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FACTS & FINDINGS



PROSPECTS FOR GERMAN FOREIGN POLICY

The German G7 Presidency (I)

THE G7 AS AN OPPORTUNITY – RETURNING TO
VALUE-BASED GLOBAL GOVERNANCE

Working Group of Young Foreign Policy Experts

With the re-establishment of the G7, the democracies of the West will once again have their own forum as a community of shared values. However, the G7 nations face several fundamental challenges: Both a strategic debate about transatlantic relations and specification of a shared constructive position vis-à-vis Russia are required. The main advantage of the G7 compared to the G8 lies in the possibility of closer coordination among G7 members' to then represent a united stance in international forums. During its G7 presidency Germany should thus clearly foreground the opportunities offered by a strengthened Western partnership of values. The German government should also promote the elaboration of a long-term vision and strategy for the MENA region, which has been the centre of multi-layered and violent conflicts since the beginning of the Arab uprisings in 2011.

Information about the Working Group of Young Foreign Policy Experts is available at: <http://www.kas.de/wf/en/71.6391/>

*Prospects for German Foreign Policy:
<http://www.kas.de/prospects>*

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INTRODUCTION: THE GERMAN G7 PRESIDENCY

In July 2014 Germany assumed the presidency of the G7 and will therefore host the meeting of the G7 heads of state and government on 4-5 June 2015. The presidency gives Germany the opportunity to have more of a say in defining the agenda of the summit meeting. The German government has already announced that it will pay special attention to the continued development of the United Nations' Millennium Development Goals. With an eye to the upcoming climate conference in Paris, the Summit will also focus on climate protection. Another topic on the agenda will be the realm of foreign and security policy. Here, the focus will naturally be on current crises and conflicts.

However, the Summit also offers an opportunity to address longer-term concerns and to launch joint G7 initiatives. In view of this, the Working Group of Young Foreign Policy Experts from the Konrad-Adenauer-Stiftung has prepared three papers in the run-up to the conference that address the topics of foreign and security policy (this Paper I), development policy (Paper II) and climate policy (Paper III). Based on the short analysis at the beginning of each paper, concrete recommendations for action that the German government should advance during its G7 presidency are provided.

2015 AS A KEY YEAR FOR THE G7

By annexing Crimea and supporting the separatists in East Ukraine, Russia not only violated international law but also fundamentally called into question the European security order that has existed since 1990. This course of action severely damaged the foundation of trust for further relations with Russia. The G7 nations were therefore justified in discontinuing cooperation with Russia within the G8 format.

As the German Chancellor emphasised in her statement at the G7 Summit in early June, the G8 is not just an economic community but also a community of values. The admission of Russia into the G8 in 1998 represented a special offer of partnership: Russia, as a young democracy, was to be admitted into the club of the West as a member with equal rights and recognised as a partner. Inviting Russia in was both a form of recognition and an incentive for its further development.

In retrospect, Russia's recent conduct in the Ukraine was not the first sign that Russia was unable to fulfil the expectations that it would move closer, both economically and with regard

to domestic and foreign policy, to the pluralistic Western model of state and society. For example, we must regard critically the Russian attitude toward free media, fair elections, state-protected minority rights, the rule of law and investment protection. After the failed attempts at liberalisation in the 1990s, these developments have reversed themselves over the last decade. President Putin in particular likes to draw repeated attention to his rejection of Western values.

The year 2015 is thus a key moment for the future of the format. There are two possible strategies, and a decision must be made whether to hold on to the G8 perspective or focus once more on the G7. The first strategy would mean working toward the fastest possible normalisation of relations and readmission of Russia. The second option would recognise that the goals associated with the admission of Russia were not achieved and that today's Russia can no longer be represented in a league of Western democracies. As the current council chair and host of the Summit in Elmau next year, Germany has a special responsibility in reaching this decision.

POLICY RECOMMENDATIONS

(1) Re-establishing the G7 as a forum for dialogue among partners with shared values

Germany should clearly take the position that the re-establishment of the G7 is not just a temporary measure. In its current condition – particularly with regard to other emerging democracies around the world – Russia is no longer a power deserving of a privileged partnership within the G8. The format of the G7 should rather be used to detail joint positions vis-à-vis Russia and an understanding of the opportunities for and limits of collaboration. That would send a signal of unity and resolve to Russia.

Germany should see the re-establishment of the G7 above all as an opportunity to put emphasis on the international dissemination of Western values and standards. In contrast to controversial concepts like a global NATO, broader foreign and economic policy topics are also explicitly in the foreground here.

Germany should use its presidency to place more fundamental questions on the G7 agenda again. This also involves a strategic debate about transatlantic relations. What do the transatlantic partners currently expect from each other, where is there friction, and what are their ideas regarding



long-term transatlantic collaboration? Germany should make use of the trust-based context that allows for more detailed discussion of even sensitive topics among partners who share a common set of values.

Furthermore, an invitation should be extended to Poland to attend the Summit as a guest. The presence of the Polish delegation will give the G7 the opportunity to address current political developments in Ukraine and their consequences for Eastern Europe as well as to discuss new policy options. The invitation to Poland, which will initially be extended for one time only, should at the same time also be viewed as recognition of that country's positive developments and should promote the role of global responsibility played by central Eastern European nations. In this way, the summit meeting provides a forum for open and trusting discussions among equals who share a set of interests and values.

(2) Utilising the G7 as a coordinating forum for international negotiations

The main opportunity of the G7 compared to the G8 lies in the possibility of closer coordination of the G7 partners' positions on key issues, which can then be represented in international forums, in particular the G20. The G7 can attend to its original task of forming a coordinating forum of similar, democratic market economies. Today, the G7 countries are no longer the world's largest national economies. Consequently, this group no longer represents the primary global governance forum; this role increasingly falls to the G20. However, a more cohesive G7 could re-assert itself more strongly, as a nucleus within the G20, at the heart of global governance.

The German sherpas can take on a central role in elaborating joint G7 positions for negotiations in the G20 as well as for the coordination of work in both forums. By sounding out the support that exists among individual G20 nations for possible G7 initiatives, bridges can be built on specific issues in the spirit of flexible, effective and value-based multilateralism.

A cohesive stance by the G7 within the G20 will also improve the West's potential for influencing individual partners in the G20 with regard to dealing with Russia in a way that is compatible with the values of the G7. At the same time, there must continue to be significant collaboration with Russia within and outside of the G20 on important topics, especially with regard to questions concerning the nuclear order and the fight against Islamic terrorism.

(3) Setting standards with the G7 for the global economic order of the future

The unity that has been re-established among the G7 represents a great opportunity for designing the future global architecture of trade and economics. Important topics can be placed on the agenda, such as the free movement of goods and services, the protection of investment and intellectual property as well as occupational health and safety in compliance with high international standards. This is especially timely in light of the loss of significance of the WTO and the Doha Round. Germany should make the conclusion of the negotiations on the Transatlantic Trade and Investment Partnership (TTIP) as well as harmonisation of the TTIP and the Trans-Pacific Partnership (TPP) process, which is decisively influenced by Western nations and ideas, into a central topic of its presidency. Coordination with the G20 nations that are involved in the TPP negotiations should be intensified within the G7. With these two free trade agreements, the foundation could be laid for establishing world-wide Western standards in the area of economics and trade. Politically and economically like-minded partners, such as Canada and the Latin American nations of the Pacific Alliance, which is oriented toward free trade and democracy, should be tied as closely as possible to TTIP. That would contribute to strengthening Western global governance goals.

(4) A "new map" for MENA

The Middle East and North Africa (MENA) region has been the locus of violent (inter- and intra-)religious, strategic-political and territorial conflicts since the beginning of the Arab uprisings in 2011. MENA is in a process of transformation that will last for years – if not decades – to come and the outcome of which is entirely open.

In light of the numerous tensions, ongoing escalation and extent of the threat, the nations of the region as well as external actors have understandably focused on short-term crisis management. The German government should, however, push for the elaboration of a vision and long-term strategy for MENA within the G7. After all, the numerous, interconnected challenges in the region, such as the non-state actors ISIS (the "Islamic State"), AQIM (Al-Qaida in the Islamic Maghreb), Hamas and Hezbollah, as well as the fragile statehood of Egypt and Lebanon and the civil wars in Syria and Libya, require more than just short-term responses.



In addition to prioritising individual objectives, it must first be clarified to what extent the Group of Seven can and should exert an influence on the crisis-ridden region. Moreover, joint positions must be found on key questions: In addition to the G7, what roles can other external actors and regional anchor countries like Turkey, Saudi Arabia and Iran play with regard to issues like the spreading danger posed by radical Islamic groups? What future do the current state structures have in countries like Syria, Libya and Iraq? To what extent can geo-political interests go hand in hand with the fight against radical Islamic groups? How can positive developments like the reforms in Tunisia and Morocco be supported? Only by setting shared and long-term goals will it be possible to shape the region in an active and coherent way.

Germany should advocate using the Group of Seven as a value-based forum for developing a vision, which goes beyond acute crisis management, of how the MENA map should look in the long term. This does not refer to a neo-colonial order for the region. What is needed is a strategic debate about the desirable territorial and national order of the region. The West can only be helpful in developing that order if it pursues clear objectives and works together with regional anchor countries.