

## **Germany – A Ruling Monster**

Germans love laws and a general opinion exists that the more laws we have the better and more fair our society is, since we hope to have a fixed rule for every problem which could appear. This leads to the situation that we have 2197 federal laws with 45,511 paragraphs that we apparently need in order to live together peacefully.

That there are not only positive affects by producing a lot of new laws and that less laws are sometimes more, will be clarified in the following essay.

Firstly, there is the German wish for regulation through laws for any and every issue. If the government makes a law it is seen to be better than a private solution, as people like to have general rules that are valid for everyone. Should there be a problem Germans want a law that helps them to get rid of the problem. But instead of having just a few more general laws we have tried to make the rules and laws as fair as possible, what is undebatable a good aim, consequently leading to a very complicated amount of laws. Our traffic regulations are a good example. Every country in the world, except Germany, has a general speed limit on its motorways. In contrast, in Germany we have the freedom to drive as fast as we want, but on most stretches we also have a speed limit, with the result that we need a lot of signs telling us as drivers the regulation – the speed limit – for this special area. Therefore we need, all traffic regulations included, 500 different types of signs placed at an average distance of every 28 metres along the road. So we have a hypothetical freedom to have no limit, but in reality there exist only a few places where it is not regulated. Of course, a general rule cannot be perfect for every situation and every place, however it would be easier and clearer to have a general limit than our current sign-forest.

Secondly, Germans like to have legislation as fair and just as possible. No doubt, this is a good characteristic. By contrast, it does not always lead to the best and most transparent results as legislation becomes more and more complicated by trying to make it more just.

Indeed, the taxation policy, for example, is a difficult one. As Germans have the wish for rules to outline every situation combined with the wish to have the laws as just as possible,

we consequently have the most complex taxation system worldwide. To have the taxation system perfectly fair and just we need so many rules and different regulations, meaning that everyone pays the appropriate amount of money dependant on his life situation. When a person, for example, invests in films, ships or green energy, he gets tax breaks. The result of that regulation, which especially is intended to help the poor or support a special branch and tax the rich ones more, is that no one can understand the system. Only the best accountants can find tax breaks for the rich people through loopholes existing due to the many regulations and exceptions. So an easier and more transparent system would be fairer, because everyone could understand why he pays what and no one could find little mistakes in a complex system. Although this easier concept would work, we like to have the complex and ineffective system in Germany as it seems to be fairer and so is for us due to this reason better.

Thirdly, to show why we like regulations so much, it has to be mentioned that the Germans like to give away personal responsibility. It follows that we like to call on the State or government whenever there is a problem, what leads to less social engagement and less economical risks for us. The economic crisis is mentioned as an example for this mentality. As long as the system of a free market economy worked to everyone's benefit, everything was fine and everyone was happy and satisfied. At the time when there were some problems, everyone called for the State to intervene. Suddenly, the government should find better solutions especially in the financial sector. No one mentioned that the State owned banks where the ones, which had the most problems. There appeared a problem and without trying to solve it personally, the Germans wanted extra rules and more regulations. We like to give away personal responsibility for the things we do, because it is then not our fault if something does not work well and we can blame others – in this case the politicians – for that. We should have learned that too much influence and guidance in the economy does not lead to a good future through our recent history.

To say it short, the Germans often want to have more rules and regulations than they might need. Many people think that you only need a rule to solve any kind of problem. That this is not true and that more laws and complexity is not always better, the Germans have to learn first, before they are able to change their views on regulations and laws. As long as this mentality is fixed in our brains, Germany remains the one of the world's best ruling

monsters.

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