

Germany between its Unity and the European Unity

The celebration of fourteen years after the unification of Germany comes very few days before the inauguration of the Frankfurt International Book Fair where the Arab World is invited as a guest of honor. The German interest in the Arab World is not new.

Egypt is on the top of the list of the German interests in the region and a top target for the German cooperation. In the following paragraphs, I will try to highlight some of the elements and aspects of this fruitful cooperation between Egypt and Germany.

The relation between Egypt and Germany has a special character especially starting with the strong friendship that linked late President Anwar el Sadat and the German Chancellor Helmut Schmidt.

If we look around, we would find many German institutions having a lot of activities in various fields. There are four basic German institutions in Egypt operating in various fields.

Few days ago, a media program was signed between the German institution, Frederich Nauman, and the Egyptian Radio and Television Union. There are also the major projects for democracy awareness which started between the German institution and the Egyptian State Information Service since 1978 which is manifested in the well-known Nile centers.

In the field of education, there are the German schools which are considered as the first foreign education centers in Egypt. The educational cooperation has been crowned by the establishment of the German University.

It is also well known that the cultural activity of the Goethe Institute became one of the elementary cultural traditions in Egypt whether in teaching the German language or presenting German films and hosting literary discussions. In one of these discussions, the German well-known Nobel Prize winner Gunter Gras was a participant.

There is also the German Archaeological Institute and its extensive excavations as well as the German Trade Chamber which managed to become an integral part of the economic and commercial growth in Egypt.

Now regarding the global role of Germany which this country has managed to achieve despite the many obstacles and biases, we may remember that in January 2002 the members of the General Assembly of the United Nations voted to elect Germany as a non-permanent member of the Security Council. I believe that Germany is now demanding a permanent seat in the Council especially in light of its leading role in the European Union.

It is well known that Germany after its unification became one of the leading countries in the Union, not only because it is providing the highest contribution to the EU budget, but also because it has the largest number of seats in the European Parliament.

Though I would not claim that I am a specialist in Political Sciences, I would say that referring to my industrial activity in Germany and spending long times there, I can express my humble opinion about the German role in the European Union, as I believe that the experiment of re-uniting the two sides of Germany

in 1990 was the model for the unification of Europe that took place in 2004 after the affiliation of ten new states to it – eight of them were communist countries from East Europe in addition to Malta and Cyprus.

This orientation towards East Europe and the countries that used to follow the Soviet Union is not new for Germany. Thus the Germans know very well the price they have to pay or any other European country has to pay when starting the journey of unification.

Of course West Germany has paid a lot to forge this unity in 1990 and this came in a cost of hundreds of billions to develop the five provinces of East Germany.

As Germany is passing currently with a number of economic hardships, the reason for this situation is basically the cost which the Western German tax payer had to pay to rebuild East Germany on the economic, industrial and social grounds.

This is typically what is happening now after the accession of the East European countries to the EU. In my humble opinion again, I believe that these new affiliates to the EU are not interested in the Union as a political or an economic force to resist the American hegemony.

They are only interested in the EU as an opportunity to receive aid and assistance and to invite West European investments to their grounds.

Therefore, the East European new affiliates to the EU have lowered their industrial taxation fees despite the resistance of major powers in Europe especially Germany which rejected the idea of lowering the taxes.

As I mentioned before, it is also well known that Germany is the largest contributor to the budget of the EU.

Talking about the role of Germany in our region and in the EU as well as the world is endless.

Germany is currently trying to get out of the narrow nationalist sphere which colored its past towards an era of openness and liberalization to join a global framework where all its members seek justice, peace and equality.

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