

The Foreign Policy of the New Government of Germany

- **Annalena Baerbock as the new Green foreign minister sets new focus areas with climate action, a more stringent rule of law and a feminist foreign policy orientation while the continuing influence of the Chancellor on foreign affairs implicates potential tensions within the coalition-parties.**
- **The US and EU remain the key partners for Germany especially in building a global alliance of democracies, yet a sharpened, values-oriented stance towards China and emphasis on dialogue as well as stringency represents the most distinct change to the foreign policy line of the previous government.**
- **The coalition wants to approach NATO's defense-spending debate with an inclusive foreign policy approach: a 3% budget of Germany's GDP on general international action.**

The narrative of change continues within the foreign policy of the new coalition but does not implicate a complete departure from the policy direction of the previous government.

Annalena Baerbock will become the first Green foreign minister since 2005 and sets new focus areas with climate action, a more stringent rule of law and a feminist foreign policy orientation as well as being expected to change the general tone, yet it is unclear to what extent this will manifest. Moreover, in view of rising global tensions, Germany's foreign policy is more likely set out to reduce tensions and create opportunities for dialogue. Additionally, the foreign policy direction

will continue to be significantly shaped by the chancellor's office, which implicates potential tensions within the coalition-parties.

The US as the anchor-partner

The transatlantic relation with the United States remains one of the key pillars of Germany's foreign relations and security as well as the anchor-partner for the coalition's anticipated global alliance of democracies. Furthermore, it is bolstered with a closer climate and energy partnership, a global health policy, and regular cooperation on disarmament, geopolitical issues, data sovereignty and AI.

More critical towards China

The relation to China represents one of the most distinct changes in the foreign policy line of the new coalition. Baerbock anticipates a values-oriented foreign policy towards China where dialogue and stringency interact resulting in more outspoken criticism. Cooperation and economic partnership are aspired, yet the transatlantic alliance, the common EU policy line and human rights standards set the stage for this relationship. Additionally, the systemic rivalry shapes the development of a comprehensive China strategy. Conflicting topics, such as the current status quo of Taiwan and Hong Kong, will be addressed more precisely while the coalition focuses on more systemic allies in the region such as Japan. This will be a relationship that can cause tension between the coalition-parties after most recent statements by Scholz indicate a softer tonality.

Focus on united climate action and global values

All in all, the coalition sets a focus on values-oriented alliances with united climate action at the forefront. Germany's G7 presidency in 2022 is used to establish such partnerships. Moreover, the coalition seeks to introduce a global climate club focusing on renewables and hydrogen, that is open for all countries aligning on set climate goals, and to create a global emission trading system and a common CBAM.

Russia is also met with more outspoken criticism against human rights violations and regional expansionism while polarizing topics like Nord Stream 2 will be discussed on EU-level. Sanctions are maintained as an appropriate foreign policy tool when dealing with Russia and likewise with Belarus. The currently rising border-tensions between Russia and Ukraine as well as Ukraine, Poland and Belarus aggravate this relation and require strong responses from NATO and the EU regarding their allies, defense-strategies and the sharpened migration-issue.

The coalition emphasizes the acceptance of humanitarian responsibility when looking at the rising border tensions and the situation in Afghanistan. Yet, they aim to avoid irregular migration influxes by pushing for better digitalization, a more distinctive and efficient asylum-application structure and EU-cooperation within the migration process. Again, this will be a policy area where Scholz will have to mediate within the partially very different ideologies of the coalition parties.

Strong multilateral commitment

The European Union is strengthened by reforming the current infrastructure in order to develop a common foreign, climate and defense policy that allows for increased EU-sovereignty. Additionally, the coalition strongly supports EU-expansion in the West Balkan Region while the accession-process of Turkey remains frozen.

Moreover, the coalition emphasizes its multilateral commitment to act first through international organizations. Accordingly, the UN is regarded as the key international organization to foster global action and receives greater resource-allocation while NATO is set as the key security-alliance. As a consequence, the coalition wants to satisfy the symbolic debate around the required 2% defense-spending with a new inclusive foreign policy approach: a budget of 3% of Germany's GDP is allocated on general international action, including defense-spending and diplomacy.