



## Federal Republic of Germany



### **Energy Dependencies and European Military and Humanitarian Aid efforts in Ukraine**

#### Historical Context of the Federal Republic of Germany

The German cabinet, also known as the Federal Cabinet or the Bundesregierung, is the executive branch of the federal government of Germany. It is composed of the Chancellor, who is head of government, and federal ministers, who head various government departments.

The cabinet's history is tumultuous. Its roots lie in the shadow of the German Empire (1871-1918), where it functioned as an advisory council to the powerful Kaiser. During the Weimar Republic (1919-1933), the cabinet shifted to a more parliamentary system, responsible to the Reichstag, but it was still rife with chronic instability. The Nazi Party exploited the Weimar Republic's weakness to dismantle the democratic system and transform the cabinet into an instrument of Hitler's totalitarian regime.

Following the devastation of World War II, the newly formed Federal Republic adopted a more stable and powerful cabinet structure. The Basic Law, drafted in 1949, established the Chancellor as head of government and the cabinet as the chief executive body, thereby separating the powers of the President and Chancellor, while ensuring the cabinet's accountability to the Bundestag (Parliament). Since its inception, the German cabinet has continued to evolve, with a growing focus on social welfare and environmental issues.

#### Context of the Central Theme

##### **Topic A**

Foreign Policy: Between Rivalry and Cooperation with Asia

Traditionally, German foreign policy was perceived as a triangle: reliance on NATO and the US for security, economic and political anchorage within the EU, and a delicate relationship with Russia influencing the other two sides. However, the Ukrainian invasion shattered this equilibrium. Germany stands at a crossroads, needing to recalibrate its foreign policy:

- Balancing rivalry and cooperation with Asia: The rise of China and the ongoing US-China competition present both opportunities and risks for Germany. While economic

ties with China are crucial, concerns about human rights and geopolitical ambitions necessitate a cautious approach.

- Redefining relations with Russia: The possibility of reconciliation with Russia in the foreseeable future seems unlikely. Germany will need to work closely with allies to maintain a firm stance against Russian aggression while seeking diplomatic solutions.
- Strengthening European leadership: With the war exposing vulnerabilities in European security and energy dependence, Germany has an opportunity to step up as a leader within the EU, advocating for greater unity and strategic autonomy.

## **Topic B**

Energetic Crisis: Protecting the German Economy through the Renewable Energy Sources Act

The disruption of Russian gas supplies has triggered an energy crisis, pushing prices to unprecedented levels and threatening social unrest. The cabinet's immediate focus is on:

- Ensuring energy security: Diversifying energy sources, tapping alternative supplies like LNG, and accelerating the Energiewende, Germany's ambitious renewable energy transition, are crucial steps.
- Mitigating economic shocks: Implementing targeted measures to cushion the impact of rising energy costs on vulnerable segments of the population is essential to maintain social cohesion.
- Investing in renewable energy: The Energiewende needs renewed commitment and increased investments to break free from dependence on fossil fuels and achieve long-term energy independence.

## **Topic C**

Domestic Circumstances: Maintaining Social Cohesion in the Face of Social Movements

Soaring energy prices and the ongoing debate about nuclear energy as a temporary solution have fueled anxieties and sparked protests. The cabinet must navigate these internal pressures while addressing pre-existing issues like:

- Income inequality: The energy crisis risks exacerbating existing inequalities, requiring targeted policies to ensure a fair distribution of the burden and benefits of the transition.
- Housing crisis: Rising construction costs and limited availability of affordable housing necessitate investment in social housing and rent control measures.
- Climate anxieties: Balancing immediate energy needs with long-term climate goals remains a delicate dance. Engaging with climate activists and fostering public understanding of the energy transition are key to maintaining social cohesion.

The German cabinet faces a defining moment. Its success in navigating these interconnected challenges will not only determine Germany's future but also influence the trajectory of the European Union and the global response to the war in Ukraine.

## Research Questions

### **Topic A**

Foreign Policy: Between Rivalry and Cooperation with Asia

- What is Germany's position on China? Explore the significance of Germany's three-dimensionally defined relationship with China as "partnership, competition, and systemic rivalry."
- How has the Ukraine war impacted Germany's strategic calculus towards China? Has the war led to a stronger alignment with the US against China, or has it pushed Germany to seek greater strategic autonomy and engagement with Asia?
- What role does Germany play in shaping the EU's approach towards China? Can Germany act as a bridge between the US and the EU regarding China, or are there fundamental differences in their China strategies?

### **Topic B**

Energetic Crisis: Protecting the German Economy through the Renewable Energy Sources Act

- What is the Renewable Energy Sources Act, also known as the *Erneuerbare-Energien-Gesetz* (EEG)? Consider the significance of its feed-in tariff (FIT) scheme and auction system.
- How has the Russian-Ukraine war exacerbated the economic pressures on the German economy, and how is the EEG adapting to these challenges?
- How will the EEG's adaptations and potential price increases impact low-income households and energy-intensive industries, and what social safety nets are needed to ensure equitable energy access?

### **Topic C**

Domestic Circumstances: Maintaining Social Cohesion in the Face of Social Movements

- What is the "traffic light coalition" in Germany? Can the Social Democratic Party of Germany (SPD), Alliance 90/The Greens, and Free Democratic Party (FDP) maintain cohesion?
- How did defeat in World War II shape the public "Never War Again" discourse? Does the shift to *Zeitenwende* threaten this stance?
- What is the public's opinion on Germany's position that certain natural gas projects are sustainable but not nuclear fission? Moreover, how have climate activists reacted to Germany's shift to coal as a replacement for Russian natural gas?

## Character Research Questions

- What are my character's main objectives?
- How can my character play its cards to reach the cabinet's goals?

## Discussion Questions

- Considering the interconnected nature of the challenges facing Germany, how will the cabinet prioritize its agenda and allocate resources effectively? How can the cabinet

uphold German values of democracy, human rights, and the rule of law while navigating the complexities of international relations and competing national interests?

- How can the cabinet effectively navigate the inherent tensions and potential contradictions within the coalition while ensuring cohesion and delivering on its collective goals?
- Can Olaf Scholz effectively lead Germany through its current multifaceted challenges – from the energy crisis to social unrest – and solidify his position as a transformative leader, or will his cautious approach and tendency to avoid strong stances ultimately hinder progress and leave him vulnerable to criticism?
- How can Germany leverage its position as a leading nation in Europe and the world to promote international cooperation and address global challenges such as climate change, inequality, and conflict?

## Bibliography

- <https://www.theguardian.com/commentisfree/2023/oct/22/the-guardian-view-on-germanys-troubled-traffic-light-coalition-dealing-with-the-midterm-blues>
- <https://www.economist.com/europe/2023/09/21/angst-mounts-over-germanys-green-transition>
- <https://www.bbc.com/news/world-europe-63709352>
- <https://www.nytimes.com/2022/04/05/business/germany-russia-oil-gas-coal.html>
- <https://www.nytimes.com/2023/12/06/opinion/germany-scholz-gaza.html>
- <https://thediplomat.com/2023/03/is-germany-siding-with-the-us-in-its-systemic-rivalry-with-china/>
- <https://www.gmfus.org/news/zeitenwende-dawn-deterrence-era-germany>
- <https://www.economist.com/the-world-ahead/2021/11/08/a-new-coalition-government-will-try-to-find-its-feet-in-germany>
- <https://www.cfr.org/project/german-foreign-policy-after-zeitenwende-change-era>
- <https://www.theguardian.com/commentisfree/2023/jan/22/the-guardian-view-on-germany-and-ukraine-a-fateful-hesitation>
- <https://www.dw.com/en/opinion-germanys-economy-faces-huge-challenges/a-64153620>