



Reorganising the Federal Academy for Security Policy

by Christian Lipicki, Head of Communications

Hardly a day goes by without something in the news about the world's trouble spots. Whether in Eastern Europe, the Middle East or in Africa: "The world seems to be falling apart," as Germany's Foreign Minister Frank-Walter Steinmeier put it, describing the development. In view of the large number of crises, the nations must accept their responsibility. Germany's Defence Minister Ursula von der Leyen also expressed her view on the matter: Indifference is not an option for a country such as Germany. And the German President Joachim Gauck warned that Germany must "be prepared to do more for its security, which for decades has been provided by others."

Germany's security situation has changed dramatically. Characterised since the end of the Cold War by the feeling of being surrounded by friends at our national borders, the perception and discussion change if we look beyond our immediate neighbourhood. The world has become more dangerous and there is a feeling of unease among the people. Security is, and will continue to be, a question of existence. And for this reason it has long been a topic of discussion for more than just the experts.

"Security policy may still be a specialist subject and will remain so, but public interest is clearly growing and the debate has thus also intensified considerably over the past few years," explains Karl-Heinz Kamp, Academic Director of the Federal Academy for Security Policy. "This is something that particularly members of the Bundestag are noticing as their voters are asking increasingly about topics related to foreign and security policy."

What do politicians have to do so that people in Germany can live in freedom and security, as they do today? The Coalition Agreement of CDU/CSU and SPD has already established a political roadmap to this end. This roadmap reflects the commitment of the political parties, building the government: "In foreign and security policy we think and act in a networked way."

Better networking, more intensive dialogue and stable security – this is the right direction. The ongoing development, of course, affects all federal authorities, particularly the work of the Federal

Academy for Security Policy, which is the German Government's highest institute for advanced training regarding security policy and which has considerable expertise in this field. For this reason, in early 2015 the Federal Security Council adopted a new concept for the Academy, derived from the Coalition Agreement. On this basis the Academy is now setting new priorities. What does this exactly mean? What are the specific changes?

Public Discourse and Communication

Arguably the most dramatic change is the opening up of the Academy's previous security policy discourse to the broader public. In other words, security issues will no longer be considered merely by experts but will provide the basis for public discussion. On this point it is stated in the new concept for the Academy: "The mission of the Federal Academy for Security Policy is to promote a comprehensive understanding of Germany's long-term security goals and interests among executive personnel, experts and a broader public."



Hans-Dieter Heumann, President of the Academy, considers this aspect particularly important: "Many people ask themselves: How safe are we in Germany? Security policy is something that concerns each and every one of us. We want the topic to reach a wider audience as this satisfies the people's need for information and exchange."

To perform its new task, at the beginning of the year the Academy set the course by establishing a new division for "Communication". As from autumn, this working area will then be extended and called "Public Discourse and Communication". In addition to the traditional forms of communication such as press conferences, event support and the Academy's own website, new avenues will be explored.

The Academy therefore aims to create greater openness in the security policy discourse so that members of the public can discuss the topic constructively – this applies both to their inclusion in what have so far been expert dialogues, such as the German Forum on Security Policy and the Forum on Cyber Security, and to the development of new forms of dialogue. This will not be easy. Freedom and security cannot, however, be taken for granted. There is a need to discuss how both can be ensured.

Courses on Security Policy

Education and training activities, adapted to the requirements of the ministries, continue to be a unique feature of the Academy. "The needs of the sending authorities and institutions have changed because the world has changed," says the Vice President of the Academy, Armin Staigis. "This is why we aim to tailor the Senior Course on Security Policy to the new environment." The courses will still be targeted at executive personnel but the programmes we offer are being expanded to cater to younger specialists on the one hand and higher-level decision-makers on the other. In future, the Academy will therefore offer two courses on security policy each year.

The Senior Course on Security Policy, which has so far been the main pillar of advanced education and training, will undergo noticeable changes and be condensed to form the Core Course for Security Policy. Many executive personnel from federal ministries and security agencies are familiar with this flagship of Academy activities, in which they themselves participated and were taught important skills that would benefit them in their later career. The new, three-month core course is aimed in particular at civil servants from the federal ministries who are to be prepared to work as heads of key

branches in the field of security policy. The course is also open to a comparable group of participants from business and society. It focuses on crisis prevention and crisis management, teaches a concept of security that encompasses all political fields, and promotes mutual understanding for the various security actors. The core course thus helps to develop a level of competence needed to act in the field of security policy that clearly goes beyond the individual's present area of responsibility.

The future Senior Officials Course for high-level executive personnel from government, business and society, on the other hand, will give participants the opportunity, in an intensive three-week phase of exchange, to deepen their knowledge of complex security topics and to create even better working relations on an interministerial level. In a nutshell: The course teaches strategic thinking and actioning. "We know that executive personnel greatly appreciate networking, but also that they cannot be available for training for longer periods of time," says Staigis. These constraints have been taken into account, when these new courses were developed.

Expert Talking on Security Policy

Each year the Academy hosts some 70 events with approximately 4,000 participants. These include a number of specialist events for the new division "Expert Talking and International Cooperation" will assume responsibility as the third pillar of the work undertaken at the Academy. Serving as a platform - and as a neutral host - for discussion on issues of future security policy and strategy on national and international level.

The previous expert talks on security policy, held at the Academy, regularly brought together decision-makers from different ministries and agencies at Federal and State level as well as from business, society and research. The experts greatly appreciate such for a place where they can maintain a trusting exchange of views and develop personal networks.

Security problems are becoming increasingly complex and the developments are going faster. It is therefore important to discuss with experts and decision-makers which direction will be taken, by whom, and with what approach, and who needs to be more closely integrated in security networking. "There is no substitute for this discussion among experts on an equal level," says President Heumann.

Furthermore, cooperation will continue with international partner establishments and institutions. The Academy thus plays an active role in the "European Security and Defence College", the union of institutes and academies in the EU specialising in security policy, and at the same time maintains individual partnerships with institutions that have also devoted themselves to a comprehensive understanding of security policy, including the French "Institut des Hautes Études de Défense Nationale" and the U.S. "National Defense University".

The New Academy

With its three pillars, the Federal Academy for Security Policy is now effectively positioning itself as an institute that provides advanced training, explains complex issues and paves the way for experts, strategists, operational decision-makers and members of the public. "The way the Academy is now being reorganised shows that we are on the right track," says Walter Kolbow, former State Secretary and Chairman of the Advisory Board of the Academy. "Discussing and networking at expert level, then combining results with the citizens' dialogue and taking lessons from discussions with experts and the public into the advanced education and training programmes for the courses for the executive levels of the federal ministries - I would say that is the best possible approach to German security policy."

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