



THOMAS BAGGER

Head of Policy Planning, German Federal Foreign Office

Thank you, Thierry. I mean what is clear, I think, is that we have a renewed sense of the fragility of the European integration project, that it is not something that inevitably only moves forward in some teleological fashion, which I think a lot of Germans liked to believe in past decades.

I think what is also true is that as the external crises come closer to Europe, whether that is in Crimea, Ukraine, whether that is in the Middle East with the refugee issue, that it is quite clear that every big external issue and external crisis is at the same time a test for the European Union's internal cohesion. That is not for a lack of integration or as a failure of integration. It simply reflects the diversity of a community of 28 member states with different traditions, different histories, varying interests and different exposure to these crises. I think for every one of these external crises, there is inevitably a process of trying to come to terms internally with how we respond, and that is what we feel today.

Just maybe as a final first comment from my side, I think one of the things that I am worried about when I look at the refugee crisis is not so much absolute numbers and administrative procedures, but the fact that the debate in Germany seems out of sync with the debate in many of our European partner countries, and that in itself makes the task of coming to a joint European position so difficult.

Thierry de MONTBRIAL, Founder and Chairman of the WPC

Thank you.