

GERMANY A LEADING COUNTRY

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TWELVE YEARS OF UNITY

This year, the anniversary of the German unity coincides with general elections for a counsellor. This took place in an atmosphere that reflects democracy and freedom enjoyed by the German people.

The German people are used to the fact that any change in the partisan leadership of the government does not necessarily bring political changes, but usually influences the economic variables, including labour market and manpower, fair distribution of wealth, educational policy and health service market.

The time of posing questions on the German unity is now over. There are no more discussions on the extent of success of the unity, or the search for appropriate standards for measuring this success, or the exuberant costs encumbered for promoting the Eastern part of the country.

At present, questions are revolving on Germany's leading and renewable role, both economically and politically, whether within the framework of the European unity, or at the general level in Germany.

Within the European unity, Germany assumed a major role in discussions that led to the adoption of decisive measures for re-developing the administrative agency. This had started before the European unity became a reality.

Germany is considered the most influencing and influenced country, within the European unity, by Middle East problems, due to the confidence of Arab countries in Germany, on one hand, and the size of its economic transactions with these countries, on the other.

In addition, Germany has won moral gains at the Arab level, due to its military participation in Kosovo. This step has led to containing the exploding situation and reaching a balanced and stable situation.

This is from the aspect of the external policy of unified Germany. As for its internal achievements, undoubtedly the German unity is now well-established and stands on solid grounds.

According to some analysts "some harm could bring forth some benefit". This is what happened with the recent floods that have helped bolster the ties of cooperation and solidarity between East and West Germany.

It is known that the Eastern part of Germany used to be considered the orphan of the German family. However, the arrival of the floods called for a decisive intervention, which has radically changed the situation.

As stated by the President of the Red Cross, which was the organization in charge of handling the impacts of the floods, "feelings accompanying the relief operations have helped bolster the old ties that had suffered from separation, alienation and division, over fifty years.

Relief operations, swift intervention and earnest endeavours have helped consolidate the German national unity, rendering it an established fact, after lying under the dust for ages.

In fact, the flood catastrophe itself reflects the concept of unity of East and West Germany. Floods started in Bavaria in the West and advanced towards the East, hitting the Saxony province, which is rich in an old heritage that is centered in the capital, Dresden.

Then, the floods headed northward. Actually, these floods are considered the biggest natural catastrophe, size-wise, ever hitting Germany. The compensation budget allocated for assisting victims of the floods and eliminating damages amounted to € 1.6 billion, out of which € 500 million was to be spent this year and the rest next year.

The government decided to provide such an allocation from profits and reserves of the German Central Bank.

At the level of organization and management, Germany has always been distinguished by its advanced managerial systems. In spite of this, the government has taken the initiative to adopt new steps for development. Primarily among these steps is the recent programme submitted by the government, under the title “New Government = New Management”.

This programme aims at introducing all governmental services, amounting to 376, on the Internet, a matter that would lead to higher rates of performance and efficacy, with respect to cost and material revenue.

Loss rates, concerning time, energy and efforts exerted in required governmental services, are expected to fall down beyond unprecedented levels.

In addition and in parallel to this, the German parliament has issued a bundle of legislative items, under the title “Transparency Law”. This is a code of honour that serves as a guide for major companies and that includes the proper behaviours to be adopted.

This comes concomitant with the release of an interesting book by Hans Oulof Henkel, former president of the Federation of Industries and prominent member of the SPD party headed by Schroeder.

The book is entitled “Ethics of Success”, in which he emphasizes the importance of conceptual channels and behavioural approaches that are to be adopted by an advanced society at all levels, be that individual, private or public enterprise, partisan or governmental levels.

Another important topic that held the attention of the government was the Immigration & Nationality Law enacted last March. This law tackles the problems of immigration and nationality.

It is a fact that Germany is one of the most accepting European countries for immigrants. They amount to millions from all over the world. It is noteworthy that, in Germany, there are 7.3 million non Germans, out of which 2.1 million are Turks, followed by 721,000 Serbs, then 600,000 Italians, besides some other nationalities.

The new law aims at linking immigrants with needs of industry and labour market, by organizing the admission of foreign labour. At the same time, steps are to be taken to help integrate these immigrants within the German society, in an easy and safe manner, away from closed communities in the form of ghettos within the German society.

Furthermore, this law sets the basis for reducing problems of immigrants, gathering families together and accepting immigrants for humanitarian reasons.

The German government has even gone further, by trying to tackle the issue of “Dialogue of Cultures”, given that Germany is practically a multicultural nation.

For this, the government has organized seminars and conferences, such as the Arab German Dialogue, which has been launched in 1997 and is still going on. The most recent dialogue was held this year in Cairo, in collaboration with the Arab League.

Germany’s policy towards the dialogue of cultures is summarized in what was said by two German leaders. On one hand, the President of Germany Mr. Johannes Roe stated that the Germans were seeking a global coalition to fight famine and poverty, as well as to guarantee due respect for the dignity of different identities that are affiliated to different cultures and religions.

For this reason, it deemed necessary to hold a dialogue of cultures and religions, given that in times of globalization, it was necessary to preserve cultural identities and stop them from dissolving in one another.

On the other hand, Speaker Wolfgang Thiebers of the Federal parliament stated in a long article that there was no antagonistic culture or religion.

Lack of knowledge and ignorance of other religions was a fertile soil for partiality, challenges and fanaticism, creating an antagonistic environment among all parties.

Last but not least, the German state is worthy of appreciation and admiration, given that it held the loudest voice within the European community and was the first to break the obstinacy of the Americans to obtain the

European blessing for launching a war against Iraq and luring the European states to participate therein. Schroeder announced it clear and loud – together with his adversary, Schtopier – his refusal to be involved in the Iraqi war.

Moreover, he declared his objection to this war from the start, a war that would take place at the threshold of Europe, only to widen the gap between the East and the West, at a time when there was a dire need to bridge this gap.

The initiative taken by Germany to establish the concept of German partnership with Middle East countries is noteworthy.

This initiative has later turned into the programme of European-Middle Eastern Association and European Mediterranean Association.

Although we see the Egyptian German friendship vessel as the oldest and firmest along the ages, amidst the sea of Arab German relations, and in spite of newly arising tempests and storms after the September 11 incidents and their repercussions, yet we are confident that this vessel is steadfast, regardless of any tumultuous agitations in international relations.

This vessel will remain safe and sound, in spite of any navigational conditions, thanks to the good care provided by Egypt and Germany with equal attention, understanding and insight.