

ATHENA

FOREIGN POLICY SPEECH

MSc Course

"The EU and the Post-Soviet Space"

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AS

ANGELA MERKEL

Chancellor of
Germany, 2005–2021



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Context

Policy Statement by Federal Chancellor Angela Merkel before the Eastern Partnership Summit of 2015 in Riga in front of the German Bundestag, 21.05.2015

In the frame of the current ongoing brutal aggression war by Russia in Ukraine, the inspiration for my foreign policy speech came from the careful deliberation, if the war in Ukraine as it happens today, could have been prevented (not in a Mearsheimerian way). And if so, when this point in time to change the course of history would have been.

After some research, I believe this moment to have been in 2015, a little over a year after Euromaidan and the subsequent annexation of Crimea, when demands from Ukraine were growing for a European perspective, analogously to the then on-hold project of North Stream 2, an expansion of the North Stream 1 natural gas pipeline system between Russia and Germany through the Baltic Sea. In 2015 then, the former German Federal Chancellor Angela Merkel held a policy statement in front of the German Bundestag on May 21st in preparation for her participation in the 4th Eastern Partnership (EaP) Summit, a joint initiative between the European Union and its Eastern European neighbors of [Armenia](#), [Azerbaijan](#), [Belarus](#), [Georgia](#), [Moldova](#), and [Ukraine](#), which intends to provide a forum for discussions regarding economic issues, but also shared values of democracy, prosperity, stability and joint ownership between the EU and its Eastern European partners. With the EaP Summit in 2015 being the first one to happen after the Crimea's annexation, the expectations and the attention were high to see the outline of the next steps of EU-Ukraine bilateral relations, in particular with Germany as one of its leading forces and as Russia's contract partner for the planned project of North Stream 2.

In her speech before the EaP summit in front of the Bundestag then, Merkel dampened prevalent expectations and declared that the EaP was “not an instrument of enlargement policy,” and that Georgia's and Ukraine's efforts in achieving the goals for EU candidacy status were not sufficient yet. Nonetheless, she posited the G8-summit happening the same year to only consist of the G7, excluding Russia as a reaction to the start of the Russo-Ukrainian war. Following this, I believe, that under the same-year's G7-summit banner “Think Ahead, Act Together,” Germany and the EU could have made bold statements before and at the EaP summit in demarcation to the breach of national sovereignty from Russian forces and should have declared:

a) European candidacy status for Ukraine, which could have led to EU membership by 2022, including the EU's mutual defense clause, which provides all EU member states with a military assistance obligation in case of armed aggression on its territory – thus, having the power of a deterrence policy, which could have led to Russian forces not fully invading Ukraine in 2022.

b) an end of North Stream 2 in order to avoid possible dependencies in the future by seeing and calling it by what it really is: a geopolitical project by Russia.

My foreign policy speech by Merkel, thus, takes place in the same time and circumstances as it did, but imagines it to portray a different message, heavily influenced by imagery used by e.g. Josep Borell, the European Union's High Representative for Foreign Affairs and Security

Policy, with his EU garden metaphor and other speeches by Merkel drawing on her Eastern German heritage and upbringing.

Speech

Mr President,
Fellow members of this House,
Ladies and gentlemen,

For hundreds of years, **relations among European countries** were marked by conflict, changing alliances, bloodshed and division. Since the end of WWII, we were lucky that these horrors have grown into a **lush garden of peace, freedom and prosperity** through European integration.

Europe has proven to have learned its lessons from its painful history.

I also remember when the world was **divided into East and West**, during my own upbringing. I grew up in East Germany, in the GDR, the then unfree part of my country, in a dictatorship, where people were oppressed and under state-surveillance. And where the East German government was afraid that people would flee to freedom. This fear led to the **erection of the Berlin wall**. A physical barrier of concrete and steel. **A tangible manifestation of the ideological divide.**

But I also witnessed the **fall of the wall** and know that if we go into the open and dare new beginnings, then everything is possible.

That walls can be overcome.

That freedom is possible.

In this way, I am firmly convinced that within our **European family** we are united in our **fortune and in our future.**

But at this moment, fellow members of this House, we are witnessing a conflict about spheres of influence, that we thought we had put behind us.

The **annexation of Crimea by Russia** in violation of international law marks a new era on the European continent. In the last months, we have witnessed a massive destabilization of Eastern Ukraine through Russia.

And as the President of Ukraine, Poroshenko, said during the European Union Summit “There is a **very high risk for loss of peace and stability**, not only for Ukraine, **but for the whole... of Europe.**”.

So, at a time of great uncertainty in Ukraine, **my message is, that Ukraine belongs to the European family.** [Pause]

The people of Ukraine have made that clear, too, with their **fierce defence of values of the EU and Western democracy** during Euromaidan and the Revolution of Dignity last year.

I want to respond to Ukraine's demand before the Eastern Partnership summit in Riga and formally declare that Germany supports **EU membership candidacy status for Ukraine** .

In addition, we have to critically reflect our foreign policy towards Moscow. Decades of rapprochement policies have not led to the desired "change through trade" and Russia has moved further away from democratic values. Now, 26 years after the fall of the Berlin wall, the physical barrier between East and West -- **it seems like the ideological wall is not gone for all**.

In this connection, I propose that Germany opposes any further plans and construction of the **North Stream 2 pipeline in the Baltic Sea** and will instead focus on diversifying German energy resources. While we have yet seen this as a purely commercial project, I feel responsible to from this point on **avoid any geopolitical implications**.

Under this year's G7 guiding principle: "**Think Ahead. Act Together,**" Germany is prepared to acknowledge its **responsibility** and protect its shared values and interests for everything that **Western liberal democracy stands for** with its partners.

As we have learned, history may not repeat itself, but it rhymes.

Therefore, in order to contain this belligerent foreign policy, we have to act **now**.

I ask for your support in this.