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Germany Tightens Its Grip on Its European Empire

We could soon have an EU that tells its member states how to run their own countries.

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Germany is in an odd position. At home, its government is at its weakest in years. Divisions and infighting abound, even within Chancellor Angela Merkel's own party as her authority weakens.

But in Europe, Germany is strong. It is making a bold push to formalize its control over the European Union.

In the latest long-term budget plan, EU budget commissioner Günter Oettinger (who happens to be German) unveiled a new policy proposal. It would strip member nations of their EU funding if they failed to comply with EU requirements on "rule of law."

In theory.

In practice, it would give Europe's largest states the ability to blackmail the smaller ones.

You can see this in the way Europe is already using its "rule of law" controls.

The EU is currently pursuing Poland for violations of the rule of law. If it succeeds, it will be able to strip Poland of its EU voting rights—if all other countries agree. What is Poland's great transgression against the basic tenant of liberty? The EU accuses the Polish government of tampering with the composition of its judges on its constitutional court. That's a sham. [Spain did almost exactly the same thing](#) and the EU said nothing. The difference is, the EU approves of Spain's government, but not Poland's.

Oettinger's proposals would dramatically expand the EU's power. If the European Commission deems that a country has violated the rule of law, financial penalties would come into effect. Only a large majority in the European Council could *stop* those penalties. In the Council, voting rules take into account population. Germany is the most populous nation in Europe. So if it wants sanctions on a country and it gets a few other nations on its side, the rest of the Council could not stop them.

We could soon have an EU that tells its member states how to run their own countries. The EU bureaucracy is already fighting democratically elected governments in Poland and Hungary. If it gains the power Oettinger is proposing, it would have even more authority to make member nations do as they are told.

This is just the latest in a long-standing trend. Hans Kundnani noted in the *Berlin Policy Journal* last month that in Germany's vision for Europe, "more Europe would mean more Germany—as in many of the steps already taken in the last seven years since the euro crisis began."

"As well as becoming more German, the EU has also grown more coercive since the beginning of the euro crisis in 2010," he wrote. "Further integration has fallen somewhere on the spectrum between voluntary and forced."

Kundnani wrote, "It is particularly striking how ... terms such as 'budgetary surveillance' and 'fiscal discipline' have become increasingly central to the functioning of the EU." Europe's response to the euro crisis has been much greater German control over other nations' economies. "Developments since then have only confirmed and advanced this transformation," Kundnani wrote. "The emergency summit held in Brussels in July 2015 to discuss the Greek debt situation may turn out to be a critical juncture in the history of the EU." This is a trend the *Trumpet* noted in "[Look Who Rules Europe!](#)" Greece tried to defy Germany, and Germany made an example out of it. The Greeks' humiliation sent a powerful message to all other EU member nations.

This latest push to use the budget as a mechanism for punishing nations is "part of a wider trend of expanding coercion in the EU," wrote Kundnani. "Even EU member states who worry about democratic deconsolidation in countries like Hungary and Poland wonder if it could also be turned on them." He noted: "[T]he danger is that the EU is increasingly seen as a vehicle for the imposition of German preferences."

Selmayrgate

At the same time, Germany has been muscling in on key positions within the EU. With Oettinger's help, Martin Selmayr, another German, took the EU's most powerful civil servant job in March.

Selmayr's appointment as the European Commission's secretary general was so murky that the European press commonly refers to it as "Selmayrgate."

The European Commission employs 33,000 civil servants. That's a lot of responsibility, which is why the job of secretary general is open only to qualified individuals who have already proved themselves by operating at a high level within Europe's civil service.

Selmayr served at that level, as the deputy secretary general, for just a few minutes.

The Commission has said little officially about what actually happened. But one anonymous commissioner [shared the details](#) with Jean Quatremer, *Libération's* EU correspondent.

Quatremer's source said that at a European Commission meeting, President Jean Claude Juncker proposed appointing Selmayr to the deputy position. The Commission approved. Then Juncker announced that the current secretary general had resigned and that Selmayr would take his place.

Quatremer's source alleges that the Commission was then bribed not to protest the deceitful way in which Selmayr got the job. EU commissioners get paid two thirds of their salary for about two years after they leave office. Selmayr proposed extending that pension to three or five years, and also offered additional perks like a company car and driver.

Quatremer called it "a brilliantly executed coup that has handed this 47-year-old German bureaucrat near-total control of the EU machine." His commissioner informant called it "an impeccably prepared and audacious power grab."

The European Parliament was so outraged by the process, it voted unanimously to investigate Selmayr's appointment. It also passed a resolution saying that the appointment "could be viewed as a coup-like action." During the debate, a Dutch member of Parliament said the appointment "destroys all the credibility of the European Union." A Hungarian mepsaid, "When it suits the commission, it ignores the rules, meaning the rule of law."

"Selmayr has long shown disdain and disregard for the traditional workings of the Commission, and a willingness to strong-arm colleagues and bulldoze opponents, earning him the nickname Monster of the Berlaymont," [wrote Politico](#), referring to the building in which the European Commission meets. "One result of the combination of Selmayr's rise and reputation has been an array of allegations over what sort of power grab may be next on his agenda."

His appointment also sparked complaints that Germany has too much power. Germans now hold the secretary general positions in the civil service, the European Parliament and Europe's foreign ministry—the External Action Service. [Politico quoted](#) one anonymous EU diplomat saying that Selmayr's appointment was a "power grab that gives lots of power to the Germans."

Germany already dominated the EU. But historically it has done so through its dominant population and policies emanating from its national government. "[N]o one can dispute Germany's leadership role" in Europe, *Berlin Policy Journal* wrote. "Berlin is increasingly becoming a clearinghouse for all of Europe's political issues." However, "it is not a question of the positions Germans hold in Brussels."

Now, in addition to having Europe's largest population, its biggest economy and its preeminent political power, Germans also hold more positions in Brussels. And they're using their posts to increase EU (and German) power over other nations.

Perhaps Berlin's push to change EU budget rules and the questionable appointment of Selmayr is part of Berlin's formalization of its dominance over Europe.

A major step in this process could come next year, when the presidency of the European Central Bank (cb) becomes vacant. Germany's coalition has already agreed it wants Bundesbank president Jens Weidmann to get the job.

With Weidmann in position, German control over Europe's economy would be complete. Previous ecb heads have printed money and passed it on to poorer South European countries. Weidmann doesn't believe in this. When Southern Europe needs cash, it will have to ask the ecb or Germany for help. One way or the other, Germans will be deciding whether they get loans.

It will be a fight for Germany to get Weidmann the job. And it seems likely that Germany's plan to block funds to disobedient countries will itself be blocked. But what is clear is that Germany is pushing for more Germans to have more formal power in the European Union.

A European Empire?

A large area of land composed of multiple nationalities formally controlled by one authority has a name: an empire. It's a label that more and more people are using to describe Europe. Gwythian Prins, an academic and a government adviser, [wrote last month in the Telegraph](#) that Europe "looks like an empire."

"It walks like an empire," he continued. "It certainly talks like an empire—listen to [European Council President Donald] Tusk. It treats its subjects like an empire. They grumble rebelliously, as vassal states do. Its rulers, the Brussels elite, feather their nests just like their predecessors in function did in the ussr. In 2007, the president of the Commission, José Manuel Barroso, actually called it an empire. I think we may safely say that the EU is an empire."

Even Germany's *Spiegel* wrote, in 2015, that "the word 'reich,' or empire, may not be entirely out of place" when describing modern Germany. It concluded that "an empire is in play, at least in the economic realm."

German-led Europe is looking more like an empire with each passing year.

The *Trumpet* and the *Plain Truth* have been warning about this empire for decades. In 1945, *Plain Truth* founder Herbert W. Armstrong said that Germany would once again rise to dominate Europe through a "European Union."

In 1973, he wrote, "Biblical prophecy revealed that this empire would start as an economic movement, that it would bring an era of unusual prosperity to Europe. It did start in March 1957, when six European countries—West Germany, France, Italy, Belgium, the Netherlands and Luxembourg—signed the Treaty of Rome creating the European Economic Community. ... How did I know as far back as 1927 that this coming United States of Europe would spring up in our time? I knew because I saw it clearly revealed in biblical prophecy."

In the 1990s, *Trumpet* editor in chief Gerald Flurry wrote in his booklet [Germany's Conquest of the Balkans](#), "It will not be long before Europe is reunited as the Holy Roman Empire. It will be led very assertively by Germany."

How could Mr. Armstrong predict, all the way back in 1945, the rise of a German-led empire in Europe? And how could he forecast that it would begin with a union of European nations and with economic dominance?

His forecasts all came from the Bible. It may be ridiculed by many today, but where else can you get such advanced insight into what is happening in Europe?

For the background you need to understand the earthshaking events soon to occur in Europe, read our free book [The Holy Roman Empire in Prophecy](#). Also watch Mr. Flurry's *Key of David* episode from last November: "The World's Greatest Empire Is Hidden." ■