

Chapter 17

Shaping German Feminist Foreign Policy in Times of Conflict in Ukraine



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17.1 Introduction

Russia's aggression against Ukraine launched on 24 February 2022, has caused European political leaders to question the existing European security architecture. Observers agree that "even if the war in Ukraine ends or becomes a frozen conflict, members of the European Union and NATO will need to prepare for a long-term confrontation with Russia" (Puglierin, 2022). In her official statement of 27 February 2022, European Commission President Ursula von der Leyen talked about "a watershed moment" for Europe, announcing that "for the first time, the European Union will finance the purchase and delivery of weapons and other equipment to a country that is under attack" (European Commission, 2022). Similarly, in his address to the *Bundestag* (federal parliament) on the same day, German Chancellor Olaf Scholz of the Social Democratic Party (SPD) referred to this time as a *Zeitenwende* (historic turning point) for the European continent leading Germany to reinvent itself as a European security actor (German Federal Government 2022). Scholz's *Zeitenwende* comprises a dramatic shift in the country's defense spending with the launch of a EUR 100 billion special fund for immediate investment in military capacity and a commitment to invest more than 2% of the nation's annual GDP in defense (Tausendfreund, 2022).¹ The new spending goals were accompanied by a new defense posture, with the government announcing Germany's new deployments to NATO's eastern flank and the abandonment of "a long-standing policy of blocking weapons from being delivered to conflict zones" (ibid.). In addition, a more confrontational approach has emerged in the past year and a half, as testified

¹ For the past 20 years, the country consistently spent around 1.3% of its GDP in defense annually.

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by the speech given by Foreign Minister Annalena Baerbock (Green Party) on the same day. During her speech, the Foreign Minister emphasized,

“This war is an attack against our peace in Europe. This war is an attack against our freedom. This war is an attack against international law. Right up to the last minute, we tried diplomacy. The Kremlin strung us along, lied to us and rejected everything we Europeans stand for. Putin wanted this war—whatever it would take. Russia ruthlessly attacked Ukraine” (German Federal Foreign Office, 2022a).

Germany’s paradigm shift needs to be contextualized in the framework of an overall reshaping of the security and foreign policy fields initiated by the new Social Democrats/Greens/Free Democrats’ “Coalition Agreement 2021–2025” signed in December 2021. Indeed, two main intertwined goals were set up in the new government program: the elaboration of a new National Security Strategy (NSS) and the development of a Feminist Foreign Policy (FFP) for Germany. With the conflict in Ukraine, the discussion on what a feminist peace and security policy could look like has become even more relevant, bringing to light a tension between more pragmatic and normative FFP proponents. More precisely, whereas the FFP-pragmatists, including the German government, consider FFP “compatible with measures such as arms delivery for acute defense”, the proponents of a normative approach are “against arm support to Ukraine and the logic of military deterrence that are rather framed as a manifestation of patriarchal structures and *modus operandi*” (Dinkel et al., 2022: 3).

Since the development of a feminist foreign policy for Germany started only in the spring of 2022, it is too early to measure its impact on the ground. Therefore, the focus of this chapter is placed on discourses and narratives produced and circulated by the current government that led to the official publication of Federal Foreign Office Guidelines “Shaping Feminist Foreign Policy” on 1 March 2023 (Federal Foreign Office, 2023). The chapter approaches the current elaboration of an FFP for Germany from a framing perspective, looking at “signifying work or meaning construction engaged in by” the German Federal Office (Snow, 2013) and, specifically, by German Foreign Minister Annalena Baerbock. The development of an FFP for Germany represents a new national priority with international implications since, as highlighted by Foreign Minister Baerbock, this policy can only be shaped globally (German Federal Foreign Office, 2022d). As such, it should be contextualized in the framework of a global emancipatory movement that enhances the representation and participation of women and more marginalized groups in foreign and security decision-making processes that started before the war in Ukraine. At the same time, the chapter reveals that the current armed conflict in Ukraine has been used in the speeches of Foreign Minister Baerbock to develop and articulate the substance of a German FFP in practice.

To highlight the specific feminist perspective of Germany’s new foreign policy, this chapter familiarizes the reader with the broad confines of international scholarship on feminist foreign policy. It looks at the involvement and contribution of women to the current conflict in Ukraine. It then turns to the German case and briefly describes the processes through which the new NSS and FFP agenda have been elaborated, as well as the main instruments and stakeholders involved in the process. The

fourth section presents the main results of the analysis of Foreign Ministry Baerbock's speeches, focusing on how the German feminist foreign policy was framed in the context of the war in Ukraine. By way of conclusion, the study emphasizes the novelty of Germany's FFP regarding both its conceptualization and its implications vis-à-vis the current conflict and draws attention to the challenges that still lie ahead in its implementation, especially when it comes to resource allocation and actual representation of women and more marginalized groups in foreign policy-making processes.

17.2 Feminist Foreign Policy in the Context of the War in Ukraine

The current debate around a feminist foreign policy is grounded in UN resolution 1325 on Women, Peace, and Security (WPS) adopted in 2000, which acknowledged for the first time the critical role women could play in matters of peace and security as well as the gendered impact of conflict. In the last two decades, this Resolution has developed into a much broader framework emphasizing the importance of "gender mainstreaming" and "gender balancing" for enhancing political participation, combating sexual violence in conflict, and countering violent extremism (Achilleos-Sarll, 2018: 35). Although a single and cohesive definition of FFP is missing, a consensus has been reached that FFP goes beyond gender mainstreaming and towards more controversial politics that challenge and renegotiate the power hierarchies and gendered institutions currently defining foreign and security realms (Aggestam & Bergman-Rosamond, 2016). Indeed, conventional analysis is seen as unable to recognize how "gendered discourses and gendered identities—intersecting with other identity markers—produce oppressions that inform the process, the production, and the consequences of foreign policy" (Achilleos-Sarll, 2018: 38). It is in this framework that FFP tends to question traditional categories such as states, nations, and sovereignty as socially constructed and as manifestations of a militarized patriarchal system that has produced a stereotypical and gender-differentiated understanding of the role and obligations of female and male citizens vis-à-vis the state in times of peace and of war.

FFP seeks to include a gender equality lens in all spheres of foreign policy, ranging from women's representation in public life, economic empowerment, and conflict resolution to freedom from psychological, physical, and sexual violence and the promotion of sexual and reproductive health and rights (Zhukova, 2021: 1). It comprises post-colonial and post-structural, liberal feminist and radical perspectives calling for transformative thinking to address the invisibility of gender and the absence of women in international relations by embracing their stories and lived experiences (Shepherd, 2015; Aggestam et al., 2019: 23). The most common narrative of states and international organizations are liberal feminism that supports legal reform for gender equality and women's human rights and seeks to integrate women into

existing institutions as well to promote them into leadership positions. Remarkably, liberal feminism is not against militarism but allows pragmatism and idealism to co-exist in an FFP (Zhukova et al., 2022: 201). By contrast, more radical theorizations of FFP tend to reject masculine hegemonies represented by state-militarized security structures and responses that are seen as fueling and funding conflicts (True, 2015).

While the concept of FFP is new for Germany, the phenomenon is not recent in the rest of Europe. Sweden has developed the oldest and most comprehensive FFP concept, launched in 2014 around the formula of the 3Rs—Rights, Representation, and Resources. In this context, “Rights” refers to the promotion of human rights for all, especially women and other marginalized groups, and entails the proactive protection (prevention) of these as well as the establishment of justice should these rights be violated (accountability). “Representation” is related to the inclusion and participation of women and marginalized groups in foreign and security policy decision-making at all levels. “Resources” refers to the adequate provision of resources, including discrimination-sensitive budgeting (Dinkel et al., 2022: 4). By actively promoting various aspects of the FFP in multilateral and bilateral relations, Sweden has acted both as a role model and as a norm entrepreneur spreading its feminist values to other countries via multilateral and bilateral relations (Sundström & Elgström, 2020: 418, 420). Nonetheless, despite being a pioneer in the field, Swedish FFP has been criticized for its binary non-inclusive focus on women as a sex rather than gender, ignoring in its original formulation the rights and needs of LGBTQ individuals (Thompson & Clement, 2019) and for allowing the sale of weapons to repressive regimes which violate women’s rights (Robinson, 2021).²

Recently other European countries such as Denmark, France, Luxembourg, the Netherlands, Norway, and Spain have adopted more gender-sensitive approaches in foreign policy and have prioritized spending for gender equality and direct funding to women’s rights organizations as part of their foreign assistance (Thomson et al., 2021). At the EU level, at the end of 2020, the European Parliament called on the EU to foster gender equality and mainstreaming in its foreign and security policy following developments at the EU member-state level (European Parliament, 2020). In the same year, the European Commission presented a new Gender Action Plan on gender equality and empowerment in external relations (GAP III 2021–2025), foreseeing that 85% of official development assistance (ODA) should go to programs that include gender equality as a significant or main objective (European External Action Service, 2020). Similarly, since 2019, the Organization for Security and Cooperation in Europe (OSCE) has strengthened comprehensive security by advancing gender equality, which is seen as a prerequisite for achieving and maintaining stable, prosperous, and peaceful societies in the OSCE area. The project “WIN for Women and Men” provides an example of this engagement aimed at increasing women’s participation in conflict prevention, mediation, and other forums and processes of

² Noteworthy, in October 2022 Sweden’s Minister for Foreign Affairs Tobias Billström announced the country’s intention to abandon its FFP since “the label obscures the fact the Swedish foreign policy must be based on Swedish values and Swedish interests” (Walfridsson 2022).

comprehensive security, emphasizing the impact on women of the conflict currently taking place in Ukraine (see, for instance, OSCE, 2022).

Since 2014, the number of women joining the Ukrainian Armed Forces has more than doubled, and their role in the Ukrainian Army has increased in importance as they have succeeded in accessing positions previously held only by men (Rzegocki & James, 2022). If around 30,000 women were in the armed forces in Ukraine at the beginning of the war, making up about 10%, they now account for 22.8% of the total (ibid.). At the same time, as men of military age are forbidden from leaving the country, it is mainly women and children who have become refugees. Women-led groups and civil society organizations (CSOs) have quickly reacted to the immediate priorities of their communities and provided internally displaced people (IDPs) with assistance to meet their basic needs in terms of food, shelter, and psychological and medical assistance. Despite their critical role in the humanitarian response, women-led CSOs have pointed out how women are still excluded from essential decision-making processes at all levels. As one representative of a local organization emphasized:

The war started on February 24, 2022, and once again, it showed how much women are ignored at the level of coordination and making decisions. Their suggestions and needs are ignored, and instead priority is given to the needs of Teroborona (voluntary local defense group), mostly represented by men, who dictate what to do and how to behave. At the same time when it comes to humanitarian needs of IDPs, locals, and households – women do most of the work – they drive, provide hospitals and locals with medication and food, they care about their disabled relatives and children. And this all remains unnoticed again and again (UN Women, 2022: 5).

Remarkably, the war in Ukraine has highlighted the centrality of women's NGOs in preventing, responding to, and documenting violence, particularly gender-based violence in conflict situations. The alleged war crimes committed by Russian soldiers and fighters in towns like Bucha and Irpin have shocked the world. Ukrainian civil society has engaged in documenting the atrocities happening on their doorstep and, with the help of volunteers, is collecting "the testimonies of real people" that in the future could be used to prosecute Russian soldiers in domestic as well as international courts (Worley, 2022). In addition, in the past months, sexual abuse and violence against women and girls have been systematically carried out in Ukraine to achieve military and political goals. In this context, women's civil society organizations are currently offering survivors of war rape confidential access to medical treatment (including safe anonymous abortion), and psychological and legal services, the latter also in preparation for trials at national and international war crimes courts (OSCE, 2022: 27).

As the analysis of Baerbock's speeches will reveal, holding the perpetrators of this violence accountable represents one primary objective of Germany's FFP in Ukraine. Yet, before looking at the singularities of German feminist engagement in the war, the chapter will first examine the overall process of shaping an FFP that started in March 2022. As in Sweden, the theorization of a Feminist Foreign Policy for Germany is seen not only as a matter of foreign affairs but also as a national

security priority, as testified by the vision accompanying the development of a new National Security Strategy (NSS) for the country.

17.3 Germany's Feminist Foreign Policy

The development of a new comprehensive NSS was identified in the new Coalition Agreement of December 2021 as an ambitious goal to be accomplished within the first year of governing. From the outset of the process on 18 March 2022, several stakeholders, including not only state actors and agencies such as the German *Bundestag* and relevant Federal Ministries but also ordinary people, were involved in elaborating the new Strategy. This represents a significant change to how foreign policy is formulated, at least theoretically, since a closed field usually shaped by a limited number of state actors and officials was open to the public's participation. In Baerbock's vision, foreign policy is connected to human security as defined by members of the broader public based on "their fears" but also on the "opportunities and focal points" that they see for greater international involvement, thus ensuring that the new NSS "reflects a broad public consensus" (German Federal Foreign Office, 2022c). To this end, in-depth discussions with representatives from civil society, think-tanks, academics, and experts were organized. Foreign Minister Baerbock conducted security policy trips throughout Germany and dialogues on current security challenges with the public took place in selected German cities.

Based on the official document presented on 14 June 2023, Germany's NSS was formulated in line with its feminist foreign and development policy (see German Federal Government, 2023: 14, 29, 42, 52, 67). FFP is a topical area of engagement for the current Social Democrats/Greens/Free Democrats' government coalition and another manifestation of Germany's *Zeitenwende* in foreign policy. Although, during her 16 years of mandate, the former German Chancellor Angela Merkel of the Christian Democratic Party (CDU) was considered the world's most powerful woman, she always resisted the role of the feminist leader. Indeed, Dr. Merkel preferred to be seen as "the federal chancellor of all people in Germany" and rather emphasized how "parity in all areas just seems logical to me. That's not something I have to bring up" (Petzinger, 2021). In contrast, in their "Coalition Agreement 2021–2025", the parties comprising the current German government explicitly agreed to pursue an FFP whose essence was described as follows:

Together with our partners, we want to strengthen the rights, resources and representation of women and girls worldwide and promote social diversity in the spirit of a feminist foreign policy. We wish to appoint more women to international leadership positions and ambitiously implement and further develop the National Action Plan for implementing UN Resolution 1325 (Bundesregierung, 2021: 144).³

³ Translated from the original version in German: "Gemeinsam mit unseren Partnern wollen wir im Sinne einer Feminist Foreign Policy Rechte, Ressourcen und Repräsentanz von Frauen und Mädchen weltweit stärken und gesellschaftliche Diversität fördern. Wir wollen mehr Frauen in internationale Führungspositionen entsenden, den Nationalen Aktionsplan zur Umsetzung der UN-Resolution 1325 ambitioniert umsetzen und weiterentwickeln".

The German Foreign Office and its Foreign Minister Annalena Baerbock together with the Federal Ministry for Economic Cooperation and Development and its Minister Svenja Schulze (SPD) have been engaged in promoting a more gender-sensitive discourse in international affairs. For instance, on its webpage the Federal Ministry for Economic Cooperation and Development has introduced the idea of a feminist development policy framed as able to transform international cooperation. More precisely, German feminist development policy is described as “centered around all people”, tackling “the root causes of injustice such as power relations between genders, social norms and role models”, and as a “powerful approach to take sustainable development forward and assert human rights—worldwide and regardless of gender and any other personal traits” (German Federal Ministry for Economic Cooperation & Development, 2022). As with the new NSS, the articulation of Germany’s new feminist approach to development cooperation is conceived as a participatory process engaging high-ranking participants and practitioners from civil society and international organizations (but not necessarily regular citizens) through events such as the international conference “Feminist Development Policy—Transforming International Cooperation” hosted in 2022 by the Federal Ministry for Economic Cooperation and Development. It is worth mentioning that Germany’s feminist development policy was also officially presented on 1 March 2023 (German Federal Ministry for Economic Cooperation & Development, 2023).

Foreign Minister Baerbock has duly prioritized the development of an FFP. Her work in this field is well documented on the webpage of the German Foreign Office, where FFP is featured as one of six main foreign policy topics together with climate crisis prevention, humanitarian assistance, human rights, and the NSS (German Federal Foreign Office, 2022j). The German Federal Office framed FFP as “based on the conviction that gender equity and equal participation are preconditions for long-term peace and security in the world” (German Federal Foreign Office, 2022b). Germany’s conceptualization was originally based on the formula “3R + D,” where the aim is to promote the rights, representation, and resources of women and marginalized groups, as well as to enhance diversity in foreign affairs (Ibid.)⁴ Although the task of formulating Germany’s new feminist foreign policy was mainly that of the staff of the Federal Foreign Office both in Germany and abroad, the involvement of international partners, experts, and civil society representatives was also foreseen. An example of this involvement is offered by the international conference “Shaping Feminist Foreign Policy” at the Federal Foreign Office in Berlin on 12 September 2022. Foreign Minister Baerbock explicitly dedicated the meeting to the women and girls in Afghanistan (German Federal Foreign Office, 2022d). A series of workshops brought together high-level experts from the public sector, civil society, and academia who explored the practical aspects of a feminist foreign policy, identified possible responses and concrete steps to tackle current

⁴ “D” stands for diversity, highlighting an intersectoral approach that does not focus exclusively on women (Dinkel et al., 2022: 4). Interestingly enough, the FFP Guidelines published by the Federal Foreign Office in March 2023 are grounded in the 3R formula and explicitly refer to Rights, Representation and Resources as the major goals of Germany’s Feminist Foreign Policy (German Federal Foreign Office 2023: 11-12).

challenges from a feminist foreign policy perspective and shared lessons learned and best practices in this field (German Federal Foreign Office, 2022k). Remarkably, one of the high-level segments of the conference was focused on “Feminist foreign policy in times of war in Europe”, offering a venue to reflect on:

why is feminism repeatedly used as an irritant in the cultural war between (Western) modernity and (Russian) tradition often proclaimed by Putin and his consorts [...] what Putin’s war of aggression means from a feminist point of view: What gender relations are affected by war? How can feminism contribute to different, more forward-looking, de-escalating and more humane politics? How can art and literature give a voice to those who often remain mute in the news? (German Federal Foreign Office, 2022l).

17.4 German FFP and the Russo-Ukrainian Conflict

On the webpage of the German Foreign Office, a collection of speeches given by the Foreign Minister Annalena Baerbock, together with the latest articles and press releases concerning the process of development of Germany’s FFP, is available in German and English. This exploratory study analyzed a sample of speeches in the English language—official version or official translation—delivered by the Foreign Minister Baerbock between 24 February and 24 October 2022. Particular attention was given to the framing processes through which the German FFP was articulated. In this context, frames are defined as “principles of selection, emphasis, and presentation composed of little tacit theories about what exists, what happens, and what matters” (Gitlin, 1980: 6) and as “patterns of cognition, interpretation, and presentation, of selection, emphasis and exclusion, by which symbol-handlers routinely organize discourse” (ibid.: 7). More precisely, the chapter understands framing processes as “select[ing] some aspects of a perceived reality and mak[ing] them more salient in a communicating text, in such a way as to promote a particular problem definition, causal interpretation, moral evaluation, and/or treatment recommendation” (Entman, 1993). The selected speeches were analyzed using the software Nvivo. A list of relevant categories and concepts was developed during the analysis (Strauss & Corbin, 1998).

From Foreign Minister Baerbock’s speeches, a clear theorization of Germany’s FFP emerges. Baerbock conceives FFP as an approach that tackles the world’s inequalities in the twenty-first century and permeates the entire foreign and security policy, making it more comprehensive. It is built around “human security” and focuses mainly on women and marginalized groups. Baerbock sees the root of Germany’s FFP in Sweden’s experience and its approach based on the 3 Rs: Rights, Resources and Representation” (German Federal Foreign Office, 2022d). The first R—rights—is described by her as “the right to protection. Where we cannot guarantee protection, we need to call those who infringe upon and violate rights to account” (ibid.). In this regard, Baerbock refers to Germany and other countries efforts to bring before courts perpetrators of crimes (such as slavery and rape) committed against Yazidis as a building block of a *shared* (emphasis added) feminist foreign policy. In her vision, women and girls should be seen not only as victims of conflicts but also

as part of the solution, as “decisive actors when it comes to negotiating peace agreements” (ibid.) and must, therefore, be represented accordingly. Germany is already engaged in this field, assisting women in Chad who serve as mediators in conflicts between farmers and herders and promoting the participation of women in conflict prevention in Iraq as one of the largest donors of the Women’s Peace and Humanitarian Fund. Germany’s conceptualization of FFP has further developed the Swedish 3R formula by introducing a new dimension—Diversity—putting “the spotlight on people, regardless of their background, gender, belief or whom they love” (ibid.), at least in its first phase of conceptualization.

Whereas in the Green Party 2021 election platform FFP was explicitly described as having “the goal of a world order in which the rule of the strongest does not resolve conflicts, but around the negotiating table” (Tausendfreund, 2022), the very confrontational approach characterizing Baerbock’s words casts doubt on the viability of this option in solving the current conflict in Ukraine. On the contrary, her speeches contain extreme accusations against Russia, particularly against its President, Vladimir Putin. For instance, during her speech at the United Nations Security Council Briefing on the “Maintenance of Peace and Security of Ukraine” on 23 September 2022, Minister Baerbock urged Russia to stop the suffering in Ukraine (German Federal Foreign Office, 2022e). Baerbock’s speeches highlight how “the feeling of being threatened by Russia was never completely erased in Central and Eastern Europe, even before 24 February” (German Federal Foreign Office, 2022i). Germany’s foreign minister describes the European approach as naïve and as falling short since “the annexation of Crimea and what happened in Donbas were only a prelude to what has been unfolding in Ukraine since 24 February: further efforts to subjugate Ukraine entirely—the Russian President is making no bones about it” (ibid.). Putin is identified as the primary person responsible for what is occurring in Ukraine, and despite the fact that “half the world has done everything to re-establish peace in recent months, has worked to ensure the horror of this war finally ends; although half the world is begging the Russian President to finally withdraw his troops, he is at this time not recruiting negotiators but more soldiers to make further inroads into Ukraine” (German Federal Foreign Office, 2022h). In addition, “by blockading ports and bombing silos in Ukraine, Russia has disrupted the international grain trade—and intensified the global food crisis triggered by bad harvests in different parts of the world” (ibid.). Baerbock also strongly condemned the “sham referendums” in the occupied territories and the “horrendous crimes” perpetrated by Russian soldiers and fighters particularly in eastern Ukraine, where they raped women, abducted children, shot at a mayor distributing bread to his people and “at a conductor who does not want to make music with the occupiers” (German Federal Foreign Office, 2022i).

In Baerbock’s framing, the conflict in Ukraine has changed how international security is understood, switching the attention from internal to interstate disputes and violent conflicts. Although civilian instruments are needed even more than ever to create long-term peace, Russia’s aggression in Ukraine has led to conceptualizing security in military terms; as Baerbock highlighted:

Security means, first and foremost, the safety of life—not having to be afraid of being shot on the street or killed in a bomb attack. That is why we supply heavy weapons so that Ukraine can defend its citizens (German Federal Foreign Office, 2022g).

Interestingly enough, the German Foreign Minister tends to frame the conflict in Ukraine from an FFP perspective, highlighting, for instance, how “Russia’s horrific war” is affecting especially women, the elderly, and children that are particularly exposed to brutality and hardship as they are “attacked due to their gender” or “cannot receive the treatment they so urgently need” (German Federal Foreign Office, 2022d). In juxtaposition to a more normative interpretation of FFP, Ms. Baerbock accepts military assistance to Ukraine and, on the contrary, reassures that Germany will “continue to support Ukraine intensively with arms” (German Federal Foreign Office 2022i). This decision is framed as a value-based resolution since Ukraine is supplied with armaments not only “to save lives, but, I hope, also to demonstrate our trust and solidarity” for a country that “as it fights for survival [...] is also defending European freedom” (ibid.).

At the same time, the economic, political, and military support offered to “courageous people in Ukraine to defend themselves” is presented as only one aspect of Germany’s engagement in the war. In this regard, the Foreign Minister has stressed that another crucial contribution is “to bring charges concerning sexual violence and crimes committed against women” (German Federal Foreign Office, 2022d). Germany’s Federal Public Prosecutor General has already opened an investigation into war crimes and crimes against humanity in Ukraine, and Germany will “back Ukraine in its case against Russia at the International Court of Justice” (German Federal Foreign Office, 2022e). The following quote is emblematic of the country’s FFP approach to the war in Ukraine, placing the focus on the first “R” for Rights: i.e., the advancement of human rights, especially those of women and other marginalized groups in terms of both proactive protection of rights (prevention) and the establishment of justice (accountability) (Dinkel et al., 2022: 4):

There must be no impunity. This is our pledge to the victims. Especially to the most vulnerable: women and girls but also the elderly. Not just because we know that it is the weakest who suffer most during armed conflict. But also because we know that unless women are safe, no one is safe (German Federal Foreign Office, 2022e).

The importance of the proactive protection of rights and the establishment of mechanisms of justice for victims of war violence and crimes was recently translated into Baerbock’s call for a new format of court to punish Russian leaders for the crime of aggression that cannot be prosecuted by the International Criminal Court (ICC). This special tribunal should be based on Ukrainian criminal law but located outside Ukraine and should receive international financial support and involve international prosecutors and judges.

17.5 Discussion

Since the beginning of the war, Germany's military support for Ukraine has expanded quantitatively and qualitatively. Whereas in the first phase of the conflict, Germany's support was limited to essential equipment such as helmets, the country now provides heavy weapons, including armored personnel vehicles, rocket launchers, and air defense systems (Fix, 2022). Despite Minister Baerbock's renewed promise of further military aid, Germany has been reluctant to abandon its pacifist post-World War II tradition. Germany's reluctance has been also the result of the internal fragmentation characterizing the current government coalition. While the Green Party and the Free Democratic Party have favored more military support for Ukraine, the Social Democratic Party has been more cautious. Although Germany is one of the largest producers of Leopard battle tanks worldwide, Chancellor Scholz refused for months to deliver such tanks to Ukraine, arguing that this could trigger a broader war (Karnitschnig, 2023). Indeed, for Germany, the current conflict does not represent an immediate threat to its security; the country is more concerned about the risk of a broader confrontation between Russia and NATO (see Kapp and Fix in this volume). Additionally, the German government's half-hearted support for Ukraine has hurt its reputation, especially in Eastern European countries such as Estonia and Poland, whose confidence in Germany's reliability remains low (see Dyduch and Góra and Veebel and Ploom in this volume).

Chancellor Scholz's position mirrors a particular caution characterizing public opinion in Germany. Indeed, recent data show that while 72% of Germans feel threatened by Russia, most of them (52%) also want the government to continue acting cautiously in international affairs, and more than two-thirds were against Germany taking a leading role in the military field (Schwarz, 2023). Similarly, out of 41 percent of respondents supporting a more substantial presence of Germany in Ukraine, only 14% favored more military support (ibid.). Moreover, a striking divide has emerged between West and East Germany. For instance, while 47% of the respondents in West Germany demand more toughness toward Russia, the percentage in East Germany is 31. Likewise, while 34% of respondents in East Germany believe that the government is doing "too much" to support Ukraine, the percentage in West Germany is 18 (ibid.). Nevertheless, in recent months Germany has significantly increased its military support to Ukraine, with its bilateral commitment reaching EUR 17 billion in July 2023 (Kiel Institute for the World Economy, 2023).

17.6 Conclusion

German feminist foreign policy is a new phenomenon, a manifestation of the *Zeitenwende* promoted by the new Government Coalition and, as in Sweden in 2014, especially by the Social Democratic and the Green Parties. The articulation of German Foreign Policy has been set as a priority of the German Foreign Office and as a central

component of the NSS. The task of shaping an FFP for Germany occurs within and beyond the country's borders. Through her speeches at international forums and events, Foreign Minister Baerbock has promoted a more gender-informed international discourse and agenda and an image of Germany as a champion of gender equality and inclusiveness. Through dialogue-based public diplomacy involving both state and non-state actors (as at, for instance, the conference on "Shaping Feminist Foreign Policy" taking place in September 2022), the current German Foreign Office has operated as a norm entrepreneur that seeks to shape global developments in a gender-sensitive direction (Aggestam & Bergman-Rosamond, 2016). Foreign Minister Baerbock's framing efforts have complemented another important dimension emerging from the current *Zeitenwende*, especially after 24 February 2022: the abandonment of Germany's anti-militaristic position that has been held since the end of World War II. The development of Germany's FFP has occurred during a time of war, leading to an increase in military spending and a military response in terms of the export of arms taking place under a female defense minister (who stepped down in January 2023) and in a time when more women than ever are represented in the armed forces. At the same time, the new Government Coalition finds itself under heavy national and international pressure, with Germany's allies believing that the country is not doing enough to support Ukraine. Heated discussions took place among FFP proponents when, at the end of April 2022, the German Bundestag took the decision to supply heavy weapons to Ukraine (Dinkel et al., 2022: 2).

The analysis of Baerbock's speeches reveals that the current government is neither "struggling to define which actions would be appropriate for a short-term application of FFP in crises" (ibid.: 3), nor unable to explain "how and why" weapons need to be delivered. It is undeniable that the current German FFP has been significantly affected by the Russo-Ukrainian war and that, without the current conflict, it would have looked different: more focused on climate security and cybersecurity and less on military security. Remarkably, in Baerbock's version, there is no contradiction between FFP and military response in Ukraine, as the latter is framed as a way to realize the first "R": i.e., to protect the rights of women and vulnerable people who cannot defend themselves.

Following the Swedish example, another peculiar element of Germany's FFP is its framing as a domestic issue: a way to promote social inclusion "because no country in the world, no economy, no society can afford to exclude half its population from public life" (German Federal Foreign Office, 2022f). This is done in theory and practice, as testified by the participatory approach chosen for elaborating the FFP and the NSS. The involvement of civil society and academia representatives in *ad hoc* events on FFP and of ordinary people in security-related dialogues and discussions provide good examples of how the second "R" of FFP has already been implemented on the ground. Germany's FFP can also be seen as a vital component of its public diplomacy efforts critical for reaching the foreign and domestic public to ensure support for international policymaking and actions through participation and representation. Interestingly enough, a fivefold increase in German soldiers declaring themselves conscientious objectors has been registered since Russia's full-scale invasion of Ukraine began. German public opinion is fragmented about the country's position

vis-à-vis the war and the role it should play in European security. This undoubtedly represents a challenge for a Minister who wants the new German foreign and security policy to reflect broad public consensus while meeting international expectations and commitments. In addition, much remains to be done to make sure that the diversity characterizing Germany and its over 84 million residents—and, primarily, the voices and experiences of people with migratory backgrounds (including 750,000 female refugees fleeing the war in Ukraine)—are represented in current foreign and security decision-making processes.

Another challenge, but also an opportunity, for Germany's FFP is represented by the third "R"—resources—which has been an almost neglected aspect in Baerbock's speeches of the past months.⁵ The allocation of special resources for FFP is a *conditio sine qua non* for the promotion of the rights of women and more marginalized groups and their representation in decision-making processes. This chapter emphasized the centrality of women's CSOs in Ukraine in providing internally displaced people with food, shelter, and medical and psychological assistance, as well as in preventing and responding to gender-based violence and in documenting violence including war rape. Although women do most of the humanitarian work, they are still ignored when it comes to coordination and decision-making. The amount of resources invested to support women-led organizations and grassroots initiatives, the capacity to reach out and fund those which work on the frontline and in direct contact with most vulnerable and marginalized groups, and the audacity to make funding conditional upon women's representation in coordination and decision-making processes concerning humanitarian aid can be used in the near future to assess the extent to which German FFP represents a reality on the ground.

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⁵ Remarkably, based on the FFP Guidelines of the Federal Foreign Office, Germany will “allocate 85% of project funding on a gender-sensitive basis and 8% on a gender-transformative basis by 2025, taking the OECD criteria as a guide” (Federal Foreign Office 2023: 4).

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