

FOCUS 6 – INTERVIEWS

Does Germany have a special role in Europe? Does it have a responsibility to help countries such as Bosnia or Greece?

Nina (43): A special role, of course, again by showing that we are not an aggressive nation. And I think in the EU this is important as well because we are working together closely like a family. ... And of course, because of our economic power as well, we have to. ... In a way there is a responsibility to make the EU work because I think Germany had a major role in structuring and forming the EU, so I think there's definitely a responsibility.

Anke (43): Yes and no. Yes, because it's in the center, and it's a very large country. On the other hand, I find that Germany considers itself bigger than it is, and therefore blocks things or gets in the way of smaller countries. ... In the environmental field Germany can push things forward ...

Daniel G (55): As an economic power and a center country with 80 million people, yes of course.

Tobias (45): Well, you can look at the global perspective; it's definitely one of the strongest economies; it has one of Europe's largest populations and therefore it partly has a special role; it just gets it naturally. Especially now, look at the economic crisis or the crisis of the Euro. There you can clearly see that all of a sudden everybody is calling on Germany for support and saying that Germany has the obligation to help. If you want a common Europe, naturally we have obligations, but you also can't formulate them only for one side ...

Stefan (44): Yes, in Europe, of course. It's now the biggest and most powerful country economically. So it is the leading nation in Europe which also has special responsibility. But it shouldn't adopt a nanny position in my view, because all sovereign states are responsible for their own mistakes, and Germany should not be singled out as the only or most responsible state. It's just the most powerful leading nation in Europe. Germany has a kind of a chairman's position in many cases to initiate and enhance certain activities, but always in cooperation and coordination with all other nations. It shouldn't go anywhere alone.

Nora (28): Yes, sure. Without Germany there wouldn't be the European Union. It's the basis of the European Union; it was among the first members of the EU. It's the country with the largest population, it is a very rich country. We have to admit that. Even though there are a lot of things happening in Germany that can be criticized a lot, it still is,

I guess, one of the best working democracies in the world. It's not THE best ... but it's just a good example for how democracy can work. Even though it's not a perfect democracy at all. ... I have a hard time with countries intervening in other countries' development even though I guess financially they should and if it's done in cooperation it's better. And if there is a country that doesn't have any resources anymore, then sure, there should be other countries helping. But I don't feel like it is just Germany's role. I would say if there are capacities or financial possibilities in other countries they also should help ...



Xin (56): Yes! First of all, the German population grew with the unification. Further the German democracy, the German social policies, and the economy are often stronger than in other countries. So Germany can play a big role in Europe. The euro-rescue parachute, Greece, Ireland, this effects of course all our tax money, but we are all in favor of Europe and if we really want it, we, the Germans, have to contribute, even contribute a little more because we have a bit more money...

Anna (42): Germany has a special role in Europe, yes. Because together with France, for instance, Germany is one of the strongest members of the European Union, and Germany definitely has a lot to win and a lot to lose if the European Union goes well or goes bad. So that is, of course, why Germany wants to play a very active role. But I think a country is



not less important because it's less strong or less powerful. ... Germany was one of the countries that very strongly wanted to have the European Union, and it was one of the big drivers towards this union. Maybe that process was a bit too fast, like involving too many countries at a very early stage, maybe too early. This is something Germany is also responsible for, and

that's why it has to deal with the consequences now and help these other countries.