

ABSTRACT

Germany and Italy: Different Projects to Enlarge the United Nations Security Council

The present work focuses on the proposals for enlarging the Security Council made by the Federal Republic of Germany and by the Republic of Italy. I want to show that Germany and Italy always supported opposite projects to enlarge the SC. Nevertheless, a seat for the European Union in the SC is an aim that both countries have. The thesis of this work is that it is absolutely necessary to change the number of SC-members.

The Security Council (SC) of the United Nations has primary responsibility for the maintenance of international peace and security. The states that won the 2nd World War – China, France, Great Britain, Russia and the United States – are permanent SC-members (so-called P5) and therefore always represented in the SC. The UN General Assembly elects the other 10 members for a mandate of two years (non-permanent members) considering «the contribution of Members of the United Nations to the maintenance of international peace and security and [...] the other purposes of the Organization, and also [...] equitable geographical distribution» (Art. 23 of the UN-Charter).

The P5 have a right of veto on substantial decisions (e.g. sending troops): if one permanent member votes against, no decision can be adopted.

Modifying the UN-Charter, and thus the SC, is a difficult task. 2/3 of the total members of the General Assembly must give an affirmative vote on the amendments and then ratify them according to their Constitutions. That happened only once, in 1963, when the number of non-permanent members changed from 6 to 11.

Today, many decades passed and there are several reasons why an enlargement of the SC is necessary:

1. the composition of the SC represents the distribution of power how it was after the 2nd World War;
2. inadequate geographical representation of the SC means a lack of legitimacy of the body in its work. SC-resolutions are mandatory, but the states can recognize the authority of the SC as legitimate only if the body has the highest representation as possible;
3. it is not correct that a small group of privileged permanent members have so much influence on decisions that concern the whole world.

The large part of the international community wants to reform the SC.

The first real German attempt to become a permanent member of the SC took place in 1993. German chancellor Kohl (Christian Democratic Party, CDU) and the minister of Foreign Affairs Kinkel said that Germany should be permanently represented in the SC because it was not only the third major financier of the UN, but it also actively took part in the Gulf War (1990-91).

At that time especially the United States, but also France and Great Britain, were for a permanent seat of Germany.

The next important German attempt to gain a permanent seat occurred in 1998, with the government composed by the Social Democratic Party (SPD) of chancellor Schroeder and the Greens. In 1998 Germany failed to promote its reform project, because the General Assembly approved a resolution according to which the majority required to make amendments to the SC structure is 2/3 of the total members of the Assembly itself.

Before the 2005 world summit on SC-reform, Germany formed a diplomatic alliance with Japan, Brazil and India. Those four countries, which all run for permanent membership in the SC, wanted:

- the enlargement of the SC from 15 to 25 members;
- 6 new permanent seats without the right of veto;
- 4 non-permanent seats with a non renewable mandate;

According to the proponents, this project of reform of the SC would lead to a redressing of force among the states and could better reflect the distribution of power in the present international community. The G4 decided to waive the right of veto because otherwise there would have been no chance that the P5 supported the resolution. The proposal of the G4 failed.

The USA did not support any more Germany's candidacy for a permanent seat. The reason was Berlin's decision not to join the Anglo-American coalition in the Iraq-war in 2003. Italy and other countries opposed the G4 with all their strength. China was strongly against a permanent seat of Japan. Last but not least, the G4 could not reach an agreement with the African Union (AU), the international organizations that includes all African states except Morocco. The AU counts with 53 votes and plays therefore a decisive role in the approval of every reform project. Two new permanent seats of the G4-Resolution should be for the African states, but the AU wanted them to be with the right of veto. So the UA made its own reform proposal. At the end, no one of the resolutions – G4, UA and Italy's group "Uniting for Consensus" – could be put to the vote.

Also today Germany considers itself as a natural candidate for a permanent seat in the SC. Apart from the arguments presented in the past, Berlin based its claim on Art. 23 of the UN-Charter, according to which the SC-members shall be elected in consideration of «the contribution of Members of the United Nations to the maintenance of international peace and security [...]». The country considers the right of veto today anachronistic and useless. The long-term aim of the Federal Republic is a seat in the SC for the European Union.

In 1991 the minister of Foreign Affairs Gianni De Michelis firstly proposed Italy as a candidate for a permanent seat in the SC. Two years later Italy's position changed radically: it opposed the creation of new permanent seats and suggested that so-called semi-permanent seats were created in order to make members rotate more frequently in the SC and to give representation also to middle and little states.

Italy suggested to assign the non-permanent seats according to the economic contribution to the work of the UN. At that time Italy was the sixth major contributor to the budget of the UN. However, it was less than Germany: that's why Rome started to gain consensus towards the opposition to new permanent seats.

In Italy's political system, highly fragmented and instable, foreign ministers often remain in office for a very short time and cannot influence significantly the position of their country. Because of that, it is often the Italian diplomatic corpus that plays a

decisive role in carrying out the international aims of the country. A good example of that is Francesco Paolo Fulci, the permanent representative of Italy in the UN from 1993 to 1999.

Fulci's lobbying activity was successful. In 1998 Italy promoted the procedural resolution, according to which any amendment to the composition of the SC must have the affirmative vote of 2/3 of the total members of the General Assembly. With the new resolution, reforming the SC became much more difficult. It was a diplomatic success for Italy against the G4.

Because Italy and other states stressed the importance of a wide consensus in a SC-reform, they formed a diplomatic alliance called "Uniting for Consensus" (UfC).

At the New York summit UfC wanted:

- 20 non-permanent members totally with two-year-mandates, elected with reference to the criteria of Art. 23 of the UN-Charter;
- not to vary the number of permanent members and their right of veto;
- to distribute the non-permanent seats among the regional groups, which are composed by all the states of a particular geographic macro-area.

Firstly, Italy wanted to eliminate the right of veto. Because that is not realizable at present, it suggests to limit the use in some specific cases (admission of new members, humanitarian aid, actions of the Chapter VII of the UN-Charter).

The argument against new permanent members is that the international community would have been divided in three categories: the P5, the new permanent members without the veto and all the other states.

Rome stresses the importance of creating semi-permanent members. In the long run the creation of a seat for the European Union (EU) in the SC remains an aim of Italy. But nowadays only states can be part of the UN and thus of the SC. In order to create an EU-seat in the SC, the Charter must be modified. The problem is that the EU does not take common decisions on foreign policy.

In 1945 the P5 had won the 2nd World War and were great powers. Today a lot of things have changed in the distribution of power. Being a great power remains a necessary element to aspire to a permanent seat in the SC.

Great powers are states that have huge military forces and strong economies. Moreover, they can invest a lot of money in security and have big power resources in the long term. In the postwar period France, Great Britain, China, the United States and the Soviet Union could be defined great powers. Today France and Great Britain have lost a lot of their influence and other countries, especially the so-called BRICS (Brazil, Russia, India, China and South Africa), are increasing their international power.

Until the reunification, Germany kept a low profile and was usually an abstentionist in decisions of foreign policy concerning the use of military forces. That was due mainly to the responsibilities that the country felt for the 2nd world war and the Nazi-persecutions. A non-intervention policy and a great economic power are two elements that gave Germany (and Japan) the definition of civil powers.

Today Germany is still a great economy and the third contributor to the UN budget. However, Berlin's claims for a permanent seat seemed more understandable in the nineties rather than nowadays, also because of the fast growth of the BRICS.

Asking for a permanent seat and in the same time trying to reach a seat for the EU in the long term is something incompatible. A seat for Germany excludes a seat for the

EU and vice versa. This position of Germany emerged as a compromise in 2005, when the government was formed by a coalition of SPD (traditionally for a national seat) and CDU (open to an EU-seat).

But is Germany really ready for a permanent seat in the SC? It seems not.

Berlin always said that it wants to assume more responsibility in foreign policy. But that did not happen in important moments. In 2011, when SC has to decide on the Iraq crisis, Germany (not-permanent member at that time) abstained. Its traditional non-intervention policy emerged again, but the allies did not trust Germany so much any more.

Being permanent member of the SC also means having an influential military power. A strong and competitive economy or important contributions to the UN budget are not sufficient for claiming a permanent seat. Germany has no particular interests in the SC: some think that the country asks for a permanent seat only because it would give a position of prestige.

Therefore probably Germany is not going to get a permanent seat in the short or medium term.

It is difficult to well define the position of Italy in the international community. Experts say that the country always fluctuates between the great powers and the medium powers. Despite having a good economy and taking actively part to the work of the UN, Italy must constantly reaffirm its international status. Rome's position among the great powers is temporary and uncertain.

Also because of that Italy was against the creation of new permanent seats in the SC. Therefore, new semi-permanent members and a seat for the EU represents Italy's proposal in the reform debate. Especially in the first position can be successful .

More specifically, Italy always opposed a permanent seat for Germany. The two countries have many shared elements in history and strong economic relations. However, many Italians always thought (and still think) that Germany could have hegemonic ambitions in Europe. That is an old and deep fear of Italy.

In foreign policy, Germany and Italy had common elements, such as the EU and the close relationship with the United States. But at the time of the Iraq crisis the countries took different decisions: Germany was against an intervention, while Italy joined the Anglo-American coalition.

Italy showed Germany's attempt to become more influential in the international community as a threat to its status. A rise of Germany has always been considered by Italy as a decline for itself. That explains the great engagement of the Italian ambassador Fulci to prevent Germany from getting a permanent seat in the SC.

Italy's fear of a too strong Germany often revived deep-rooted prejudices in the country. A solution to this could be to consider the common element that Rome and Berlin have in the SC-reform – the EU-seat – and work on this shared position. Moreover, the two countries should also remember the deep mutual relationships and “describe” them in a more realistic way, also before the press, without prejudices. In the past Germany and Italy often collaborated in order to reach important goals, such the European integration. Why should that not be possible also for the SC?

To sum up, we have seen in this work that the projects of Germany and Italy for the reform of the SC are conflicting. Berlin asks for a permanent seat, while Rome is against the creation of new permanent seats and wants to increase the elected members.

However, there are some common elements between the two countries.

Firstly, Germany and Italy want to create a seat for the EU in the SC. But while this has been Italy's aim for many years, Germany supports the project only since 2005. For Berlin the European seat is a goal in the long term.

Secondly, both countries want to give representation to those states that usually do not have it in the SC.

Finally, Germany and Italy engage to make the SC more democratic.

We have shown that it is absolutely necessary to eliminate the right of veto. This institution never helped the international community to solve crisis, but on the contrary it acted in the national interests of the permanent members.

It is not likely that new permanent members are created. The majority of states would never approve a reform-project that worsens the democratic deficit of the SC. A lot of states would abstain and because of the procedural resolution of 1998 that would be like a vote against the nations that want to become permanent members.

A reform of the SC should bring new non-permanent members, especially for the countries that are really underrepresented today. A seat for the EU is a practicable solution only in the long run, when the institutions and the decision-making process work better.

In September 2013 there was a meeting of the UfC group, during which the members of the coalition decided to start a new diplomatic campaign in 2014. As always in the last twenty years, Italy is very active in the debate and is the leader of UfC.

Before approving an entire reform of the SC, in the meanwhile an amendment could be adopted, i.e. eliminate the part of Art. 23 of the UN-Charter which states that the non-permanent members can not immediately be reelected. This solution would satisfy both Germany and Italy: because they are very active within the SC, it would be more likely for them to be reelected after a mandate.

Less hope gives the possibility that something changes in the composition of the permanent seats. As long as the right of veto exists, any change in permanent membership would depend on the will of the permanent members themselves. The other states can only make pressure on the permanent members in order to show that the veto is today an anachronistic and useless privilege.

Despite the very different and conflicting interests, the international community has the duty to try the challenge of reforming the SC. Let's remember a statement by Francesco Paolo Fulci, the ex-permanent represent of Italy at the UN: "in the United Nations it often happens that for matters that have been dragging on for years, suddenly there is an opportunity that permits to find a solution" (Fulci, 2006, *La riforma del Consiglio di Sicurezza e l'Europa. Realtà e prospettive. Affari Esteri*. Retrieved October 2, 2013, from <http://www.affari-esteri.it/ae2006.html>).