BSR Policy Briefing series 6/2020

Leadership in Turbulent Times: Germany and the Future of Europe

By Kimmo Elo

CENTRUM BALTICUM

ISSN: 2342-3153

Leadership in Turbulent Times: Germany and the Future of Europe

By Kimmo Elo

Adjunct professor Dr Kimmo Elo is senior researcher at the Centre for Parliamentary Studies at the University of Turku. He is a nationally and internationally acknowledged expert in German and European politics and history. His current research interests include the politics and history of Germany and European integration (both since 1945), intelligence studies and computational research methods in social sciences and the humanities (e.g. network analysis, data visualisation and text mining).

Recent publications: Elo, Kimmo (ed.): *Suomi 25 vuotta EU:ssa Millainen on ollut Suomen EU-jäsenyyden ensimmäinen neljännesvuosisata?* Turku: Turun yliopisto, 2020; Elo, Kimmo; Metsälä, Jussi & Nyyssönen, Heino: Demokratia poikkeusoloissa. *Kosmopolis* 50(2), 2020, pp. 9–28; Elo, Kimmo: Geospatial Social Networks of East German Opposition 1975–1989/90. *Journal of Historical Network Research* 1(2), 2018, pp. 143–165.

Abstract

In the second half of 2020, Germany has held the rotating presidency of the Council of the European Union (EU) under totally changed circumstances. The COVID-19 pandemic struck Europe and turned the political agenda upside down, but it has also evidenced how interlinked political and economic powers are nowadays. The past decade, marked by multi-crises, has made Germany almost overwhelmingly economically strong, at least when compared to its European partners. At the same time, the EU has lost a great deal of its global political weight, leaving Germany politically weaker than before the crises.

As regards the future of European integration, Europeans must – despite the election of Joe Biden as the next president of the USA – take greater responsibility for the stability and security of the continent and its neighbouring regions. Especially, if the security-political division of labour between NATO and the EU were to erode, the EU would lose one of its most important providers of regional security and stability. The Franco-German tandem will remain a key pillar of Germany's European policy, but it needs to be strengthened in order to push forward long-overdue EU reforms.

After the German federal election in 2021, both Germany and Europe will enter the post-Merkel era. One crucial challenge of the new German government will be to formulate a coherent, sustainable and future-oriented European agenda. A strong signal of commitment to European integration would diminish room to manoeuvre for populist and other anti-European political forces.

Keywords: Germany, EU, leadership, Russia, USA, Baltic Sea

1. Introduction

In the second half of 2020, Germany has held the rotating presidency of the Council of the European Union (EU) under totally changed circumstances. The COVID-19 pandemic struck Europe and turned the political agenda upside down. The changed situation is reflected in the motto of Germany's Council presidency – 'Together for Europe's recovery' – which focuses on 'overcoming the COVID-19 pandemic and seeking answers to the challenges of the future' (https://www.eu2020.de/eu2020-en/programme). Accordingly, recovery from the pandemic and economic recovery are among the top guiding principles of Germany's Council presidency (see Auswärtiges Amt 2020, 5).

Although the COVID-19 pandemic situation has strongly affected the agenda of Germany's Council presidency, it has not been limited to recovery measures. The agenda has also included 'traditional' policy areas and objectives such as a 'stronger and more innovative Europe', a 'sustainable Europe', a 'Europe of security and common values' and a 'strong Europe in the world'. All these domains are linked to the core priorities of the European Commission for the years 2019–2024, focusing on, among others, a 'European Green Deal', a 'Europe fit for the digital age', a 'new push for European democracy' and a 'stronger Europe in the world' (https://ec.europa.eu/info/strategy/priorities-2019-2024_en).

The COVID-19 pandemic has evidenced how interlinked political and economic powers are nowadays. Germany, as the strongest economy in the EU, has far greater possibilities for economic recovery than many other EU Member States. Germany's economic power inevitably helped to conclude the negotiations of the EU's multi-annual financial framework for the period from 2021 to 2027. The extraordinary solution, reached at a special summit on 21 July 2020, consists of the multi-annual financial framework (€1,074 billion) and the Next Generation EU recovery tool (€750 billion), together adding up to a huge €1,824 billion. At the writing of this report, however, Germany's (economic) power has been pushed to the limits, as Hungary and Poland are threatening to block the approval of the negotiated EU budget because of its integrated mechanism for ensuring that all Member States comply with the rule of law. Hungary and Poland have not signalled any significant willingness to settle the conflict in the EU, although a downfall of the EU's financial framework would cause a downfall of the recovery tool as well and leave both Hungary and Poland without a cent.

This report analyses Germany's contemporary role in Europe by focusing on three different, yet interlinked, questions. The report starts with an analysis of recent developments in Germany's leadership in Europe. As the reader might recall, in 2013, the weekly magazine *The Economist* described Germany as 'Europe's reluctant hegemon', a notion originally expressed by William Paterson in his analysis of Germany's European policy two years earlier (see Paterson 2011). The article saw a shift of power in Europe towards Berlin so that the quest for Europe's future – 'Where is Europe going?' – was increasingly dependent on the answer to the question 'What do the Germans want?' This report argues that Germany's changing leadership in Europe has benefited from changes and re-orientations in Germany's foreign policy. In a nutshell, there seems to be a shared understanding of the need for a stronger global responsibility among the German political elite, which also flows into Germany's European policy. Second, this report argues that changes in the transatlantic relationship between Europe and the US have influenced Germany's European politics. During the first two decades of the 21st century, the transatlantic community has eroded, resulting not only in growing tensions between Washington and Berlin but also in intra-EU quarrels and tensions. Although many of these tensions and disagreements had already emerged under the presidency of George Bush Jr. or Barack Obama, the presidency of Donald Trump has reduced both the accountability and the predictability of the European policy of the US. Consequently, Germany, together with France, has been forced to take greater responsibility for European security. Closely linked to the transatlantic complexity is, third, the question of the relations between Germany, Europe and Russia. The frozen conflict in Ukraine, the annexation of the Crimean Peninsula, the gas pipeline project 'NordStream 2' and the recent poisoning of Alexei Navalny with the neurotoxin 'Novichok' are all examples with a strong, negative impact on German-Russo and European-Russo relations in the era of Vladimir Putin. These negative issues have resulted in a geopolitical spillover into the Baltic Sea region as well, where the confrontation between Russia and NATO has escalated and sharpened in recent years. The analysis is rounded off with an outlook and some policy recommendations focusing on Germany's future role in Europe in general and in the EU in particular.

2. German Leadership in Europe

The aforementioned article in *The Economist* in 2013 reflected not only changes in Europe's political landscape, but also – and, in my opinion, first and foremost – changes in the political and economic self-understanding of the unified Germany. This change, however, is linked to changing perceptions of Germany's European role among its European – and also global – partners. As Janning and Möller (2016, 2) point out, discussions about Germany's leadership in Europe have mostly revolved around two questions: 'First, whether Germany's interests can be reconciled with those of the EU as a whole; and second, whether Germany is willing and capable of being more than a geoeconomic power that relies on economic rather than political tools to pursue its interests'.

During the past years, leading German politicians – the Federal Chancellor, the Minister for Foreign Affairs and the Federal President –have tried to respond to these questions at several forums. A prominent example is the Munich Security Conference in 2014, where Chancellor Merkel, Minister for Foreign Affairs Frank-Walter Steinmeier, and Federal President Joachim Gauck all addressed these questions by emphasising the need for a stronger engagement of Germany in global affairs. Although not directly stated, each speech can also be read as if latently responding to *The Economist's* article. By stressing and underlining their awareness of Germany's 'natural' leadership based on its central position in Europe, all three politicians seem to have tried to take the sting out of the criticism of Germany's 'reluctance' to lead or of the scepticism of whether German power benefits the interests of Europe as a whole. From this perspective, the speeches at the Munich Security Conference also sought to counter frustration over Germany's structural dominance in the EU.

The past decade in the EU has been characterised by multiple crises. It started with the global financial crisis, which hit the EU in 2009 in the form of the sovereign debt crisis in the eurozone. The legacy of this crisis is still unresolved, especially regarding the 'casting defect' of the monetary union constructed as a single currency with a common monetary policy, but without a common fiscal policy. All demands to complete the monetary union with a full-fledged political union have thus far been in vain, partly due to German resistance to such plans. A popular explanation for this resistance is presented by proponents who view Germany as a geoeconomic power benefiting from the current setting of the monetary union (see especially Kundnani 2016). However, although Germany has inevitably profited from the structural differences of the eurozone, the same structural imbalance has increased political tensions among EU Member States and sharpened criticism of Germany's European politics as neglecting the interests of Europe as a whole.

The eurozone crisis was followed by the conflict in Ukraine and the annexation of the Crimean Peninsula by Russia in 2014, causing the relations between the EU and Russia to hit rock bottom. Only a year and a half after that, in the summer of 2015, an almost totally unprepared EU was hit by a refugee crisis as hundreds of thousands of refugees arrived within a short period, revealing the weaknesses of the common refugee and immigration policies of the EU. Another political shock followed just one year later, in the summer of 2016, as the Brits voted for 'Leave' in the referendum on EU membership in the United Kingdom (for an excellent analysis, see Dinan et al. 2017). All four crises were still more or less unresolved when the EU was hit by the COVID-19 pandemic. Within a short time, European societies and economies were subject to a total lockdown, causing a radical economic and human shock. At present, the COVID-19 pandemic overshadows the future of European integration in a manner similar to the eurozone crisis. However, the global nature of the COVID-19 pandemic makes economic recovery more difficult compared to the recovery from the eurozone crisis. This is because the shock has been globally overarching and simultaneous, thus making it impossible to find alternative markets in Europe or on a global scale.

All these crises have one thing common: the offered solution is dependent on Germany's power, stressing and underlining the central role of Germany in Europe. At the same time, however, the dependency on Germany has revealed both a leadership problem and structural asymmetries in the EU. Hence, European debates on and around these crises have revealed not only how unusually complicated Germany's relationship to power is but also how unusually complicated Europeans' relationship to German power is. But as the aforementioned speeches at the Munich Security Conference in 2014 demonstrate, German

politicians and decision-makers do not often refer to 'power'; they use 'softer' concepts like 'responsibility' (*Verantwortung*) or 'engagement' (*Engagement*) instead (Maull 2018, 460).

The decade of multi-crises has affected the way Germany looks at Europe and the rest of the world. Many scholars consider the traditional role for Germany as a 'civil power' to be outdated and in need of being complemented by parameters that take Germany's role as an emerging great regional power into account (Fröhlich 2016). Maybe the most prominent proponent of the 'civilian power' concept, Hans W. Maull, still considers Germany a 'civil power', though he also acknowledges a change when he suggests an updated concept of 'civilian power 2.0'. According to Maull, Germany still rejects the use of *Machtpolitik* and is profoundly sceptical of the utility of military force; it also refuses to act alone. Instead, Germany is committed to multilateral institutions and organisations – most notably, the EU, NATO, the Organisation for Security and Co-operation in Europe (OSCE) and the United Nations (UN) – and is willing to subject its political preferences and goals to the norms of international law and to integrate itself into and act within supranational institutions, organisations and other frameworks (Maull 2018, 461–463).

Especially regarding Germany's European power and policy, the central role of Germany's economic power has given a boost to the debate of the idea of Germany as a 'geoeconomic' power using economic means to gain strategic advantages within a limited geographical region. This approach seems reasonable since Germany also considers its economy to be its most powerful lever for pushing through its political preferences and interests in the context of European integration. Against this background – and based on hegemonic stability theory – Kundnani (2016) sees Europe's geoeconomic hegemon in Germany. The problem with this interpretation, however, is – as Kunz (2015) correctly points out – that it takes Germany's will to be a hegemon for granted. The aforementioned fact that Germany today has a much stronger position as a regional power than it had, say, 20 years ago does not necessarily mean that Germany wants to be a hegemon. From this perspective, the word 'reluctant' actually describes Germany's current European politics under Angela Merkel's chancellorship. What Chancellor Merkel clearly lacks is, indeed, a clear and coherent European policy. Germany – mostly due to its size and central position but also to the political and economic weakness of its European partners – has been forced to take leadership in a time of multiple crises. This has happened without a clear strategy (Kunz 2015, 177); that is, the solutions offered by Germany have been more or less *ad hoc* and reactive.

Although Germany under Angela Merkel does not want to be (or become) a hegemon, its strong economic status has strengthened Germany's *de facto* leadership in the EU. The trend was already visible during the eurozone crisis and the conflict with Russia. The COVID-19 pandemic is an excellent example of how Germany has come to compensate for the weak leadership of the European Commission (see also Janning and Möller 2016, 3). The Next Generation EU recovery tool, initiated by the traditional EU-tandem of Germany and France also reflects an old division of labour in post-World War II European integration, where Germany has used its economic power to support France's political ambitions and interests (Gruner 2018, 43; see also Bulmer 2018, 20–21). If anything, the economic asymmetry and imbalance between these two countries has changed in favour of Germany, making France even more dependent on Germany's willingness to back up France economically. However, as odd it may sound, the current situation seems favourable for both countries. French president Emmanuel Macron has presented ambitious but also expensive plans and ideas regarding the future of the EU. For example, he has pushed forward the idea of completing the monetary union, resulting in a full-fledged political union with a common budget and fiscal policy for the eurozone, or to strengthen common foreign and security policy by building a European armed forces. Macron is well aware of the fact that all bigger reforms of European integration cannot be realised without support from the most important net contributors. Chancellor Merkel, in turn, is well aware that the EU's current multi-crisis setting can become untenable in the near future, but she lacks her own political concept for the future of the EU. Merkel knows that Germany's economic status is a powerful and effective lever to force France to find an acceptable balance between theory and reality in integration policy. Since Merkel's own European priorities are rather fuzzy, she uses this economic lever mainly for cutting off the costliest and/or most unrealistic ideas until a level is reached that corresponds with her own perceptions of the current situation.

All in all, the current situation has strengthened Germany's leadership position in the EU. No reform of the EU or integration policies can be financed without Germany, and no reform idea is realistic without

proper and realistic financing. Merkel's Germany has remained committed to the EU as Germany's most important political framework, but Merkel is not willing to invest in an EU whose added political and/or economic value is questionable or uncertain. This makes her pragmatically suspicious of quantum leaps and supportive of the politics of small steps in integration policies. Against this background, the agreement on the COVID-19 economic recovery tool – amounting to a huge €750 billion – can be interpreted as a remarkable manifestation of Germany's commitment to European integration and a clear signal that Merkel's Germany considers the added value of European integration vital for Germany.

Regarding the future prospects for Germany's European policy in the next, say, three years, two factors seem to be of central importance. First, during the presidency of Emmanuel Macron, France has taken a stronger role in European affairs. Prior to Macron, the Franco-German tandem was not only quite unbalanced towards a German dominance, but the tandem was politically weak due to Merkel's weak – even non-existent – strategy for Europe in general and for the EU in particular. Macron has restored France's traditional role as the tandem's political forerunner, but his overambitious – and costly – visions of the future of the EU put Merkel on the defensive but also revealed a fundamental mismatch between Merkel's perception of the EU as a pragmatic solution for Europe and Macron's ideas about a strong, powerful EU capable of taking responsibility on a global scale. Interestingly enough, both countries seem to act faithfully to their own history. The tensions emerge as France wants to regain its own international power by making the EU strong, while Germany is still learning to take international responsibility without being a threat to its neighbours in order to make the EU strong. The interdependency of these two goals explains why President Macron is putting pressure on Germany: without a politically global Germany, the EU cannot become a credible international actor, which, in turn, would hinder France from gaining political leadership through the Common Foreign and Security Policy of the EU.

The second factor is the upcoming German federal election in autumn 2021. As this election will mark the end of the era of Merkel, after 16 years in office, it is anything but an ordinary election, especially when European leadership is considered. Here, also, the COVID-19 pandemic has thrown all plans into disarray by forcing Merkel's party, the CDU, to postpone its party conference to January 2021. This party conference should elect a new party leader, who most probably will also be the CDU's candidate for Germany's next chancellor. The three candidates – Armin Laschet, Friedrich Merz and Norbert Röttgen – represent different profiles. Laschet is politically and ideologically closest to Merkel, whereas Merz can be seen as Merkel's antipode. Röttgen, in turn, is an outsider who has gained in popularity during the COVID-19 pandemic, thanks to his expertise in international affairs. All three are also convinced Europeans. At the writing of this paper, the decision will most probably be between Laschet and Merz.

Based on recent polls, the CDU will most probably continue to govern after the German federal election in 2021. Whether the new chancellor will also represent the CDU heavily depends on the election results for the Greens, on the one hand, and for the right-wing populist *Alternative für Deutschland* (AfD) on the other. Currently, the Greens are profiting not only from the decline of the German Social Democrats but also from the general increase in environmental and climate consciousness among the German electorate. The AfD, in turn, has profited from the CDU's left turn under Merkel, as voters from the conservative right wing have left the CDU for the AfD. If these trends continue in the German federal election in 2021, the CDU might have a close run with the Greens. Even if the CDU succeeded in defending its position as the biggest party, a 'black-green' coalition of the CDU and the Greens would be the most probable coalition for 2021–2025. Such a coalition would undoubtedly be a pro-European/EU coalition and support the 'European Green Deal' of the European Commission.

The more important question linked to the upcoming German federal election is Germany's future status and position in European integration after Merkel. Her successor – whether that person represents the CDU or the Greens does not really matter – will be immediately confronted with great expectations for German leadership in a fuzzy world. After 16 years of Merkel's rather conceptless European policy, the EU is looking for a sustainable concept for future integration politics.

3. Eroding Transatlantic Partnership

One of the key elements of Germany's foreign and European politics has been the so-called Western integration (*Westintegration*), a special transatlantic relationship between Germany and the US. For decades, Germany's alignment with the US as the most profitable foreign political option was Germany's best and most preferred choice (Kunz 2015, 178). The refusal of chancellor Gerhard Schröder to participate in the invasion of Iraq in 2003 revealed a deep political crevasse between the US and the 'old' Europe in general, and between Germany and France in particular. If the developments since then have confirmed anything, it is, first, how differently these traditional partners look at the contemporary world and, second, how worried US political elites were – at least prior to the Trump presidency – about the strength and unity of Europe and the EU (Janning and Möller 2016, 6).

Already during Barack Obama's presidency, Americans signalled their expectation that Europeans – especially the EU Member States – should come together and take responsibility for Europe's security in turbulent times. For Obama, Germany was the key player, and it should become a benevolent hegemon, providing not just political leadership but also the resources needed for a stronger European engagement in foreign and security policy (Szabo 2015, 438; Janning and Möller 2016, 6). Although Chancellor Merkel has welcomed this idea in general, she has remained faithful to her own pragmatic style to lead by facts – not by emotions – as well as to her commitment to defend shared 'Western values' and to uphold rules and values upon which European integration is based.

From the US perspective, Germany's leadership in Europe is also due to a lack of potential alternatives, making Germany an indispensable partner in transatlantic relations. Brexit has decreased the political role of the UK as bridge-builder in foreign and security policies. France, in turn, still enjoys a certain strategic importance, but this importance is mostly based on France's strong engagement in Africa (Szabo 2015, 439). President Macron's strong engagement in and commitment to Europe has slightly improved France's reputation in the eyes of US political elites. Despite these improvements, compared to Germany, France still lacks political, economic and geopolitical weight.

As Szabo (2015) correctly points out, the dependency of Germany's – and Europe's – security on the US has significantly decreased in the 21st century. This trend has not just continued but also become stronger under the presidency of Donald Trump. The reason, however, is not entirely caused by the increase in transatlantic tensions. An equally important factor is economics: hard security questions are increasingly replaced by economic and trade interests so that questions related to, for example, raw materials, energy resources and cyber security are weighted as equally important for a country's security policy. As a consequence, 'methods of commerce are displacing military methods' (Luttwak 1990), a development supportive of Germany's new role as a geoeconomic power. At the same time, however, this rearrangement of the transatlantic relationship away from the military-based dominance of the US towards an economic-based relationship changes Germany's role from a junior partner to a key player on an equal footing with the US. The Trump presidency has made clear that such a transatlantic arrangement, determined by economic instead of military power, does not appeal to the US.

The Trump administration has made several attempts to counter – or, at least, to limit – Germany's rise as a geoeconomic power. Threats and intimidation through a full-scale trade war against Germany, leading to higher customs on German (and European) products, is perhaps the most prominent example. However, the frequently repeated demand to invest at least two percent of the national GDP in NATO, as well as plans to withdraw a remarkable share of US military troops stationed in Germany, should be seen as part of the same geoeconomic zero-sum game. President Trump seemed to follow the logic that a reduction in the military presence and engagement of the US in Europe forces Germany to take greater responsibility and, consequently, to invest more (economic) resources in Europe's security. Such a development would, in turn, not only weaken Germany's status in transatlantic relations but also free US resources to be used elsewhere; for example, in the strategically important Pacific region, where the US and China are struggling for regional hegemony. Although the importance of the Pacific region increased during the Trump presidency, the underlying regional strategic reorientation was introduced during the Obama presidency (see also Szabo 2015, 444–445).

The Trump presidency has not only widened the 'value gap' between Europe and the US but also made clear how differently Americans and Europeans look at the contemporary world. Although a great share of these differences can be explained by differences in strategic thinking and perspectives, there is also a certain bias caused by – imagined or real – geographical distance. For Europeans, conflicts in the closest neighbourhood – Ukraine, North Africa, Syria or the Arctic – are a far more real and immediate threat than for Americans enjoying and benefiting from the advantage of the transatlantic distance. The same, however, also applies to Europeans, when they express their worries about the turn of the US to the Pacific, which is bound up with the fear of losing security guarantees traditionally granted by the US. Against this background, it is rather understandable that Europeans are slowly waking up to reality and starting to understand that the operational environment of Europe has not only changed but will continue to change in the future, forcing Europeans to take a bigger responsibility for Europe's security. In other words, Europeans are forced to adapt to a changed reality in which the US and Europe are still connected via the transatlantic link, but where the US is increasingly unwilling to be solely responsible for Europe's security.

The recent developments have forced Germany, together with France, to take the initiative in European security. In the first place, it has been Germany that has felt pressure from the US to push forward initiatives to strengthen Europe's security. US political and military elites see Germany as a 'natural' leader based on its economic strength. Germany, in turn, considers Franco-German leadership instrumental in reaching a European solution, which should be realised within the institutional framework of the EU. From Germany's perspective, exercising leadership in the intergovernmental setting with Paris and other capitals is the most effective way not only to prevent other Member States from being excluded but also to curb discussions on German leadership (see also Janning and Möller 2016, 6).

From the US's perspective, Germany's commitment to and willingness to act within the EU framework are no problem as long as Europe can provide strong answers and solutions to regional or global problems. Germany, as well other EU Member States, have been slow in adapting to a changed global order and still seem to enjoy the privilege of considering – as Kunz (2015) points out – security policy to be an option, not a necessity. This explains why German leaders have been rather reluctant and slow in pursuing hegemony or strong leadership. Despite all latent or open criticism of President Trump's anti-EU rhetoric, a careful study of statements made by European and German political elites reveals a stable opinion that Donald Trump is a sort of transient disruption and that a transatlantic partnership will recover with a new president. Although this might happen, it can also turn out to be a naive misunderstanding. As pointed out above, the change in transatlantic relations was introduced years before Donald Trump entered office.

The turning of the US strategic view away from Europe to China and the Pacific region naturally raises questions of how committed the US is to its post-World War II role as the most important regional security provider in Europe. These discussions have been catalysed by President Trump's frequent demands that the European NATO members invest more in the organisation. Another issue causing irritation among the European partners of the US has been Trump's hints that the US could leave NATO entirely. Although, at the writing of this report, a complete withdrawal of the US from NATO seems a rather theoretical option, the tense, even aggressive, tone of these discussions reflects the deeper meaning and importance of transatlantic security co-operation for the regional stability of the EU. Frankly, the withdrawal of the US from NATO would force Europeans to take full responsibility for Europe's stability – a responsibility not all EU Member States are sufficiently qualified to take. Further, such a change would fundamentally change the operational environment of the EU. Taking responsibility for hard security issues would no longer be just a theoretical option but a necessity.

If the US became more reluctant to stand for Europe's regional security by military means in the future, more pressure would be put on Germany, together with France. Although, as pointed out above, German political leaders have shown a growing awareness of changes in Europe's role and status in global politics, the German – or European – political agenda is not well prepared to tackle 'hard' security issues (Kunz 2015, 177). This applies, however, to Europe as well, where questions related to Europe's international – or, to use the EU jargon – 'external actions' hardly move the masses. A common foreign and security policy is generally of little interest to the greater European public and has, thus, remained in the narrower circles of politicians and experts. This public disinterest was recently well evidenced when the French

president Macron blamed NATO for being 'brain dead' – a rhetorically and verbally strong statement that evoked only a little public attention and modest reactions by European politicians and experts.

The US president-elect, Joe Biden, will bring a remarkable change to transatlantic relations, most probably resulting in a deeper co-operation in the fight against global climate change but also in a revival of multilateralism in global affairs. However, although Biden's presidency would – after the destructive four years of Donald Trump – reduce the biggest tensions in transatlantic relations, it would not be a complete foreign policy U-turn. Hence, it would be a delusion to believe in a full political recovery between Europe and the US. Strategically, and regarding security policy, China and the Pacific will remain the core region for the US under Joe Biden's presidency. Further, the US will most probably demand a stronger European engagement in the security and stability of Europe and its near neighbourhood, Russia included.

What will change under Biden is Germany's role and status in the geopolitical, geoeconomic and strategic thinking of the US. The current open hostility of the Trump administration towards Germany can be expected to be replaced by more moderate tones. But the fundamental demand already stated by the Obama administration, that Germany should take the leadership in Europe and show more engagement in global challenges, will continue in the future. In questions of vital strategic, economic or security interest for the US, Europeans can expect stronger support from the US. Joe Biden's commitment to the fight against climate change is the most prominent domain offering a fruitful starting point for a revival of transatlantic relations and co-operation. Another field in which Europeans should restore co-operation with the US consists of democracy and the so-called 'Western values'. In this field, the legacy of Donald Trump is devastating and seriously threatens the 'West' as a global champion of freedom, democracy and the rule of law. Germany should take the leadership in this field and encourage not just its European partners but also the new US government to defend the Western political and economic model.

One domain that will enjoy a high priority in the future is the military and political security presence of the USA in Europe. How important and contradictory the issue is also for Europeans is well illustrated by the recent debate between Germany and France. On 2 November 2020, the political magazine *Politico* published an opinion article written by Germany's defence minister Annegret Kramp-Karrenbauer (see https://www.politico.eu/article/europe-still-needs-america/). In her text, Kramp-Karrenbauer criticised the German debate over the future of transatlantic relations as 'fractious', demanded that both America and Europe 'fully accept the realities of continued US nuclear deterrence on the European continent' and, finally, sharply stated: 'Illusions of European strategic autonomy must come to an end: Europeans will not be able to replace America's crucial role as a security provider.'

This last statement was almost immediately attacked by President Macron, who, in an interview with the magazine *Grand Continent,* openly disagreed with Kramp-Karrenbauer's opinions about Europe's strategic autonomy as being based on a misinterpretation of history (https://legrandcontinent.eu/fr/2020/11/16/macron/). This reaction is well in line with my aforementioned interpretation of France's ambitions regarding the future role of the EU as a security provider with global weight. Interestingly, Macron drew a dividing line between Merkel and Kramp-Karrenbauer by stating that, according to his understanding, Merkel would not share Kramp-Karrenbauer's insights about Europe's strategic autonomy. Macron also added a pointed criticism of Europeans for their inability to think of geopolitical relations outside the framework of NATO. Although there is a certain element of political gameplaying in Macron's statements, he is not afraid of forcing France's European partners – Germany included – to leave their traditional, security political 'comfort zone'. Macron also openly takes up questions relevant for debate on the future of European integration, thus presenting different, possible futures. As already stated in this report, such statements also evidence attempts to restore and revive the traditional division of labour of the Franco-German tandem. The crucial question, however, is whether Germany after Merkel will be willing to provide resources for France's ambitious plans for the future of the EU as a serious global actor. The open contradiction between Macron and Kramp-Karrenbauer – this *Politico* case was not the first time – does not necessarily bode well for future development, especially if the new German chancellor is not willing to take up the question seriously. But this could also become a problem for Macron himself in the French presidential elections in 2022 if he were forced to explain why Europe's strategic autonomy could not be achieved with Germany. The alternative – France first and France going it alone – would run counter to European integration and, most probably, also harm Germany.

4. Germany, Russia and the Baltic Sea Region

As already pointed out, the relationship between Russia and the EU hit rock bottom in 2014 after the breakout of the Ukraine crisis and the annexation of the Crimean Peninsula by Russia. Many scholars and analysts see in these events a central catalyst for changes in thinking about security policy in Europe in general and in the EU in particular (Scazzieri 2017). Without any doubt, these negative developments have affected relations between Russia, Germany and the EU. We should, however, keep in mind that the relations were already strained due to the war in Chechnya, but especially due to the military conflict between Russia and Georgia in 2008. Another factor is the civil war in Syria – still ongoing at the writing of this analysis – and Russia's involvement in it (Holt 2015). In general terms, growing instabilities in Europe's close neighbourhood, the Arctic included, have also resulted in growing tensions within the EU. At the same time, global affairs have changed for the worse, and the future seems fuzzier than, say, a decade ago.

The military conflict in Ukraine has had a strong, mostly negative impact on security in the Baltic Sea region as well. For centuries, the Baltic Sea region has been a place of geopolitical, political, economic and cultural clashes between Europe and Russia (e.g. Bengtsson 2000, 372; Musiał 2009, 287). The end of the Cold War and the developments thereafter have step by step widened the definition of the European north to revolve (geo-)politically, economically and culturally around the Baltic Sea (Labarre 2001). Today, the Baltic Sea region is conceptualised as a region covering an area from Northern Germany to Northwest Russia. However, Russia has regarded the EU as too diffuse a negotiation partner, and so it has favoured bilateral relations and agreements. Here, Germany has enjoyed a role as the closest and most important co-operation partner at different times.

Since the outbreak of the war in Ukraine, Germany has emerged as the most important player in the complex geopolitical game between Russia and Europe. This evidences, first and foremost, the political weight of Germany's understanding of Russia's place in the European order. Further, it stresses and underlines the great pan-European significance of Germany's bilateral relations with Russia. The most important European question here is whether Germany acts as a 'motor of pan-European politics' (Hans-Dietrich Genscher) or as a 'barrister' (Klaus Kinkel) of Russia's interests within the framework of European integration (Neumann 1996, 207; Hacke 2003, 567). Since the collapse of the Soviet Union, Germany has supported Russia both politically and economically because a weak and unstable Russia could have a destabilising impact on European integration and security (Stent 2000). Hence, Germany has become the most important player in Russia's European politics. Russia, in turn, seeks to establish a privileged bi-lateral relation with Germany and France and, thus, gain influence on the future of European integration (Kolossov and Turovsky 2001).

Although Germany's active role vis-a-vis Russia also reflects both Germany's central role in Europe and the long, complex history of these two countries, it also evidences crucial weaknesses of common European policy with Russia. One key message sent by Germany to its European partners is that Russia should not – despite Russia's current aggressive geopolitics – be excluded from future developments of European integration. Chancellor Merkel is well aware of different perceptions of Russia among EU Member States, as well as of criticism of Germany's Russian policy. At the same time, however, Merkel's concept of coping with Russia has remained vague and quite blurred when it comes to concrete, long-term objectives and systematic institutionalisation. This is quite understandable against the backdrop of Merkel's vague and fuzzy European policy. How can she develop a robust concept for Russian policy without a coherent conception for the future of European integration? Uncoupling the question of the future of European integration from the future development of the relationship between Russia and Europe does not offer a promising perspective for tackling the continent's central challenges.

At the writing of this report, two issues dominate the political agenda between Russia, Germany and Europe. The first issue is the undersea gas pipeline 'Nord Stream 2' through the Baltic Sea from Ust-Luga, Russia, to Lubmin near Greifswald in Germany. The pipeline project dates back to the chancellorship of Gerhard Schröder (1998–2005), and the first pipeline – known as 'Nord Stream 1' – from Vyborg, Russia, to Lubmin was inaugurated in November 2011 under Merkel's chancellorship. Currently, the second pipeline, the construction of which started in May 2018, is almost finished but is currently stopped due to sanctions imposed by the US government against Russia.

The whole Nord Stream project has catalysed controversial and critical discussions about Europe's energy politics and dependency on a Russian energy supply. From the very beginning, the Nord Stream gas pipeline was politicised and conceptualised as a German-Russian connection and raised historically grounded doubts about Germany's motives and interests. Since the launch of the *Energiewende* (energy transition) in Germany, the increasing dependence of Germany on imports of Russian gas has led these doubts to re-emerge. Poland, as well as the Baltic countries, have been worried about the possible consequences of Germany's dependence on Russian gas on Europe's sovereignty and on Germany's willingness to criticise Russia's political developments in Russia, thus bringing up deeper historical-political fault lines between the East and West, as well as between big and small states in Europe (Timmins 2006; Bengtsson 2012). Quite understandably, Ukraine, enjoying the status of an energy transit country between Russia and Europe, has heavily criticised the project because it can be used to bypass the current pipeline running through Ukraine. Such a scenario is bound up with severe economic impact for Ukraine in the form of the loss of transit fees.

During the presidency of Donald Trump, the critical voices against the pipeline project became louder. In an official statement in January 2018, US Secretary of State Rex Tillerson expressed worries that the project could undermine Europe's energy security and stability, as it makes Europe dependent on Russian energy supply. US President Trump heavily attacked Chancellor Merkel several times for Germany's unwillingness to stop the pipeline project and claimed that Germany would become a political underdog of Russia in Europe. Merkel's government has rejected Trump's criticism by pointing out that Europe's energy supply is not a matter for the US, but a matter for Europe. Further, German politicians have also expressed their anger by stating that the US is interfering in the internal affairs of Europe. Some commentators have also correctly pointed out that the US is attacking Europe for economic reasons: they want Europeans to buy American shale gas instead of Russian natural gas.

The second issue currently putting a strain on relations between Russia and Europe is the poisoning in August 2020 of Alexei Navalny, a prominent Russian opposition politician and an active antagonist and critic of the Putin government. Navalny collapsed during his return flight from Tomsk to Moscow and was first handled in a clinic in Tomsk. After a couple of days, Navalny was transported to Berlin on a medical evacuation flight and hospitalised at the University Clinic Charité. The case of Navalny became politically loaded after experts found traces of the neurotoxin Novichok in samples taken from Navalny. Chancellor Merkel uttered clear words in her statement on the affair and demanded an immediate explanation from President Putin, a demand thus far left unanswered. Although Russian political leadership has rejected all allegations of an active role in Navalny's poisoning, the use of a military toxin has not convinced Europeans of the non-involvement of the Russian political elite. However, EU Member States have been rather reluctant to respond to Russia. At the time of this report, EU Member States and the UK have been capable only of imposing sanctions on a handful of Russian officials and a chemical centre possibly involved in the case.

The struggles of the Nord Stream 2 pipeline project increased greatly after Navalny's poisoning. The main reason was the apparent reluctance of eminent German politicians to stop the project as a political protest against the Kremlin's suspected involvement in Navalny's poisoning. This fuelled criticism not just from the US but also from Germany's European partners, as well as from prominent opponents of Chancellor Merkel. The main argument – also presented by Chancellor Merkel – was grounded in economics: the pipeline project should not be seen as a German project only because it will contribute to the European energy sector as a whole. Further, the pipeline project was seen as one of the few connections preventing Russia from being alienated from Europe. Hence, stopping the project would not only harm Europe's economic development and relations but also put a burden on the Russian economy, which is strongly dependent on energy exports. Although leading German politicians did not refute the political crisis caused by the case of Navalny, they were seemingly uncomfortable with the idea of stopping the gas pipeline project, mostly because of its unpredictable political and economic spillover.

From a more general perspective, the Navalny case is just one more incident in the long decline of relations between Russia and Europe from 'Ostpolitik' to 'frostpolitik' (Forsberg 2016). This continuous worsening of Russo-European relations has now spilled over to the traditionally strong Russo-German relations, obscuring options available in the future. Without a doubt, Russia has become more authoritarian

during the era of Putin. For a long time, however, Germany remained Russia's most important strategic partner in Europe (see Elo 2009), but at the same time, Chancellor Merkel was one of the few European politicians who spoke frankly with Putin about democracy and freedom and who was not afraid to use sharp language in economically important questions (Forsberg 2016, 24). This underlines Germany's geoeconomic orientation, as Merkel has tried to use Germany's strong economic ties and role in Russo-German relations to influence Putin and the Russian political elite. Generally speaking, current German foreign policy towards Russia seems to be motivated by Germany's disappointment with recent developments. In more concrete terms, the old approach towards the Kremlin is no longer working as expected and needs to be changed (see also Forsberg 2016, 42). At the time of this report, the question of how successful the revised policy is in 'normalising' relations between Europe and Russia is a question that can only be answered at a later date.

This new 'frostpolitik', however, might indicate a change in Russian policy towards the EU in general, Germany in particular. Recent developments in Belarus evidence that Chancellor Merkel is losing in possibilities to influence President Lukashenko via Kremlin. Russia has become more critical of European relations with Russia's close neighbourhood – its 'near abroad' – and apparently seeks to defend its own influence in this region.

Joe Biden's presidency will lead to a profound change in US-Russian relations, away from Trump's somewhat peculiar mixture of 'male bonding' and geopolitical gambling towards a more or less traditional power politics. However, the US will not be willing to risk an open conflict with Russia, especially when European questions are at stake. This would, once again, put pressure on Germany to take a stronger leadership role in the EU's relations with Russia. Germany and Europe could count on US support, but they can no longer rely on the willingness of the US to solve problems for the EU.

Interestingly enough, although Germany's defence minister Kramp-Karrenbauer has been critical of Europe's strategic autonomy (as in the aforementioned opinion article), she does not deny that 'the new global strategic map will ask Europeans to take on many more security challenges than before, especially in the wider European neighbourhood'. She also sees 'no real reason why Europeans should not be able to show more of a presence – and more muscle, when needed – in the Baltic Sea and the North Sea, in Central and Eastern Europe'. In other words, Germany seems to be well aware of changes in Europe's security environment, including those changes catalysed by the annexation of the Crimean Peninsula and the armed, currently frozen conflict in Eastern Ukraine. However, read in the context of Kramp-Karrenbauer's article, all these security challenges and external actions are embedded in the NATO-based security framework of the EU. Thus, answers to the question of how these security policy objectives should be achieved if the USA were less present in Europe in the future remain vague.

5. Summary and Outlook

This report has discussed selected topics relevant to understanding Germany's contemporary role in European integration and Germany's agenda for the rotating presidency of the Council of the EU, which Germany has held in the second half of 2020. In a historical context, Germany has undergone a tough and painful learning process since World War II. First and foremost, Germany has proved its capability to use its powers in a constructive way, *in dubio pro* Europe. There is no hidden hegemonic agenda behind Germany's European policy. Germany is still committed to Europe, European integration and the EU. Germany, like all other EU Member States, also wants to benefit from its membership. Thus far, Germany has not only valued European integration as complementary to its weaknesses but has also been willing to Europeanise its national competences and, especially, to use its economic power in favour of the EU. Germany's economic power has made the EU politically strong, but it should be kept in mind that Germany is not an altruistic geoeconomic player. Instead, Germany has mostly supported projects and initiatives that fit its own political ambitions and goals. And the politically strong EU has made the politically weak Germany feel politically strong.

This constellation has fundamentally changed during the past decade of multi-crises. Germany is economically almost overwhelmingly strong, at least when compared to its European partners. At the

same time, the EU has lost a great deal of its global political weight, not least because of Brexit. As a result, Germany is politically weaker than before the crises. France is the only European partner with comparable global weight, but President Macron lacks economic resources to independently push through his initiatives targeting reform of the EU as a strong regional and global power. The EU itself is stuck in a structural deadlock: EU Member States have tried to protect Europe from an economically strong Germany by keeping Germany politically weak by blocking structural reforms. As a consequence, Germany has not been willing to use its economic power to help Europe out of the crises. Thus, Germany's political weakness and the lack of supportive partners have prevented Germany from using its economic power, which, in turn, has weakened Europe further. The crucial point here is that Germany's political weakness is caused by the structure originally designed to protect Germany from its own weakness. Currently, the structure is used to keep Germany weak, but this has caused Europe to become not only increasingly weaker but also increasingly politically quarrelsome; both developments are well reflected in the rise of right-wing populism.

Given this background, pushing Germany to provide stronger leadership in the EU or blaming it for its reluctance sounds a bit ridiculous. Europe's reluctance to accept a stronger Germany also reveals a lot about the trust in the institutional framework of the EU. Are we really afraid that a politically stronger Germany would blow up this framework? Or is Europe reluctant regarding Germany because it is so reluctant to think about its own future? Or maybe, because Europe has understood that a weak Germany is bad for Europe but is still reluctant to accept the political consequences of this understanding?

In the 21st-century world, Europe needs Germany – maybe more than ever. But also, Germany needs Europe more than ever. Germany has been a 'good European', and Europe clearly benefits not only from Germany's economic but also political power and weight. But the challenges ahead also require a re-thinking of structures constructed in the coldest period of the 20th century. Each political system, including those of Europe, should be understood as an answer to the problems of its founding period. In order to survive, a political system needs renewals and reforms. In the past 70 years, the political system of European integration has proven to be a good framework for protecting Europe from destructive hegemons and for fostering democracy. The challenge ahead is how to reform this system in a way that the powers of constructive, benevolent hegemons could be unleashed – for the benefit of Europe.

At the writing of this report, Germany can be described as a benevolent hegemon and Europe's indispensable leader. After years of multi-crises, Europe is more dependent on Germany's economic power than before, which inevitably shapes the options and concepts available for the future of Europe and European integration. Against this background, the following points seem most important for the period of the next, say, five years:

- Although the US president-elect, Joe Biden, will reduce the transatlantic gap, Europeans must take greater responsibility for the stability and security of the continent and its neighbouring regions. The rise of China as a regional and global power especially challenges the US as a superpower. From the perspective of the US, Europe counts as one of the most stable regions in the world, although Europe's close neighbourhood shows growing instability. This shift in the global balance of power away from Europe and towards the Pacific must result in a change in European strategic thinking. This does not mean a return to geopolitics – at least not in its old, hegemonic form – but Europe should re-think its role as part of the changing global order. This re-thinking, in turn, should result in (re-)defined relationships with China, the US and Russia, seeking to find a better balance between expectations and capabilities than exist today. Undoubtedly, the EU has benefited from its commitment to the contract-based, multipolar international system. But the EU should prepare itself for the possibility that other key actors are not necessarily – or at least not unconditionally – committed to supporting this contract-based global order. Thus, the EU should put more effort into strengthening its global actorness in order to find partners willing and capable of promoting those interests and objectives the EU finds important in global politics. Hence, together with these global, similarly minded partners, the EU would have better possibilities of promoting its priorities, policies and agendas in global forums.

- A special yet difficult task is to find common European answers to changes in the operative environment of the EU. If the security-political division of labour between NATO and the EU eroded, the EU would lose one of its most important providers of regional security and stability. In such a case, investing in 'hard' security would no longer be just a theoretical option but a necessity for the EU. Without a doubt, this would result in an increase in the structural power of bigger EU Member States, Germany being the very first to find sustainable concepts for the future of European integration. A stronger EU engagement in hard security can create new challenges for the EU's neighbouring regions, Russia included, in bearing the risk of negative reactions. Hence, the common European concept must seek to prevent such conflicts from emerging in advance, not afterwards.
- The Franco-German tandem will remain a key pillar of Germany's European policy but needs to be strengthened in order to push forward long-overdue EU reforms. At the same time, Germany should continue to strengthen its traditional co-operation with the smaller, affluent Member States, such as Austria, Belgium, Denmark, Finland, Luxembourg, the Netherlands and Sweden. France, in turn, also represents southern EU Member States, thus balancing the core. This balance is politically appealing for Germany as well, mostly because Chancellor Merkel has no appetite for unilateral German leadership. We should, however, keep in mind the upcoming elections in Germany (2021) and France (2022). There is no guarantee that pro-European/EU forces can effectively block populist – right-wing or left-wing – political forces, which can radically change possibilities for an enthusiastic, ambitious integration policy.
- Although the contemporary decision-making apparatus of the EU is an approved result of the long integration history, too often power in the EU means veto power. Many Member States tend to prevent action due to national interests, instead of shaping policies and actions by taking the wider and broader European viewpoint into account. The 'harder' the questions, the more reluctant many Member States are to leave the national ground. Although this is understandable, the contemporary world is facing many wretched challenges, risks and problems requiring regional, transnational or global co-operation. The EU should continue expanding the use of qualified majority voting because it would force Member States to consider issues beyond narrow national boundaries.
- Since the end of World War II, Germany has maintained good and open relations with Russia. Recent developments – especially the conflict in Ukraine and the poisoning of Alexei Navalny – have, unfortunately, evidenced that Germany's powers and possibilities to influence, let alone change, Russia's political thinking and agenda are also becoming increasingly limited. Russia has become increasingly authoritarian, and the bad news for Europe is that there is no realistic scenario that this will change in the near future. Germany should – despite its current loss of influence – continue to maintain endurable relations with Russia, simply in order to prevent Russia from drifting apart from Europe. Since the current situation is the result of a long, downward slope, there is no quick recovery in sight.
- Despite the increase of armed conflicts in the world in general, and in the close neighbourhood of the EU in particular, future development in global politics will be determined by questions of economic and technical development. The most important issue for now and the future is the global climate change. The other wretched global problems are connected to climate change and cannot be solved without sustainable answers to problems at the core of climate change. Further, many consequences of climate change can result in armed conflict and, hence, increase global and regional instability, foster refugee movements and increase economic and social disparities. This problem is well recognised in the Commission's agenda, but the agenda needs to be realised. Germany will invest in European solutions but requires the other Member States to do so as well.

Germany's assumed reluctance should be put in the right context. Although Germany has been reluctant to gain leadership in Europe, this reluctance is – at least partly – a result of the reluctance of the other Europeans to allow Germany's leadership. The core problem is not the reluctance itself but merely the possibility of Europeans turning their reluctance into a blockade. As long as the distribution of political power in Europe is seen as a zero-sum game, all claims for Germany to take over the leadership are doomed to fail.

The fact that Germany's agenda for the rotating presidency of the Council of the EU has been well in line with the core priorities of the new commission of the EU underlines Germany's commitment to European integration, as well Germany's willingness to support the European-level agenda. A revival of the Franco-German tandem can only be welcomed since it seems not only to have given a long-awaited boost to European integration but also to have widened the shoulders upon which the future of European integration rests. Of course, Germany's national interests are part of the story. Germany, like other EU Member States, would share the economic burden caused by digitalisation, the Covid-19 pandemic, measures against climate change and increasing global activities of the EU. Germany is ready to 'overinvest' in stabilising Europe, but it requires other Member States to contribute as well. There is, however, no evidence whatsoever that Germany would return to its previous 'cheque book politics'. Instead, Chancellor Merkel's pragmatic approach to Europe has evidenced that Germany supports Europeanisation if there is a clear added value to be expected in return – be it in economic, political or geoeconomic terms. The difference, compared to several European countries, is that Germany's assessment of this added value is evaluated against European, not – at least not primarily – against national interests.

Germany is a European economic giant committed to European integration. For the entire post-World War II period, Germany has used its economic power and resources to support the objectives and goals of European integration. That said, this does not mean that Germany has uncritically financed all initiatives. Instead, Germany has invested in actions and policies supportive of Germany's national and European interests. In the past turbulent decade, Germany has shown a strong commitment to its post-World War II European policy. At the same time, Germany's economic power has become more evident. One could say that today, European integration rests economically on Germany's wide shoulders and politically on France's ideas and visions. Germany has no appetite for becoming a regional hegemon, but it seems willing to make the EU – and Europe in a broader sense – into a geoeconomic power in global politics by prioritising the goals, actions and policies of the EU over Germany's national interests. The rest of Europe should understand that no state alone, not even Germany, can make Europe a global power. This requires a strong commitment by all Member States of the EU to the building of a strong consensus and community.

A final remark: After the German federal election in 2021, *both* Germany *and* Europe will enter the post-Merkel era. One crucial challenge for the new German government will be to formulate a coherent, sustainable and future-oriented European agenda. If Germany is willing to invest – either politically or economically – in European integration in order to make the EU stronger both in European and global politics, the most promising method is to strengthen the Franco-German tandem. This would require a re-orientation and re-thinking in both Paris and Berlin. A strong signal of commitment to European integration would also diminish room for manoeuvre for populist and other anti-European political forces.

References

Auswärtiges Amt (2020): *Together for Europe's recovery: Programme for Germany's Presidency of the Council of the European Union.* Online: https://www.eu2020.de/blob/2360248/e0312c50f910931819ab67f630d15b2f/06-30-pdf-programm-en-data.pdf

Bengtsson, R. (2000). Towards a stable peace in the Baltic Sea region? *Cooperation and Conflict 35*(4), 355–388.

Bengtsson, R. (2012). The EU strategy for the Baltic Sea region in 2012 - implementation challenges. *Baltic Rim Economies* (1), 27.

Bulmer, S. (2018). Germany and the European Union: Post-brexit hegemon? *Insight Turkey 20*(3).

Dinan, D., N. Nugent, and W. E. Paterson (Eds.) (2017). *The European Union in Crisis. London*. London: Palgrave.

Elo, K. (2009). European integration and Germany's *Ostpolitik*: From new *Ostpolitik* to "Strategic Partnership". In M. Rasmussen and A.-C. Knudsen (Eds.), *The Road to a United Europe: Interpretations of the Process of European Integration*, pp. 271–288. Bruxelles, Bern, Berlin, Frankfurt am Main, New York, Oxford, Wien: PIE Peter Lang.

Forsberg, T. (2016). From Ostpolitik to 'frostpolitik'? Merkel, Putin and German foreign policy towards Russia. *International Affairs 92*(1), 21 – 42.

Fröhlich, S. (2016). Towards more pragmatism: German foreign policy after the euro crisis. *Insight Turkey 18*(1), 45–56.

Gruner, W. (2018). German perceptions of Europe before and after 1989/90. *Studia Studia Universitatis Babeș-Bolyai Studia Europaea 63*, 5–62.

Hacke, C. (2003). *Die Außenpolitik der Bundesrepublik Deutschland. Von Konrad Adenauer bis Gerhard Schröder*. Frankfurt/Main, Berlin: Ullstein.

Holt, B. D. (2015). Europe, Where Is Your Strategy? *American Foreign Policy Interests 37*(3), 123–131.

Janning, J. and A. Möller (2016). Leading from the centre: Germany's new role in Europe. ECFR policy brief, European Council on Foreign Relations.

Kolossov, V. and R. Turovsky (2001). Russian Geopolitics at the Fin-de-siecle. *Geopolitics 6*(1), 141–164.

Kundnani, H. (2016). *German Power. Das Paradox der deutschen Stärke*. München: C. H. Beck.

Kunz, B. (2015). Germany's unnecessary hegemony: Berlin's seeking of 'tranquillity, profit and power' in the absence of systemic constraints. *Politics 35*(2), 172–182.

Labarre, F. (2001). NATO-Russia relations and NATO enlargement in the Baltic Sea region. *Baltic Defence Review* (6), 46–69.

Luttwak, E. N. (1990). From geopolitics to geo-economic: Logic of conflict, grammar of commerce. *The National Interest 20*(2), 17–23.

Maull, H. W. (2018). Reflective, hegemonic, geo-economic, civilian...? The puzzle of German power. *German Politics 27*(4), 460–478.

Musiał, K. (2009). Reconstructing Nordic Significance in Europe on the Threshold of the 21st Century. *Scandinavian Journal of History 34*(3), 286–306.

Neumann, I. B. (1996). *Russia and the idea of Europe. A study in identity and international relations*. London: Routledge.

Paterson, W. E. (2011). The reluctant hegemon? Germany moves centre stage in the European union. *Journal of Common Market Studies 49*, 57–75.

Scazzieri, L. (2017). Europe, Russia and the Ukraine crisis: The dynamics of coercion. *Journal of Strategic Studies 40*(3), 392–416.

Stent, A. E. (2000). *Rivalen des Jahrhunderts. Deutschland und Rußland im neuen Europa*. Berlin - München: Propyläen.

Szabo, S. (2015, 01). Vom potenziellen Führungspartner zur 'Nein-Nation'. Deutschlands neue Außenpolitik aus einem Washingtoner Blickwinkel. *Zeitschrift für Außen- und Sicherheitspolitik 8*, 437–450.

Timmins, G. (2006). German Ostpolitik Under the Red-Green Coalition and EU-Russian Relations. *Debatte 14*(3), 301–314.

Earlier publications in the BSR Policy Briefing series by Centrum Balticum Foundation

BSR Policy Briefing 5/2020	**Denmark and COVID-19** Marin A. Marinov
BSR Policy Briefing 4/2020	**Lithuania and Belarus: Will Lithuania become Belarus' "Iceland"?** Ruslanas Iržikevičius
BSR Policy Briefing 3/2020	**The corona pandemic and its impact on the economic development of the Baltic Sea region in 2020** Kari Liuhto
BSR Policy Briefing 2/2020	**Increasing Eco-efficiency via Digitalisation in Maritime Industry in The Baltic Sea Region: Policy Support through Carrots or Sticks?** Milla Harju
BSR Policy Briefing 1/2020	**The forest industry around the Baltic Sea region: Future challenges and opportunities** Edited by Kari Liuhto
BSR Policy Briefing 9/2019	**The Baltic states and security in the Baltic Sea region: Dark clouds in blue sky** Kristi Raik
BSR Policy Briefing 8/2019	**Creation of regional gas market in the Baltic States and Finland: Challenges and opportunities** Tadas Jakstas
BSR Policy Briefing 7/2019	**US FDI in the Baltic Sea region: The state of American investment and selected challenges** Kalman Kalotay
BSR Policy Briefing 6/2019	**Germany and the Baltic Sea region: political and security interests** Tobias Etzold
BSR Policy Briefing 5/2019	**Government support for the Russian shipbuilding industry: Policy priorities and budgetary allocations** Elena Efimova and Sergei Sutyrin
BSR Policy Briefing 4/2019	**Finnish tonnage as the implementer for security of seaborne supply in maritime transport** Bo Österlund
BSR Policy Briefing 3/2019	**The Estonian-Finnish economic cooperation** Alari Purju
BSR Policy Briefing 2/2019	**Bioeconomy Policies in the BSR** Torfi Jóhannesson
BSR Policy Briefing 1/2019	**Cooperation between Saint-Petersburg and Finland** Stanislav Tkachenko
BSR Policy Briefing 10/2018	**The sanctions against Russia. Are there winners and losers around the Baltic Sea?** Susanne Oxenstierna
BSR Policy Briefing 9/2018	**Future of Public Sector Governance and Digitalization** Meelis Kitsing
BSR Policy Briefing 8/2018	**American Policy Towards the Baltic States** Stephen Blank

BSR Policy Briefing 7/2018	**Russian direct and indirect investment in the Baltic Sea region** Alexey Kuznetsov
BSR Policy Briefing 6/2018	**Foreign economic relations of the Kaliningrad region** Vitaliy Zhdanov, Vladimir Kuzin and Mikhail Pliukhin
BSR Policy Briefing 5/2018	**Why is Russia seeking to ignite a civil war in the European Union and how to stop it?** Ruslanas Iržikevičius
BSR Policy Briefing 4/2018	**On the paradoxes of foreign expansion: the experience of Polish firms** Piotr Trąpczyński & Krystian Barłożewski
BSR Policy Briefing 3/2018	**The bioeconomy in the Baltic Sea region** Anna Berlina
BSR Policy Briefing 2/2018	**Russia vis-à-vis Ukraine: On Some Economic Costs** Sergey Kulik
BSR Policy Briefing 1/2018	**Chinese Direct Investment in the Baltic Sea Region** Jean-Marc F. Blanchard
BSR Policy Briefing 5/2017	**The economic impact of China on the Baltic Sea region** Jean-Paul Larçon
BSR Policy Briefing 4/2017	**National innovation and smart specialisation governance in the Baltic Sea region** Edited by Zane Šime
BSR Policy Briefing 3/2017	**The economic state of the Baltic Sea region** Edited by Kari Liuhto
BSR Policy Briefing 2/2017	**Russia's foreign relations and the Baltic Sea region** Sergey Kulik
BSR Policy Briefing 1/2017	**Russia and the security in the Baltic Sea region** Justyna Gotkowska & Piotr Szymański
BSR Policy Briefing 2/2016	**The EU-Russia relations and their reflections in the Baltic Sea region** Stanislav L. Tkachenko
BSR Policy Briefing 1/2016	**The maritime cluster in the Baltic Sea region and beyond** Edited by Kari Liuhto
BSR Policy Briefing 1/2015	**Natural gas revolution and the Baltic Sea region** Edited by Kari Liuhto
BSR Policy Briefing 4/2014	**A Russian Sudden Stop or Just a Slippery Oil Slope to Stagnation?** Torbjörn Becker
BSR Policy Briefing 3/2014	**Poland and Russia in the Baltic Sea Region: doomed for the confrontation?** Adam Balcer
BSR Policy Briefing 2/2014	**Energy security in Kaliningrad and geopolitics** Artur Usanov and Alexander Kharin

BSR Policy Briefing 1/2014	**The Baltic Sea region 2014: Ten policy-oriented articles from scholars of the university of Turku** Edited by Kari Liuhto
BSR Policy Briefing 4/2013	**The Kaliningrad nuclear power plant project and its regional ramifications** Leszek Jesien and Łukasz Tolak
BSR Policy Briefing 3/2013	**Renewable Energy Sources in Finland and Russia - a review** Irina Kirpichnikova and Pekka Sulamaa
BSR Policy Briefing 2/2013	**Russia's accesion to the WTO: possible impact on competitiveness of domestic companies** Sergey Sutyrin and Olga Trofimenko
BSR Policy Briefing 1/2013	**Mare Nostrum from Mare Clausum via Mare Sovieticum to Mare Liberum - The process of security policy in the Baltic** Bo Österlund

BSR Policy Briefing series 5/2020

CENTRUM BALTICUM

www.centrumbalticum.org/en