

## Rede von Staatsminister Michael Roth beim Dinner im Anschluss an den ECFR-Workshop zur Bankenunion am 12. Februar 2014 in der Spanischen Botschaft

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es gilt das gesprochene Wort

Ambassador Garcia-Berdoy Cerezo, Excellencies, Ladies and gentlemen,

First of all, let me thank you for your kind dinner invitation. After a day of intensive discussions during your workshop on the banking union, you might be relieved to hear that I will not bother you with more details on the banking union. I will rather try to enlarge our perspective, because we should never forget: Europe is more than an internal market and a single currency. Of course, completing the banking union will be one of the political top priorities in 2014, but we also have to look beyond the specific questions of crisis management. This is why I would like to share with you some of my views on the future challenges of the European Union. I will focus on three major issues structured along three main questions:

I) Can the European model of social cohesion emerge stronger from the crisis?

II) Have we learned the right lessons from the crisis and have we drawn the correct conclusions for the future of the Economic and Monetary Union?

III) Which role is the EU willing and capable to play in today's and tomorrow's world?

I

Today, the EU slowly recovers from the most severe crisis it has experienced so far. We have stood together in the crisis of the euro zone, and our common efforts are finally bearing fruit. The year 2014 starts with good news from the crisis-ridden states: Ireland has left the bailout, Portugal has returned to the financial markets, and even Greece has achieved a budget surplus (before interest payments) in 2013. And I'm sure that Ambassador Garcia-Berdoy Cerezo will agree, that we also have some hopeful signs for a positive development in Spain.

But we have to keep in mind: the crisis is not over yet. Much remains to be done. There is no doubt about it: We have to continue the path of structural reforms in Europe. We know that this is a very long and bumpy road and that it requires great efforts and sacrifices of the people in Greece, Portugal or Spain. Therefore, our answer to the crisis has to be more than just austerity measures or the liberalization of markets. Instead, we need a comprehensive policy approach that takes the difficult social and economic situation in Europe into account. The new federal government will put a stronger emphasis on strengthening social cohesion and promoting growth and employment in Europe.

The most pressing issue in my view is the enormous youth unemployment in many member states of the EU. In Greece or in Spain more than 60 percent of the young people are without work - and without a perspective for their future. We cannot afford to lose a whole generation of young Europeans, who are for the most part well-educated and highly qualified. This is the most prominent example of where the EU's economic and financial crisis has turned into a severe crisis of confidence. The young and unemployed people see Europe as part of the problem - and not as part of the solution to this problem. We need to turn around this perception. We need to make it clear: Europe is not the troublemaker; Europe can be the solution to the problem.

The federal government will mobilize any resource available bilaterally and within the EU framework for the fight against youth unemployment. We have already agreed to the front-loading of 6 Billion Euros of EU funds to fight youth unemployment. In addition, we continue to exchange best practices among member states. My Ministry for example is working on ideas to support other member states in absorbing structural and social funds so they can quickly and effectively reach the projects and people who need them. Our bilateral program MobiPro is a real success story: It supports young people from other member states who want to do a vocational training in Germany. We are deepening cooperation in states which want to learn from our good experience with dual vocational education and training. This is just to mention some efforts of the German government to improve the situation of young people. We need to give Europe's youth the future they deserve. This has to be the top priority of European policy in 2014.

Of course, we need a competitive Europe to survive and prosper in today's globalized world. But the internal cohesion of our societies and our Union is equally important: We need a European Union that is politically and economically strong, but also socially just. This is the trademark of Europe: Peace, prosperity and social justice are what we stand for and what we are known for around the globe.

II

Closely linked to this argument is the question which lessons need to be learned from the crisis and how we can strengthen the Economic and Monetary Union [EMU]. In my opinion, we need to combine closer economic policy coordination with the idea of social cohesion.

Strengthening the EMU will certainly remain our priority for the time being. The focus is currently on completing the banking union, but we will also have to work on making economic coordination in the Eurozone more binding and strengthening democratic legitimacy.

It is obvious that the EMU also has a social dimension. We need to come to a closer coordination in spheres beyond the fiscal and economic field: We need to agree on standards in the field of labour policies, taxation and social protection. In addition, we have to improve our common analysis of the social and employment situation in the EU. If we want to take countermeasures at an early stage of an emerging crisis, it is not enough to look at fiscal indicators like the budget deficit or national debt of the member states. We also have to use new indicators like levels of employment or public investment in the educational system to make our mechanisms of coordination work better.

Of course, member states must also continue their national economic reforms in order to ensure the long-term stability of the Euro. In this regard, we support national ownership, while at the same time we need binding agreements and full involvement of the European level as mentioned earlier.

I am sure that a broader debate on the future of European integration will start at the end of 2014 or at the latest in 2015, when the new top EU personnel has taken office. In a mid-term perspective, we need progress not only regarding to the inner functioning of the EMU and the EU, but also in other policy areas, such as the external representation of the EU. This leads me to my last question for tonight:

III

How can we improve the ability of the EU to speak with one voice, and to be listened to at the global stage? The first answer coming to mind is obviously to strengthen the European External Action Service [EAS], headed by High Representative Lady Ashton. Iran and Kosovo are two examples of what Common European Foreign and Security Policy can achieve. Germany has always been a strong supporter of the External Action Service and will continue to do so in the future.

In the last few weeks, especially before and at the Munich Security Conference, the notion of Germany's "new foreign and security policy" has been the talk of the town - or better: the talk of Europe. The debate was inspired by speeches by the Minister of Foreign Affairs Frank-Walter Steinmeier, the Federal President Gauck and the Defense Minister Mrs von der Leyen. Let me just sketch out what we mean by this - drawing on the thoughts of the Foreign Minister in Munich: Germany is too big to only comment on world politics from the sidelines. Germany has to be ready to engage in an earlier, more decisive and more substantive way in the foreign and security policy sphere.

Of course, this engagement has to be embedded in and taking into account what the European Common Foreign and Security Policy [CFSP] will say and do in this matter. We are keen to supply conceptual input to the CFSP. We are against a renationalization of the CFSP, because we think that the CFSP can be much more than the sum of its many small parts. For Germany the use of military force will always be an instrument of last resort. But instead - and now I would like to quote Frank-Walter Steinmeier directly: "We must sit down together with others and think harder and more creatively about how our diplomatic toolbox could be improved and utilized for productive initiatives. - end of quote. And the most like-minded others to sit and think with are our EU partners and the EAS.

Let us be realistic: Europe cannot solve all the problems in the world - especially not all by itself. There are many global challenges we need to tackle in cooperation with our strategic partners. I will only mention a few where the EU has a role to play - but in concert with others: the conflict in the Middle East, Syria, Afghanistan, the fight against climate change, the fight against terrorism and so on.

But there are regions and challenges where we have a greater responsibility because they lie in "our backyard."

In my view, the most urgent task of the Common Foreign and Security Policy is our European neighborhood. We have to assess profoundly the strengths and weaknesses of our current European Neighborhood Policy [ENP]. The ENP has so far not always been an effective instrument to promote transformation and reform processes in the East and the South of Europe. This is why we should work on a greater vision for the ENP that is also more attractive for our partners.

In the Eastern Neighborhood, our goal remains to forge an ambitious partnership with Ukraine and to advance our association with Moldova and Georgia. At the same time, we need an open dialogue and a viable cooperation with Russia. We need to overcome the concept of zero-sum-games or the creation of separated spheres of influence. A new division of Europe, a new Iron Curtain would hurt us all. Instead we should cooperate and work towards the realization of a greater vision of a common economic space from Lisbon to Vladivostok.

In the Southern Neighborhood, the transformation processes and acute crises require our close attention. People in the countries of the so called Arab Spring demand greater economic and political participation. Those who strive for freedom, rule of law and democracy deserve and need our support from Europe. The flow of refugees requires a humanitarian approach, solidarity with the most affected EU

partners, but also improved cooperation with the countries of origin. We already have concrete projects and ideas like Mobility Partnerships, Free Trade Agreements and partnerships supporting the democratic transitions and transformations. The EU-Africa Summit in April will provide a good opportunity to move many of these issues forward.<br />Let me close in saying: I am convinced that strengthening solidarity and social cohesion in Europe, reforming the Economic and Monetary Union, and taking more global responsibility will make the European Union stronger, both internally and externally.<br />I know there is still a long way to go. Its an ambitious project, but its possible. European integration was never easy. The French author Paul Lacroix put it straight: "The unification of Europe is like trying to bake an omelett without cracking the eggs. Lets try it, if we want the EU to emerge stronger from the crisis. Its worth the effort!<br />Thank you.<br /><br />Auswärtiges Amt<br />Werderscher Markt 1<br />10117 Berlin<br />Deutschland<br />Telefon: 030 5000-2056<br />Telefax: 03018-17-3402<br />Mail: [presse@diplo.de](mailto:presse@diplo.de)<br />URL: <http://www.auswaertiges-amt.de> <br />

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