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More Rhetorical Commitment than Coherence: Germany's Security, Its Arctic Policy and the EU

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1. Introduction

In German Arctic policy, European and German security interests are tightly connected. In its first *Arctic Policy Guidelines* from 2013,²⁸¹ the German government saw developments occurring in the Arctic which might pose 'economic, environmental and security policy threat[s] to stability in the region and would also affect *Europe's* security interests.'²⁸² It thus declared that it wanted to make the Arctic 'a central focus of *German* policy' and that it was 'committed to ensuring that the Arctic is used for peaceful purposes only.'²⁸³ The successor document, the *Arctic Policy Guidelines* from 2019,²⁸⁴ also emphasises the security dimension—the 'developments in the Arctic' are now seen to 'affect *Germany's* security interests,'²⁸⁵ interestingly prompting the government to advocate a more intensive involvement of the EU in Arctic security. Moreover, in a reply to questions of the parliamentary faction of opposition party *Die Linke*

* I would like to thank Dorentina Mahaj for her help in the preparatory research for the article.

²⁸¹ For two excellent comparative reviews of Germany's first Arctic Policy Guidelines (with France and the UK, respectively), see Cécile Pelaudeix and Thierry Rodon, "The European Union Arctic Policy and National Interests of France and Germany: Internal and External Policy Coherence at Stake?," *Northern Review* 37, no. 1 (2013): 57–85; Malgorzata Śmieszek and Paula Kankaanpää, Observer States' Commitments to the Arctic Council: The Arctic Policy Documents of the United Kingdom and Germany as Case Study, *The Yearbook of Polar Law Online* 6 no. 1 (2014): 375–397.

²⁸² Auswärtiges Amt, *Germany's Arctic Policy Guidelines. Assume Responsibility, Seize Opportunities* (Berlin: Federal Foreign Office, 2013), 10, my emphasis.

²⁸³ Amt, 1.

²⁸⁴ Deutsche Bundesregierung, *Germany's Arctic Policy Guidelines. Assuming Responsibility, Creating Trust, Shaping the Future* (Berlin: Federal Foreign Office, 2019).

²⁸⁵ Bundesregierung, 23, my emphasis.

in the same year, the government re-stated its view that ‘the Arctic has become a key region in world politics.’²⁸⁶

However, analysts of current German Arctic policy agree ‘that Germany only plays a marginal role in the Arctic.’²⁸⁷ This report approaches the apparent tension between the stated importance of the Arctic region and the observed ‘low profile’ of German engagement²⁸⁸ in two ways. On the one hand, it argues that a closer look at the types of German interests involved and the kinds of activities taking place qualifies, at least to some degree, analysts’ judgment. On the other hand, it aims to show that, indeed, the rhetorical commitment exceeds overall policy coherence, particularly when it comes to German core interests.

Core interests relate to the foreign policy aspects of Germany’s security and prosperity. Today, Germany has environmental, economic, political, and military core interests in the Arctic. However, German engagement in the Arctic is also guided by what could be called *collateral* interests. These are the by-products of other domestic politics, especially regarding conservation policy and Arctic research and science policy. Overall, German interests are pursued through two kinds of activities. German foreign and security policy is engaged in Arctic *regional activities*. These are activities taking place in specialised multilateral forums for Arctic regional issues, such as the AC or the Arctic Security Forces Roundtable,²⁸⁹ or involving the region and regional issues, such as German Arctic research and science policy. However, there are also

²⁸⁶ Deutscher Bundestag, *Antwort der Bundesregierung auf die Kleine Anfrage der Abgeordneten Anders Hunke, Hubert Zdebel, Lorenz Gösta Beutin, weiterer Abgeordneter und der Fraktion Die Linke*, Drucksache 19/15326 (Berlin: Deutscher Bundestag, 2018), 3.

²⁸⁷ Vivien Mirzai et al., “Kalter Krieg im ewigen Eis? Ressourcen- und Territorialkonflikte in der Arktis. Ein Bericht zum Heidelberger Dialog zur internationalen Sicherheit im November 2020,” *Zeitschrift für Außen- und Sicherheitspolitik* 14, no.1 (2021): 77; Njord Wegge, “Arctic Security Strategies and the North Atlantic States,” *Arctic Review of Law and Politics* 11 (2020): 374.

²⁸⁸ Wegge, “Arctic Security Strategies,” 360.

²⁸⁹ A list of Arctic multilateral forums in which Germany participates can be found in Deutscher Bundestag, *Antwort der Bundesregierung*, 20.

activities related to the region which are not undertaken because of any specific Arctic regional-ness but because of their belonging to an overarching context which includes the Arctic. These are mostly activities with one or more of the Arctic states or domestic and EU activities regarding climate change, international shipping, European and transatlantic security, and political stability. While the *regional activities* that Germany pursues are mostly determined by collateral interests, its core interests are pursued mostly through *activities related to the region* in bilateral, European and transatlantic contexts.

In the following section, this report will present in more detail the *core* German interests, emphasising how these are linked to German security and German *activities related to the region*. It will point out where, despite rhetorical commitment, these activities display a lack of coherence and might thus not be perceived as contributing to Germany's Arctic role. The report will then show that Germany's engagement in *regional activities* in the early 1990s and the larger part of its activities since then were driven by *collateral* interests, although its *core* interests increasingly gained importance. In the fourth section, this report elucidates the link between the EU and Germany's Arctic activities. In the fifth section, the report argues that the future of Germany's Arctic activities and the role of the EU in these will depend on how the apparent incoherence in policies regarding the core interests and their EU underpinnings will play out.

2. Germany's Core Arctic Interests

Germany is linked to the Arctic in at least four ways: geophysically, economically, politically and militarily. From these links, Germany's core interests in the Arctic emerge.²⁹⁰ If one defines security as being related

²⁹⁰ These interests variously appear in analyses of German Arctic policy (e.g. Henning Riecke, "Die Arktis lockt - Deutsche Interessen im Hohen Norden," in *Die Arktis. Ressourcen, Interessen und Probleme*, ed. Bernd Rill, Berichte and Studien 91 (München: Hanns Seidel Stiftung, year), 97–109; Tobias Etzold and Stefan Steinicke, "Die Europäische Union und die Arktis: Status quo und Handlungsperspektiven," *Sicherheit*

to some sort of existential threat,²⁹¹ all four of these links can have implications for Germany's security. However, in German public and political discourse, these implications are securitised and thus formulated as German security policy interests to varying degrees.

Geophysically, Germany is linked to the Arctic by the ocean and the atmosphere. As a country just south of the so-called subarctic latitudes, it is affected by the atmospheric circulation of the Northern Hemisphere. As a coastal state to the North Sea and the Baltic, Germany is affected by the marine macro-ecology and geophysical conditions of the Northeast Atlantic, which directly reaches into the Arctic. Global warming might change atmospheric circulation in the Arctic, makes sea levels rise because of water extension and the melting of ice shields, and through the melting of Arctic sea ice and ice shields probably creates negative global feedback loops or even tipping points both for the global climate and ocean geo-ecology and geophysics.

For Germany, this produces at least two sets of potential security implications. On the one hand, global climate change in general, and in the Arctic in particular, might have consequences for Germany's mostly marine temperate climate, which, in turn, might amount to existential threats to vulnerable parts of the population and economy. Amongst these are an increase in extreme weather conditions and changes in biodiversity because of an expected general increase in temperature.²⁹² On the other hand, the very low-lying parts of northern Germany's coastal areas might be existentially threatened not only through potential

und Frieden 33, no. 3 (2015): 127–131; Mirzai et al., “Kalter Krieg im Ewigen Eis,” 77, as well as in more or less explicit form in the respective policy documents themselves.

²⁹¹ Barry Buzan et al., *Security: A New Framework for Analysis* (Boulder/CO: Lynne Rienner, 1998). The four interests mentioned here correspond to four of the five sectors that Buzan et al. focused on in their framework for security analysis: military, economic, political and environmental.

²⁹² Deutsche Bundesregierung, *Monitoringbericht zur Deutschen Anpassungsstrategie an den Klimawandel*, Bericht der Interministeriellen Arbeitsgruppe Anpassungsstrategie der Bundesregierung (Dessau: Umweltbundesamt, 2019), offers an extensive overview of the consequences of global warming-related weather change.

future inundation but also through other more immediate effects on coastal geophysical and geo-ecological dynamics.²⁹³

Giving his remarks to the AC meeting in Reykjavik in May 2021, German Foreign Minister Heiko Maas directly referred to sea level rise as showing that ‘our future is linked to the future of the Arctic.’²⁹⁴ Climate change is also the dominant topic of the two above mentioned German strategic documents. The older document states that climate change in the Arctic ‘will also directly impact Germany.’²⁹⁵ The link between climate change and threats to stability and security in the region is more pronounced in the more recent document, as evident in the following political response: ‘Consistent climate and environmental protection is a key element of Germany’s Arctic policy.’²⁹⁶

However, despite submitting reports on its black carbon and methane reduction policies to the AC similar to other observer states,²⁹⁷ Germany does not have an *Arctic climate policy*.²⁹⁸ Climate policies are pursued at the national, European and international levels. As will be argued in more detail below, in Germany the Arctic has mostly functioned as a symbol for political mobilisation. Moreover, while climate change has been one of the most politicised topics in German public discourse for some time now—indeed so politicised that it might

²⁹³ Wissenschaftliche Dienste, *Meeresspiegelanstieg und seine Auswirkungen auf die Bevölkerung*, Dokumentation (Berlin: Deutscher Bundestag, 2018).

²⁹⁴ Auswärtiges Amt, Video remarks by Foreign Minister Maas at the 12th Arctic Council Ministerial Meeting in Reykjavík, May 20, 2021, <https://www.auswaertiges-amt.de/en/newsroom/news/maas-arctic-council/2462196>

²⁹⁵ Auswärtiges Amt, *Germany’s Arctic Policy Guidelines (2013)*, 5.

²⁹⁶ Deutsche Bundesregierung, *Germany’s Arctic Policy Guidelines (2019)*, 13.

²⁹⁷ E.g. Deutsche Bundesregierung, *National Report by Germany. Enhanced Black Carbon and Methane Emissions Reductions* (Tromsø: Arctic Council Framework for Action, 2020).

²⁹⁸ The Climate Action Plan of the German government does not mention the Arctic at all: Bundesministerium für Umwelt, Naturschutz, Bauen und Reaktorsicherheit, *Climate Action Plan 2050. Principles and Goals of the German Government’s Climate Policy* (Berlin: Federal Ministry for the Environment, Nature Conservation, Building and Nuclear Safety (BMUB), 2016).

determine the outcome of the federal election in September 2021—the direct impacts of climate change on Germany have not yet been perceived as security issues. Although the 2016 *White Paper on German Security Policy and the Future of the Bundeswehr* ‘advocates making climate change a permanent item on the security agenda’, it does so only in the context of ‘fragile regions’, which are described in a way suggesting that neither Germany nor the Arctic would be included.²⁹⁹

Economically, as a resource-poor, industrialised, exporting, high-technology, and high-income country, Germany is linked to the Arctic through what the latter has to offer to the country’s production, exports, trade, and consumption. Germany needs to cover roughly 70% of its overall energy consumption with imports,³⁰⁰ and in terms of aluminium, zinc and copper, Germany is amongst the five largest consumers globally.³⁰¹ No wonder, therefore, that German Arctic policy guidelines emphasise the Arctic’s resource potential and seek to ‘seize economic opportunities.’³⁰² Germany is also the third largest export country and the ‘global number two in worldwide container shipping.’³⁰³ Over two-thirds of German exports are transported by ship. The safe and secure usability of maritime straights is an important general concern for the country and

²⁹⁹ Bundesministerium der Verteidigung, *White Paper 2016 on German Security Policy and the Future of the Bundeswehr* (Berlin: Federal Ministry of Defence, 2016), 42.

³⁰⁰ World Energy Council, *Energie für Deutschland 2020* (Berlin: Weltenergieerat Deutschland, 2020), 134.

³⁰¹ Deutsche Bundesregierung, *Robstoffstrategie der Bundesregierung. Sicherung einer nachhaltigen Rohstoffversorgung Deutschlands mit nicht-energetischen mineralischen Rohstoffen* (Berlin: Bundesministerium für Wirtschaft und Technologie, 2019), 12.

³⁰² Auswärtiges Amt, *Germany’s Arctic Policy Guidelines (2013)*, 6.

³⁰³ Bundesministerium der Verteidigung, “Maritime Sicherheit: Marineschiffbauindustrie bleibt wichtig,” May 12, 2021, <https://www.bmvg.de/de/aktuelles/maritime-sicherheit-marineschiffbauindustrie-bleibt-wichtig-5073706>. See also Deutsche Bundesregierung, *Siebter Bericht der Bundesregierung über die Entwicklung und Zukunftsperspektiven der maritimen Wirtschaft in Deutschland*, Drucksache 19/27975 (Berlin: Deutscher Bundestag, 2021), page/s.

has also found its way into the *Arctic Policy Guidelines*.³⁰⁴ Maritime business has received special attention from the government.³⁰⁵ As ship traffic and the maritime economy in the Arctic grow, the German government hopes for a demand for German technology and know-how.³⁰⁶

In the above-mentioned white paper on security policy, resource and raw material supply as well as access to safe and secure maritime straits have been defined as a matter of existential importance for Germany and are thus securitised: ‘In the future, the prosperity of our country and the well-being of our citizens will significantly depend on the unhindered use of [...] transportation and trade routes as well as on a secure supply of raw materials and energy.’³⁰⁷ Germany is willing to use ‘flexible’ instruments ‘to prevent and remove disruptions and blockades.’³⁰⁸ In her 2021 speech, then-Minister of Defence Annegret Kramp-Karrenbauer made clear that the security relevance of the freedom of navigation and of raw materials, and consequently commanding the respective flexible instruments to secure these, necessarily entail the development of Germany’s maritime industry and technology.³⁰⁹

Again, however, activities regarding the economic core interest are largely taking place domestically, bilaterally or in the European, transatlantic, and international contexts, not as regional activities. These activities include domestic government subsidies for Arctic relevant

³⁰⁴ Auswärtiges Amt, *Germany’s Arctic Policy Guidelines (2013)*, 8; Deutsche Bundesregierung, *Germany’s Arctic Policy Guidelines (2019)*, 17–20.

³⁰⁵ The government has a maritime coordinator who organises a biannual national maritime conference and prepares a maritime report for the government.

³⁰⁶ Etzold and Steinicke, “Die Europäische Union und die Arktis,” 129.

³⁰⁷ Bundesministerium der Verteidigung, *White Paper*, 41.

³⁰⁸ Ibid.

³⁰⁹ Bundesministerium der Verteidigung, “Maritime Sicherheit:

Marineschiffbauindustrie bleibt wichtig,” May 12, 2021,

<https://www.bmvg.de/de/aktuelles/maritime-sicherheit-marineschiffbauindustrie-bleibt-wichtig-5073706>.

maritime high-technology development,³¹⁰ bilateral relations with Russia and Norway as the biggest suppliers of oil and gas for the German economy,³¹¹ explicit support for the *European Maritime Security Strategy* (EUMSS) and its implementation, and engagement within the International Maritime Organization for safe and secure shipping around the world. While all these activities are somehow covered by the Arctic policy guidelines, they lack an explicit or significant Arctic component in the documents of their respective policy domain.

Politically, Germany is tied to the Arctic because of its core political interest in the stability of the European political order. The Arctic becomes relevant to the degree that Arctic states are important actors in the three contexts that Germany defines as most crucial for this stability: the EU, transatlantic relations, and Russia. However, Arctic states do not primarily matter for Germany politically because they are Arctic countries, but because they are fellow EU members, partners in the NATO alliance or—in the case of Russia—are seen as indispensable for the European order.

According to the principles of German foreign policy, European integration and the EU are ‘Rahmen und Richtung’, frame and direction, for any German policy.³¹² Germany therefore has an interest in good relations with Arctic EU partners: Denmark, Finland, and Sweden. The second context is the transatlantic extension of this regionalism to the West and the relationships with NATO partners in the Arctic: Canada, Denmark–Greenland, Iceland, Norway, and the US. Relations to Russia, the former *Ostpolitik*, as well as the envisioned strategic partnership can be seen as an extension of the context for European political stability to the East. While Germany acknowledges that, for instance, Nordic

³¹⁰ E.g. Deutscher Bundestag, *Antwort der Bundesregierung*, 19.

³¹¹ World Energy Council, *Energie für Deutschland 2018* (Berlin: Weltenergieerat Deutschland, 2018), 111.

³¹² Auswärtiges Amt, Grundprinzipien deutscher Außenpolitik, October 9, 2019, <https://www.auswaertiges-amt.de/de/aussenpolitik/themen/grundprinzipien/216474>.

countries and Russia have important stakes in the Arctic, and while Germany has brought up its core Arctic interests with them, the respective activities take place in bi- and multilateral contexts—*not* primarily in the Arctic regional one and *not* with a primary or significant Arctic focus.

Militarily, Germany is connected to the Arctic through its obligations as a NATO alliance member and to the degree that it assumes military obligations under the EU common security and defence policy (CSDP). Germany's respective core interest has two sides. On the one hand, Germany is interested in preventing the need for military deployment in the Arctic. Accordingly, the *Arctic Policy Guidelines* state that '*Germany's security and defence policy in the region aims to preserve the Arctic as a largely conflict free region.*'³¹³

On the other hand, Germany is interested in showing reliability and responsibility regarding its obligations. It has participated regularly in military exercises with an Arctic component,³¹⁴ for instance, by supplying the second-largest contingent behind the US for NATO's 2018 *Trident Juncture* exercise in Norway. However, while Germany participates in the Arctic Security Forces Roundtable, and the above-mentioned quote from the *Arctic Policy Guidelines* suggest that there is a specific regional security and defence policy, at least publicly available defence planning or strategy documents do *not* mention the Arctic,³¹⁵ much to the

³¹³ Deutsche Bundesregierung, *Germany's Arctic Policy Guidelines* (2019), 3 and 14. Emphasis added.

³¹⁴ For a list of German armed forces participation in Arctic exercises, see Deutscher Bundestag, *Antwort der Bundesregierung*, 26.

³¹⁵ cf. Bundesministerium der Verteidigung, *White Paper 2006 on German Security Policy and the Future of the Bundeswehr* (Berlin: Federal Ministry of Defence (BmVg), 2006); Bundesministerium der Verteidigung, *White Paper 2016*, page/s; Annegret Kramp-Karrenbauer and Eberhard Zorn, *Positionspapier: Gedanken zur Bundeswehr der Zukunft* (Berlin: Bundesministerium der Verteidigung, 2021).

dismay of some commentators on Germany's security and defence posture.³¹⁶

It is interesting in this respect that the German government, despite the available argument and evidence to the contrary,³¹⁷ seems to see regional stability in the Arctic primarily threatened by regional security issues, such as unresolved territorial disputes or use of military means for safeguarding primarily regional interests.³¹⁸ The alternative view that systemic tensions between Russia and the West spill over into the region would put the German government in a less comfortable position of possibly also being part of the problem, rather than being a bystander or supportive ally only. The systemic perspective casts some doubt on the Arctic policy guidelines' goal to further NATO and EU involvement in Arctic regional security.

3. Collateral Interests and the History of German Regional Activities in the Arctic

In the preceding section, it was argued that the core interests Germany has in the Arctic are pursued largely by activities at the domestic, bilateral and multilateral levels and not at the Arctic regional level. The pursuit of these interests remains a rhetorical commitment in the Arctic policy guidelines, which is not matched with respective coherent actions in the policy domains of the core interests. Yet, Germany has also been involved in more genuine regional activities, particularly regional cooperation under the *Arctic Environmental Protection Strategy* (AEPS) and in the AC. Already in 1991, the AEPS mentioned assistance 'in the

³¹⁶ Konstantinos Tsetsos, *Die Auswirkungen des Klimawandels auf die Arktis*, Metis-Studie 02 (München: Institut für Strategie und Vorschau, 2018).

³¹⁷ E.g. Planungsamt der Bundeswehr, *Future Topic: Klimawandel und Sicherheit in der Arktis nach 2014. Hat die friedliche und kooperative internationale Arktispolitik eine langfristige Zukunft?* (Berlin: Planungsamt der Bundeswehr, Dezernat Zukunftsanalyse, 2014).

³¹⁸ Deutsche Bundesregierung, *Germany's Arctic Policy Guidelines (2019)*, 23; Auswärtiges Amt, *Germany's Arctic Policy Guidelines (2013)*, 10.

preparation of the Strategy by [...] observers', amongst them Germany.³¹⁹ Since then, Germany has participated regularly in the AEPS and, later, the AC working groups. Although the country is also an observer, for instance, in the Barents Euro–Arctic Council, the AC remains the main institutional arena for German regional activities. In what follows, three phases of such activities will be distinguished: a long initial phase, an intermediary phase of rhetorical agenda completion, and the current phase of consolidation in which Germany's core Arctic interests have increasingly come to the fore.

Germany's involvement in Arctic affairs as one of the first observer states was probably due to collateral interests in combination with a political core interest. Around the turn of the 1980s/1990s, German conservationists and polar researchers successfully lobbied the involvement of the government. Conservationists saw a chance to enhance the protection of migratory birds' Arctic habitats via circumpolar cooperation. German polar researchers, in turn, wanted to be included in the establishment of the International Arctic Science Committee.³²⁰ However, neither the conservation nor the science interest would probably have been sufficient to spark German involvement had the Federal Foreign Office (FFO) not entertained ideas similar to those of Nordic countries to seek to involve Russia in functional regional cooperation—which, for instance, also materialised in the German–Danish initiative for the 1992-founded Council of the Baltic Sea States. It is fair to say, however, that when institutions for Arctic cooperation were established and the participation of German conservationists and scientists was secured, FFO activities were reduced to facilitating and representing—within the country's possibilities as an observer state—

³¹⁹ *Arctic Environmental Protection Strategy* (Rovaniemi, Publisher: 1991), 1.

³²⁰ Louwrens Hacquebord, "How Science Organizations in the Non- Arctic Countries Became Members of IASC," in *25 Years of International Arctic Research Cooperation*, ed. Odd Rogge et al. (Potsdam: International Arctic Science Committee, 2015), 21–27.

German conservationists' and scientists' projects and participation in regional forums.

This was to change only from 2007 onwards. At the end of 2005, the newly formed coalition government under Angela Merkel's first chancellorship put both climate change and energy politics prominently on its agenda. Neither of these topics in German politics had any strong Arctic connotation at first. Their acquisition of such connotations was probably contingent on two media hypes: the August 2007 Russian flag-planting at the North Pole seafloor, on the one hand, and the so-called Knutmania in early 2007, which was about an orphaned polar bear cub in the Berlin Zoo, on the other.³²¹ Both hypes amplified the media echo of a trip by Merkel and her minister of the environment, Sigmar Gabriel, to Greenland.³²² To not let this appear to be a mere PR stunt, the government needed to follow up. In March 2009, it hosted the first international conference in Berlin on 'New Chances and New Responsibilities in the Arctic Region.'³²³ The conference theme, which later reappears slightly changed as the title of the first *Arctic Policy Guidelines*, added the topics of climate change and resources to the former science- and conservation-based German Arctic agenda. A second conference took place in Berlin in 2011 and discussed the topics of free navigation and free research in the Arctic. Thus, the list of topics later represented in the first *Arctic Policy Guidelines* was completed, and the intermediary phase ended with their publication in 2013. While the core interests had made it onto the agenda, regional activities were still mostly driven by collateral interest in science. Despite these apparent changes,

³²¹ Andreas Zammert, "Knut Mania Sweeps the Globe," *Bloomberg*, May 9, 2007, <https://www.bloomberg.com/news/articles/2007-05-08/knut-mania-sweeps-the-globebusinessweek-business-news-stock-market-and-financial-advice>.

³²² Die Zeit, "Grönland-Besuch: Frau Merkels neues Gespür für Eis," August 17, 2007, https://www.zeit.de/news/artikel/2007/08/17/2359882.xml?utm_referrer=https%3A%2F%2F

³²³ Georg Witschel et al. (eds.), *New Chances and New Responsibilities in the Arctic Region* (Berlin: BWV - Berliner Wissenschafts-Verlag, 2010).

activity when compared with that in other observer states in the Arctic regional forums so far had remained at a fairly low level. Throughout the intermediary phase Germany was a bystander rather than an active player.³²⁴

This changed after the first Arctic policy guidelines had been published in 2013. With the new, more comprehensive agenda German Arctic policy entered a consolidation phase. Participation was ramped up significantly by nominating representatives for the working groups and then ensuring that substitutes were available so that attendance significantly increased.³²⁵ An Arctic office was established in 2017, organising an Arctic policy dialogue which is meant to facilitate inter-ministerial exchange and coordination, as well as knowledge transfer from Arctic science.³²⁶ With German participation in the Arctic Security Forces Roundtable and discussions within NATO about Arctic involvement, the Arctic came increasingly into the focus of the German security and defence policy establishment, as well as of the German Armed Forces. Examples are a study by the central office for planning of the German Armed Forces³²⁷ and the Arctic activities of the George Marshall European Center for Security Studies, a common institution of Germany and the US, led by the respective ministers of defence.

In 2019, the consolidation culminates in the second *Arctic Policy Guidelines*. These do not really contain new topics, but the perspectives somewhat change, most strikingly regarding the role of the EU and NATO. While the previous document had envisioned NATO

³²⁴ Sebastian Knecht, “The Politics of Arctic International Cooperation: Introducing a Dataset on Stakeholder Participation in Arctic Council Meetings, 1998–2015,” *Cooperation and Conflict* 52, no. 2 (2017): 203–23; Sebastian Knecht, “Exploring Different Levels of Stakeholder Activity in International Institutions: Late Bloomers, Regular Visitors, and Overachievers in Arctic Council Working Groups,” in *Governing Arctic Change*, ed. Sebastian Knecht and Kathrin Keil (London: Palgrave Macmillan, 2017), 163–185.

³²⁵ Deutscher Bundestag, *Antwort der Bundesregierung*, 19.

³²⁶ See <https://www.arctic-office.de>.

³²⁷ Planungsamt der Bundeswehr, *Future Topic: Klimawandel und Sicherheit*.

partnership arrangements as political arenas for Arctic security diplomacy, Germany now advocates a more intensive involvement of NATO and the EU in the context of collective defence and military activities.³²⁸ However, even in this consolidation phase, the *overall* government policy agenda as set out in the government coalition agreements, features the Arctic in connection with the two collateral interests only: conservation and marine and polar research.³²⁹

4. Germany, the European Union and Security

Related to the core *political* interest, it has already been mentioned that the EU is the frame and direction for German foreign and security policy. However, the three other core interests are also closely related to Germany's EU outlook and engagement. The more the core interests entered Arctic policy formulation and activities, the more the EU became relevant—so much indeed, that analysts have called Germany's and the EU's current interests in the Arctic 'identical.'³³⁰

In the initial phase, however, the EU did not matter much for German Arctic policy. It was first in the intermediary phase that the formulation of Germany's Arctic interests and activities related to the region began to run parallel to EU activities. In the first half of 2007, Germany held the EU Council presidency and pursued amongst its major themes an ambitious EU climate change policy, the restructuring of European energy markets and energy security, later including the climate–security nexus through its presidency of the G8.³³¹ Further EU

³²⁸ Deutsche Bundesregierung, *Germany's Arctic Policy Guidelines (2019)*, 25.

³²⁹ CDU, CSU and SPD, *Deutschlands Zukunft gestalten. Koalitionsvertrag zwischen CDU, CSU und SPD* (Berlin: 2013), 25 and 84; CDU, CSU and SPD, *Ein neuer Aufbruch für Europa. Eine neue Dynamik für Deutschland. Ein neuer Zusammenhalt für unser Land*, Koalitionsvertrag zwischen CDU, CSU und SPD (Berlin: 2018), 36 and 138.

³³⁰ Mirzai et al., "Kalter Krieg im Ewigen Eis," 77.

³³¹ Florian Baumann and Kristina Notz, "Erfolgreiche Zusammenarbeit zur (Fort-) Entwicklung einer Europäischen Energie- und Klimapolitik," in *Bilanz der deutschen EU-Ratspräsidentschaft, Analyse und Bewertung des Centrums für angewandte*

integration regarding common foreign and security policy (CFSP) and a new CSDP had long been on the German agenda.³³² The Arctic seemed to be a possible area of EU engagement. It was no coincidence, therefore, that in 2009, the FFO's state minister for Europe, Günter Gloser, opened the first Arctic conference in Berlin.³³³ The FFO later changed the leading departmental unit for Arctic affairs. The lead had been with the office for special areas of international law, including the Antarctic Treaty System and the Law of the Sea, which are part of the Legal Directorate-General. It went over to the office for the Nordic and Baltic states in the Department for Bilateral Relations with EU Members under the European Directorate-General. That Germany saw the Arctic as an opportunity for the EU then also found its expression in the first *Arctic Policy Guidelines*, in which Germany supported 'an active EU Arctic policy and is working to ensure horizontal coherence on Arctic issues within the Common Foreign and Security Policy' and other domains.³³⁴

As mentioned above, there have been changes regarding the EU's envisioned role in the newer *Arctic Policy Guidelines*. These can be explained by three developments which had left their mark also on the consolidation phase of German Arctic policy. The most obvious is that not only did Germany consolidate its Arctic policy, but the EU had also done so and come up with its own integrated Arctic strategy in the meantime.³³⁵ This strategy, however, was missing the security dimension. In accordance with the securitisation of transport routes and access to energy and raw materials, as well as with the special attention to the

Politikforschung (CAP), ed. Bertelsmann Forschungsgruppe Politik (München: CAP, 2007), 21–27.

³³² Franco Algeri, "Arbeitspräsidentschaft mit Initiativen: Aspekte europäischer Außen- und Sicherheitspolitik unter deutscher EU-Ratspräsidentschaft," in *Bilanz der deutschen EU-Ratspräsidentschaft*. Analyse und Bewertung des Centrums für angewandte Politikforschung (CAP), ed. Bertelsmann Forschungsgruppe Politik (München: CAP, 2007), 41–45.

³³³ See Witschel et al., *New Chances and New Responsibilities*.

³³⁴ Auswärtiges Amt, *Germany's Arctic Policy Guidelines (2013)*, 15.

³³⁵ Deutsche Bundesregierung, *Germany's Arctic Policy Guidelines (2019)*, 18.

German maritime economy, the government chose the EUMSS as the focus of EU activities. However, that Germany advocated the inclusion of the security dimension in EU policy and the EU becoming more involved in Arctic security policy stemmed from an overall changed situation regarding the elements of Germany's core interest in European political stability. The unlawful annexation of Crimea, Russia's involvement in Eastern Ukraine and its increasing hybrid warfare and clandestine actions against Russian opposition leaders, even in Western countries, jeopardised the cooperative side of the German *Ostpolitik* and made a strategic partnership with Russia a rather distant prospect, even though Russia is still seen as an indispensable partner for European security.

Thus, effective deterrence and political resilience as aspects of security policy come to the fore. While NATO is essential for Germany in terms of deterrence, the EU has been the venue through which political power can be generated and exercised. From late 2016, the Trump administration's erratic and anti-multilateralist policies drove home the point that the Europeans also needed to look out for themselves regarding military capabilities. With Brexit and the UK gone as a great European military power, it became more difficult for Germany to act as a *shirker* when it came to the EU's security and defence policy.³³⁶ One outcome of this situation was that Germany together with France, the remaining European military great power, took the initiative to activate the Lisbon Treaty's Permanent Structured Cooperation (PESCO) on defence.³³⁷ PESCO focuses on capability development, for instance, in the maritime realm for which—in view also of the EUMSS—

³³⁶ Didem Buhari Gulmez and Seckin Baris Gulmez, "Towards an Autonomous European Defense? A Comparative Analysis of French, Polish and German Perspectives in the Post-Brexit Era," *Global Affairs* 6, no. 2 (2020): 185–202.

³³⁷ Claudia Major and Christian Mollig, *PeSCo. The German Perspective*, Ares Policy Paper 36 (Paris: Armament Industry Research Group, 2019); Niklas Helwig and Marco Siddi, "German Leadership in the Foreign and Security Policy of the European Union," *German Politics*, Pre-print (2021), DOI:10.1080/09644008.2020.1719073.

the European Defence Agency has identified respective priorities. Advocating a more security-centred role of the EU in the Arctic with a focus on the maritime realm thus makes sense for the realisation of Germany's core economic, political, and military interests within the changed context for European political stability. However, it is interesting to note that in PESCO, Germany is not particularly active in maritime activities and projects.

5. A Look into the Future of German Arctic Policy within the EU

Neither the collateral nor the core interests that Germany pursues with regional activities and activities related to the Arctic region are likely to change in the near future. Germany has recently strengthened its polar and marine research with unprecedented levels of funding and new coordination mechanisms.³³⁸ The data and experience gathered on the 2019–2020 German-led MOSAiC expedition, the largest and most expensive Arctic research endeavour ever, will place German polar research high on the domestic science agenda and in the attention of international science for years to come. In conservation, Germany will also be present in regional activities. The German Federal Agency for Nature Conservation, for instance, has financed a multiyear project on marine habitat protection in the Arctic.

Regarding the core interests, the interesting questions are how these will be pursued further and the kind of role that the EU will play in this. Both might depend on the outcome of the September 2021 general elections, particularly on whether and to what extent the German Green Party becomes involved in the new German government. Its involvement might be decisive in how some of the mentioned incoherence regarding the core interests will be dealt with, which, in turn, will significantly influence the role that Germany and the EU will play in the Arctic and in Arctic security.

³³⁸ Deutscher Bundestag, *Antwort der Bundesregierung*, 14–18; CDU, CSU und SPD, *Deutschlands Zukunft*, 25; CDU, CSU und SPD, *Ein neuer Aufbruch*, 36.

Regarding climate change policies, the German government has put ambitious goals and policies on the EU agenda. However, it has, for instance, sabotaged the adoption of rules at both the domestic and EU levels to reach the goals when these hurt narrowly conceived economic interests, particularly the car and energy industries. In the past, Germany has failed to reach its self-set targets. In 2020, it could keep its promise mostly because of emission reductions caused by the worldwide COVID-19 pandemic. It is projected to miserably fail achieving long-term targets with the measures now in place or envisioned.³³⁹ The stronger the Greens will be in the government, the more these discrepancies will likely be solved towards a consistent climate policy at the EU and domestic levels, as Germany promises in its *Arctic Policy Guidelines*.

Regarding energy security, German stubbornness regarding the Nord Stream 2 pipeline became emblematic of Germany's willingness to put its own interests before a common line with its EU partners. Two aspects are involved when contemplating the future of the pipeline. The first is the pace with which Germany will finally get away from fossil fuels for its energy production and consumption because in the transition phase, gas imports will most likely gain importance. The Greens are likely to accelerate the pace of the energy transition and advocate a much stronger reliance on solar energy–produced hydrogen as a fuel source. The second aspect, however, is the political relationship with Russia. Here, by contrast to the Social Democrats, who still seem to see Nord Stream 2 as an element of Ostpolitik, the Greens, with most of Germany's European and transatlantic allies, advocate a much tougher stance, including the abandonment of the almost completed pipeline project. Together, this would significantly decrease German interest in the Arctic's fossil energy resources and remove from the agendas a

³³⁹ Spiegel Online “Deutschland verpasst Klimaziele deutlich“ August 19, 2021, <https://www.spiegel.de/wissenschaft/deutschland-verpasst-klimaziele-deutlich-a-2cf90514-0f9c-4cca-ac7c-063eed701939>

significant issue of contention between Germany and its (Arctic) EU partners.

Regarding Germany's core military defence interest, the German consensus remains that the EU and NATO are complementary rather than exclusive.³⁴⁰ Here tension stems from the fact that the European focus on civil mission deployment of the military corresponds more to Germany's foreign policy identity and outlook than does NATO's traditional military posture,³⁴¹ while it is also undisputed in the German security and defence policy establishment that US-backed NATO capabilities are indispensable. It thus makes sense from the German government's point of view to advocate the involvement of both NATO and the EU in Arctic security. How exactly the complementarity works out, largely depends on resolving tensions regarding the EU part in it. In view of the challenges to political stability in Europe, all German parties, except those at the left and right fringes, have advocated stronger EU security and defence integration. But to realise this, Germany, again, must tackle two aspects—a more technical aspect and a more political one. The technical aspect pertains to German military and military planning, which is still very much rooted in and determined by NATO structures. This limits the ability to build up and support genuinely European structures.³⁴² The political one, however, concerns the resources that Germany must be willing to muster for progress on the CSDP. Germany will have to invest substantial money not only in European leadership and structure-building projects but also in procurement for and further

³⁴⁰ On the complementarity, see James Sperling and Mark Webber, "North Atlantic Treaty Organization (NATO) and the European Union," in *Oxford Research Encyclopedia of Politics*, Pre-print (January 30, 2020), DOI: 10.1093/acrefore/9780190228637.013.1086).

³⁴¹ See Jamie Gaskarth and Kai Oppermann, Kai, "Clashing Traditions: German Foreign Policy in a New Era," *International Studies Perspectives* 22, no. 1 (2021), 84–105 for a mapping of Germany's foreign policy discourses.

³⁴² Tobias Bunde, "Defending European Integration by (Symbolically) Integrating European Defence? Germany and Its Ambivalent Role in European Security and Defence Policy," *Journal of European Integration* 43, no. 2 (2021), 243–259.

reform of its armed forces. Only then will it be possible, for instance, to achieve consistency between the desired maritime role of the EU in the Arctic and the German part of it. So far, for instance, Germany does not participate in naval capabilities development under PESCO, nor are these specifically directed at the Arctic, despite the naval forces' prominent place in German political rhetoric. The likelihood that the respective resources will be made available will possibly increase with the value that the new German government puts on the CSDP vis-à-vis the value of NATO. It is again the Greens which have taken the most outspoken stance in favour of the EU in this regard, and who, despite their initially pacifist outlook might even agree to respective procurement and investments in line with a larger German role in the CSDP.

6. Conclusion: Germany, the EU and Arctic Security

Germany has core environmental, economic, political and military interests in the Arctic. These are related to German security, but only a part of the economic interests—freedom of navigation and access to raw materials—is actually securitised. Arctic regional security, in turn, is relevant to Germany because its interests can only be realised if the Arctic remains a region of low conflict and cooperation. However, regional activities are mostly driven by Germany's collateral interests in Arctic science and conservation. The core interests, by contrast, are pursued in domestic, bilateral and multilateral contexts that are not Arctic per se. The most important of these contexts is the EU. Whether Germany's Arctic interests can be successfully pursued and whether Germany and the EU can contribute to Arctic regional security will largely depend on how Germany increases the coherence of its policies and activities at the European level with the rhetorical commitment of its Arctic policy guidelines. If it does so, it might no longer be perceived as a marginal player only. But it might need to be careful by engaging in a way that is coherent with its stated goal of keeping the Arctic a largely conflict-free region.