

GERMANY

Party Portrait

Germany is a stable democracy, EU's largest and most economically successful member state and has emerged as its de facto leader in recent years. Given its history, Germany has been reluctant to take up this leadership position or engage in an activist foreign policy. In particular, it is opposed to making extensive use of armed forces. One of Germany's long-standing foreign policy aims is to ensure the security of Israel. Germany houses a large population of foreign origin, with more than 3 million residents of Turkish heritage. Since 2015, Germany has received more than 1 million requests for asylum, most from the Middle East. It has also been the target of Islamist terrorism. Germany views the conflict in the Middle East primarily as a risk to its own security and stability and that of the EU. However, Germany recognizes that its own interests and possibilities for direct influence in the conflict are limited.

Key Interests

- Ensure its own stability and the stability of its neighbors and the EU by eliminating the threat of Islamist terrorism, limiting the influx of refugees, and stabilizing the EU's neighborhood
- End Syrian civil war, maintain Turkish stability, and defeat ISIS and AQAP, while contributing as little militarily as possible
- Maintain and expand lucrative trade ties to countries in the region and make the most out of the economic opportunities arising out of the Iran deal

Sources of Leverage

Convening Power - Germany's membership in the EU and NATO provides it with important means to shape the positions of and efforts of these actors and thus increase its influence.

Economic - As an important economy, de facto leader of the EU, and recognized soft power its open and covert diplomacy can reach and influence most parties involved in the conflict. Also funds refugee relief efforts and technology to equip actors in the region with arms.

Military - Reluctant to use armed forces, but participates in military efforts to tackle Islamists in the region and could increase participation

Regional Strategy

Pushing for diplomatic talks to end the Syrian civil war and exclude Bashar al-Assad from government. It contributes to tackling the threat from Islamist terrorist groups militarily, yet limits its own contribution to indirect measures. While it openly criticizes Turkey for the degradation of civil liberties, it continues to be supportive of the EU-Turkey deal and provides funding for refugee relief efforts. Economically speaking, the country maintains close economic ties to the Gulf states and attempts to capture a large market share in Iran.

Powerful Individuals

Chancellor Angela Merkel (head of the federal government; Christian Democratic Union Party); Vice Chancellor and Foreign Minister Sigmar Gabriel; Permanent Representative to the UN Harold Braun

Potential Negotiation Moves

Military - Could assume military responsibilities from EU/NATO member states in low-risk scenarios to free their assets to fight ISIS.

Expand Training Programs - Could expand its existing training and equipment programs to militias for Kurds of Iraq and Kurds of Syria.

Refugee Funding - Could provide further funding to incentivize refugees to remain in relatively safe areas in the region.

Alter Sanctions - Could influence the remainder of the EU to alter existing sanctions targeted at actors in the region or unilaterally alter its armaments exports regime to the Gulf monarchies and Israel.

Internal Conflicts

Germany is relatively stable politically and has very few internal divisions. The main governing and opposition parties agree on the broad lines of Germany's policy. Nonetheless, members of the governing coalition have criticized the welcoming attitude towards refugees and opposition groups and the country's Turkey policy after the attempted military coup. There are some societal tensions over the sudden influx of refugees from the Middle East since 2015. This has contributed to the rise of the AfD, a new right-wing populist political party.

Memberships

EU, IAEA, NATO, OECD, OSCE, UN

Allies

FRANCE, HOLY SEE, ISRAEL, TURKEY, UNITED KINGDOM, UNITED STATES, HUMANITARIAN ACTORS

Partners

IRAN

Rivals

RUSSIA

Adversaries

SYRIA Government

Active Armed Opponents

AQAP, ISIS

Proxy

KURDS of Iraq, KURDS of Syria

External Sponsor

N/A

Aid Recipient

TURKEY, MOROCCO, EGYPT

Aid Donor

UNITED NATIONS