in 1990 and it can be compared to the situation in the second half of the 19th century, when Germany became one state again after more than two hundred years of partition. In 1998, Wolfgang Schäuble, then chairman of the CDU parliamentary faction, characterised Germany's situation in the following way: "The years of relative peace have ended. The Federal Republic of Germany was not entirely sovereign, which, not taking into account the partition of the country, was even comfortable. Germany was rich and ensured social stability. Now the situation is completely different. The changes occur rapidly, whereas the Germans would like to cut out coupons, travel around the world and have their peace and quiet. But this is impossible."

And in fact Germany suddenly found itself in a completely new situation. In 1945 it was a nation with a "broken neck". Later on, the years of the "economic miracle" imprinted the conviction of its excellent economic condition, however, the still existing vivid memory of the war in Germany and in particular in the environment it created, made Germany shun away from a political, European role. Then, suddenly, its neighbours urge it to play such a role. Among other things, they demand that Germany send troops to Bosnia and play a more active role in Europe and in the UN. Germany has to decide what kind of role in Europe it is interested in, taking into consideration current internal and international conditions.

Similar doubts and uncertainties, however, are experienced today by a number of European countries but Germany's importance causes that its decision and its future role are in the centre of its partners' special attention. To satisfy this attentive interest, one has to answer the following questions:

- what is Germany's present role in enlarging Europe?
- which factors can determine Germany's future role?
- which role can Germany play in an enlarged Europe in different variations of the development of the European situation? The following material tries to answer these questions.

1. Germany's Present Role in Europe

The role that today's Germany plays in enlarging Europe is a result of German tendencies and ambitions, of expectations that other countries link with the new, re-united Germany, and also of certain fears, expressed more or less openly by Germany's neighbours and partners. This role, synthetically speaking, consists in realising its own interests through taking care of European interests. It is limited, though, to a certain degree, by two extremely important factors: the level of the country's sovereignty and the moral charges against the Third Reich period that Germany tries to get rid of. However, this is clearly visible in relations with other countries and international institutions. In order to find an appropriate place for itself in a united Europe, Germany for years supported the vision of Western Europe as a union of states and societies without any mutual prejudices, motivated by a desire to cooperate after painful historical experiences.

1.1. Gaining Full Sovereignty

This objective of German endeavours resulting from the effects of the Second World War has been achieved. The withdrawal of Russian troops from German territory and the symbolic removal of the Western allies' military contingencies from the Berlin garrison in the middle of 1994 can be recognised as a spectacular achievement, crowning Germany's efforts in this respect.

But in fact, military forces of other NATO countries are still stationed in Germany. It is one of the Cold War consequences – the operational necessity of those days to maintain appropriate forces near the dividing border of two contrary blocs. The size of these forces, however, has been seriously limited as they form multinational operational units together with Bundeswehr forces. Moreover, their presence is in agreement with current Germany's political interest. On the one hand, they guarantee common defense of the Alliance territory, on the other hand, they are a pacifying element proving that, in spite of long-lasting limitations, the German partner still functions in an agreed allied framework.

1.2. The Reconstruction of Germany's Moral Authority

Generally speaking, it concerns softening all phenomena, gestures and opinions in the international area referring to Germany and linked with the Nazi times. The evaluation if, or to which extent, this aim has been achieved by Germany is very difficult and can be based merely on subjective assessments.

For years, German foreign policy aimed at proving that the Third Reich's heritage, while not forgotten, could not form a basis for judging the new,

democratic Germany of today. Germany was therefore especially keen to follow democratic principles and international law in its internal and international relations, in its engagement in international humanitarian aid, in the stimulation of international cooperation – based on mutual trust and also growing restraint, as far as international peace missions with military troops participation are concerned, mandated by the UN or the OSCE.

Germany carefully avoids all situations which would raise doubts concerning its commitment to democratic values or which could be the basis of accusations of nationalistic or "National Socialist" tendencies. However, it participates with great engagement in endeavours strengthening its image as a democratic and peace loving member of the international community.

Germany's tendency to get rid of past burdens and to give them only historical dimension – not projecting on today's evaluation of the state's activities – is very valuable. In addition, it favours maintaining advantageous trends in German politics, at least in the time of the present generation of politicians in power. However, as time passes, younger and younger people will determine Germany's policies and politics and soon considerations concerning the past will have no importance whatsoever.

1.3. NATO Membership and Transatlantic Partnership

The North Atlantic Alliance is the basis of Germany's security in a double sense: it safeguards it against any potential immediate threat and it is also an effective instrument allowing to prevent or suppress crises and conflicts which, although distant, can influence the situation of Germany and of its environment. In connection with this, in spite of different opinions expressed by the German "Greens" or by the post-communist PDS party, none of the important political parties in fact questions the FRG's membership in NATO. This became clear with the formation of the new "Red-Green" government.

During the many years of membership, Germany obtained a strong position in the Alliance. It results from German military contribution (all Bundeswehr operational units are subordinate to NATO command) and also from Germany's political, economic and financial significance. Making use of these advantages, Germany works on maintaining NATO's uniformity, strength and effectiveness in the conditions for admitting new candidates. In the discussions on NATO's new Strategic Concept, Germany has been insisting consistently not to change and not to diminish the traditional Alliance function, i.e., its common defense.

For years, Germany persistently has been advocating NATO enlargement to central and eastern European countries. It is interested in moving the Western security and stability zone to the east, which allows it to move away from the hitherto "front-line" state, which was the relic of Europe's division into two blocs, and to also move an immediate threat of possible crisis or conflict consequences from its own territory to the less stable east of Europe.

Taking into consideration candidate states' tendencies, Germany stresses the need to increase security within the Alliance as well as outside, and, as a result, to enlarge NATO. It was the lead initiator in establishing special

relations between NATO and Russia (Founding Act on Mutual Relations, Cooperation and Security between the Russian Federation and NATO and the NATO-Russia Council created on this basis) and Ukraine (Charter on Special Partnership Ukraine-NATO) and it helped the Czech Republic, Hungary and Poland, in particular, to join the Alliance. It tries to involve all of Europe in a mutual relations network so that the countries not belonging to NATO and not aspiring NATO membership would not get an impression of isolation or threat vis-à-vis the enlarging Alliance.

It is pointed out in Germany that NATO enlargement to the east is one of the stages in the process to build a Euro-Atlantic security structure, hence the first three candidates' invitation for accession talks fully conforms to the German vision of a secure Europe. Germany also supports the invitation, in further order, of Romania and Slovenia, and approves of the Alliance being open in the future to further countries which fulfil NATO requirements. In these endeavours, Germany is guided not only by the overall European goal but also by a national one. It aims at strengthening its position in Europe, creating a number of grateful allies and a strong engagement in the security stabilisation processes on the continent. In this way it maintains influence on decisions of organisations and groups it is a member of, and on decisions on which it also depends.

Germany builds its strong position within the Alliance through keeping exceptionally active and good relations with the United States. The basis of these relations is a solid combination of many years of historical, cultural and economic experiences. The United States discusses its decisions and positions more often with Germany than with any other NATO country. Very often it is Germany that appears as a spokesman for European Alliance members, frequently dispelling American fears concerning the aim and consequences of various European actions, mediating between the French and American concepts of security and of European integration, and explaining its own policy towards Russia.

The will to maintain American military presence in Europe is expressed in all important German political documents and in all its politicians' statements. This will is undoubtedly sincere. Germany is well aware of the continuing need of American presence in NATO for the good of the Alliance itself, which in a different situation, with numerous contrary nationalist European interests, would stop playing its role of a European security pillar. Such a turn of affairs would certainly engage Germany, one of the main elements of the European mosaic, in conflicts with rivals and could become the reason of a new European war or even a world war. The membership in an effective – thanks to the American presence – military-political structure, where Germany's own movements are constantly coordinated with other partners' actions and are under constant international supervision, practically excludes such a development of events.

Germany expresses serious doubts if Europe, in general, is able to ensure security for itself using its own forces and to take care of its own defense needs. For instance, the late Gen. Wolf v. Baudissin, one of the creators of the Bundeswehr in its present shape, who also contributed greatly to the

development of German security policy, wrote in 1970: "I am afraid that even Western Europe, left alone, is not able to create a suitable deterrence potential, or at least such which would be recognised as credible by the second military power in the world" This opinion refers to the then current threat of military confrontation of two political-social systems and to deterrence concerning the USSR, or, in larger terms, the Warsaw Pact, thus, to a situation which is historical today. But the uncertainty towards Europe's abilities to ensure a satisfactory level of defense still remains. In recent years it has increased as a result of the war in former Yugoslavia, where the chances to end the conflict appeared only in the moment of the United States' engagement, and, additionally, due to persistent, serious Greek-Turkish controversies. This latter example is particularly upsetting for Germany (and not only for Germany) as, firstly, it relates to a conflict between two NATO countries, secondly, the object of the quarrel, a rocky little mountain of about 400 square meters in the Aegean Sea, is inproportionate both to the military engagement of these two conflicting sides as well as to the potential consequences, which at the time of the conflict climax was presented by the German press in the following way: "In a short time both sides, Turkey and Greece, directed ten vessels each into the crisis area. The area was patrolled also by aeroplanes equipped with rockets. With utmost difficulty, the US president, Bill Clinton, managed that on 31st January the vessels and air landing forces were withdrawn.... According to the American mediator, Richard Holbrooke, Turkish and Greek threats were not only meaningless gestures: 'If the United States had not intervened, then Turkey would have captured the island, the consequence of which might have been war...'"

On the other hand, this is the way US presence in Europe is perceived by Germans and American themselves. For the latter, their presence on the "old continent" was connected, aside from other important aspects, with the necessity to guard the Germans not to cause another war, fatal in its consequences, or not to create competition too dangerous for the American economy. Even today, after German re-unification and getting rid of the limitations connected with the lost war, the United States carefully watches the endeavours of its strongest ally (and rival at the same time) in Europe. Germany undoubtedly is aware of this but it does not do anything to lose this protection. It does not necessarily want to alarm its partners, who are already worried by Germany's growing power. Therefore, the American president's suggestion , announced in 1994, that Germany would take over a greater responsibility for Europe, was received with some embarrassment, although undoubtedly it would suit German ambitions and tendencies. One must consider, however, that the more time elapses, the more European integration progresses and the more the role of the USA decreases, the will of Germany to keep the American presence in Europe will gradually weaken.

1.4. European Integration

"The German nation, whose military, economic and political power was broken, can be only raised with cooperation with Western countries based on complete trust. One must persistently remind other countries that they belong to Western Europe like Germany; creating the United States of Europe gives

the greatest hope for the European continent and Germany." Konrad Adenauer said these words and he also showed by his acts that he was willing to follow this course: in the mid-fifties he forsake Soviet proposals at German re-unification as a neutral country in favour of Germany's integration into Western Europe. In due course, Germany became one of the lead initiators and a driving force of the European integration process. This direction of German tendencies results also from the establishment that a political-economic integration of different countries in a region is currently a dominant tendency on the global scale, observed in various parts of the world.

Blocs of countries are emerging which are or will be, in the future, of such economic, and also soon, political power that competing with them will become very difficult and will outgrow the possibilities of single countries, even if they are economically as strong as Germany. Furthermore, the world's shrinking natural resources make their exploitation costs grow. The necessity to look for alternative materials, more economic and effective technologies, new investments and trade markets, or of conducting projects of environmental protection and re-cultivation of land are connected with such a great scientific and economic effort that this can only be coped with by a closely coordinated cooperation of many countries. In this context, one has to mention contemporary threats of various kinds (natural environment devastation, mass migration from war and poverty areas, farming land, water and energy resources deficit, organised crime, epidemics of illnesses not known so far, proliferation of ABC weapons and their production technology, etc.) which can be stopped or limited only by common effort.

The aspects mentioned above also cause that German support of NATO enlargement to the east strongly stresses the need to admit "new democracies" which fulfil the necessary requirements for the European Union. Germany is aware that enlarging the security and stability zone will be empty words unless the borders of the western prosperity area also move to the east.

Although a unified Europe is still a long way down the road, most European countries in principle understand the needs of integration. However, especially smaller countries are worried that by delegating power to the European institutions, these might infringe on their sovereign rights. As one of the larger European countries, Germany is less concerned about potential loss of sovereignty, feeling itself rather able to be the EU's "primus inter pares" and thus able to influence the political direction and EU activities, and shape them according to German interests. As one of Europe's major economic powers, it agreed to full integration and fast introduction of the Monetary Union ("Euro") not just as the price for German re-unification but also because these measures are in the German national as well as in the common European interest. Despite their traditional attachment to a strong German currency, the greater part of the German population now appears to support these policies.

According to Germany, the European integration will not be complete if the economic and monetary union is not complemented by a political union. In turn, the political union should, in consequence, lead to the European defense identity. This identity, being a derivative of the European Common Foreign and Security Policy, would be an important step to ensure security in Europe,

competitiveness on the global scale and to enable facing new challenges effectively, international crises in particular. The European Union members should bear the risks and burdens resulting from the need to ensure common security as much as they take advantage of the fruits of integration. Germany is aware that a greater European integration – and the defense area is extremely important in this context – is the necessary condition to play an essential role in the world of the 21st century, together with the USA, but if the situation allows – by itself. In any case, the leading function will be held by European superpowers, which re-united Germany undoubtedly belongs to.

The European identity development in the security and defense area was supported and confirmed by the NATO summit in January 1994. Its evident effect was strengthening the Western European Union and adapting it to the NATO European pillar. It is not going to replace the transatlantic link, on the contrary, it should strengthen it. This will happen, Germany believes, if the shaping of the identity process occurs in a transparent way and if policies resulting from it are complementary to the Alliance's policies. In giving a solid shape to Euro-Atlantic relations, one has to remember that security and stability in Europe will be guaranteed, at least for the time being, only by Europeans and Americans together. Therefore, the transatlantic link in the security area is decisive and necessary to develop the European security architecture. Only when Europe is ready and capable to take on responsibilities and burdens, it can count on the United States' further engagement in Europe and for the European interest. If national interests of countries, not only in the defense area, will be effectively reduced to a common denominator of the overall European identity, then, according to Germany, opportunities will appear to create the feeling of a true European community. This is possible under the condition that the states, the components of this community, will become convinced that foreign policy objectives are easier to achieve together than by independent, one-sided actions.

1.5. German-French Cooperation

Among European countries, Germany maintains the closest relations with the French Republic. This cooperation has both a moral and a practical-political dimension. The moral one, as after years of "Erbfeindschaft", which is an inherited hostility characteristic for these two countries' and nations' relations, there was a return to normality, had the result that in the political and military areas cooperation is so close that this is hard to find in any other European countries' relations. As far as the practical-political dimension is concerned, the German-French rapprochement results from political consideration because when one wants to achieve success in the European unification process, one has to be successful first in relations with a strong, competitive and, at least at the beginning, not very supportive neighbour.

Today, in the French-German tandem, it is Germany that often plays the main role. On the French side, however, the driving force of cooperation is the fear of the possibility that re-united Germany, aware of its own political and economical power, carries out politics that are too independent. Not to increase these fears, Germany tries to include France in the majority of the endeavours, in fact, initiated by it: the Maastricht Treaty was mostly the result of a common

French-German initiative; during the Intergovernmental Conference, France and Germany together supported keeping the existing development dynamics of the EU; also, these two countries presented a common, French-German position concerning the Common Foreign Policy and Security to the president of the EU Commission, in which they approved, among others, of enlarging the range of decisions taken with a qualified majority of votes.

German-French military cooperation is conducted in a very active way, too. The "Common French-German Concept in the Security and Defense Area", signed in December 1996 at the Kohl-Chirac meeting, embraces all French and German common assumptions and tasks in the above mentioned fields, harmonising both countries' positions in the key issues of European defense. The "Common Concept" allows to position the French-German cooperation in the European security system framework, taking into account its transatlantic link. Both countries, in spite of many years of close cooperation, had until then never tried to come closer in the military area and to synchronise their security and defense concepts. Thanks to this, there appeared a document, the provisions of which could in the future be included in resolutions concerning a new formula regarding the WEU, EU Common Foreign and Security Policy and NATO.

In the context of German-French cooperation, one must mention a trilateral association which includes France, Germany and Poland. This association, named after the place where it was founded – The Weimar Triangle – was the initiative of Chancellor Helmut Kohl. The official formula of the Triangle, at the moment of its founding, was the cooperation of three medium sized countries situated on the east-west axis. In practice, the idea was to help Poland in its efforts to enter European structures. This Triangle, the attractiveness of which remains unchangeably high, is a good example of a German stimulation of integration processes in Europe and, at the same time, of French engagement in these actions and of France soothing its worries about an excessive growth of German influence in the post-communist countries. It is similar to the recently initiated trilateral French-German-Russian cooperation. (At least one can have such an impression after the meeting of the three heads of states at the beginning of 1998).

1.6. German-Russian Relations

Germany tries to maintain the best relations with Russia. It wants to act in a stabilising way in this still unpredictable region. It is interested in relations with the Russian Federation which enable Russia, with its strong nuclear potential, to become a reliable and responsible pillar of the European security architecture. Therefore, at the time when decisions concerning NATO enlargement to the east were taken, Germany treated Russian protests very seriously and offered Russia, in exchange for accepting inevitable changes, a closer cooperation with the Alliance and an agreement to realise a part of the Russian stipulations relating to increasing the role of the OSCE in Europe, and the role of Russia in the former USSR territory. Besides, numerous initiatives of German Russian cooperation result from German fears of increasing nationalistic and anti-democratic tendencies in Russia, which would emerge as

a reaction to leaving Russia on the edge of European and Euro-Atlantic integration processes.

The scope of German-Russian cooperation includes, among other things, space and military technology. In recent years, both countries agreed upon a cooperation to produce transportation aircraft. In the spring of 1995, the German airline and air-space consortium DASA signed a partnership with Russia, which would deal with placing one-and-a-half-ton reconnaissance satellites in the earth's orbit. The satellites will be launched by intercontinental missiles, SS-19, of which Russia has a lot in stock. The highest value of this endeavours for Germany, however, is not only to make use of carrier rockets but of the rich technical and laboratory bases which must accompany every launching system. The opportunity to use Russian military rocket ranges is also important.

Germany's relations with Russia are different from the United States' attitude. Germany seems to have (or manages to create such an impression) much more understanding for Russian interests and arguments than the USA. Germany also willingly agrees to a "mediator" function in the contacts with Russia, for instance, in connection with NATO enlargement. The role of a mediator places Germany in a favourable light both in the United States' and in most European countries' opinion. Russia sees it as a country which understands the complicated Russian situation and reaches out a helping hand.

Germany sees also other advantages in good relations with Russia. It takes into consideration the rich Russian natural resources and a great investment and trade market, not occupied by competition yet. It is also interested in the Far East market, the way to which crosses Russia. Furthermore, it remembers the approximately one million people of the German minority still living in Russia.

About a million and a half Russian Germans stay in Germany itself causing many problems for local authorities, and further thousands are on the way. While, at first, the newcomers aroused sympathy, now they are often the subject of alarming reports. Most of them live in real Russian ghettos and do not integrate into the local community. They do not know the language, do not work, cause crime. Therefore, the government of Germany wants to create for these people the best possible conditions in their accustomed place of living. This requires Russian authorities' acceptance and goodwill. Otherwise, the wave of immigration cannot be stopped, and this would additionally complicate the not easy present economic situation of Germany.

1.7. Poland in German Politics

All the relations of states, taking place in the political area, are highly determined by the partners' interests. A closer look at the political platform of Polish-German relations entices one to make a statement that the position of Poland in German politics is marked by advantages that can arise for German interests from the international role and activities of our country, from its location and its potential.

The basic value in this context is the fact that Poland's superior interests, such as:

- the will to avoid being in a security "vacuum", in the area of a power struggle of European powers or alliances,
- the will to maintain the ability of our own influence on decisions in international politics concerning Poland,
- the tendency to eliminate in the future the risk of totalitarian or autocratic governments, do not collide with the strategic German interest, on the contrary, they favour it.

Germany, as has been expressed in this study, is interested most of all in:

- maintaining security and stability in its environment,
- further growth of its influence and importance through playing the leading role in the European integration process,
- coming closer to the states which traditionally relate suspiciously to German intentions (France and Poland) in order to avoid any obstacles from their side to achieve its goals.

In connection with this, Poland's support to accomplish its tasks, in addition to gaining the gratitude of a future ally, will enable Germany to:

- get a more convenient, central location in integrated Europe, including the European security structures;
- create, also from the east, a zone isolating from potential instability areas, although today Germany is already surrounded exclusively by allied or partner countries. This, also from a historical point of view, comfortable situation allows it to look peacefully at the development perspectives of the state;
- move the western area of instability outside the eastern border. This is a very crucial matter because, as the former US defense secretary, William Perry, expressed it, "Poland holds in her hands the key to the European security." The historical experience confirms that Poland, weak and troubled by inner controversies, was always a temptation for stronger neighbours;
- gain a partner who is strongly interested in enlarging the stability zone to the post-Soviet countries. It is not a coincidence that in the NATO enlargement context, Germany always has expressed the hope that Poland would share a responsibility for European security in the Alliance, concentrating on relations with the Baltic states, Belarus, Ukraine, and, most important of all, Russia;
- improve NATO collective defense and co-responsibility for security in Europe and adjoining areas (peace operations) by strengthening it with a neighbouring country with a big economic, population and military potential;
- get another argument alleviating suspicions about Germany regarding superpower, "Wilhelm-like", politics of the past (Poland, a former victim of German imperialism, is currently a grateful partner taking advantage of German help in integrating Europe).

To tell the truth, one should stress, that the German interests mentioned above concerning Poland have a European dimension. They would certainly

lose their significance without this European context. Obviously this does not diminish their importance as a solid, prospective basis of Polish-German relations. Everything indicates that the integration process will continue and this context will gain a dominant meaning. However, at the moment when both countries concentrate to a greater degree on their national interests, controversies and discordances become more visible (this issue will be discussed later in the study). In fact, the European interest facilitates to overcome them or to find a compromise but it will not replace the quiet, serious dialogue between the Poles and Germans. This dialogue started ten and a half years ago and still continues.

1.8. The Military Factor in Foreign Policy Instruments

This aspect of Germany's European role raises some fears among some of its allies and partners. These fears are justified by historical factors but also by military strength. Since the re-unification, many European countries watch the endeavours of a new superpower with some concern, although, it should be stressed, nothing in German movements in the political, economic or military area confirms these fears so far.

Germany is engaged in an active way to create measures of confidence and security building. It strictly complies with disarmament agreements signed in the conventional weapons area. It is the co-author of a chemical weapons ban. Nothing shows that it is going to change its opinion concerning its resignation from nuclear, biological and chemical weapons announced in 1954. Although Germany expects, as the former German defense minister, Volker R  he expressed, that in the world of interdependent relations, in addition to the responsibility for their own country, its soldiers will take on also co-responsibility for threatened freedom and prosperity of other nations, the social and parliamentary debate relating to Bundeswehr participation in missions and peace operations outside the NATO responsibility area was very long, and the positive decision concerning this issue was not unanimous at all.

Some symptoms show, however, that the German position to use military instruments to realise foreign policy goals can change. In the "1994 White Book", a paragraph can be found that includes "a fair political system, based on market economy rules of the world economy, into the German security interests area." The instruments to ensure that the political system includes, among other things, peace operations with German participation, during which it would be possible to exert influence, also by using military force, to achieve an advantageous course of economic phenomena and processes in different parts of the world. In turn, in the above mentioned "Common French-German Concept In Security and Defense Area", Germany agrees with a possibility to participate along with France in common peace operations in the Mediterranean region. It also supported the idea of a dialogue concerning "the deterring nuclear functions of the French forces, contributing to the allies' global security". This can prove that Germany makes a step in a new direction, although it does not want to openly discuss the access to nuclear weapon. One of the Social Democratic politicians stated in this context that: "of course, we don't want any German finger could push the nuclear button ... this does not

mean, however, that we stay indifferent towards the possibility to access the information concerning this issue, to participate in a decision like this". This fact cannot be interpreted too hastily. The new position of Germany and the will to ensure the best possible protection for Europe in case of the United States' withdrawal also explain this fact in a logical way.

2. Major Factors that Can Determine the Future Role of Germany in Europe

After years of economic prosperity, when the lack of workers necessitated attracting a labour force from other European countries, and after the re-unification euphoria, Germany faced problems. These are not troubles that cannot be overcome by a strong German economy but keeping them for a long time, or deepening them, can influence the internal situation of Germany in a negative way.

Moreover, there appeared a phenomenon called "being tired of coalition" in Germany. Christian Democrats and Liberals had been governing Germany for sixteen years, they had been in power for twenty-eight years, so they had exhausted the formula of government. They were not able to make a breakthrough in the evolving situation, hence their popularity decreased. But also those who came to take over power, did not have a significantly new program. Therefore, they looked for slogans to attract their voters by populism, using the population's common fears of change.

In addition, one problem leads to another. Appearance or continuation of one problem stimulates the appearance of several others. They then make a difficult knot to untie.

2.1. Particular German Interest

For a long time, because of historical reasons, Germany has avoided officially forming a national position concerning European and world matters. It rather preferred endeavours going on behind the scenes in order to realise its own goals. The term "vital German interest" was, in fact, not used, which obviously does not mean that the interest of the state and of the nation was not taken care of well. The situation changed after re-unification. Germany expressed its will to "regain its rightful place" in the family of democratic states and also the notion of German interests stopped being something to be ashamed of.

An auction of German interests has been conducted for some time on the German market of political ideas. One of the suggestions comes from SPD circles, the party which won the most recent parliamentary elections. In Egon Bahr's book, we can find a pattern of these interests: traditionally, the main partner for Germany is Russia because there are huge oil resources in the Caucasus and in the Caspian Sea area which Germany should exploit together with the Russians. Therefore, the main centre of German interest should not be to reform and strengthen NATO but to reform and strengthen the OSCE. The new Social Democratic chancellor, Gerhard Schröder, mentions Bahr and says that German interests should be shown more.

Egon Bahr (born in 1922) is the leading representative of this generation of social democratic German politicians that were most successful in the seventies. It is the generation which created Germany's "new eastern policy" and co-initiated the Helsinki Council for Security and Cooperation in Europe. Their attitude to Russia is undoubtedly based on positive emotions of that time. The present generation which took advantage of the chance of gaining power in Germany looks onto the world in a slightly different way. They cannot disregard contemporary political conditions, nor throw away the results of the Christian-Liberal coalition's work, which would be against German political tradition. Nevertheless, if they focus on their own interests in a more selfish way, some fears and doubts continue to exist concerning the role that Germany wants to play in the future. For instance, will the idea of "Great Germany" come back?

2.2. Obstacles in the Integration Process

Although the German Social Democrats' motto for the parliamentary elections was "enlarging the European Union but not for the price of our interests", each political option to create a German government in concrete negotiations, in spite of formal declarations, had to represent a purely German interest. The government will have to raise the issue of disproportions of financial contributions to the common EU fund (Germany currently pays 1.27% GNP and would like to pay less), will have to insist on Brussels' present agriculture policy (this is mainly a postulate from Bavaria), and, in particular, it will have to refer very precisely to the conditions due to which the citizens of new member states gain freedom to move and work in the Union countries (all the Germans are afraid of this).

The faith in any kind of German altruism in this respect would be naive on the part of candidate states (this refers mainly to Poland because of the large size of our population). The need to protect Germany's own work market is understandable and obvious, and Germany, because of its location, is particularly afraid of an influx of cheap labour from its eastern and southern borders. Nonetheless, if the German position in this matter is so rigid that it will not allow a compromise solution, then the European integration process may slow down, with all the negative consequences of this.

2.3. Economic Situation

The German economy has carried the costs of two unifications: with the European Union and with the former Democratic Republic of Germany (DRG). But even without these burdens, the country required reforms of its social market economy and a reduction of its too large social services, that have not been done. The result of this is the following: about 5 million Germans are unemployed, internal debt reached 2 billion marks; in 1997 a huge number of bankruptcies was recorded – 33410, i.e. 6.2% more than the previous economic year. According to the German Institute of Economy, the economic growth in 1998 was to be about 2.5% or less and the potential number for the creation of new jobs would not exceed 50,000. These are not very optimistic perspectives.

From 1990 to 1997, about 750 billion dollars, that is about 50,000 per citizen, were transferred from "Western" Germany to the so-called "new lands". Transfer payments are not expected to decrease. In spite of this, the economy of the former DRG is still in a crisis, the unemployment rate exceeds 20%. This situation was caused above all by the immediate introduction of a retirement pension system and of social services in Eastern Germany identical to those in the former FRG. Also, the increase in workers wages, much higher than the increase in productivity, contributed to it. If suddenly one had to withdraw such a great range of help for Eastern Germany, then the situation there would become dramatic.

Even worse, the years of social market economy, the pride of Germany, have created a passive attitude and a "you owe me" mentality among the people. In turn, the citizens of Eastern Germany were supported by the state in such a way that they did not see the need to do anything on their own. As a result, "Western Germany" citizens lost the social security feeling, whereas frustrated people from "Eastern Germany" more and more supported extreme parties in elections. This breeds all kinds of extremism and increases the number of "eurosceptics".

2.4. Population's disappointed hopes

A similar risk is created by promises that are difficult to realise, made especially by Social-Democrats and Ecologists during the most recent election campaign. The German "Greens" proposed to their voters to introduce "social, economic and environmental renewal, social justice, i.e. just distribution of the changes' difficulties, solid reconstruction of the public sector, increasing employment due to making use of new technologies and entering new markets, economic remodelling in environmental requirements and increasing production costs".

Social-Democrats, in turn, have promised the increase of retirement pensions, extras for children, reintroduction of payments for construction workers for so-called "weather stops", a return to former principles of protection before lay-offs, etc. The lack of realisation of these ambitious promises would certainly cause disappointment, and this is very probable; it would also lead to social disturbances and even to changes in Germany's political scene difficult to predict.

2.5. Foreigners

Public feelings in Germany changing for the worse give reason to look for the guilty ones in these matters. Very often it is the foreigners who are blamed. They migrated to Germany during the rapidly growing economy in the sixties (so-called "Gastarbeiter" = "guest workers") or made use of the – until recently – liberal immigration principles. Currently the number of immigrants amounts to about 7 million, thus to over 8% of the German population. They form a dynamic group, younger in total than the original German population (78% are people aged below 45). Furthermore, quite often these are people representing the second generation of foreigners, raised in Germany, perfectly acquainted

with traditions, speaking the language and being more and more competitive for the original Germans.

Most of the foreigners have melted into the German environment. The only ones who maintain their individual character are three groups: people from the Far East (about 300,000) because of their physical appearance, Muslims, mainly Turks and Kurds (about 1.8 million), who are dressed differently, and Russian Germans (about 1.5 million), whose problems with adaptation in a new environment have been discussed before.

These people create various problems for the German authorities, from criminal ones (gangs, mafias) to political ones (e.g., the activities of the Kurdish Labour Party). They are also the focus of all kind of extremists' attacks (among those cases, the best known are the cases of burning down houses for refugees), to a greater degree in the former DRG territory, less frequently in the so-called "old lands". So far, these have been rather sporadic cases but their number may increase in case of a probable worsening of public feelings and the growth of hostility towards foreigners. Because these nations' groups are represented in Germany in great numbers, this can lead to disturbances on a large scale. Even today, each bigger event (e.g. disco) organised in districts inhabited by newcomers, especially by Russian Germans, causes the mobilisation of a large police force.

3. Germany's Future Role in Europe

The future role of Germany in Europe depends, to a large degree, upon its internal situation. There are many factors influencing this situation, also external ones, such as the direction of the future development of the European situation which will have an impact on the internal situation of Germany. Hence, attempting to predict the role that Germany will play in an enlarged Europe, one has to consider the future arrangement of powers on our continent. From among many models, the following ones have been chosen to fulfil the needs of this study:

Model I – Paneuropean Security System

This model implies shaping a geopolitical Euro-Atlantic zone, including a large group

- of northern hemisphere countries and it draws upon two visions of Europe's future security:
- the first one – based on a cooperative security principle which consists in the adaptation of existing western structures to new conditions and the OSCE development as an institution offering the so-called soft guarantees of security and stability,
- the second vision – referring to the common security ideas realised in the OSCE framework which would be the main institution to coordinate the activities of the western system structures and the Commonwealth of Independent States (CIS) [the Russian vision].

Model II – Bipolar Arrangement

This can appear in case of Russia's (CIS) position growth on a world scale and its rigid veto of including the former USSR states into the European integration process. Its other characteristics are as follows:

- the appearance of countries' controversies in the EU, WEU and NATO, caused by unequal advantages from the integration,
- Russia's confrontation politics, based on the above mentioned phenomenon, towards the EU, WEU and NATO,
- introduction of individual politics, above the commonwealth, by stronger members of these organisations or by the creation of summary "decision making clubs", which would initiate a collapse of the European Union structures.

Model III – "Loose" Monocentric Arrangement

This model implies including into the integration also post-Soviet states and Russia's consent on staying in special relations with the EU, WEU and NATO normalised by treaties. It is conditioned by:

- the development of democratisation processes and economic growth in Russia thanks to EU support and cooperation,
- Russia's resignation from imperial ambitions,
- Russia's signing a strategic alliance with the EU, WEU and NATO and, also, a broad cooperation with the USA and Asian and Pacific states.

Model IV – "Superpowers Concert" – a relative balance of power between the strongest European countries (Germany, France, Great Britain, Russia, Italy)

This model implies:

- stopping the integration process on the western border of the former USSR territory,
- long-lasting appearance of economic and integration problems in Russia,
- Russia's tendency to post-Soviet re-integration, an aggressive attitude to defend its superpower interests and its usurpation of the role of the eastern pillar of European security
- recognition of NATO enlargement by Russia as its military threat,
- undertaking individual strategic actions by the main EU, WEU and NATO countries above the commonwealth, for their own interests, which can cause frustration and protests among the weaker states and can start the collapse of the commonwealth.

In case of each of these models mentioned above, there are some possible variations of Germany's future role, depending on the direction of its internal evolution. This results in insignificantly more or less probable versions and their description would exceed the scope of this study. Hence it seems reasonable to concentrate on two versions which seem to have the broadest justification according to present knowledge about Germany and the processes taking place there.

Version I – positive

It implies that also in the period of the next ten to fifteen years, Germany's development will be carried out under conditions of such a political and economic stability as exists in this country today. In connection with this, Germany has all the opportunities to play a positive role in Europe.

Germany needs most of all stabilisation for its internal and external development; therefore, it will "produce" this stabilisation by being a stable element of the European political scene and by taking care of appropriate, effective counteractions against processes which disturb the balance both in its near and far neighbourhoods.

The necessity to have appropriate instruments to realise this goal will induce Germany to make all efforts so that NATO would continue to exist as a bedrock of the European security system and would play the peace guarding role, at the same time not losing its defense structure values.

For the same reasons, the transatlantic partnership with the United States will be maintained, although, after some time, Germany can take actions directed to change the formula of this partnership, giving it a more equal character than up to now.

Creating a stability zone around its borders will remain an important direction in German political activity for years to come. This, in practice, will be expressed most of all by supporting its closest neighbours to achieve the status of full members of the European integrated and Euro-Atlantic structures, and also by further stimulation of the integration processes in Europe. Simultaneously, because of the same reasons, the cooperation with the post-Soviet states, Russia in particular, will be deepened. There, Germany will support political forces able to ensure inner stability and able to solve their conflicts, or at least keep them within their borders.

Germany will concentrate mainly on economic expansion, especially in the areas of Eastern Central Europe, the former USSR and the Far East. However, it will not be interested in territorial gains or in other countries' subordination, among others with the help of military instruments (in the material sense, and also as far as international public opinion is concerned) gained as a result of economic actions. Therefore, its military forces' primary task will be, to a greater degree, to prevent and stop crises and to return peace to troubled regions, gradually limiting at the same time the possibilities to conduct large classical offensive operations. This does not exclude, however, attempts to make use of participation in peace operations to secure its own political and economic interests in remote regions of the world.

Rebuilding and strengthening of Germany's position in European political, economic and military organisations will continue. The limitations, however, resulting from the functioning of integrated structures, should effectively stop Germany from gaining too much advantage over the other partners and from achieving excessive advantage at their costs.

Version II – negative

According to this version, in the ten to fifteen years' perspective, a loosening or even a collapse of the European integrated structures could occur. This could happen under Germany's influence: Germany, undergoing a long period of economic problems and, due to it, a deepening of social disappointment, would concentrate on severely forcing its own national interests.

The other possibility is a general victory of "particularism" among the integration partners or their concern over Germany's growing position and competitiveness which would cause creating new political ties and alliances, aiming against Germany or including it ("the superpowers concert"). The starting point could be severe competition or political games between, for instance, Russia, France and Great Britain. Then Germany would be the focus of attention of the rivalling states and thanks to it Germany's status would increase even more. Germany could be even interested in keeping such a situation alive if its ultimate condition were not a military conflict.

Moving Germany away from the integrated European structures could also happen as a result of extremely radical political groups gaining influence or power on the federal level, as a result of a significant worsening of public feelings due to a systematic reduction of social services. However, since mechanisms protecting against such a situation exist in Germany, the chance of such a course of actions to happen would appear only after a few years of serious economic and social crisis.

The "superpowers concert" or a bipolar arrangement, implying a weakening of the European integrated structures, would be particularly dangerous for Germany, because Germany would then be pushed into the position of a national superpower, the counterbalance of which would be the superpower of Russia. It would place Germany in a position that it was placed in twice in this century, the result of which, each time, was war.

Assuming, completely hypothetically, that in such a situation a political will and social agreement to use the army to realise aggressive politics in Germany would be created, one should state that both the economic situation of the country and the state of the German armed forces would allow to conduct large operations against other countries. The armed forces division into a few categories, as introduced in the Bundeswehr recently, however, would give the subjects of a potential aggression a considerable margin of security.

The pillar of the German armed forces, the so-called main defense forces (GSO), are supposed to create conditions of full combat readiness for the army to achieve in peacetime and in the time of a crisis to deploy mobilisation armed forces and to train the reservists summoned to duty. They would be able to achieve full combat readiness as a result of mobilisation and accompanying intensive training in a transition period lasting about four months.

As a result, any kind of military operations on a large scale, prepared by Germany, has to be preceded by a longer period of mobilised reserves training. Moreover, a great deal of heavy combat equipment, stored according to CFE

Treaty agreements, would have to be re-opened and adapted for use, which cannot be conducted in a completely secret way. The obligation of military information exchange, the possibility to carry out an inspection and to make assessment visits gives other countries satisfactory potential to be certain about Germany's intentions, and the time of army deployment and training leaves enough time for political and diplomatic counteractions and for taking appropriate military preparations.

4. Implications for Poland

We have had the best chapter in Polish-German relations in a thousand-year-history for more than nine years. There is also the next chapter of German eastern policy, the chapter of common interests. In general, it implies that Germany is interested in NATO and EU enlargement to the east in order not to be a "front-line" country. Poland, having achieved NATO membership, is interested in becoming a member of the EU organisations and does not want to be the western bridge-head of the unstable East.

This prosperous period has provided an accelerating impulse and has been an enriching process of rapprochement and forgiveness taking place between the Polish and the German nations. The progress that has been made in this area in the last ten years is astonishing. During this time, the Poles and the Germans have "walked the road" leading from distrust conditioned by history and prejudices to a friendly, neighbourly co-existence. Since 1990, the liking towards the Germans has grown by about a few percent every year. This is not only the expression of admiration for German prosperity but also the element of the Poles' getting rid of the "German complex".

A real turn-over took place in Poland in perceiving the history of German-Polish relations in the nineties. There was a great discussion concerning population expulsions. In the Polish Western lands, there appeared a movement to discover the authentic local history, including the German part. Traditional matrices of "a thousand-year-hostility" have been reconsidered and the German minority does not raise negative emotions any longer. Polish politicians, like the former foreign minister, Władysław Bartoszewski, publicly expressed words of sympathy because of the harms suffered by the Germans who, as a result of border changes carried out by four victorious superpowers, had to leave their home country.

Also the German side reports that the Germans start to revise their image of Poland and to appreciate Polish achievements of the last years. In the German economic milieu, some admiration for Poland's economic achievements has been expressed and Berlin's professor Arnulf Baring draws the Germans' attention to the fact that they can learn something from Poland, too.

This chapter of Polish-German relations, however, is slowly coming to an end. With Poland joining NATO and starting negotiations with the EU, this chapter's formula finishes. Obviously there remains an important commonwealth of superior interests, but divergence concerning particular interests starts to appear, like, for instance, the above mentioned case of free settlement of Germans in Poland and Poles in Germany. This matter arouses

emotions on both sides. As Germany is afraid of the cheaper labour force influx from the eastern border, Poland is concerned that the western neighbours will buy out Polish lands on a massive scale and even take away properties lost by their ancestors as a result of after-war removals.

Thus, both countries have to begin writing a new chapter of their common history which would be the basis of cooperation for the next years, within the framework of the European and Euro-Atlantic integrated structures. It would facilitate reaching the end of a whole catalogue of particular, difficult matters. It would enable including also the expelled Germans into the Polish-German dialogue. It would help to close numerous accounts opened by the war.

This would all appear unreal if the situation in Germany, and in consequence the role of Germany in united Europe, developed in an undesired and unsuccessful way in regard to Europe's direction. The negative scenario of the course of events could put back the clock for many years, destroy the successes of Polish-German relations and, in the worst case, place Poland again in the zone of two neighbours' friction. We are ready to undertake any effort not to allow this.

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