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Germany's strategy for the Arctic



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Abstract. In the last decade Germany has increased activity in the Arctic region. From a formal point of view, the German state connects it with various aspects of international security (mainly —

environmental and transport), with needs to respect the rights of peoples living in the Arctic regions and the importance of scientific research in the Arctic. But in reality, they are hiding far-reaching interests of safeguarding the national security of raw materials and access of German concerns to the Arctic resources. In solidarity and in many ways defining the EU's policy in the Arctic, Germany primarily is focusing on their long-term economic and geopolitical goals and objectives, which it will consistently implement in the coming years in the framework of the Arctic Council, and beyond, including within the framework of cooperation with Russia. This article is devoted to the analysis of these goals and objectives, as well as to the definition of medium-term trends in Germany's Arctic policy.

Keywords: *The Arctic, the Arctic Council, Germany, Russia, cooperation, Arctic resources, raw materials, energy, environmental, transport security*

Introduction

The range of modern Germany's interests in the Arctic region is very wide. It covers the ecology, economy, shipping, and various aspects of security, including energy and raw materials. In 2013 Germany accepted the basic areas of the state policy in the Arctic [1]. The current coalition government (CDU / CSU and SDPG) since 2014 started to fill it with certain content, especially in the Arctic Council. In the following years, including during the current US presidency of the Council, the German activity will increase.

Germany began to show interest in the Arctic research in the middle of the XIX century. Famous German polar researchers (including citizens of the tsarist Russia) made a significant contribution to the development of the Arctic, many geographical discoveries are connected with their names¹. One may state that that for a half of the century the country has become a world leader in this field, having gained invaluable scientific and technical experience in different fields.

In this respect, it is interesting to study of the economical and geopolitical objectives and Germany's interests in relation to the Arctic region, Germany's approaches, methods and tools for their realization, the role and place of various public and private entities, as well as the interaction

¹ URL: http://www.awi.de/en/discover/history_of_polar_research/famous_polar_researchers/; <http://library.ikz.ru/georg-steller/aus-sibirien-2013-2009/Boyakova-S.-I.-GERMANSKIE-NAUCHNYE-ISSLEDOVANIYA-V> (accessed: 30 May 2016).

of Germany with the main actors - both within the framework of the Arctic Council, and outside of it. Is important to define medium-term trends in German politics, especially in view of the forthcoming elections to the lower house of the federal parliament in 2017, which will lead to a new configuration of the government coalition.

The Arctic structures in Germany

Today, there are a number of federal and private research institutions engaged in the study of the polar region. Leading among them is Alfred Wegener Institute for Polar and Marine Research founded in the summer of 1980 (part of the Joint Helmholtz Research Centre, the annual budget for polar research is about EUR 100 million). It has a highly developed material and technical base, which includes research vessel Polar-stern² and two arctic stations — joint with the French in Svalbard and with the Russians on the island Samoylovsky. The second most important structure is the Federal Office for Geosciences and Natural Resources (Bundesanstalt für Geowissenschaften und Rohstoffe — BGR). BGR has nearly 35 years of experience in the field of polar research and, among other things, consults government bodies on issues of cooperation with international organizations dealing with the Arctic³. German Agency for raw materials (Deutsche Rohstoffagentur — DERA) was founded in 2010 as part of this structure. The main tasks of DERA include the provision of information and consulting services to business entities about possibilities of access to foreign markets of mineral and raw material resources, including through the implementation of specific projects with the use of modern mining technologies.

Among the government structures, following federal ministries are actively engaged in the Arctic issues: Ministry of Foreign Affairs; Environment, Nature Protection, Nuclear Safety of reactors and construction; Education and research; Economy and energy. In addition to the state, the number of federal lands located in the north, contribute to the funding of research: Hamburg, Bremen, Brandenburg, Schleswig-Holstein. The range of German national interests in the Arctic is determined by the following factors: 1) the role of the Arctic in climate change on the planet; 2) the need to protect the Arctic ecosystem and habitat of indigenous peoples; 3) the prospects of access to mineral resources (including hydrocarbon, as well as colored and rare earth metals) in terms of increasing energy and raw material security of the country.

To increase the stability and security of supply of the national economy by raw material resources, the federal government accepted the so-called raw-material strategy on the 20th of

² In 2018 it will be replaced by the new vessel with the same name and the value of 113 million euros. It will be one of the most modern in the world in its class.

³ BGR. URL: http://www.bgr.bund.de/DE/Themen/Polarforschung/polarforschung_node.html (accessed: 30 May 2016).

October, 2010 and the German program of efficient use of resources (das Deutsche Ressourceneffizienzprogramm — ProgRess) on 29th of February 2012. The Arctic is not mentioned there directly, but is implied. It is interesting that in early 2014 the German Agency for Natural Resources published a study of German experts of the mineral resource potential of the Arctic, much interesting for the manufacturing industry in Germany [2]; 4) due to the possibility of using the Northern Sea Route and the North-West Passage. Federal Republic of Germany is one of the largest exporters and importers of goods in the world, 90% of which are delivered by sea. Using of the Arctic shipping infrastructure significantly reduces transport costs for the German companies; 5) demand for German technologies, machinery and equipment during the development of the Arctic. It seems that just long-term economic and political interests are crucial in the current German Arctic strategy. Other objectives are subordinated to them and act as important accompanying factors, destined to show a special concern of the German government about the protection of the fragile Arctic ecosystem and very important role of Federal Republic of Germany in it, including as well its unique half century potential of scientific Arctic research.

Germany is one of the permanent observers in the Arctic Council (since 1998), member of Spitsbergen Treaty of February 9, 1920, the observer in the Barents / Euro-Arctic Council (BEAC). Germany is attentively following the processes in the Arctic, trying not only to participate but also to influence them — in the first place, within the European Union, cooperating closely with France. The federal government constantly emphasizes its committing to the various international legal documents, in one way or another related to the Arctic, such as the UN Convention on the Law of the Sea of 1982, the International Convention for the Prevention of Pollution from Ships (MARPOL), the Convention for the Protection of the Marine Environment of the north-east Atlantic (OSPAR).

The Arctic policy of Germany

Despite the obvious strategic interests in the region, the German state until recently has not got any clear program of actions. Various federal ministries and departments realized some projects that were not coordinated with each other. The coalition government (CDU / CSU and SDPG) made the first steps in the coordination of activities, definition of objectives and interests in 2009. Since March 2008 Germany holds international conferences and seminars where the future of the Arctic is discussed.

The German Foreign Office has a Department of the Arctic Policy and the Division for the economic, environmental and scientific aspects of the Arctic Ocean. The development of the main lines of the state policy regarding the Arctic started at the initiative of then-head of the Foreign

Office G. Westerwelle in 2011. These lines were coordinated with the corresponding regulations of the EU [3; 4] and accepted in mid-2013 [5]. The document denotes the chances and risks of development of the region and the main aspects of the German Arctic strategy, as well as in the context of cooperation with leading international organizations and individual states. On 27th of April 2016, the European Commission, largely in view of the German position, introduced a new Integrated Arctic policy of the European Union, which identifies three main challenges for the future: 1) support for research on environmental and climate issues in the Arctic; 2) achieving sustainable economic development in the Arctic on the basis of a reasonable use of resources and environmental expertise; 3) strengthening of constructive interaction and dialogue with Arctic states, indigenous peoples and other partners⁴. The Arctic policy contains 39 measures for further development of EU policy regarding the region in these closely linked lines [6]. EU, as well as Germany, pays special attention to the Arctic cooperation with Russia. After the acceptance of the basic lines of new EU policy, EU High Representative for the Common Foreign and Security Policy F. Mogherini said that cooperation with the Russian Federation regarding solving of the Arctic problems meets the interests of the European Union and must be deepened and expanded⁵.

Germany supports the international development of the Arctic region and criticizes national approaches of the neighboring states, including Russia. In the Arctic Council the German Federal Government supports increasing of the participation of German experts in Council working groups and obtaining of the additional rights for the observer countries in case of their significant contribution to the solution of certain problems. Not being able to directly influence the activity of the Arctic Council, the German authorities use the EU potential (largely forming its policy of the development of the Arctic, including in the context of "normative" force, involving the implementation of the relevant standards and behavior patterns), as well as bilateral relations with several countries - members of the board (in the first place, with Norway) [7; 8].

The German position on many issues coincide with the French [9]. It seems that in the coming years the French-German tandem will more actively coordinate their actions regarding the polar region, among other things, continuing to insist on the determination of the international Arctic status, the introduction of compulsory and law fixed standards of geological exploring works, further extraction of minerals, environmental protection and responsibility of business entities. Germany also

⁴ Joint communication to the European Parliament and the Council. An integrated European Union policy for the Arctic. Brussels, 27.4.2016 JOIN (2016) 21 final. URL: http://eeas.europa.eu/arctic_region/docs/160427_joint-communication-an-integrated-european-union-policy-for-the-arctic_en.pdf (дата обращения: 09.07.2016).

⁵ Mogherini: ES zainteresovan v sotrudnichestve s Rossiei po rabote v Arktike. 27.04.2016. URL: <http://ria.ru/world/20160427/1421462488.html> (accessed: 09 July 2016).

supports the activities of the European Investment Bank (EIB) in the area of development of energy, environment, transport and research infrastructure in the Arctic.

In the context of security policy, German supports the peaceful development of the polar region, but it is focused on the implementation of different formats NATO in the development of partnership, involving the organization of active dialogue between the neighboring countries. The German authorities think that a platform for discussions such as the Arctic Security Forces Roundtable should be added here.

In essence, the current government of grand coalition (especially the Federal Minister for Education and Research J. Vanka) is actively implementing the Arctic policy developed by the previous cabinet. It emphasizes continuity and importance of integrated support of the geopolitical, geoeconomic and geoecological interests of Germany, highlighting the priority of environmental protection — the issue about it was firstly included in the coalition agreement. Not without reason, the Federal Chancellor A.Merkel addressed with video message to the participants of the Arctic Circle Assembly in Reykjavik in October 2015, where she paid special attention to environmental aspects of the Arctic system⁶. It is obvious that the role of the Arctic in the German foreign policy will be constantly growing and the economic and political goals will gradually come to the forefront. Germany is trying to use the current US chairmanship in the Arctic Council (2015-2017) to lobby german interests. It will be possible to evaluate the efficiency of these efforts in a few years.

Russian-German cooperation in the Arctic

In these circumstances, it is important to pay special attention to the role and place of the existing Russian-German Arctic cooperation in terms of mutually beneficial Russian and German interests in the development of the Arctic in the medium and long term prospect. Despite the deterioration of German-Russian relations since the beginning of 2014, due to the Ukrainian crisis, there is still significant potential for mutually beneficial cooperation in the development of the Arctic region in the scientific, technical and economic sphere, as well as in education. Germany started to develop scientific cooperation with the Soviet Union in the sphere of the Arctic research 30 years ago — in 1985. The main partners from the German side — Alfred Wegener Institute and Leibniz Institute of Marine Sciences (IFM-GEOMAR, Kiel), from the Soviet / Russian side — Arctic and Antarctic Research Institute (now — FGBI "AARI"). Their joint projects successfully survived difficult periods of Soviet perestroika and formation of the new Russian state. It should be noted

⁶ Arktis-Schutz steht im Koalitionsvertrag. URL: http://www.deutschlandfunk.de/run-auf-die-arktis-deutsche-forschung-im-zwiespalt.724.de.html?dram:article_id=320795 (accessed: 30 May 2016).

that the joint projects of polar research, carried out in the period from 1957 to 1990 with scientists from East Germany, were continued after the unification of the country.

Agreement in the field of marine and polar research between the Ministry of Industry, Science and Technology (now the Ministry of Education and Science) and the Federal Ministry of Education and Scientific Research of Germany, signed in the middle of 90s of the last century, plays the important role in current scientific cooperation. The largest project was the program "Laptev Sea System", combining the efforts of about 20 Russian and German organizations. The Russian-German Laboratory for Polar and Marine Research named after O. Schmidt, was created in FGBI "AARI" in 1999, it coordinates research, including monitoring, holding seminars, schools, conferences and meetings on polar issues [10].

One of the leading Russian institutions in the scientific and educational cooperation with Germany was established in 2009 — Northern Arctic Federal University named after Lomonosov (NArFU) which has stable partnership relations with many universities in Germany, including the University of Applied Sciences Emden / Leer, Freiburg mountain Academy, University of Hamburg, Kiel University of applied Sciences [11]⁷. In Arkhangelsk at the base of the Institute of Philology and Cross-Cultural Communication⁸ there is Representation of the German Academic Exchange Service (DAAD). Saint Petersburg State University, Kazan Federal University and the North-Eastern Federal University, in which the Russian-German laboratory for the study of the ecological state of the Arctic has been working from 2013, actively participate in the Arctic projects. Joint research projects are important elements of cooperation in the study of the Arctic region. They should be not only supported but expanded as well. Among other things, it is necessary to more actively use the positive experience in the framework of the Arctic Council of the International Arctic Science Committee (IASC) and the Working Group on Sustainable Development of the Arctic, and also pay more attention to Russian-German project on Svalbard.

Despite the EU sectoral sanctions against Russia there are still good prospects for economic cooperation of the German company BASF (through subsidiary — Wintershall) with Gazprom in the development of the South-Russian deposit. Now the projects are not discussed in public, but there is high probability that in a few years, the interest to them will be expressed from both sides. The Norwegian state company Statoil will be the main competitor for interested Russian economic operators.

⁷Soglasheniia o sotrudnichestve SAFU s zarubezhnymi partnerami. URL:

<http://narfu.ru/international/mezhdunarodnoe-sotrudnichestvo/zarubezhnye-partnery/> (accessed: 30 May 2016).

⁸ Now it is part of the Institute of Humanities and international communication of NArFU named after Lomonosov. — Editor's note.

Conclusion

The Arctic strategy and policy of Germany for the last five years has acquired clear outlines. They are spelled out in a number of basic documents and subsequently filled with concrete content. Many German postulates formed the basis for the new EU Integrated Arctic policy, assepted at the end of April 2016.

Formally special attention is paid to the most profitable issues in terms of international positioning — climate protection, sustainable development of the Arctic ecosystems, indigenous peoples' rights, scientific research. But behind it the long-term economic geopolitical interests of the largest economy of Europe stand. The German government aims to ensure guaranteed access of their corporate groups to the mineral resources and transport infrastructure of the Arctic region. The Arctic Council is one of the most important sites for it, where Germany is looking for a variety of formats for cooperation with its members, including Russia.

The German-Russian Arctic cooperation until now has been concentrated in the area of research and education. Scientific cooperation is characterized by a large number of participants and a variety of high-impact projects, many of which were initiated already in the XX century.

Economic cooperation still remains in the shadow, including and due to the EU sanctions. However, in the medium term, you can count on its gradual recovery, especially in view of the above mentioned economic and geopolitical objectives in Germany. In this respect, the Russian state should clearly define the common denominator, which should take into account their interests in such cooperation. The contribution in this area should be also arranged by NArFU named after Lomonosov, Moscow State University and the Institute of Europe of the Russian Academy of Sciences which carry out projects on Arctic issues, including in joint research and educational programs, finding ways to dialogue on mutual Russian-German interests in the development of the Arctic taking into account the membership of Germany in the EU and the Russian Federation in the EEU.

With high probability, the future coalition government formed at the basis of the results of elections to Bundestag in autumn of 2017, will continue to realize the national strategy for the Arctic. Perhaps certain nuances will appear in it, but they will be insignificant in terms of its core content.

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