

Germany's European Policy Record: One Year of the Merz Government

#EBDGrafik



European Movement Germany

Germany works better in Brussels. But to what end?

European policy coordination within the Federal Government

- + Coordination appears more structured; interministerial conflicts are addressed earlier — helping to avoid unintended abstentions, or “German Votes”.
- + The Federal Government presents itself in Brussels in a more unified, timely and less contradictory manner — strengthening Germany's ability to shape European policy.

Shaping Europe and European policy leadership

- + Engagement in flexible formats such as the E3 and E6 for individual policy areas — but without an integrative strategy.
- The Federal Government has not explained how exactly it intends to bring together European capacity to act, democratic legitimacy, economic strength, social security and societal cohesion as part of its European policy approach.
- Germany would strengthen its capacity to shape Europe if it formulated its guiding vision for European policy more clearly. So far, an overarching European policy vision is not yet sufficiently visible. The Federal Government needs to explain which European Union it wants — and how it intends to help shape it.

Foreign, security and enlargement policy

- + Germany's extraordinary support for Ukraine is a clear strength of its European policy.
- + The initiative to give practical meaning to the EU mutual assistance clause under Article 42(7) TEU has triggered an important debate on shared European security responsibility.
- Europe's defence structure remains only partially integrated and does not yet amount to a genuine European Defence Union.
- + - Commitment to timely enlargement — but without accompanying it proactively, strategically and realistically.

Schengen and internal border controls

- National internal border controls remain the most visible European policy flashpoint of the government's first year.
- Judicial guidance and rule-of-law concerns should be taken more fully into account.

Single Market and competitiveness

- + The Federal Government has proactively brought simplification, faster procedures and better regulation into the European policy debate.
- Care is needed to ensure that simplification is not understood as blanket criticism of European procedures. Europe does not become stronger through lower protection standards, but through clear, digital and practice-oriented rules. More self-criticism is needed regarding Germany's bureaucratic national implementation of European rules.

EU budget

- + - The Multiannual Financial Framework is now becoming a credibility test for German European policy. The Federal Government recognises new European responsibilities: support for Ukraine, defence, transformation, enlargement, competitiveness and democratic resilience. But those who call for greater European sovereignty must also be prepared to finance it at European level.

i Important for EBD

- **Coordination should become leadership:** The Federal Government can strengthen its ability to shape Europe if it sets out more clearly which EU it wants to help build.
- **The Community method should be further strengthened:** European capacity to act requires strong EU institutions, parliamentary scrutiny and the involvement of civil society.
- **Schengen remains a core European project:** National internal border controls should remain strictly limited and be replaced by European cooperation.
- **Competitiveness requires better rules:** Simplification should be digital, practical and European in approach — without weakening common standards.
- **Europäische European sovereignty needs reliable financing:** New responsibilities in support for Ukraine, defence, enlargement, transformation and democratic resilience must be backed at European level.
- **European education strengthens capacity to act:** Greater European competence, exchange and civic participation remain key prerequisites for European policy.

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