

FOCUS 1 – INTERVIEWS

*Do you think that Germany's role in the world has changed since reunification?
What are the major changes and how do you see Germany's role in the world today?*

Tobias (45): Yes, definitely. Role might not be the correct expression. One thing that comes to my mind right now is the perception of Germany. And there I see the question of the growing together of East and West. Will we be able to make clear to the West Germans that the Peaceful Revolution is part of our all-German history, like it is seen from the outside world? Only we, the Germans, have problems understanding it. With this peaceful revolution... we made clear that it is possible even to overcome dictatorships with peaceful means, that it is possible to face history... The other thing is that the tunnel vision towards Germany got broadened. So the Third Reich, WWII, and the crimes under the Nazi dictatorship got in a certain way more relative. We grew up; we have a totally different possibility to be heard in Europe and to define ourselves as a nation... We have, through dealing with our past, the positive experience of the Peaceful Revolution and the growing together of our country, not only the ability to define and formulate certain things differently, but also to contribute again. And even this gets recognized. So, I think Germany found a new positive role in Europe and in the world...

Gregor (29): Yes, of course. I think the biggest change is really the military influence. Because before reunification, Germany was under the rule of the occupying forces and was not really allowed to act on a large scale, but now German soldiers are in Afghanistan, in Africa, and in the Balkans...

Daniel S (44): ...Before reunification of course we were part of NATO and allies of the US, but internationally, Germans would go somewhere and say let's talk..., but they would never take action. And I think after reunification, the German political elite and the parliamentarians realized that they could not go on like this. So the feeling that Germany has towards itself and consequently the role it has to play in the world has changed.

Gerald (42): Yes, of course, it did. It plays a more important role on the world's stage. It's more recognized; the other Europeans are more interested in what we are doing. ...They are very interested in the German way of life, in German history, etc. I think it changed for the better, and I hope it goes on...

Nina (43): Yes, I think so. ...before reunification, West Germany always tried to play the role of not being too pushy and being aware of the fact that they have made a lot of mistakes in the past ... after reunification we became more self-assured and as a nation - had to find a new place within the EU and in the world and also to be more active and not as passive as before...



Irmtraud (68): Yes, sure. Of course, I think again of '89 and the Peaceful Revolution. The Germans – as people say - have finally done something reasonable, and this definitely improves the German image. And I always say this could be an example for other conflicts around the world that they can

and have to be solved peacefully. I think because of the Peaceful Revolution, a totally different side of Germany came to the surface.

Anna (42): Of course, it did change. It changed in an aspect that is probably more negative; now Germany is participating in more military actions. That was not the case before. On the positive side, it was a very good example ... of a peaceful revolution. ... Additionally, the country is bigger now and has more inhabitants. That's why it also has more influence in Europe and also in the UN. So I think, the role, in general, is for the better.

Daniel G (55): Yes, in many ways, e.g. the relationship to the eastern countries is different now. There are much more possibilities in economic ways and also in cultural terms. Besides this I'm actually not very happy about the frequent talk of normality that quite often means we are a state that can use its military power and be in war status like in Afghanistan. That's a type of normality and a role which is not very helpful...

