

Founding of Anti-Euro party: An “Alternative for Germany”?

While the euro finance ministers were gathering in Dublin to discuss saving the common currency, yet another group of self-acclaimed politicians gathered in Berlin. A new party aims to enter German parliament after elections in September: The Alternative for Germany (Alternative für Deutschland, AfD).

The provisional party programme, agreed upon during the founding party meeting, does not only demand the German exit from the euro, but calls an end to the currency altogether. Return to the Deutschmark is offered as the solution to an “historical mistake”¹ – the establishment of the euro. The party aims to disentangle the euro-zone in an orderly manner, to be triggered by a German veto to new austerity packages under the European Stability Mechanism.²

The party has apparently already succeeded in rallying party members behind its populist slogans. “Germany does not need the euro. It brings harm to other countries, too.”³, has, according to its own claims, led 7500 people to apply for membership, while 1500 were present at the founding congress.

As the party offers a forum for those frustrated Christian Democrats who do not want to follow Merkel’s line of saving the euro, the party could in fact stand a chance during the next elections. Although aiming for a two-digit percentage might be a bit too optimistic, euro-scepticism is not a total stranger to German society. Only in recent years the notion of a “Teuro” (combination of the German word for “expensive”-“teuer”- and the “euro”) has somewhat left the German media discussion.

Inflation, financial crisis and a perception of an unfair balancing in allocated payments is never a good combination in Germany.

However, German society has evolved and in the last decades. Pure populist opposition parties with a single aim could not establish themselves in the long-run. The fate of the left-wing party, Die Linke, is only an example. Successful at first, the lack of a comprehensive party programme and/or lack of competence when elected for parliament, led to decreasing public support and votes. Aware of this shared fate, the Alternative offers a list of PhDs and professors presented on the website who fully support the party, in a bit of a desperate attempt to make the party programme credible.

¹ Alternative für Deutschland, „Schluss mit diesem Euro“ available at: <https://www.alternativefuer.de/>, retrieved April 14th, 2013.

² Ibid.

³ Ibid.

Modern electorates however, cannot be fooled that easily anymore. Information has never been as easily accessible as these days and people do want to make informed choices. A single slogan will not get you anywhere these days.

Let democratic constitutions work as an invisible hand and let us trust well-established democracies in the 21st century. The electorate will eventually see what is, and what is not: a real alternative for Germany and the EU.