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Germany at the eye of the European political storm



Because the European Parliament (EP) doesn't make the laws that are applied in people's daily lives, but merely makes recommendations that countries may or may not adopt, European elections don't have the same significance as national ones. The EP elections serve above all as a barometer of political trends in each Member State. That's why turnout is generally much lower than in national elections.

In the case of Germany, however, the whole EU project is more important, as there is a local awareness that the country is the economic engine of the European project and that Germany and the EU are interdependent. Perhaps that's why voter turnout here is significantly higher than the European average (64 against 51 per cent).

If in neighbouring France President Emmanuel Macron is one of the leading figures exemplifying Europe's current warmongering drift – but one that has been relentlessly

crushed by the will of the people – in Germany, last weekend’s election results force us to take a different view.

Ursula von der Leyen (VDL), the head candidate of the CDU/CSU list in last weekend’s elections, is the other face of this Carolingian Europe, with its strong Occidental and, I would add, Russophobic orientation, which has been at the heart of the European federalist project. Unlike Macron’s candidate, the President of the European Commission can’t be said to have suffered a defeat; on the contrary, she confirmed her comfortable position with 30 per cent.

The CDU-SPD «omertà» and the Euro-Atlanticist model

The paradigm of the covert pact between the two main parties (CDU and SPD), joined by the Greens and the Liberals, was the anti-AfD act carried out by President Frank-Walter Steinmeier (SPD) a week before the elections, when he travelled to Kassel to pay his respects to a CDU politician murdered five years ago by a right-wing extremist, while on the same day a policeman died after being stabbed two days earlier by an Islamist who had been in the country illegally for almost ten years. It’s not the first time that the two major parties, fearing a strong rise of the AfD, have come together to perpetuate their system. We may one day find out how many secrets they are keeping about their decades-long history of corruption scandals.

Unlike in France, where only a small part of the population is interested in ‘defeating Russia’ in Ukraine, in Germany there is still a large part of the electorate that is fiercely attached to the Atlanticist ideal, determined to rearm Germany in defence of the Federal Republic of Germany consensus, and content with its status as a geopolitical vassal of the US. Today this constituency is divided between the Christian Democrats, the Liberals and the Greens, as well as the SPD.

As the European representative of the transatlantic system, Germany can afford to send ambiguous messages about its role in the current conflict in Ukraine, in which it has obviously been involved since at least 2014. In Berlin, this power counts on a coalition government of three very different parties led by a Social Democrat, and in Brussels, it has the President of the Commission, a German of an ideological sign supposedly opposite to that of the Chancellor. So, if Scholz shows moderation and VDL, on Biden’s orders, pours more fuel on the Ukrainian fire, the perception of both Germans and Europeans will be that German policy is guided by moderation, when in fact it is slowly and gradually escalating the situation.

Similarly, in Brussels, VDL sells the consensual image of a united Europe inherited from Angela Merkel, while on election posters across Germany she appears alongside her party leader, Friedrich Merz, a political hyena who jumped from the presidency of the fund manager BlackRock Deutschland to the leadership of the Christian Democratic coalition, where no one asked him to explain this blatant incompatibility. Not even when he proposes to radically change the country's pension model in the direction of privatisation.

The lobbyist has been one of the biggest supporters of the war in Ukraine in the Bundestag, where he has given seats to a wide range of parliamentarians drawn from Atlanticist think-tanks and the national and transatlantic military-industrial complex. And, as if he weren't the same man who supported Angela Merkel's open-door neoliberal policies, he now accuses immigrants of living off the Germans and engaging in 'social tourism' in the country, as popular perceptions of immigration shift towards the AfD. In this ambiguous and unscrupulous way, the CDU has managed to increase its vote, not only for the 2021 federal elections, which it lost to the SPD, but also for the European elections five years ago, with strong prospects of regaining power in Berlin in 2025.

In Brussels, VDL has already announced that it will redouble her efforts over the next five years, especially when it comes to controlling information and news. All the signs point to difficult times ahead for press freedom on the continent.

Yellow card for the government

The three parties in the 'traffic light' coalition government (SPD, Greens and FDP) have been clearly punished for their disastrous governance of the country, not only for their poor handling of the energy crisis they created, but also for the strong warmongering tendencies of some of its members. The general feeling is that Germany is dangerously close to a war that can't happen, but which some believe is worth it.

Chancellor Scholz's SPD won 13.9 per cent, two points less than in 2019, but a landslide compared to the 25 per cent it won in the 2021 general election. A head of government who lent himself to the caricature of being threatened with the destruction of his largest energy infrastructure to his face and in front of the whole world. A threat that has since been carried out, with the country no longer talking about the issue. A leader who, with a smile on his face, travels to Tel Aviv to meet the head of a government that, just a few kilometres away, is committing genocide under international law.

The liberals of the FDP have put forward as their top candidate Marie-Agnes Strack-Zimmermann, one of the most recognisable faces on German television, where she is a regular presence in prime time and where she relentlessly advocates a military solution to the

war in Ukraine. It was she who put the most pressure on Chancellor Olaf Scholz to give the famous Taurus long-range missiles to Kiev, without success. As chair of the Bundestag's defence committee, Strack-Zimmermann was also a member of the board of the German Society for Defence Technology and the German Army Support Association – roles that are incompatible under the law, say organisations for transparency in politics. But what does the law mean today, when lobbying has replaced the concept of corruption? After all, the FDP is also a minor member of the German omertà... Finance Minister Christian Lindner, the third figure in the government, is also the other face of unconditional support for Kiev. But as with the CDU/CSU, the liberal voters' confidence in the system kept the party afloat, with a very small loss of votes.

The Greens were punished the most for the disastrous policies of Economics Minister and Vice-Chancellor Robert Habeck, the constant anecdotal and dangerous gaffes of Foreign Minister Annalena Baerbock, the terrible image of Agriculture Minister Cem Özdemir in the eyes of farmers, and the insistence of lobbyist MPs Anton Hofreiter and Michael Roth on sending arms to the Zelensky regime. All this at a party that claims to be “ecological and pacifist”. They have lost ground in the run-up to both the 2019 and 2021 elections and, most importantly, in the first elections to include 16-year-olds, they have lost their lead in the youth vote, which is now trending to the right.

These are the political actors of the German political consensus of recent decades. As one can see, the CDU/CSU, SPD, Greens and FDP still hold the vast majority of the electorate, and a good part of it even seems to be radicalising in defence of the system they have always known, without taking into account global changes.

However, there are also signs that a significant proportion of the population is unwilling to follow a path that could spell the end of Germany as an industrial power. Germany's already mentioned dependence on the European project could also change things very quickly on the domestic front.

In his latest book, “Moral über alles”, Michael Lüders, author of a dozen geopolitical books, goes so far as to say: “In other words, Germany's deindustrialisation is already under way as a result of its policy towards Russia. For cost reasons, the production of steel, cement and fertilisers in Germany has collapsed massively”.

The winds of change blowing from neighbouring France, for example, are likely to have repercussions in Germany sooner rather than later and are a warning sign that the continent has entered a decisive phase in its history, where many changes will take place in the coming period.

In an upcoming article, I'll talk about the East-West rift, what I see as the two winners of election day (the AfD and the BSW), and the debut of DAVA, also known as "Erdoğan's party" in Germany.

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