Rightist Pressures in Germany

What is the issue?

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- Rightist groups are gaining ground in German politics, through direct electoral support and through exerting ideological influence on mainstream parties.
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- But for the time being, German Chancellor Angela Merkel's politicking has averted any threat to her coalition government.
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How did Ms. Merkel's political brinkmanship help her win allies?

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- Angela Merkel is now in her 4^{th} term as German Chancellor, and has weathered many crises without jeopardising the stability of her government.
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- The 2017 German election was inconclusive with no party gaining a majority due to the erosion of votes by smaller extremist parties.
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- Merkel's long time ally "Social Democratic Party" (SPD) was also refusing to support her government and preferred sitting in the opposition.
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- But eventually, SDP revived the coalition with Ms. Merkel's conservative "Christian Democratic Union" (CDU) in order to avert another poll.
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- Thereby, Ms. Merkel managed to have her way and stood her ground with her moderate political outlook.
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How did she handle the current crisis?

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- **Refugee Policy –** Ms. Merkel is the most vocal proponent of open borders within the “European Union” and is presently the linchpin of grouping.
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- But this policy also entails refugees to enter Germany even though they might have registered themselves (as refugees) in another European country.
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- Many politicians (including among the ruling alliance) sought to plug this influx and also send those already in Germany to the countries of registration.
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- The issue threatened to end 70-year alliance of Merkel’s CDU with Bavaria based “Christian Social Union” (CSU).
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- **Compromise -** Ms. Merkel asserted that curtailing entry would undermine the European Block’s cherished “Schengen Passport-free Zone”.
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- To assuage the dissenting voices, she proposed to accommodate those seeking refuge at transit centres along the borders with Austria.
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- As Ms. Merkel has agreed to send them back to the countries of registration eventually, this is a partial victory for those demanding tighter borders.
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- But nonetheless, Ms. Merkel has been holding strong in her endeavour to preserve the integrity of Euro-Zone.
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What are the implications?

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- The recent compromise is a further dilution of Ms. Merkel’s bold 2015 move to allow about a million refugees into Germany.
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- Notably, refugee flow has actually been declining since 2016, and the current political unrest was caused due to approaching elections in Bavaria Province.

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- This is a clear indication of Germany’s major mainstream parties facing pressures from smaller rightist groups, like in many other European countries.
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- On the other hand, the reality of mass immigration today calls for a concerted approach on conflict resolution and respect for the rule of law.
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Source: The Hindu

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