The playmaker is indispensable

While the current economic and financial situation in Germany is good, the political situation looks more tense. Chancellor Angela Merkel's government was confirmed in office during the fall 2017 elections, but the resumption of the coalition of Merkel's Christian Democrats and Social Democrats was more the result of a lack of genuine alternatives. At the same time, the Alternative for Germany (AfD) is the first party of the right-wing spectrum to be elected to the Bundestag and also leads the opposition. The rise of the AfD to become the third strongest party reflects above all the increasing controversy in politics and society with regard to refugee policy. The shaping of the future immigration policy and the effective and rapid integration of refugees represent complex challenges that not only have long-term fiscal effects, but have also triggered public debate ranging from security to cultural identity. At the same time, the country is also facing problems at the European and international level. In the EU, the balance of power is changing as a result of the Brexit; internationally, the long-standing partner USA is no longer as reliable as it used to be and instead threatens to impose tariffs on Germany's export-oriented economy.

Elections

Germany's electoral system is exemplary worldwide and the German Basic Law guarantees free and fair elections. Parties receive public and private funding. Some financing scandals have shown that loopholes need to be closed, but otherwise regulation is very good.

- excellent playmaking

Civil rights protection

All civil rights are guaranteed and protected by the judiciary. Courts and administration work independently and effectively. Despite comprehensive measures against discrimination, the disadvantaging of women and the degradation of minorities remains a social problem.

- excellent defense

Corruption prevention

Despite several corruption scandals in the last decade, Germany is well positioned internationally in the fight against corruption. Transparency of public officials' earnings remains a problem. The relevant regulations have been tightened but do not completely prevent conflicts of interest.

- good fair play

Freedom of speech

The German Basic Law guarantees freedom of opinion and freedom of the press. Censorship is possible in special cases, for example in the case of Holocaust denial. The private media are independent and protected by the Press Council. Public broadcasters are not completely independent of politics.

- good fan culture

Social inclusion

Germany has a functioning welfare state that ensures a minimum subsistence level for all citizens. The risk of poverty is rather low for pensioners, but will increase significantly in the future. Women, especially single mothers, are more at risk of poverty and are partially disadvantaged in the labour market.

- good team spirit

Look up the detailed SGI 2017 country report on Germany here: www.sgi-network.org/2017/Germany