

## Political parties of Germany in the context of Bundestag elections.

### «Alternative for Germany»: Random Success or Skillful Strategy?

«Alternative for Germany» is a right-wing and Eurosceptic political party that was founded by a group of indignant economists in 2013. They wanted to take the Eurozone apart and prevent the bailing out of Greece. It is well known to everyone in the world that politics is a concentrated expression of the economy. Later the AfD shifted its focus to immigration. Today we are witnessing serious problems in Germany which must be solved. The broad popular support for the AfD confirms this statement. This party took third place in Sunday's German election. Why have they been so successful in recent years? Is it a well-deserved result?

The most important thing we should say is that the AfD is trying to fill all niches in different spheres. «Alternative for Germany» stands for direct democracy, the elimination of the Eurozone, the opposition to immigration and gay marriage, promotes Christianity and traditional family values. Moreover, this party is skeptical of climate change and opposed Germany's energy transition. They want a reconstruction of Europe to some extent because they are supportive of the membership in the European Union but critical of further European integration. Despite the persistent criticism from other parties, it remains true to its core purposes. Now it is important to consider in more detail all aspects and factors I have mentioned earlier.

Firstly, the AfD has a definite position on the solution of each problem. Nowadays the European refugee crisis is a burning and debatable issue. For example, «Islamisierung stoppen, AfD wählen» is a vivid pre-election slogan that means «stop Islamisation and choose the Alternative for Germany». They adopted an anti-Islam policy in 2016. Government's admission of the new wave of migrants has bred a rise in anti-immigration protests in Germany. The AfD supposes that German national identity is under threat because of European integration and the accommodation of refugees within their country. Due to this rhetoric the party has challenged Angela Merkel's decision to let in a great number of migrants and refugees from the Middle East. The AfD declares that Germany must reintroduce permanent border controls and the EU's external borders must be "completely shut". The party attracted the attention of many voters by these actions.

Secondly, as for the Euro and European integration, the AfD still promises to abandon it and reintroduce their national currency – Deutschmark. The nation states

must get more powers again and the project of Euro-federalism should be rejected. In my opinion, these points of their program are strongly connected with the realistic paradigm where states are primary actors in international politics. Classical realism emphasizes the concept of national interest that is more important than any interests of international organization. Perhaps that is why the party of Eurosceptics is gaining popularity among the Germans. After the Brexit Germany has become an indisputable leader of the EU but its membership is often seen as a burden to the German people.

Thirdly, the AfD stands for the institutions of direct democracy such as a referendum. It is a compulsory condition of the party in the case of any coalition. They propose to review the presidential election process, many other things, in other words, they propose a constitutional reform. The question of direct democracy is crucial for democratic country and this is another successful move of the party.

Fourthly, a middle class is the main constituency of the AfD that was created by several intellectuals. It is important that they try to attract the Russian-speaking voters. The leaders of this party say that Crimea should be recognized as a part of Russia and the political and economic sanctions should be lifted. Moreover, the relations between Russia and Germany need to be improved in the near future. Such a flexible policy allows the party to attract new voters across the country.

Fifthly, one of the main planks of the party program is promoting the traditional family. The idea of gender mainstreaming is rejected in the official party manifesto because this policy undermines traditional gender roles. It is obvious that a tradition is a link between different generations that is why the AfD suggests that marriage and family should be presented in a positive way by the state. The party makes a deliberate effort to poach Christian conservative base of their powerful opponents led by the chancellor. Anyway, politics is not a fair play and according to Machiavelli the end justifies the means.

Sixthly and finally, as for the environment, the AfD suggests that Germany should leave all relevant international treaties and agreements. The party opposes subsidies in the energy realm because they damage Germany's competitiveness. The AfD rejects all national and European unilateral actions connected with the climate change because a global problem can be solved only by coordinated efforts of all nations. Moreover, the transition to alternative energy sources is expensive and the AfD suggests Germany does not need such an alternative.

In conclusion, I strongly believe that the AfD has chosen a skillful strategy «Make Germany great again». The main components of its program are similar to the Trump's

program. As we can see in today's world it works in the USA, it works in Germany. Without doubt, an elaborate, thought-out populism is a political weapon in the modern world. While the main German parties are in a state of crisis the AfD is strengthening its positions in the current political system.