

Current News:

<http://www.dw.de/will-germany-inch-away-from-military-restraint/a-17443481>

For 25 years, a 6,000-troop strong German-French military brigade has trudged along, never being sent out in its entirety on a mission, despite pleas to do so from Paris. France has petitioned the German government for many years to provide assistance with military missions in Africa, in particular. But for just as long, Germany has refused - even in clear cases of humanitarian missions. At most, Berlin has sent a few paramedics or military trainers, as is the case now in Mali, or made supplies available.



The Franco-German Brigade was created 25 years ago

Germany: an able and willing ally?

The last four years have been particularly disappointing for France in terms of military collaboration. While Germany grew more and more economically powerful, the country has taken on less and less under Chancellor Merkel when it comes to foreign and security policy. Her previous foreign minister, Guido Westerwelle, even spoke of "a culture of restraint" when it came to military missions and then-defense minister Thomas de Maiziere gruffly countered Paris' calls for more military engagement by saying Germany didn't need any lessons from its partners on that point.

"In France, those in foreign policy and security circles were asking themselves whether Germany is even still able and ready to form

alliances," said Stefan Seidendorf of the German-French Institute (dfi) in Ludwigsburg.

It's only against this background that it becomes clear why so many commentators in both countries view Merkel's comments on German-French cooperation as a turning point in Germany's foreign policy approach. Meanwhile, Germany's newly formed grand coalition government is positioning itself differently than its predecessor. President Joachim Gauck as well as the incoming foreign and defense ministers, Frank-Walter Steinmeier and Ursula von der Leyen, have called for greater German engagement abroad. Von der Leyen even indicated during her most recent trip to Africa that Germany has military capacity available. Her basic message seemed to be that Germany is prepared to take on more responsibility in the future, including in Africa. The chancellor is making assurances that Germany [will share the burden](#) there with France.



Stefan Seidendorf of the German-French Institute (dfi)

France's warning shot

But a number of doubts and open questions remain. Political scientist Seidendorf, who specializes in German-French relations, said he believes that the foreign policy shift has occurred less because of any sincere conviction and more due to EU partners' mounting impatience.

"Recent EU summits have shown that the politics of restraint propagated by Westerwelle are no longer tenable," said Seidendorf, who notes that the clearest sign of that is French President Francois Hollande's announcement to withdraw the last French regiment

stationed in Germany.

"The affair concerning the regiment in Donaueschingen was a final warning shot to the German government to signal: 'If you all don't want to or can't take part, then we have to look for other partners,'" the researcher explained.

Merkel seems to have understood the meaning behind the French move, but there has been little evidence so far that the new tone on foreign policy is indeed backed up by a new sense of responsibility in Germany. Although the chancellor recently lent her support in Brussels to a European mission in central Africa aimed at ending the bloody fighting between Christians and Muslims, she wants to leave the precarious military work to others.

Merkel hopes to prevent the EU Battlegroup, a European military unit formed within the last decade, from intervening. That's because starting in June, it will be Germany's turn to provide troops for the Battlegroup. German soldiers might then have to [fight on the ground in Central African Republic](#), and Merkel absolutely wants to avoid that outcome. The German government is exploring whether it could instead assist the French brigade in Mali. That move would have high symbolic value, and it would leave the responsibility for the Central African Republic in the hands of the French.

http://www.ediplomat.com/np/cultural_etiquette/ce_de.htm

The People



Germans value order, privacy and punctuality. They are thrifty, hard working and industrious. Germans respect perfectionism in all areas of business and private life. In Germany, there is a sense of community and social conscience and strong desire for belonging. To admit inadequacy -- even in jest -- is incomprehensible.

Question?

Meeting and Greeting

At a business or social meeting, shake hands with everyone present when arriving and leaving.

Guten Tag

Grüß Gott

Auf Wiedersehen

When introducing yourself, never use your title. Introduce yourself by your last name only.

Müller, angenehm. Müller, glad to see you

Never shake hands with one hand in your pocket.

Names and Titles

Use last names and appropriate titles until specifically invited by your German host or colleagues to use their first names.

Herr Schmidt.

Dr. Schmidt

Professor Schmidt

Titles are very important. Never use titles incorrectly and never fail to use them. If unsure, err in favor of a higher title.

A Doktor can be either a medical doctor or a holder of a Ph.D.

Two titles should not be used at the same time, except when addressing a letter to someone. If a person does hold several titles, the higher one is used in speaking to him/her.

Body Language

Germans may appear reserved and unfriendly until you get to know them better.

Never put your hands in your pockets when talking with someone.

"Thumbs up" gesture means "one" or is a sign of appreciation or agreement.

Making hands into two fists, thumbs tucked inside the other fingers and making pounding motion lightly on a surface expresses "good luck." - our I keep my fingers crossed

Never use the "okay" sign (index finger and thumb jointed together to make a circle). This is considered a rude gesture.

Don't point your index finger to your own head. This is an insult.

Corporate Culture

Germans take punctuality for business meetings and social occasions seriously. Tardiness is viewed as thoughtless and rude. Call with an explanation if you are delayed.

Send company profiles, personal profiles, etc., to German colleagues before your visit to establish credibility.

Contacts are vital to a business success. Use a bank, German representative or the Industrie und Handelskammer (Chamber of Industry and Commerce) when possible.

Rank is very important in business. Never set up a meeting for a lower ranked company employee to meet with a higher ranked person.

The primary purpose of a first meeting is to get to know one another and to evaluate the person, to gain trust, and to check chemistry.

Meetings are often formal and scheduled weeks in advance.

Germans generally discuss business after a few minutes of general discussion.

Arrive at meetings well prepared. Avoid hard-sell tactics or surprise.

Germans take business very seriously. Levity is not common in the workplace.

Business cards in English are acceptable.

Germans are competitive, ambitious and hard bargainers.

Germans value their privacy. They tend to keep their office doors closed.

Always knock on doors before entering.

Objective criticism isn't given or received easily. Compliments are seldom given for work product.

Strict vertical hierarchy exists. Power is held by a small number of people at the top. Deference is given to authority. Subordinates rarely contradict or criticize the boss publicly.

Organization is logical, methodical and compartmentalized with procedures and routines done "by the book."

Decision making is slow with thorough analysis of all facts.

Germans are not comfortable handling the unexpected. Plans are cautious with fallback positions, contingency plans, and comprehensive action steps - carried out to the letter.

Germans produce massive written communications to elaborate on and confirm discussions.

Written or spoken presentations should be specific, factual, technical and realistic.

Reports, briefings and presentations should be backed up by facts, figures, tables and charts.

Germans have an aversion to divergent opinions, but will negotiate and debate an issue fervently.

Remain silent if the floor has not been given to you or if you are not prepared to make an informed contribution.

Decisions are often debated informally and are generally made before meetings with compliance rather than consensus expected in the meeting.

Always deliver information, products, proposals, etc., to clients on time.

Do not call a German at home unless it is an emergency.

Dining and Entertainment

To beckon a waiter, raise your hand and say, **"Herr Ober."** To beckon a waitress, raise your hand and say, **"Fräulein."**

These days, it's okay to say "Bedienung, bitte (service, please) or just raising your hand when the waiter/waitress sees you.

In some places, people also use "Frau Ober."

Business breakfasts are arranged, but more often a **business lunch is preferred.**

Lunch with business colleagues generally involves social conversation. Do not discuss business during lunch or dinner unless your German host initiates the conversation.

Business entertaining is usually done in restaurants.

Spouses are generally not included in business dinners.

Dinner party:

Nobody drinks at a dinner party before the host has drunk. The host will raise his glass to the woman on his right and then toast to the health of the group. Thereafter, people may drink as they see fit.

When toasting as a guest, hold the glass only at the stem, clink your glass with everyone near you at the table and say Prosit, then take a drink. Then look into the eyes of someone at your table and lift your glass just slightly, then bring your glass down to the table.

Guten Appetit is said before eating and means "enjoy your meal". It is the host's way of saying, "please start". Guests can respond by saying Guten Appetit or Danke ebenfals, which means, "thank you, same to you."

A guest of honor is seated to the left of the hostess if it is a man and to the right of the host if it is a woman.

Keep your hands on the table at all times during a meal -- not in your lap. However, take care to keep your elbows off the table.

Use a knife and fork to eat sandwiches, fruit, and most food.

Do not use a knife to cut potatoes or dumplings (suggests food is not tender). The general rule is whatever does not need a knife, should not be touched with your knife.

Never cut fish with anything but a fish knife. If a fish knife is not offered, two forks are acceptable.

Do not leave any food on your plate when you are finished eating.

Do not smoke until after dinner is finished and coffee is served. Then ask permission.

When finished eating, place knife and fork side by side on the plate at the 5:25 position.

If you are taking a break during the meal, but would like to continue eating or would like more food, cross the knife and fork on your plate with the fork over the knife.

Germans don't tend to stay long after dinner. The honored guests are expected to make the first move to leave.

A "thank you" is usually done in person or with a telephone call.

Do not ask for a tour of your host's home, it would be considered impolite.

Dress

Being well and correctly dressed is very important.

Casual or sloppy attire is frowned upon.

For business, men should wear suits (dark colors) and ties. Women should wear dresses, suits, pantsuits, skirts and blouses.

Gifts

Gifts are normally not exchanged at business meetings, but small gifts may be appropriate at the successful conclusion of negotiations.

Give books, bourbon, whiskey or classical music. American-made gifts are very appropriate.

Do not give pointed objects like knives, scissors, umbrellas (considered unlucky), personal items, extravagant gifts or wine (Germans are very proud of their wine cellars).

When invited to someone's home, always bring a small gift for the hostess. For a large party, it is nice to send flowers before the party or the next day. Give an uneven number of flowers (unwrapped, not 13), yellow roses, tea roses or chocolates.

Do not give red roses (love symbol) or carnations (mourning). Yellow and white chrysanthemums and calla lilies are given for funerals only.

Helpful Hints

Germans are more formal and punctual than most of the world. They have prescribed roles and seldom step out of line.

A man or younger person should always walk to the left side of a lady.

Traditional good manners call for the man to walk in front of a woman when walking into a public place. This is a symbol of protection and of the man leading the woman. A man should open the door for a woman and allow her to walk into the building, at which time the woman will stop and wait for the man. The man should then proceed to lead the woman to her designation. If going to a restaurant, the man may relinquish his leadership role to the maitre' de.

Don't be offended if someone corrects your behavior (i.e., taking jacket off in restaurant, parking in wrong spot, etc.). Policing each other is seen as a social duty.

Compliment carefully and sparingly -- it may embarrass rather than please. Don't lose your temper publicly. This is viewed as uncouth and sign of weakness.

Stand when an elder or higher ranked person enters the room.

Don't shout or be loud, put your feet on furniture or chew gum in public.

Especially for Women

Traditionally, there has been little acceptance of women in high positions of responsibility and power in business.

Women, especially foreign women, must establish their position and ability immediately in order to conduct business successfully in Germany.

A woman should not feel inhibited to invite a German man to dinner for business and will not have any problems paying.

Video: <http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=Uad1Ma5DSMA>

How Germany became Europe's country:

Important factors: Work ethics

Highly specialized and indispensable products

Many sales go to other **Eurozone** countries – pricing easier and more competitive abroad

R&D , invest in workforce, "hire" many two-track vocational training students

During financial crisis: employees weren't fired but kept on: "Kurzarbeit" short work – don't work 1 -2 days, but they keep the job plus extra training on off days progress

Company vice chairman of Trumpf (metal cutting machines): **"Desire for security and safety is the strongest driver in German culture."**

Positioned industry to restart quickly after downturn

Financial caution helps weather crises such as the credit crisis.

50% growth upswing recently

extra profits are banked for difficult times. And they still reinvest

Fewer companies from crisis countries (Italy, Spain)

Will Germany have to help?

Business owner: YES – but the HOW remains difficult – although as we know, the situation looks better now than a year ago.

Bailing out Greece:

Video: <http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=WW9q4S1xSgE>

Financial prudence

Looking for work in Germany:

<http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=NQb8IzUmZdE>

The Greeks looking for work in Germany | Made in Germany

<http://www.arbeitsagentur.de/web/content/DE/service/Ueberuns/WeitereDienststellen/ZentraleAuslandsundFachvermittlung/VersionsDEEN/>

The Germans work longer each week than most Europeans.

German employees spend an average of 41.2 hours a week at their workplace – and are thus ranked seventh among the hardest working Europeans. This was the finding of a study from the European Foundation for the Improvement of Living and Working Conditions (Eurofound) in Dublin, which was published in 2008. On the other hand, the study also reveals that compared to other European countries, the Germans enjoy an above-average amount of holiday.

Thus the legendary industriousness of the Germans is relative. Also in other respects the work in Germany does not differ much from the work anywhere else in Europe. Nevertheless, we want to focus on the most important aspects.

At the work place:

The Workplace in Germany

If you work for a German firm you'll be subject not only to German taxes but also to premiums for various health, unemployment and retirement plans. (See the separate articles on [benefits](#), [health insurance](#) and [retirement](#).) These can take a bite out of your take-home pay. If you don't intend to work in Germany the rest of your life, it may be possible to be exempted from payments to the retirement insurance (*Rentenversicherung*) or to collect some of the money you have contributed when you leave if certain conditions are met.

On the positive side, you might get a housing subsidy (*Wohngeld*) to help with your rent and a child subsidy (*Kindergeld*) to help with the raising of your children. Often a company may subsidize the cost of getting to and from work, and perhaps pay all or part of the cost of your lunch. Many companies

have an employee canteen where low cost lunches and other food items are sold.

If hired, an employee must usually expect **a probationary period of three to six months, during which time he or she can be dismissed with two weeks' notice.** Once you have successfully weathered this probation it becomes increasingly difficult for the company to dismiss you. It must convince the unions and/or labor court that the reasons are very good, and in any case must give a proper notice.

If the employee is of relatively recent hire, the notice period will be four weeks. The notice period may lengthen progressively for those who have been with the employer for longer periods, and can be seven months for a person who has been employed 20 or more years.

If an employee resigns, the law requires him to give four weeks notice, up to either the first or 15th of a month.

The usual German workweek these days varies between 38 and 42 hours, and some employers shut up shop early on Friday afternoons. **The law requires a minimum of 20 working days of vacation annually, but some companies give much more than that, sometimes as much as 30 working days.** In some companies employees may earn increasing days of vacation from year to year. Unpaid leave is also permitted under certain circumstances.

Paid sick leave is six weeks, during which you will continue to receive your full salary. After that time, health insurance pays 70% of your last salary until you either return to work or have to retire because of your health.

German law is generous when it comes to maternity and paternity

leave. Mothers are allowed six weeks leave at full pay prior to the child's birth and eight weeks at full pay afterward. In the case of a multiple birth, 12 weeks paid leave is allowed.

The mother **or** father is then allowed up to three years of unpaid leave to stay at home with the child.

Recently, the German government initiated a program that allows direct subsidies to new parents (*Elterngeld*). It is funded by the federal tax system. It is not a permanent subsidy and is limited to the first 12 or 14 months following the child's birth. The amount of the *Elterngeld* is based on the after taxes income of the parent dedicated to caring for the newborn.

Salaries are generally deposited directly into your bank account around the 25th of each month.

<http://www.tatsachen-ueber-deutschland.de/en/economy.html>

Labor and Employers:

Independent collective bargaining

The collective wage bargaining partners – trade unions and employers and employers' associations – **negotiate collective bargaining agreements.** The state sets the general working conditions, though not how much workers are paid.

>>> But minimum wage is most likely coming soon.

This and the settlement of other questions – such as vacation and working hours – is left to collective bargaining. **In some sectors, the state has mandated minimum wages to be set by collective wage bargaining**

Trade unions and employers' associations



The **largest association of trade unions is the Deutsche Gewerkschaftsbund (DGB)**, which has 6.3 million members. The DGB represents **eight member trade unions**, the **largest is IG Metall**.

The **employer associations are the unions' partners in wage negotiations**.

Their umbrella organization, the Bundesvereinigung der Deutschen Arbeitgeberverbände (BDA; Confederation of German Employers' Associations), represents some two million companies. Other business associations are: Deutscher Industrie- und Handelskammertag (DIHT; Association of German Chambers of Industry and Commerce), Bundesverband der Deutschen Industrie (BDI; Federation of German Industries)

Labor market

About 40 million persons were gainfully employed in Germany at year-end 2009 – and thus more than ever before. At the same time, the number of unemployed fell to below 3.3 million. **This prime trend was fostered by the strong economy, proactive labor market policies, lower ancillary wage costs, modest reforms to labor laws (in particular as regards protection against dismissal) and stronger investments in young people's qualifications**

Employment structure



The vast majority of the approximate 40 million employed and self-employed in Germany works in the **service sector and in manufacturing**

STRIKES in GERMANY:

<http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=X7TUuODbzJU>

Video: working across borders:

http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=P5-QS_gV8pE

http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Service_sector

The **tertiary sector of the economy** (also known as the **service sector** or the **service industry**) is one of the three economic sectors, the others being the **secondary sector** (approximately the same as **manufacturing**) and the **primary sector** (agriculture, fishing, and extraction such as **mining**).

Contents [\[hide\]](#)

- 1 [Service sector](#)
- 2 [Typical industries](#)
- 3 [Difficulty of definition](#)
- 4 [Theory of progression](#)
- 5 [Issues for service providers](#)
- 6 [List of countries by tertiary output](#)
- 7 [References](#)

[Service sector](#)[\[edit\]](#)

The service sector consists of the "soft" parts of the economy, i.e. activities where people offer their knowledge and time to improve productivity, performance, potential, and sustainability, what is termed **affective labor**. The basic characteristic of this sector is the production of **services** instead of **end products**. Services (also known as "intangible goods") include attention, advice, access, experience, and discussion. The production of **information** is generally also regarded as a service, but some economists now attribute it to a fourth sector, the **quaternary sector**.

http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=c8Dlv_C4Ugo

Conducting Business in Germany

Video: Click workers:

<http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=ygeNX2EU7F4>

No benefits (8-18 Euro/hour), but you work from home and on your own time

>>> crowd sourcing