

Europe`s promise

Broken promises?

Now even Christoph von Marschall, recognised Tagesspiegel correspondent of the Berlin newspaper Tagesspiegel, has been trapped. His latest commentary on page 1 of the Tagesspiegel of 26.03.2021 ends with the statement: "[Crisis management "Made in Brussels", on the other hand, is a tragedy.](#)"

The commentary is one of numerous statements that all boil down to this: The EU can't get it right, it has screwed up, often in relation to foreign policy, recently, for obvious reasons, especially in relation to the fight against the pandemic. And in the end, if you look at the results, these statements of opinion are even correct.

Example: Foreign policy:

Yes, the EU is not in a position to influence Russian policy; it even has to accept that "its foreign minister" is paraded in Moscow. The EU is not in a position to substantially influence Erdogan's policy towards the rule of law and respect for human rights and to induce the Turkish president to refrain from solos in foreign policy with military accompaniment.

Example: Corona pandemic

Yes, the EU made mistakes in procuring the vaccine. And it took a long time for the 750 billion Corona Recovery fund to be agreed, and it is taking even longer for it to clear all the legal hurdles, indeed, as Christoph von Marschall rightly points out, it is not even certain whether it will receive the necessary approval of all 27 national parliaments.

The critique is unfair, although accurate in the result

And while the critique is justified in its outcome, it is unfair in substance, similar to criticising a leg-amputated sprinter for not being able to win the Olympic 100-metre final.

Marschalls' comment provides a good opportunity to illustrate this:

The EU Commission did not procure vaccine early enough or fast enough, and it also set the wrong priorities with the price. But: When Donald Trump, for example, had already reserved vaccine for the USA, the Commission could not yet take action because it lacked any competence to do so. It therefore had to wait until the member states mandated it to do so. And it had to carry out its task in coordination with the member states, which obviously had different priorities. Why: Because the EU has no competence of its own in this area.

The Recovery Fund was only put together after intensive discussions - whereby these discussions were held at almost record speed by EU standards. And now the EU is waiting for the necessary ratification of the fund by the national parliaments.

Why: Because in Europe, unlike member states, there is no European government that can rely on a majority in a parliament and is therefore able to combat the consequences of the pandemic quickly and purposefully with its fiscal policy.

Identifying the reasons why promises cannot be kept

To avoid any misunderstanding: Of course, the EU and its representatives may, even must, be criticised if there is a reason for it.

But, and this is what I encourage all serious opinion makers and politicians to do: Don't say the EU screwed up when the reason for inadequate political results is that Europe is not being given the opportunity to achieve better results. Don't feed the prejudice that national policies always offer the better solution, even when it comes to problems that can only be solved jointly at European level. Germany has just proved how inadequate national policy can be in the fight against the pandemic.

Please make clear that the EU, that European integration must be further developed, that a federal organisation of Europe is necessary in order to achieve acceptable European solutions. A corresponding change in the European architecture is, of course, no guarantee of good politics, but it is in any case the necessary precondition for Europe to develop its full potential.