

2023/2024

# The Berlin Pulse

Of Paradigms  
and Power Shifts

With contributions by  
Norbert Röttgen,  
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**D**ear Readers,  
Welcome to the most international issue of *The Berlin Pulse* yet! This year, authors from all G20 countries discuss Germany's role in the world. Our juxtaposition of international expectations with the opinion of the German population is therefore more exciting and diverse than ever.

Why a G20 issue? The G20, originally an economic platform, has become a mirror and driver of international politics. It exemplifies the increasingly multipolar distribution of power, and it has emerged as the most promising international problem solver. This is particularly important considering the divide between the West and the Global South over Russia's war of aggression against Ukraine and the recent escalation in the Middle East following the massacre of Israeli civilians by Hamas.

Thanks to our editors Julia Ganter and Jonathan Lehrer, this issue of *The Berlin Pulse* shows which power shifts in the international order are important for Germany. Our contributors from the G20 countries help us to better understand these shifts, and *The Berlin Pulse* survey shows how the German public feels about them.

The growing influence of the emerging economies in Asia, Africa and the Americas is largely viewed positively in Germany. Meanwhile, 66 per cent of respondents want Berlin to continue to support Ukraine militarily, while a substantial majority welcomes an increase in defence spending. These numbers show that the *Zeitenwende* and a foreign policy that pays more attention to emerging middle-income countries are supported by a solid majority of the German public.

Thanks to our partner, the Pew Research Center, we know that Germany enjoys strong support from the public in the United States. Among American respondents, 85 per cent have a positive view of relations with Germany, which is reciprocated by Germans. Especially regarding Ukraine, Americans and Germans count on transatlantic cooperation. These sentiments provide a solid foundation for the endurance of the paradigm of transatlantic cooperation.

But this G20 issue is also about other foreign policy paradigms on which Germany has relied on perhaps for too long. Our survey reveals that Germans are willing to reduce their dependence on China, even at the cost of potential economic losses. And our contributors from Indonesia, India, South Africa and the African Union expect Germany to put paradigms like respect and equality into practice, and to ramp up its support for the fight against climate change around in the world.

*The Berlin Pulse* shows that power in the international realm is shifting and that the re-emergence of geopolitics is pushing Germany out of its comfort zone. This means that the country needs to move in order not to end up on the political sidelines. Enjoy reading. Reading empowers!

**Thomas Paulsen**  
November 2023



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# Of Paradigms and Power Shifts

G20



**4 The Price of Influence**  
Editorial by Julia Ganter

**6 New Crises, New Paradigms**  
Introduction by Nora Müller and Sarah Pagung

**8 Small Groups, Big Effect**  
Norbert Röttgen

**10 Love your Neighbour**  
Lila Roldán Vázquez

**12 Respect, Please!**  
Elizabeth Sidiropoulos and  
Siyakudumisa Zicina

**14 No Bloc, No Problem?**  
Retno Marsudi

**16 Small Yard, High Fence**  
Koki Shigenoi

**18 Trump's Second Act?**  
Tara Varma

**20 New Powers, New Ports**  
Introduction by Alisa Vogt and Jonathan Lehrer

**22 Power Play**  
Sabine Weyand

**24 Make Europe Great Again**  
Interview with Giulio Tremonti

**25 → The Berlin Pulse Survey 2023/2024**

**37 Germany's Zeitenwende Is at Risk**  
Sophia Gaston

**38 Democracy in Russia Is Possible**  
Mikhail Khodorkovsky

**40 Don't Stop the Count!**  
Peter Rough, Sara Skytvedal and  
Jaiveer Shergill

**42 Ambitious India**  
Amitabh Kant

**44 South Korea's New Identity**  
Yoon Jung Choi

**46 'Finally a Seat at the Table'**  
Interview with Hafsa Maalim

**48 Inertia Is our Biggest Enemy**  
Steven Guilbeault

**50 Greenddoing Instead of Greenwashing**  
Izabella Teixeira

**52 Local Power for Global Change**  
Nina Hachigian

**54 'AI is a double-edged sword'**  
Interview with Gao Qiqi

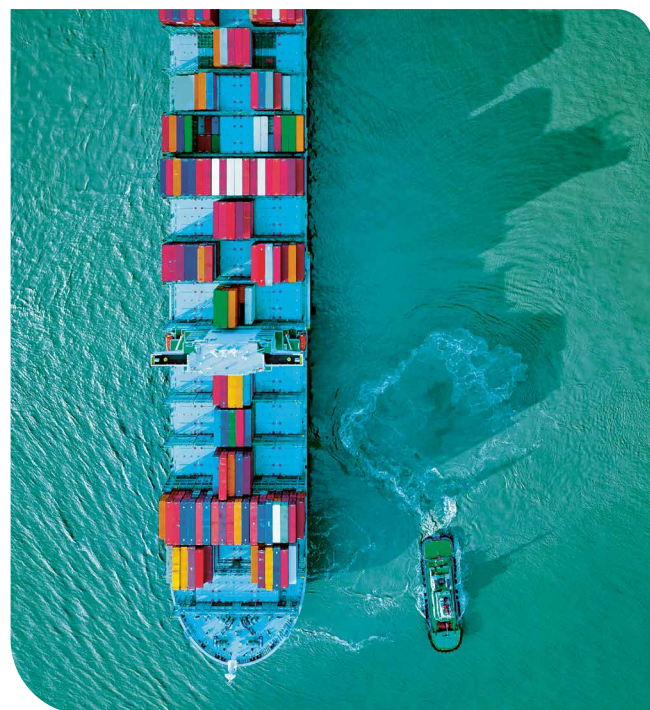
**56 'Who controls space will control the Earth'**  
Interview with Bec Shrimpton

**58 Saudi Arabia's Moderate Islam**  
Madawi Al-Rasheed

**60 'Democratisation would make Türkiye stronger'**  
Interview with Galip Dalay

**62 Vaccine Against Autocracy**  
Marcela Turati

**64 Berlin Foreign Policy Forum 2023**



# The Price of Influence

## To prevail in a multipolar world, Germany must make concessions and do its homework

'The world in the 21st century is multipolar' could be the words of China's President Xi Jinping or Brazil's President Lula da Silva. However, it is how Germany's Chancellor Olaf Scholz describes the current international order in Germany's first National Security Strategy. What are the implications for Germany of a world in which considerable power is spread among at least three states, especially in light of its alliance with the United States, whose status is being challenged the most?

On a pessimistic note, one would be a loss of international influence. As the results of this year's *The Berlin Pulse* survey show, almost six out of ten Germans think that Germany's international influence has decreased over the past two years while three out of ten say it is unchanged.

A more optimistic one would be that Germany will have more counterparts to rely on. In theory, a multipolar world should empower more countries to assume responsibility and address global challenges. Reflecting Spider-Man's 'with great power comes great responsibility' motto, this would be good news for Germany.

Scholz's declaration of Germany's *Zeitenwende* was an attempt to respond to Russia's war in Ukraine and a call for Germany to assume a leadership role in Europe. However, the changes in its foreign and security policy are also supposed to have a global dimension. The government wants to avoid the creation of blocs and a new cold war. From Berlin's perspective, a multipolar world needs multilateral solutions.

But if Germany wants to be the broker that rallies others around this vision, it will have to take actions that go against its normal *modus operandi*. It may even have to act in ways that at first seem counterintuitive, such as making concessions.

First, Germany should abandon its goal to become a permanent member of the United Nations Security Council and instead advocate for seats for emerging powers in Africa, Asia and Latin America. Otherwise, its talk of an international system mirroring the multipolar reality will remain mere rhetoric.

Second, Germany must understand that finding global partners requires offers that can be applied *ad hoc* and without binding compromise or institutionalised formats. Countries like Brazil or India have multiple partner options and taking sides or joining Western clubs is against their self-conception. These emerging powers do not feel comfortable embedded in an alliance as Germany does.

### Loss of influence

Has Germany's international influence in the world in the last two years ...?

German respondents:

11% 30% 57%



● Rather increased ● Stayed the same ● Rather decreased

German respondents, 2023: don't know 1%, no answer 1%



These two actions would contribute to Germany's continued influence on the global stage. But it must also take some internal measures.

The most important is to invest in economic capabilities. Power defined as 'the ability to get others to do what you want' has many dimensions. Yet, economic power enables the acquisition of soft and hard power. This is especially true for Germany, whose power mainly rests on economic success. Stagnant economic figures and outdated infrastructure pose severe threats to its international standing.

Due to the economic situation and Germany's debt brake, the government is having to tighten its belt. The Federal Foreign Office is facing a 17.7 per cent cut in its annual budget. Under such conditions, it will be even more difficult to implement a global *Zeitenwende*. In the long term, Germany must rethink its fiscal policy in favour of not only security and defence, but also foreign policy.

Finally, its decision-makers must communicate better why Germany cannot afford international inaction in a multipolar world. *The Berlin Pulse* survey results show that 54 per cent of Germans prefer restraint over international engagement. A suitable entry point for an exchange with the public – for example, during a new edition of the foreign minister's tours through mid-sized German cities – could be the shared feeling of an ongoing 'polycrisis' in which several challenges affect the world simultaneously.

The different dimensions of this polycrisis are reflected in the biggest foreign policy challenges Germans name. Ukraine is clearly first with 41 per cent but after that results get more diffuse: migration (15 per cent), climate change (12 per cent), China (11 per cent) and the economy and Russia (8 per cent each). Today, the Israel-Hamas war would likely be on this list, too.

These crises could end or continue in ways that destabilize the international order even further. The escalation in the Middle East is a litmus test that, after months of confidence building between the West and developing countries, has the potential to further divide the world into camps. This shows that increasing or at least maintaining Germany's influence is not an end in itself. Not only because of its historical responsibility, Germany cannot ignore these crises, nor should it let others solve them alone. Now is the moment to work on an international standing that makes Germany a credible advocate and partner for multilateral solutions in an increasingly multipolar world – backed by financial resources and domestic support. ↗



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# New Crises, New Paradigms



**F**or decades, Germany relied on the paradigm of economic interdependence. Berlin's strategists believed that economic cooperation would bring countries around the globe closer to Western standards of democracy and liberalism. After Russia's full-scale invasion of Ukraine, Germany's government realized that, contrary to these long-held expectations, interdependence had made the country more vulnerable to autocrats like Vladimir Putin.

In response, and in the light of its *Zeitenwende*, Germany increased its defence spending. This year's *The Berlin Pulse* survey shows that 46 per cent of Germans welcome a defence budget which meets the NATO target of 2 per cent of GDP, and 25 per cent even say that their country should spend more. However, 71 per cent do not want Germany to take a military leadership role in Europe.

But security has more than a military dimension. Economic, industrial and trade policies all need to be hedged against geopolitical risks. *The Berlin Pulse* survey shows that 62 per cent of Germans have a negative view of China's rising global influence. And Norbert Röttgen, a member of the German Bundestag, calls for a deeper technological partnership with the United States to limit China's economic influence.

Easier said than done? Brookings visiting fellow Tara Varma predicts that Donald Trump being reelected US president in 2024 would be a catastrophe for Germany's transatlantic partnership paradigm. The German public shares her view: 82 per cent expect relations with the United States to deteriorate if Trump is reelected. Such a scenario would weaken democracy worldwide and test Germany. Is it willing and prepared to take more responsibility for maintaining a liberal West and Europe, even without the United States?

To help navigate these uncertain waters, the advice of Lila Roldan Vazquez from the Argentine Council for International Relations is helpful. She argues that Germany should focus on regional integration, strengthen the EU and cooperate more closely with South and Central America. Elizabeth Sidiropoulos from the South African Institute of International Affairs adds that Germany's foreign policy can win trust not only by taking up the cause of decolonization, but also implementing it, from climate mitigation to development cooperation.

What we learn from this chapter is that Germany can use its *Zeitenwende* to further adapt to the uncertainties of the global landscape. The Hamas terror attacks on Israel, which have just taken place as we close this issue of *The Berlin Pulse*, are the latest example of this. They also show that, while some of Germany's foreign policy paradigms need to be rethought, others, such as the security of Israel as Germany's reason of state, remain non-negotiable. Enjoy reading! 📖



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# Small Groups, Big Effect

## How Germany should take the lead to boost European foreign policy

By Norbert Röttgen

The central paradigms of international relations are shaking. Hegemony of the United States brought a liberal rules-based international order that, albeit never perfect, has served Europe's interests. Today we witness a severe challenge to this order, most prominently by China. The country has the will and the capabilities to substitute that order with one based on power and Chinese interests. Hence, the new paradigm of this time can be best described as systemic rivalry – not only between China and the United States, but also between democracies and autocracies.

As part of the free world, Europeans need to find a strategic answer to this new paradigm and the accompanying challenges. Germany's role is crucial for doing so. However, it is particularly difficult for the country to live up to this task because, in contrast to others, it is still struggling to answer the questions of what role it wants to play in Europe and beyond.

### ➔ Transforming the EU into a geopolitical actor

Its European neighbours have long understood that Germany matters for transforming the European Union into a geopolitical actor. If it is not willing to take the lead, this simply will not happen. For Germany this is not just a matter of security. As an export-oriented economy, maintaining its prosperity fundamentally depends on everyone complying with international rules. As of now, this order is eroding at breathtaking speed and Europe is doing little to counteract this development.

In view of Russia's war in Ukraine, unprecedented brutal Hamas terror against Israel in the

Middle East and China's global ambitions, it has become more urgent than ever for Germany to live up to these expectations and accept the role of responsible leadership in Europe. Defending the European peace order that Russia has attacked and investing in security in the Middle East could be starting points towards a European foreign policy, but it is far from a reality. There is no European consensus on transferring competences to Brussels and on allowing foreign and security policies to be implemented by the EU. The current gridlock is unlikely to change in foreseeable future, as the positions of member states are too far apart.

### ➔ No veto anymore

To escape this dilemma, we need to set up a European foreign policy with a small group of member states willing and capable to coordinate their actions. Germany is in a unique position to achieve this as it can bring together different member states. These would not only agree on a policy; they would also implement it together, similarly



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to how France, Germany and the United Kingdom cooperated in negotiating the Iran nuclear deal.

Such an approach to European foreign policy should always be open to all member states and take place in close coordination with the EU institutions. But, once set in motion, there would be no veto anymore, which is precisely what is holding back the EU and its member states at the moment.

### ➔ No strategy for irregular migration

Northern Africa is one region where such joining of forces is needed. It is critical for Europe's stability and yet we entirely lack a long-term strategy for it. The member states on the Mediterranean and those experiencing a high level of irregular immigration should work together in creating real perspectives for people to stay in their countries. This requires long-term commitments and proper investment.

Europe has the potential to leverage its economic and political weight much better on the international stage. But, given the economic success of China, it is crucial that we coordinate closely with the United States. It is particularly in the field of technological leadership that the systemic rivalry and who ultimately prevails will be decided. While Germany and Europe have world-leading scientists, we often lack the United States' ability to translate science into products. Our goal should be to strengthen our military alliance by complementing it with a technological alliance that benefits both sides. Despite the deep political divisions in the United States, Americans across party lines understand that China represents a severe technological, economic, military and political threat. Therefore, the relationship between the United

States and Europe, in particular Germany, will depend on the extent to which we are prepared to align our China policies.

Leading Europe in times of changing paradigms and power shifts requires more than coming together and coordinating with our transatlantic partners. It also entails a complete reboot of our relations towards the so-called Global South, away from well-meaning but patronizing development aid and towards a relationship on equal footing.

### ➔ Putting the Global South's interests first

Niger, a country of utmost importance to Europe's stability, exemplifies Europe's failure. In a lack of strategic foresight, we thought it was enough to provide the country with aid and some military support against extremists to stabilize it. Instead, we should have massively invested in Niger's tender seed of democracy to ensure that the local population recognizes its inherent worth. Having failed to do so, China and Russia will now fill the void.

We need to learn to engage with the countries of the Global South based on their interests and not primarily ours. Supporting them to succeed politically and economically in the long term, without becoming dependent on China, would be the best outcome for Europe. In doing so, we should focus on the huge potential these countries have – for example, in renewable energies – that so far we have largely ignored. ↗

### No military leadership

Should Germany play a military leadership role in Europe?



2023: don't know 1%, no answer 0% | 2022: don't know 2%, no answer 1%



# Love your Neighbour

International organizations have failed to ensure peace and security in the world. Regional cooperation will not.

By Lila Roldán Vázquez

Ukraine has for decades fought for its dream of independence and democracy. But this dream has been brutally attacked by an imperialist Russia. Unfortunately, there was no available mechanism to prevent or stop President Vladimir Putin, even though he had repeatedly announced his intent in words and actions, such as Russia's war in Georgia in 2008, its takeover of Crimea and Donbas or his misconceptions of history and Ukraine's statehood.

Russia's war has strengthened the Western alliance, which reacted swiftly and firmly against the aggression. But it has also shifted more power to China and to regional powers like India and Türkiye. And it has led to a certain isolation of the West from the rest of the world, which does not completely share its view of Russia or the idea that democracy is almost exclusively a Western value.

The so-called Global South, a non-homogeneous group of countries, that do not necessarily share common interests – has emerged with force. While most of the countries in the Global South condemn Russia's invasion, they do not adhere to Western sanctions. Instead, they prioritize their political

and economic interests. Even if they support Ukraine's territorial integrity and share the values of democracy, some also have strong economic or security ties with Beijing or Moscow. Others, such as the Latin American countries, adhere only to sanctions adopted by international or regional organizations, or just prefer to be independent from any given power pole.

## → United in failure

Amidst that power shift, international organizations – which we trusted to build a world of peace and security, and to protect less powerful states against colonialism, economic exploitation or the horrors of war – have failed to deliver.

The romantic vision we had of the United Nations has been damaged, as it has shown very poor results regarding international security, the environment or universal health. The UN Security Council has been unable to prevent, stop or solve any conflict in the last decades, with each of its decisions at the mercy of a veto from one of its permanent members. The World Health Organization did very little to prevent the spread of COVID-19. Agreements on measures to moderate the effects of climate change are hard to reach and we are very far from reaching the Sustainable Development Goals in 2030.

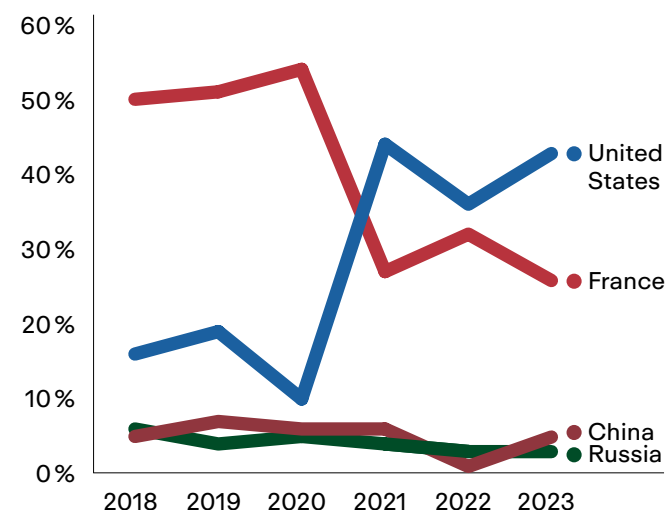
The result is that countries tend to associate with their neighbours or with partners sharing common interests or resources. As countries cannot rely on international institutions, they tend to find effective answers to their problems elsewhere. Thus, regional integration has become essential for social and economic development, as well as to



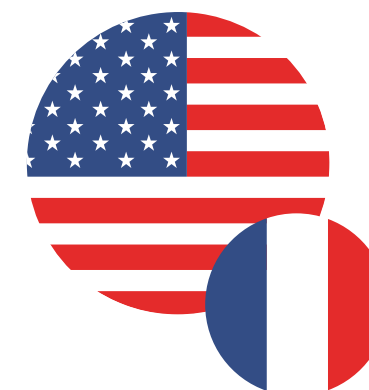
**Lila Roldán Vázquez** is the secretary general and director of Eurasian studies at the Argentine Council for International Relations and former ambassador of Argentina to Ukraine.

## Close partnership with the United States

Which country is currently the most important partner for Germany?



German respondents, 2023: don't know 14%, no answer 4%



improve competitiveness. Today, countries holding approximately 7,2 billion of the world's 8 billion people are in regional or bi-regional agreements focused on commercial and financial purposes; on political cooperation, security and defence matters; or on social development.

The European Union, the African Union, the Association of Southeast Asian Nations (ASEAN) and the Southern Common Market (MERCOSUR) are just a few of the vibrant cooperation mechanisms that have evolved in every region of the world. For their part, mechanisms like the G20+ or the G7, notwithstanding the relatively small number of their members, have set international parameters for the world economy.

Argentina and Germany are members of regional integration mechanisms that are essential for their development and for political concertation. They are founding and major members of MERCOSUR and the EU respectively. Both countries strategically chose regional integration to overcome security concerns and to foster economic growth and trade in their respective regions. The fact that this integration initially focused on commercial and economic cooperation should not overshadow the paramount political objective that inspired them: ensuring peace, security and progress for their countries.

Besides that, democracy, rule of law and respect for human rights are main pillars of their respective regional integration mechanisms. This is of the utmost importance in a world severely threatened by great power competition and the risks of escalation.

## → Time for the EU-MERCOSUR agreement

Therefore, Europe and Latin America should join their efforts to promote peace and security. Political concertation between them is already envisaged in the political and cooperation pillars of the EU-MERCOSUR Interregional Association Agreement, which should be ratified as soon as possible.

Argentina and Germany, as major actors in their respective regions, should promote and reinforce regional security arrangements and guarantees, as well as actively promote European-Latin American cooperation in matters such as socio-economic development, the peaceful settlement of conflicts and concerted actions against international crime.

Regional and inter-regional mechanisms will serve to ease conflicts and contribute to the universal goal of peace and security. In parallel, international organizations need to be properly reformed, if they want to be effective in dealing with global challenges. ↗

# Respect, Please!

## Why dismantling colonial continuities is key for international reform

By Elizabeth Sidiropoulos and Siyakudumisa Zicina


The call to decolonize international relations has gained global prominence, manifesting itself in academia and the public discourse. From the Black Lives Matter movement to the removal of statues of slave traders or advocating for much delayed reparations for mass atrocities, anti-colonial movements have garnered substantial attention. The commitment of Germany's government to end colonial continuities is welcome, but such a paradigm shift will inevitably be a process.

Developing nations have become increasingly vocal about the need for a fairer multilateral system. And those who call for fairness have become more powerful. China is now the world's second-largest economy while India is in fifth position. Each of them positions itself as a leader of the Global South. Even though China and India have different interests, they can pressure the North by emphasizing the discrimination of developing countries in the international system. Amid this power shift, the West often appears preachy, while many developing nations view China as a potential partner for their development. Western criticism of their partnership with Beijing reinforces perceptions of condescension and paternalism.

### ➔ New rules for a new world

In September 2023, six more Global South countries were invited to join BRICS. Many stakeholders, including from civil society in Africa, want the grouping to form a pole of a new alternative global order.

The design of a fairer global order will require proactive engagement from all developing countries. But the interests of small and medium-sized countries will only be protected if these countries themselves are clear about the values and rules a new system should include. They should reflect on



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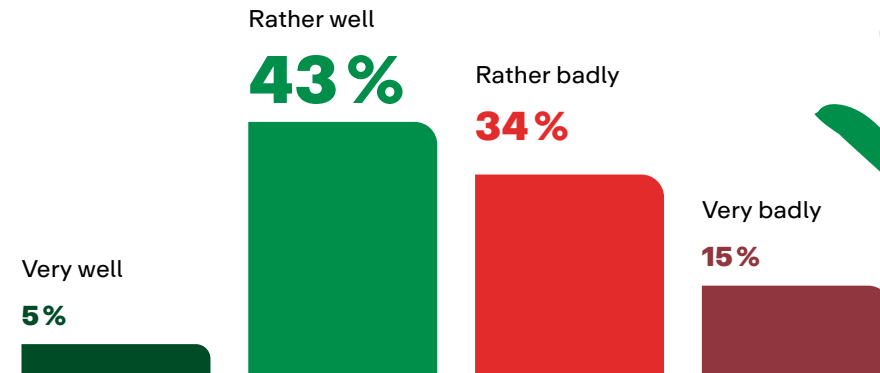
what rules need rethinking, how to reform existing institutions and what new institutions are necessary to address the new global challenges.

### ➔ Human security first

The values and principles of the UN Charter are still relevant. The problem has been non-compliance and disrespect for its values and principles by all major powers. A particular principle that should not be lost is that of political, social and economic human rights.

### Partly values-based

How is Germany doing in terms of its values-based foreign policy?



2023: don't know 2%, no answer 1%

Regrettably, in certain Global South countries political elites argue that state security is superior to human security, due to historical injustices inflicted by Western powers. However, the fight against colonialism was rooted in the pursuit of democracy, freedom and economic emancipation. A new world order that disregards such values would only reproduce an unjust global system.

Regional institutions like the African Union have a crucial role to play in these discussions. But, equally, we should not forget the voices of Global South citizens. Debates about a new world order must be on the agenda of every regional institution and every citizen. Otherwise, people will remain passive about a transformation that will profoundly affect their lives – from livelihoods and vaccines to automation, climate change and natural disasters.

The key lesson that Western governments should learn is that rhetoric without meaningful action will not delay the reform. Rather it will awaken those nations that perceive the current system as disadvantageous, prompting them to explore alternative or parallel structures.

### ➔ No more colonial continuities

Germany's government has emphasized the necessity to overcome colonial continuities and meet countries as equals in partnerships. It is imperative that a genuine commitment to multilateral reform is an integral component of this approach. Focusing on the relationship between Africa and Europe without listening to African and other Global South

countries about their vision of global governance would make this an example of meaningless rhetoric.

Critical to this is trust, which can be built right now. Re-channelling at least \$100 billions of unused Special Drawing Rights of the International Monetary Fund to those who need this or temporarily suspending its interest surcharges are two short-term actions that can build trust. Germany should also advocate for the EU to use funds raised via its carbon border tax adjustment mechanism for developing countries, a proposal that was made at the time of the negotiations on the mechanism but then was dropped.

Germany needs to understand why many African countries have adopted non-aligned positions vis-à-vis Russia's invasion of Ukraine, even when they see it as representing Moscow's colonial mindset. For many Global South countries, the West's engagement with them on this issue also represents a colonial continuity.

Berlin's approach to dismantling colonial continuities can contribute meaningfully to shaping Europe's engagement with the Global South. By listening and not dismissing the latter's concerns such as debt problems, access to vaccines and Northern climate finance commitments, Germany can play a vital role. Failing that, the multilateral system will experience increasing fragmentation and an erosion of rules. North and South should recognize their common interest in avoiding that. Only superpowers stand to gain from such a breakdown. ↩



# No Bloc, No Problem?

## Why Indonesia's non-aligned foreign policy is not neutral

By Retno Marsudi

From pandemic and economic slowdown to climate change and food and energy shortages, our world is in an age of turbulence.

Unfortunately, the mood is not jubilant for international cooperation now. Great-power rivalry and the war in Ukraine have polarized the world into opposing blocs. Trust deficits between countries are pervasive and zero-sum thinking proliferates. Countries are trading blame rather than working together.

These trends, just like COVID-19, are infectious. The Indo-Pacific, where the interests of the world's biggest countries intersect and clash, is not immune. We see unnecessary military projection and intensifying competition for influence between the major powers in the region.

Indonesia refuses to see the Indo-Pacific fall victim to geopolitical confrontation. We cannot risk its potential as the largest contributor to global growth for the next 30 years. An open conflict where 60 per cent of the world's population resides and the arteries of global trade are located would be catastrophic for the whole world.

This is where Indonesia's independent and active foreign policy comes into relevance. For almost eight decades, these principles have been a compass for Indonesia in interacting with other nations.

### ↳ Independence does not mean disengagement

Our independent and active foreign policy does not mean neutrality and disengagement. Instead, it places great emphasis on an active role and engagement with all countries, guided by strategic autonomy and firm adherence to international law. In other words, Indonesia's independent and active foreign policy is not a neutral policy; it is one that does not align with the superpowers nor does it bind the country to any military pact.



With this compass, Indonesia successfully led the G20 last year and the Association of Southeast Asian Nations (ASEAN) summit and related summits this year amid enormous geopolitical challenges, bridging widely divergent views. It actively advocates for the war in Ukraine to end while refusing being forced to choose a side.

Especially through ASEAN, Indonesia has been working hard to mainstream the core values of its independent and active foreign policy to keep peace and stability in the region.

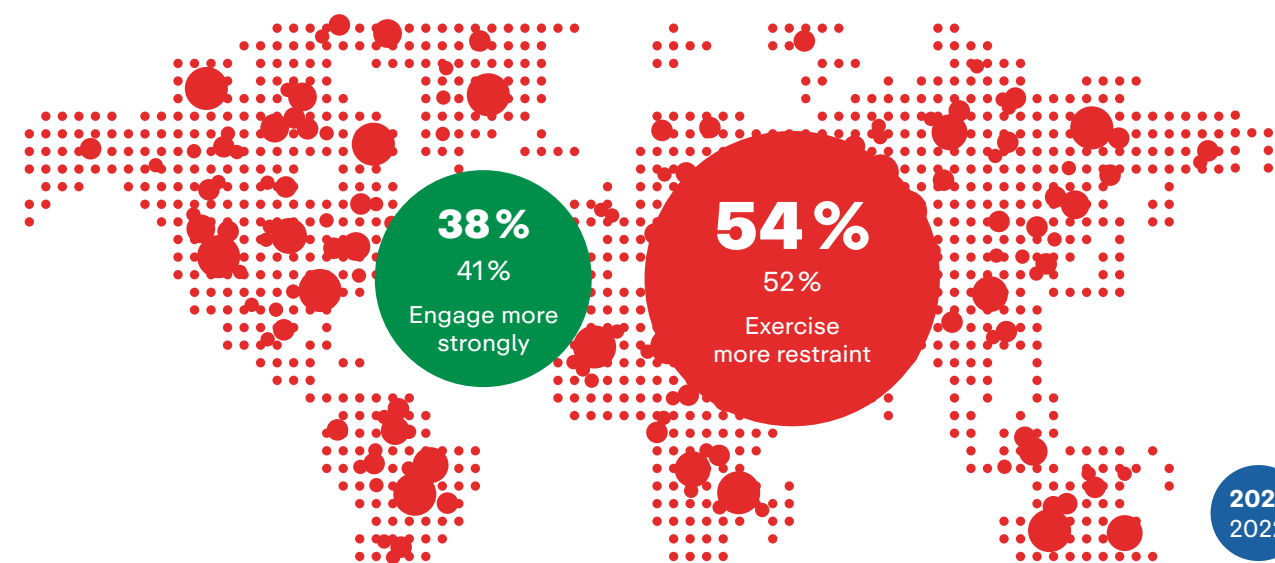
Indonesia believes in the primacy of international law and the UN Charter, including as the great equalizer among nations and protection against the rule of might. They work if we apply them consistently, and not only when we see fit.

### ‘Every house needs rules’

To ensure order, every house needs rules. For the Indo-Pacific, the rules are clear: the Zone of Peace, Freedom, and Neutrality Declaration, the Treaty of Amity and Cooperation, and the Bali Principles of Climate Justice. Every country should respect them in their engagement with the region.

### Germans favour international restraint

Should Germany engage more strongly in international crises, or exercise more restraint?



2023: spontaneously: none of the above 4%, don't know 2%, no answer 2%

It is crucial to develop an inclusive regional architecture. In ASEAN, we open our doors for cooperation with all countries.

Our region can only unlock its true potential if all its countries are given the opportunity to contribute meaningfully. Alienation and containment would only breed insecurity and resentment.

We need to mainstream the paradigm of collaboration. To create peace and prosperity, we must leave no room for mistrust and rivalry. Indonesia initiated the ASEAN Outlook on the Indo-Pacific to turn them into concrete cooperation that benefits our people.

### ↳ United by values

Indonesia sees in Germany a potential partner to promote these values. We may be geographically distant but we are closer and more alike than many would have thought.

Indonesia and Germany are partners with many shared values, including a commitment to democracy, human rights and international law. We are both G20 members and the largest countries in our respective regions. Our voices carry weight in there and beyond.

A stronger partnership between Indonesia and Germany would send a strong message that there remains room for collaboration between developed and developing countries.

Indonesia expects Germany to serve as a positive force that reduces tension and builds confidence in the Indo-Pacific. At the same time, Germany's support for ASEAN's centrality in shaping regional dynamics would be most welcomed.

As the EU's largest country, Germany's support for the conclusion of the Indonesia-EU Comprehensive Economic Partnership Agreement is critical. We also seek its support for our right to development, including by investing in our downstream industries and eliminating discriminatory trade policies.

### ↳ Indonesia's workers for Germany's economy

Our partnership must create a better world. We must collaborate to promote a green economy and combat climate change, including through the Green Infrastructure Initiative and the Just Energy Transition Partnership. Expanding cooperation through the Triple Win Program in the labour sector can foster the exchange of skills and expertise. It can make Indonesian skilled workers contribute to Germany's economy while gaining experience to enhance their own professional development.

A German proverb says: 'Mit einem Freund im Dunkeln zu gehen ist besser als alleine im Licht zu gehen' [Walking with a friend in the dark is better than walking alone in the light.] So, let us walk together in this turbulent time. ↗

# Small Yard, High Fence

## De-risking from China will not work without the German government

By Koki Shigenoi

Chancellor Olaf Scholz once stated that de-risking vis-à-vis China is mainly a job for companies rather than countries. But is this truly the case? China's coercive economic policies primarily affect the manufacturing industry, with the entire supply chain at high risk. Without government intervention, companies cannot adequately minimize their risks.

Modern industrial powerhouses have refined their supply chains through a high degree of international specialization. In this process, export giants like Germany and Japan have become increasingly dependent on China throughout the supply chain. This dependency is a vulnerability ripe for use in economic coercion. Securing strategic autonomy against such coercion is fundamental to economic security.

### → De-risk, don't decouple

However, while countries should consider de-risking to reduce their dependence on China, it is not necessary for them to halt operations in low-risk

domains or to stop taking risks and promoting their businesses in China. The principle of 'small yard, high fence' should guide their actions here. De-risking does not mean completely avoiding China. So, how to do so without harming the economy?

China's consumer market is enticing due to the country's vast population and robust economic foundations. As long as trade is insulated from geopolitical events and authorities do not impose stop-sales orders, the opportunity to sell products in the Chinese market remains. In other words, while diversifying their sales destinations to de-risk, companies can continue to sell in China unless unexpected events transpire.

### → Local production for local consumption

For some industries and companies, China might be the optimal choice for a production and assembly base, but there are alternatives, such as relocation. There are numerous examples of companies locating their production bases away from China.

By diversifying their production locations and endorsing the concept of local production for local consumption, some Japanese firms have started de-risking from China instead of full decoupling. This strategy reduces transportation costs, foreign exchange fluctuations and tariffs, and it facilitates liquidation of the local subsidiary in emergencies.

Strategizing to counter Beijing's forced technology transfers is another pivotal challenge. Japanese companies have historically faced challenges with Chinese industrial espionage and theft of designs and data. Consequently, many have opted to manufacture essential components in Japan before exporting them for assembly. Even though

confidential corporate information has been traded on the Chinese internet in recent years, these measures still somewhat protect data within Japan.

### → Attention to supply chains

However, given China's stranglehold on some raw materials and sub-materials, companies might find it challenging to find alternative sources. Incidents of Chinese economic coercion using resource dependence include the 2010 rare-earth embargo against Japan and the recent export controls on gallium and germanium that are vital for semiconductor materials.

To mitigate these risks, some Japanese firms have altered their supply chain structures, adopted multi-sourcing and augmented their inventories. Yet, these solutions have limits. Such procurement challenges largely lie within the responsibility of governments and individual companies cannot tackle them alone.

Governments should spearhead efforts to secure strategic goods and emphasize to companies the significance of de-risking in procurement. Japan's de-risking approach includes identifying critical goods in its supply chain resilience initiative and championing the Minerals Security Partnership with its Quad partners (Australia, India and the United States) as well as Gulf and African nations. Germany is on a similar trajectory based on the contents of its new China strategy.

### 'Accept the risk or deter it.'

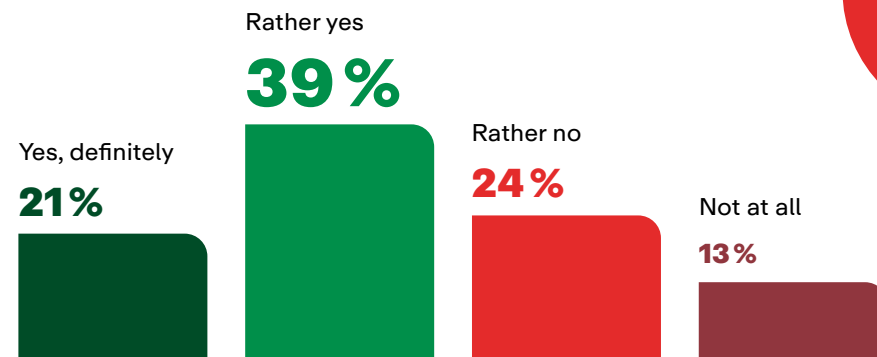
But what if China remains the sole alternative? The global community relies on it for resources such as graphite, heavy rare earths and tungsten as well as for active pharmaceutical ingredients. This dependence is the crux of the de-risking challenge. Here, only two solutions are viable: accept the risk or deter it. Economic security primarily aims to enhance deterrence by denial. However, the idea of deterrence by punishment is often sidelined.

This task falls to countries collectively rather than to any single one. The G7 has agreed to counter economic coercion and the United States has proposed the creation of an Anti-Coercion Coalition. In this context, the G7 should contemplate a mechanism akin to the EU's Anti-Coercion Instrument and also a framework resembling an economic version of NATO's Article 5.

Merely initiating such discussions would have a pronounced effect and serve as a deterrent. Problems that neither a company nor a country can resolve independently should be addressed by like-minded international partners. ↗

### Let's de-risk!

Should German companies reduce their dependency on China, even if it leads to economic loss?



2023: don't know 3%, no answer 0%





# Trump's Second Act?

Europe can survive Trump again – if Germany leads

By Tara Varma



**Tara Varma** is a visiting fellow at the Centre on the United States and Europe at the Brookings Institution and former senior policy fellow and head of the Paris office of the European Council on Foreign Relations.

They also remember that during the COVID-19 pandemic the Trump administration fought Europe for vaccine access and banned Europeans from entry into the United States for months, while Americans could still travel to Europe with no restrictions.

And Europeans have not forgotten that Trump considered withdrawing the United States from NATO. The US security guarantee is existential for most European states – inside and outside the European Union.

But from COVID-19 then to Ukraine now, Europe has become stronger. It responded to the pandemic with financial solidarity, breaking the taboo of common borrowing at the EU-level, and purchased common stocks of critical drugs and medical equipment. Germany's reversal of its frugal position especially paved the way for the change in the EU's position.

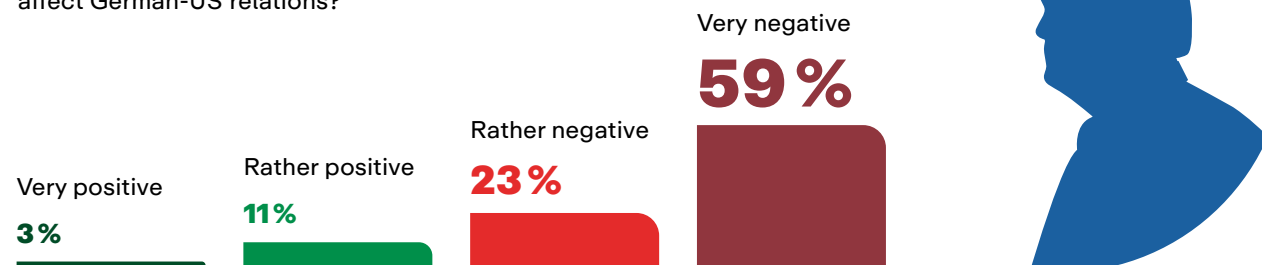
Europe also jointly and decisively responded to the shock of Russia's full-scale invasion of Ukraine. Germany is now well into the second year of its proclaimed change of era, the *Zeitenwende*.

Let us imagine that it is November 2024 and Donald Trump has won the US presidential election. Europeans are worried, scared and preparing for the worst. But they are not shocked as they have already lived through one Trump presidency.

Europeans remember the fundamental crisis Trump brought for the transatlantic relationship in his first term. He withdrew the United States from several multilateral agreements, such as the Paris climate agreement and the Iran nuclear deal.

## Gloomy outlook for transatlantic relations

How would a second Trump presidency affect German-US relations?



2023: don't know 3%, no answer 1%

**1 In the worst-case scenario,** Trump withdraws the United States from NATO. It would immediately end the credibility of the US security guarantee to Europe. It would also mark the end of the Western alliance, and – maybe more importantly – the end of Ukraine as a country. Putin would see this move as a nod to pursue his attacks not just on Ukraine but probably also on other countries in Eastern Europe, such as Poland. Meanwhile, Trump would also pursue strategic decoupling from China, including by raising tariffs on Chinese goods.

These steps would plunge the transatlantic relationship in agony. They would also put Germany in an untenable situation: having long relied on the United States for its security and on China for its economy, it would suddenly be left with neither.

**2 In a second scenario,** Trump would only threaten NATO withdrawal should Europe not contribute more to its defence. This would leave Europeans considering a future on their own, faced with a revisionist and dangerous Russia as well as a revisionist China intent on keeping its access to the European markets while further destabilizing the broken transatlantic bond. Trump's unpredictability would make a comeback. He would make grand announcements and then walk them back. He would post rants against Europeans on social media, leaving them clueless as to whether they should take him at his words or not.


**3 Finally, there is, if not a best-case scenario,** at least a least-worst one in which Trump upholds the US commitment to NATO in exchange for not only an increased European financial and material commitment to Europe's defence, but also more European engagement in the Indo-Pacific and alignment with US policy in the region. Europeans are preparing for these demands. But a major question lingers concerning the coordination for transatlantic cooperation in the Indo-Pacific. If not through NATO, an organisation Trump despises, then how should this coordination be achieved? Europeans, too, notably disagree on a potential NATO engagement in the Indo-Pacific.

With this comes the expectation that Berlin is finally going to take on the responsibility of being a leader in European defence and security policy. As Germany undergoes this paradigm shift, so does the EU with its own one as it seeks to integrate geopolitics into the European peace project.

When it comes to Ukraine, Trump has vowed that, if elected, he would immediately bring Presidents Volodymyr Zelenskyy and Vladimir Putin together and 'end the war in 24 hours'. He also pledged to 'finish the process we began under my administration of fundamentally re-evaluating NATO's purpose and NATO's mission'. Europeans hear alarm bells ringing. Three scenarios are possible.

In any of these scenarios, Trump would be very willing to divide Europeans and to pit them one against the other.

To prepare for all these scenarios, Europe needs a common strategy and defence policy. Germany was among the most reluctant EU member states in this regard before Russia's full invasion of Ukraine. The *Zeitenwende* coupled with its first National Security Strategy present a roadmap for change. However, for change to be sustainable in the long run, Germany will bear a special responsibility to ensure that investments in Europe's defence are not just cyclical but also truly structural. These will need to be made inside and outside NATO.

In the face of Trump's possible return to the White House, Europeans should pursue a more balanced transatlantic partnership, in which they take greater charge of their security and present the United States with an offer it could not refuse: more investment in their own defence capacities and more involvement in the Indo-Pacific region. 



# New Powers, New Ports



**T**he past years have shown to G20 leaders and citizens from Berlin to Cape Town that power is shifting. Middle-income countries are gaining influence. India is a major player in the digital economy, Brazil's role in combating climate change boosts its influence, and non-aligned states such as South Africa enhance their leverage amidst the Chinese-US confrontation. These nations want to reform the international system and to institutionalize multipolarity. The expansion of the BRICS and the African Union's new membership in the G20 highlight the appeal and the success of this approach.

*The Berlin Pulse* shows that 51 per cent of Germans have a positive view of the growing influence of emerging middle powers. And 66 per cent say they understand why countries do not join the West in imposing sanctions on Russia.

This shows that Germany is in a difficult position vis-à-vis global power shifts. The rise of emerging middle powers has softened the international condemnation of Russia's war in Ukraine, a country a short drive away from Berlin. And as we finalise this issue of *The Berlin Pulse*, it remains to be seen how relations with emerging middle powers will be affected by the Hamas attacks on Israel and the ensuing war.

As a trade heavyweight and a diplomatic influencer, Germany seeks to engage with the emerging middle income powers, and their influence offers it immense opportunities. As India's G20 Sherpa, Amitabh Kant, points out, climate protection and mitigation is key. According to Canada's Climate Minister Steven Guilbeault, Germany can count on reliable partners in this endeavour. And former AU partnership officer Hafsa Maalim points out that Berlin can use its diplomatic expertise to work with the African Union to make the international system fairer.

Moreover, the authors in this chapter convincingly demonstrate that there are not just power shifts from North to South but also ones grounded in the opening of new realms. The vast economic potential of space exploration remains untapped, a challenge that would benefit from German expertise, according to Bec Shrimpton, director at the Australian Strategic Policy Institute. Nina Hachigian, the US special representative for city and state diplomacy, emphasizes that Germany could improve transatlantic ties by bolstering relations between German and US cities and regions. Additionally, as explained by Russian democracy activist Mikhail Khodorkovsky, Germany needs to help the Russian opposition prepare for a post-Putin era.

But to seize these opportunities, Germany must distinctly outline its interests and reinforce them with economic, diplomatic and military capabilities. The following pages will tell you more. Enjoy! 📖



**Alisa Vogt**  
is programme director  
International Affairs at  
Körper-Stiftung

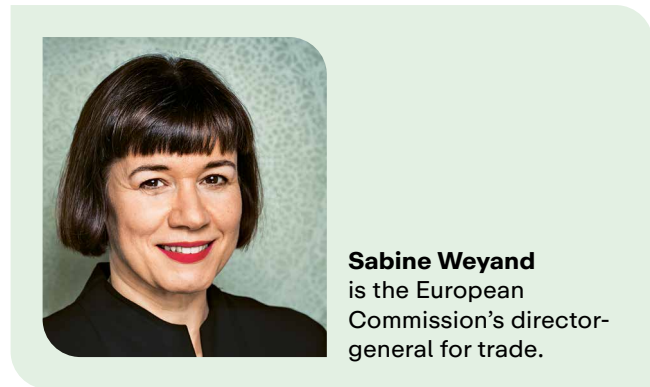


**Jonathan Lehrer**  
is programme manager  
International Affairs at  
Körper-Stiftung  
and the editor  
of *The Berlin Pulse*



## How Europe must trade in times of protectionism

By Sabine Weyand



Power has long been an awkward term in the European Union's vocabulary. But in today's world, we need to come to terms with the concept of power. This is particularly because rules-based international cooperation has given way to power-based relationships. Countries seek resilience in international economic relations more than efficiency.

This has not happened overnight, but it is now our reality. Economic competition between China and the United States is just one dimension of a growing geostrategic confrontation. The COVID-19 pandemic exposed the sensitivity of supply chains. Russia's war in Ukraine has shown how interdependency can be exploited and weaponized.

### ➔ Protectionism on the rise

The crisis of the multilateral trading system is a case in point. We are witnessing its progressive hollowing out: fewer cases are being brought to World Trade Organization's dispute-settlement body. At the same time protectionism is on the rise. The number of trade restrictions imposed globally has skyrocketed since 2020 to a new high of more than 2,500 in 2022.

Everything points to further fragmentation of the global economy, which in the worst-case scenario could wipe off the equivalent of Germany and France's combined Gross Domestic Product (GDP) share of the world economy.

The uncertainty we face is why it is even more important to put the EU in the best possible position to operate and succeed in such an environment. This is the logic underpinning the EU's new economic security strategy.

### ➔ Why the EU needs instruments of power

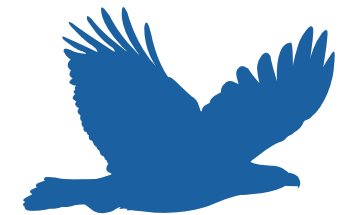
First, the EU had to learn not just the language of power but also to develop instruments of power. We will always prefer to interact with others within a rules-based multilateral trading system. But we cannot necessarily rely on the rule of law being respected by everyone.

We have built an Anti-Coercion Instrument – the EU's economic deterrent against practices that seek to alter member state policies through economic blackmail. And we are reviewing our screening of foreign direct investment for even greater efficiency in blocking third-country investments into strategic EU sectors where we assess security risks. We have stepped up our export controls to better prevent EU goods and technologies from creating security risks. We are assessing whether there are risks of leakage of export-controlled technology to destinations of concern via outbound investments. Our trade-defence tools, the new International Procurement Instrument and the new regulation to address distortions on the EU market aim to level the playing field and strengthen reciprocity.

Our unprecedented packages of sanctions to respond to Russia's war of aggression show what is possible when we all pull on the same rope. The strategic importance of EU unity should not be lost

### The Berlin Pulse survey – German public opinion:

Do the following countries represent a major, a minor or no threat to Germany's economy?



2023: answer 'don't know' ranged from 1 to 4 per cent for all issues

on anyone – it will make or break our geopolitical future.

Second, our bargaining power comes from the strength, size and attractiveness of our economy. Without this, everything else fails. From military modernisation like Germany's *Zeitenwende* to combatting climate change, nothing is possible without a sustainably strong and innovative economy.

### ➔ Trade not only with friends

There is a reason why our economic security strategy puts promoting our competitiveness first. And promoting a strong economy starts at home. This year we have given it an additional boost with the Green Deal Industrial Plan and our long-term competitiveness strategy.

Trade policy contributes to these efforts by ensuring access to inputs we need for the green and digital transitions, by opening new export opportunities, by helping to create economies of scale and by defending the Single Market from unfair practices.

Third, we can most effectively pursue our objectives through openness and international engagement. This means including everybody, not just close friends. We remain the largest trading bloc in the world, accounting for 16.2 per cent of global trade. One in five jobs in the EU depends on trade. This is why we continue investing in our bilateral trade relationships. We already have one

of the largest networks of trade agreements in the world and we are continuing to expand it.

Negotiations with Chile and Kenya have recently been concluded. The agreement with New Zealand has just been signed and we are making every effort to finalize talks with Australia, Mexico and Mercosur, while advancing negotiations with India and a number of ASEAN countries.

### ➔ Flexibility first

The essence today is to have flexible approaches. The time of one-size-fits-all solutions is over. In certain cases, a traditional trade agreement will be the right approach. In other cases, we need other arrangements that allow us to focus on specific issues of mutual interest.

Here our Trade and Technology Councils with the United States and India, our digital trade agreements, the Raw Material Partnerships, the Sustainable Investment Facilitation Agreements and other partnerships come in.

Power on its own it is neither good nor bad. It is part of a dynamic game in the grander scheme of things. The challenge will be to continue rethinking trade in an environment that is in continuing power flux. This will need constant recalibration. Germany, as Europe's biggest economy and a trade powerhouse, must be at the forefront of this debate inside the EU. ↗

# Make Europe Great Again

**Giulio Tremonti** on how to navigate Europe through crisis and conflict and why Brussels might not help

**Körber-Stiftung: The political geography of Europe has always been centred on the question of how to integrate Russia. What has changed since February 2022?**

**Giulio Tremonti:** Vladimir Putin's war has dramatically interrupted all this. Putin burned the bridges. However, the war is not the only turning point in our history. Europe is facing the evolution of globalisation in a new fragmented and furious world.

**What will Europe's future look like in such a world?**

There are two potential geopolitical scenarios for Europe. In the first scenario, Europe sits at the international table with its name boldly written on the place card. In the second scenario, Europe also is at the table but with its name written on the menu, listed among the dishes available.

To avoid finding ourselves in the second scenario, Poland's 16th Prime Minister Mateusz Morawiecki in his speech at Heidelberg University earlier this year rightly called for making 'Europe great again'.

**What does Europe need to do to become 'great again'?**

Europe needs a new political machinery, with a new political software but also a new constitutional hardware. Regarding a new political software: There is the prevailing dominance of a dogmatic idea of democracy in Brussels today. One part of Europe is perceived as fully democratic, while the other is deemed as not democratic enough. That development has resulted in a divided Europe.

**Can you give us an example?**

Poland ruled by the PIS party is an example, and it also illustrates the volatility of this division. In early 2022, the country was criticized for violating requirements of the European Union of an

independent and impartial judicial system. A few days later, attitudes towards Poland changed as other EU member states now focused on Poland's solidarity with Ukraine.

**And why do we need a new constitutional hardware?**

A new European constitutional architecture is necessary to deal with the new enlargement of the EU, from Ukraine to the Western Balkans and other countries.

**You have been minister of economy and finance during the European debt crisis. How do you look at your time in office?**

In 2003, we called for the introduction of Eurobonds to finance European infrastructure and the defence industry. I remember that the reaction to this proposal was negative. The message was purely around financial concerns: no more public debt even if the burden would be shared at a European level. Now, two decades later, we have European debt and we are grappling with the realities of a war. The time has come for a European foreign policy and European defence policy. ↗



**Giulio Tremonti** is a member of the Italian parliament for Fratelli d'Italia and president of the committee for foreign and European community affairs. He served four times as minister of economy and finance, and he was deputy prime minister in 2005–2006.

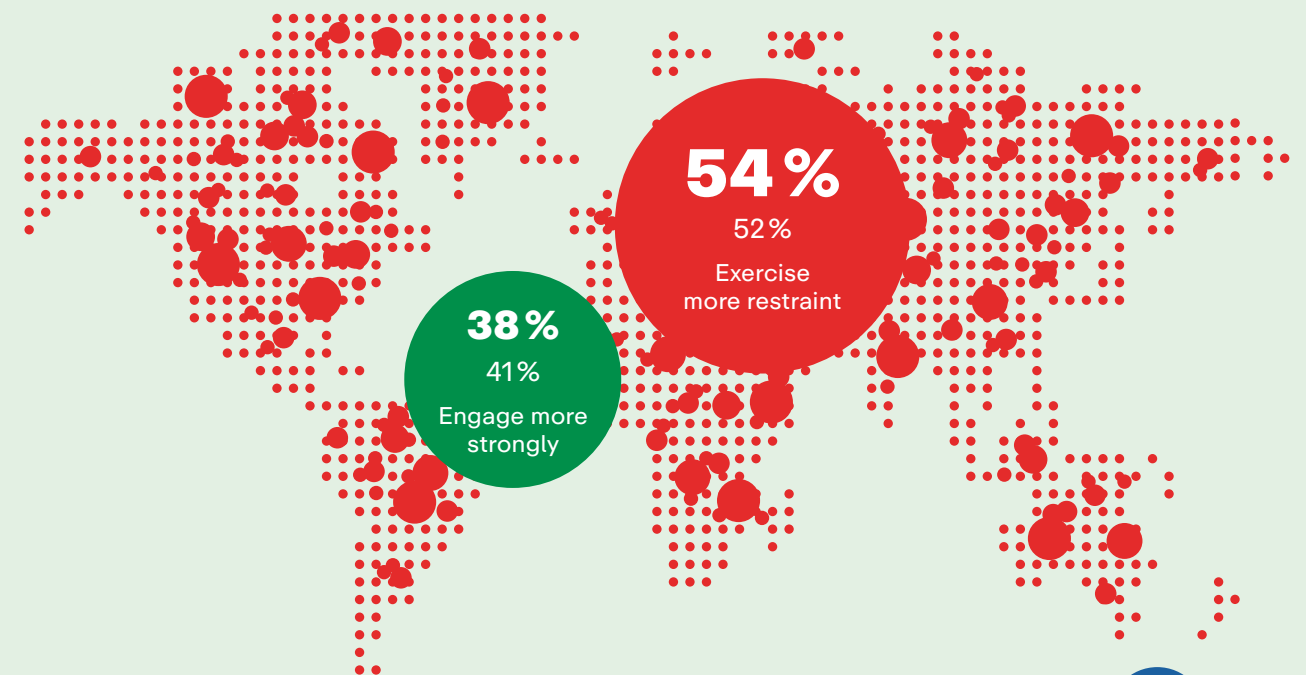
# The Berlin Pulse Survey 2023/2024

A representative survey on German attitudes to foreign policy commissioned by Körber-Stiftung

All US results by Pew Research Center   
September 2023

## Germans favour international restraint

Should Germany engage more strongly in international crises, or exercise more restraint?



Should Germany become more strongly engaged militarily, diplomatically or financially?

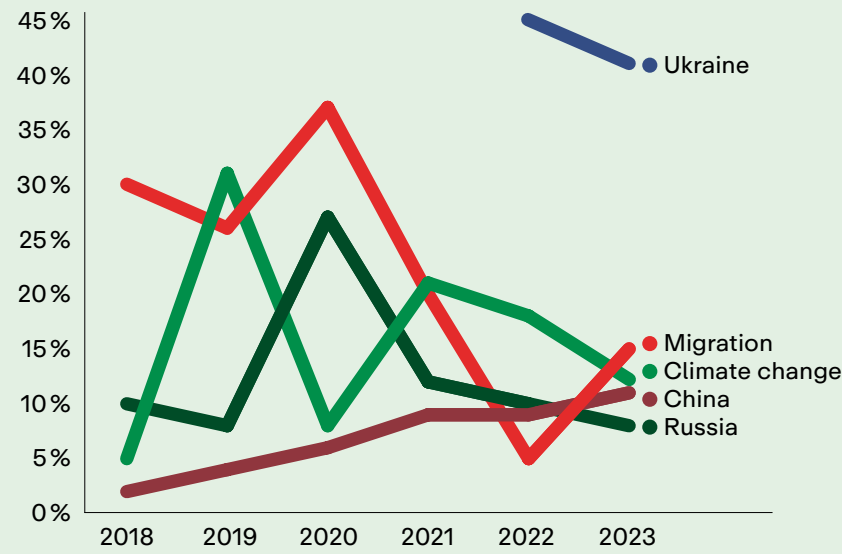


2023: spontaneously: none of the above 4%, don't know 2%, no answer 2% | 2023: don't know 5%, no answer 2%



### Greatest challenge: War in Ukraine

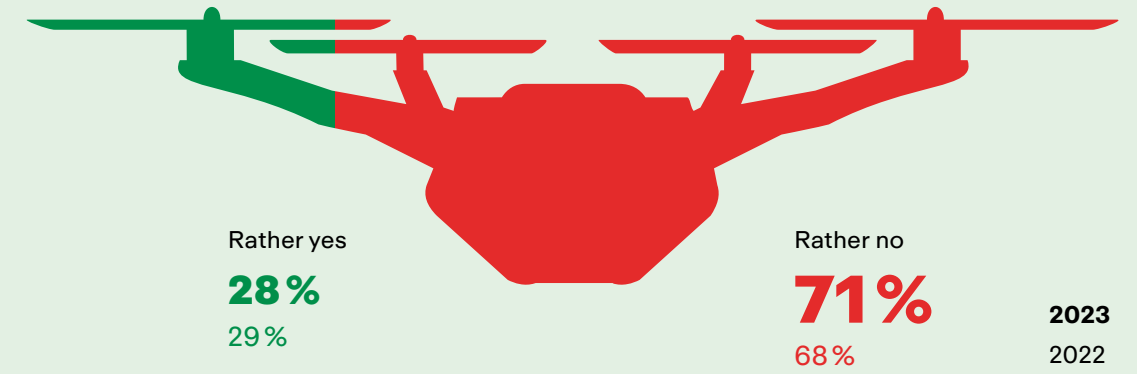
What are the greatest challenges currently facing German foreign policy?



2023: don't know 11%, no answer 5% | 2022: don't know 13%, no answer 4%

### No military leadership

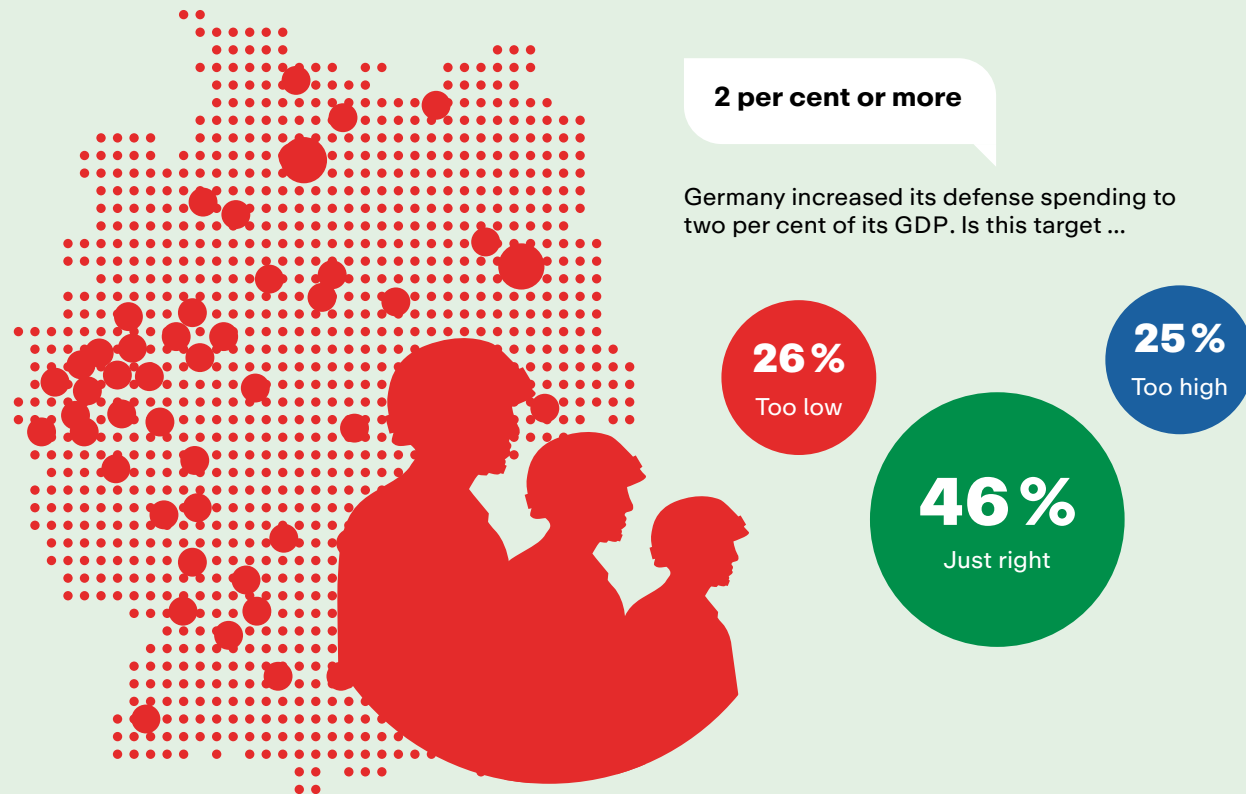
Should Germany play a military leadership role in Europe?



2023: don't know 1%, no answer 0% | 2022: don't know 2%, no answer 1%

### 2 per cent or more

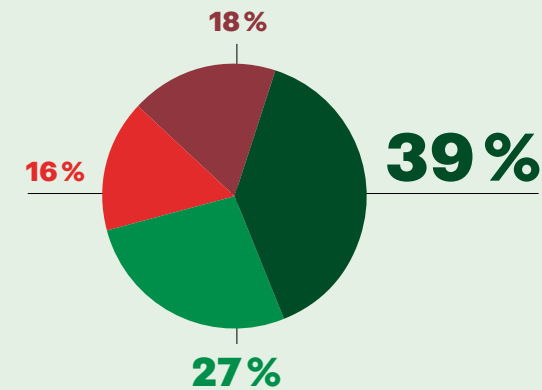
Germany increased its defense spending to two per cent of its GDP. Is this target ...



2023: don't know 2%, no answer 1%

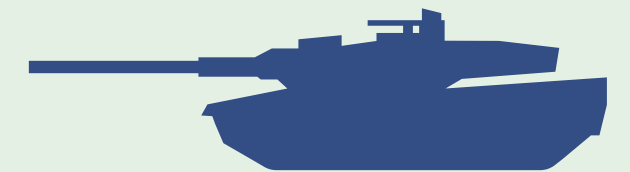
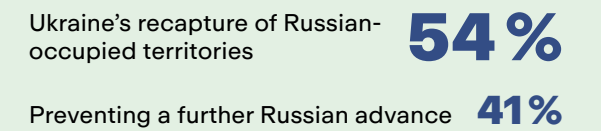
### Stay with Ukraine

Should Germany continue to provide military support to Ukraine?



● Yes ● Rather yes ● Rather no ● No

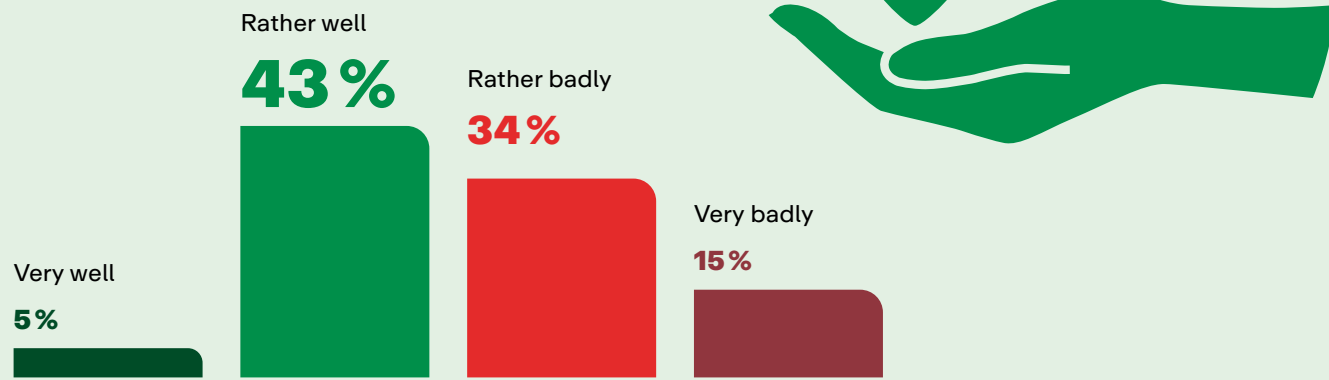
Which goal should Germany primarily pursue with its military support for Ukraine?



2023: spontaneously: none of the above 2%, don't know 2%, no answer 1%

### Partly values-based

How is Germany doing in terms of its values-based foreign policy?

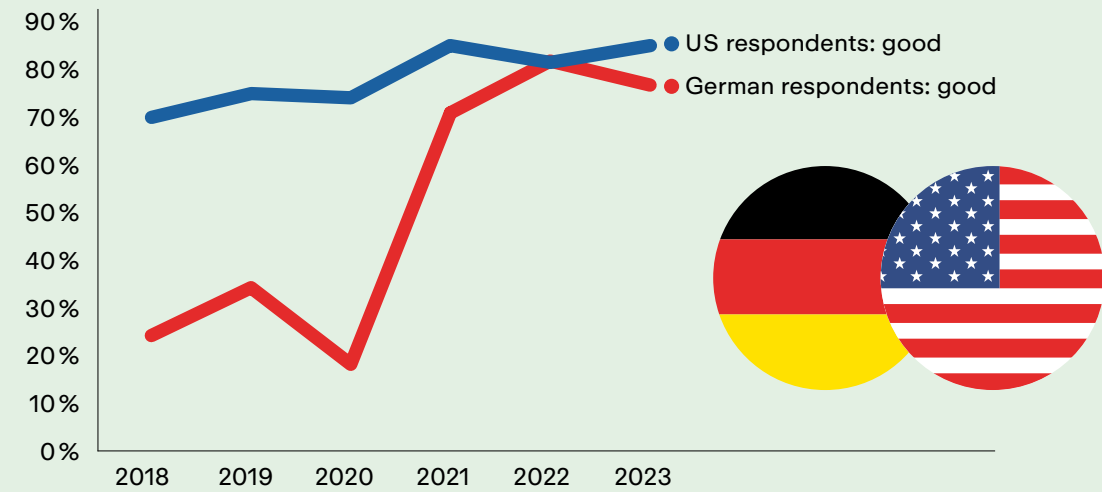


2023: don't know 2%, no answer 1%



### Best friends across the Atlantic

How would you rate the current relations between Germany and the United States?

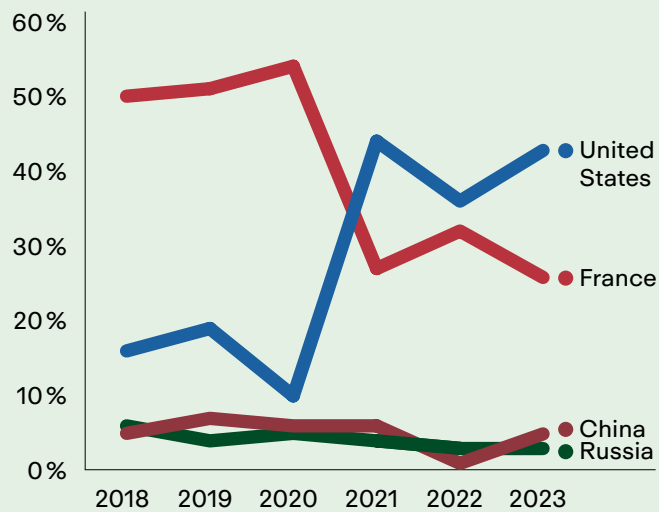


German respondents, 2023: bad 19%, don't know 3%, no answer 1%  
US respondents, 2023: bad 10%, don't know/no answer 4%

### Close partnership with the United States

German respondents:

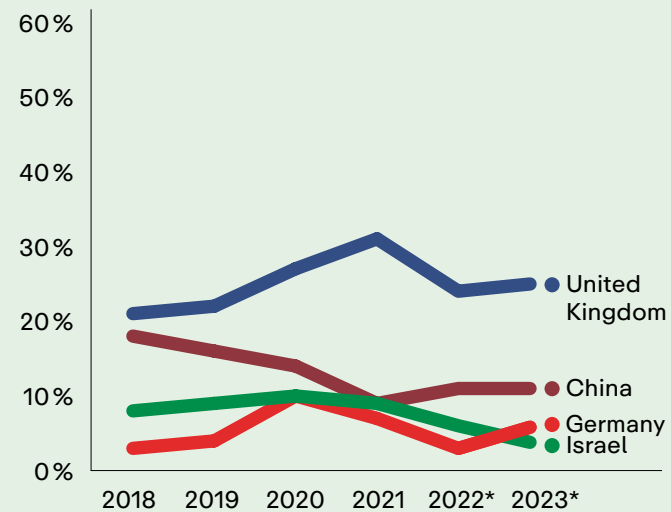
Which country is currently the most important partner for Germany?



German respondents, 2023: don't know 14%, no answer 4%

US respondents:

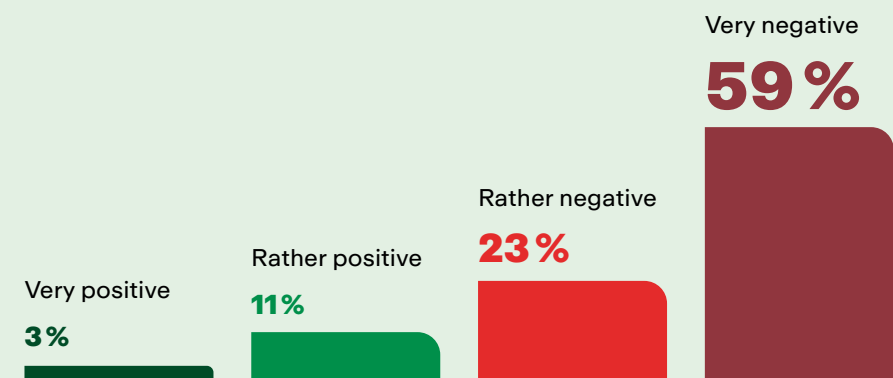
Which country is currently the most important partner for the United States's?



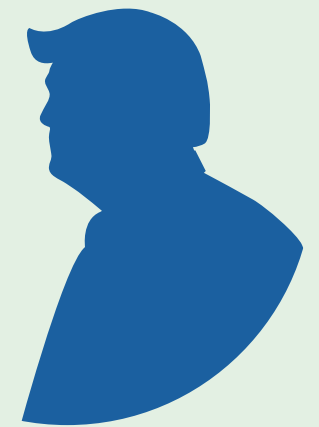
US respondents, 2023: don't know/no answer 24%;  
\*Limited comparability to previous years due to a change in methodology from telephone to online survey

### Gloomy outlook for transatlantic relations

How would a second Trump presidency affect German-US relations?

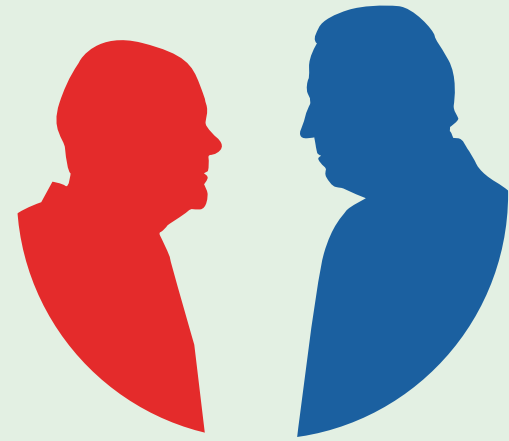


2023: don't know 3%, no answer 1%





### Partnership for Ukraine and free trade

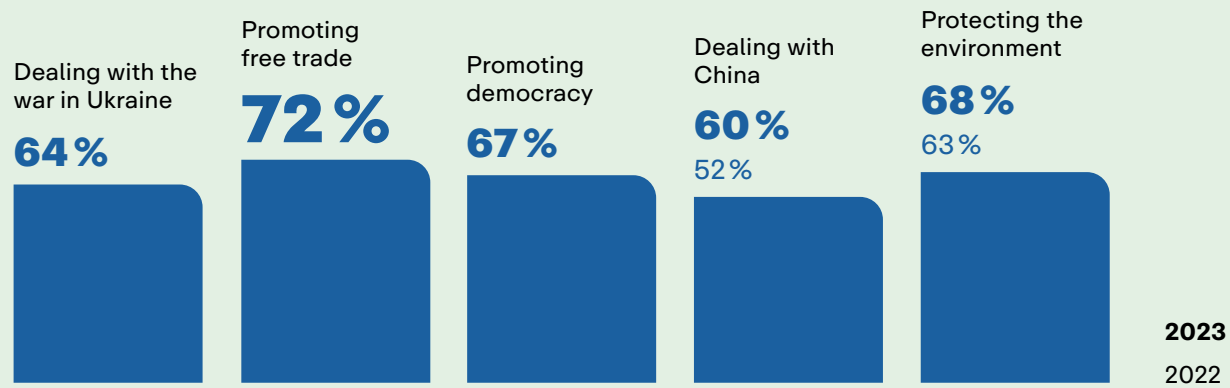


German respondents:  
Do you see the United States as a partner on these issues?



answer 'neither' ranged from 0 to 1 per cent for all issues

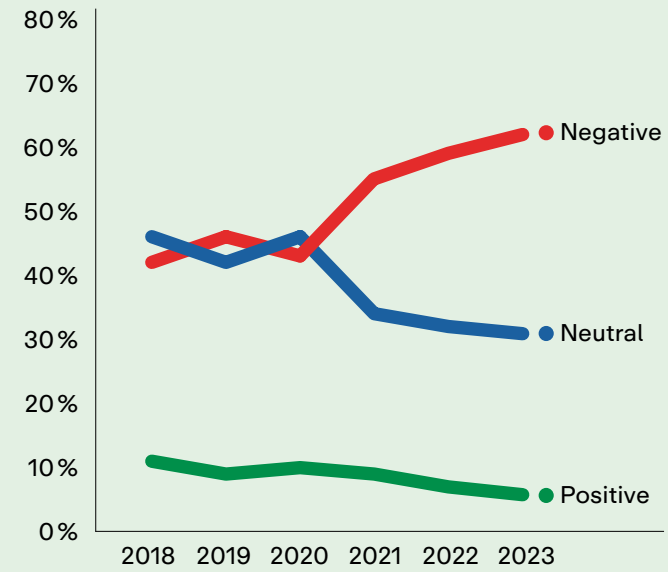
US respondents:  
Do you see Germany as a partner on these issues?



answer 'neither' 6 per cent for all issues;  
Limited comparability to previous years due to a change in methodology from telephone to online survey

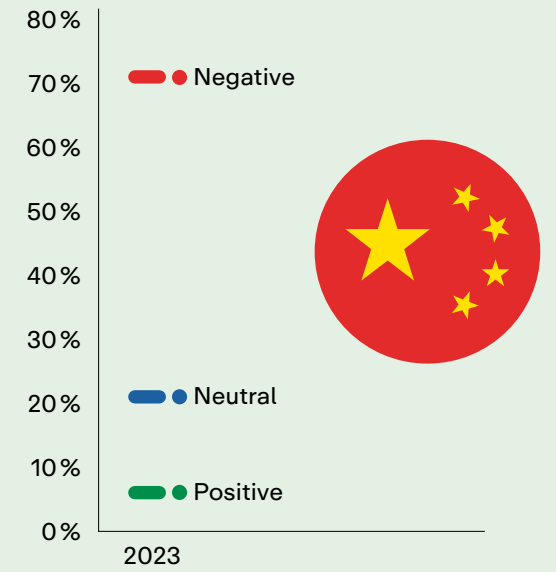
### China scepticism on the rise

German respondents:  
How do you see China's rising influence?



German respondents, 2023: don't know 0%, no answer 1%

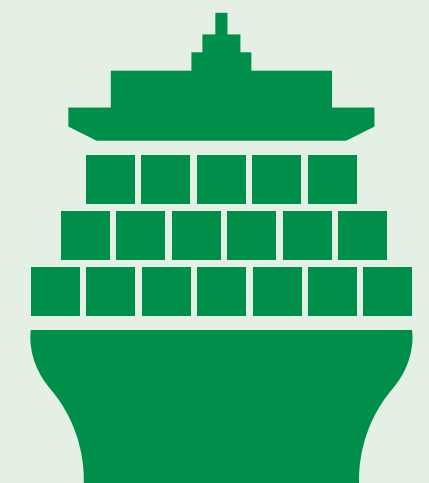
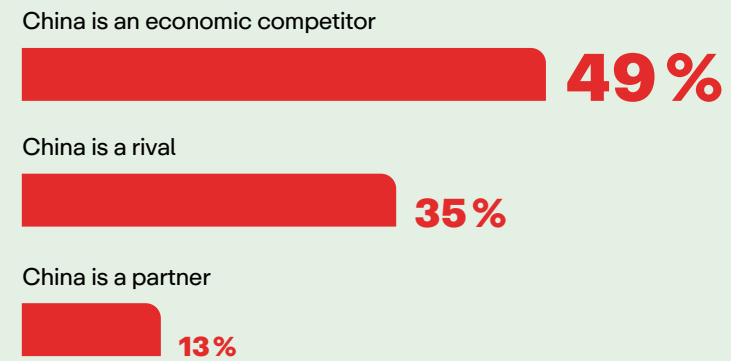
US respondents:  
How do you see China's rising influence?



US respondents, 2023: don't know/no answer 3%

### China as a competitor

What is China to Germany?



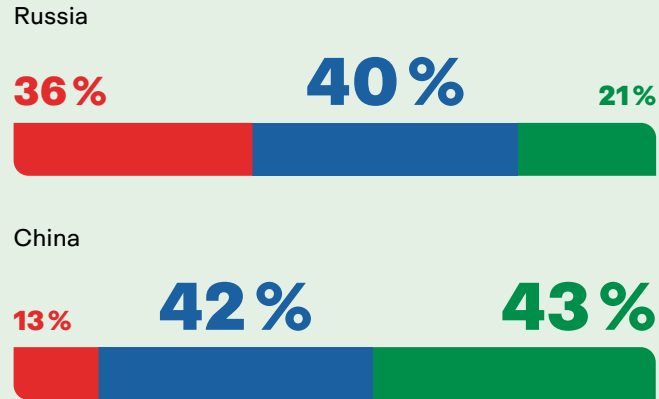
2023: don't know 2%, no answer 1%

### Russia threatens Germany's security

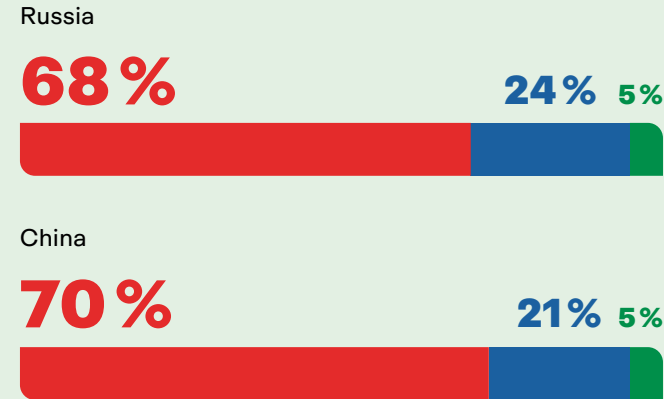


Do the following countries represent a military threat to...?

... Germany's security? (German respondents):



... security in the United States? (US respondents):

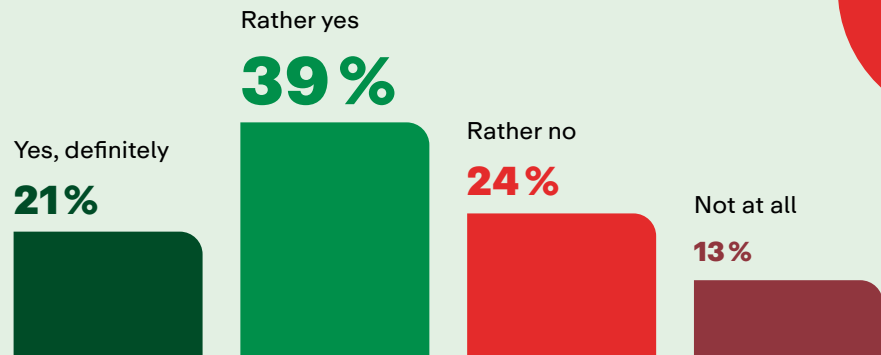


● Major military threat ● Minor military threat ● No military threat

answer 'don't know' ranged from 1 to 4 per cent for all issues

### Let's de-risk!

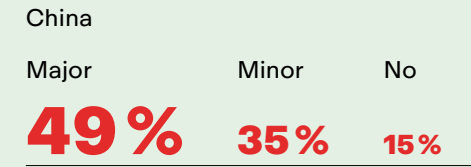
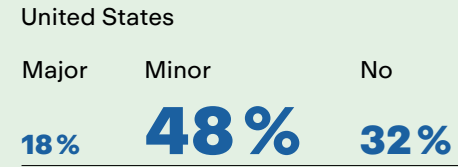
Should German companies reduce their dependency on China, even if it leads to economic loss?



2023: don't know 3%, no answer 0%

### China's economy seen as a threat

Do the following countries represent a major, a minor or no threat to Germany's economy? (German respondents):



Does China represent a major, a minor or no threat to the American economy? (US respondents):

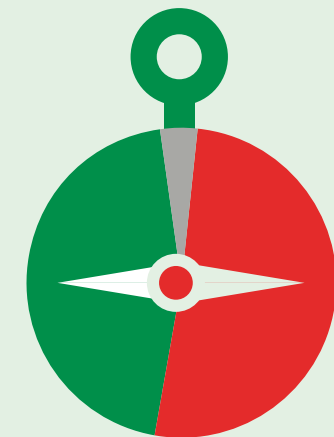


2023: answer 'don't know' ranged from 1 to 4 per cent for all issues

### Scepticism about further EU-enlargement

Albania, Kosovo, Montenegro, North Macedonia as well as Georgia and Moldova wanting to join the EU is ...?

Rather positive 45%



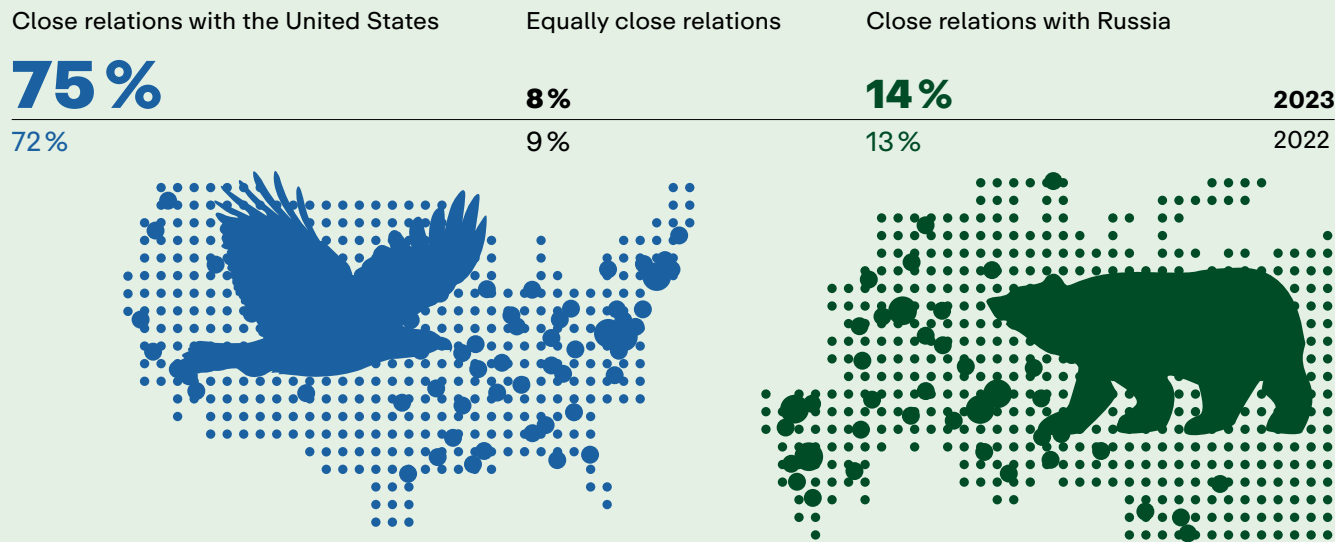
Rather negative 51%

2023: don't know 3%, no answer 1%

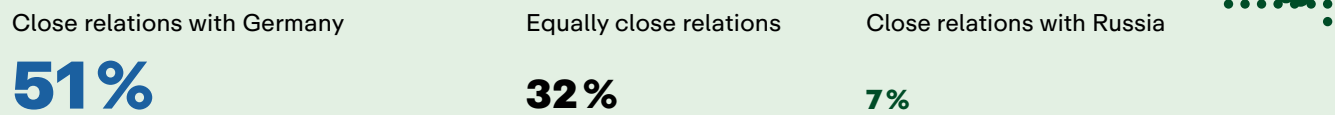


### Russia's supporters remain a minority

What is more important for Germany...? (German respondents):



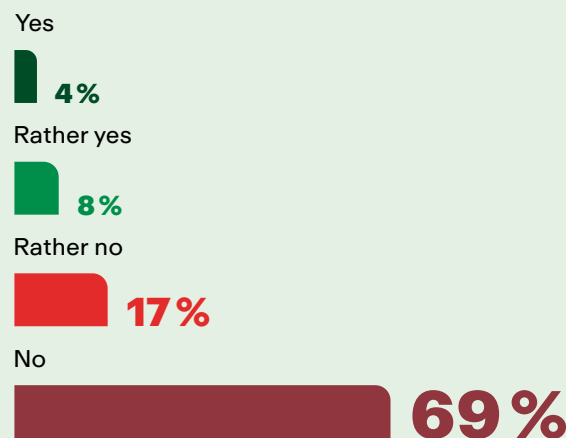
What is more important for the United States? (US respondents):



German respondents, 2023: don't know 2%, no answer 1% | US respondents, 2023: don't know/no answer 3%, neither 7%

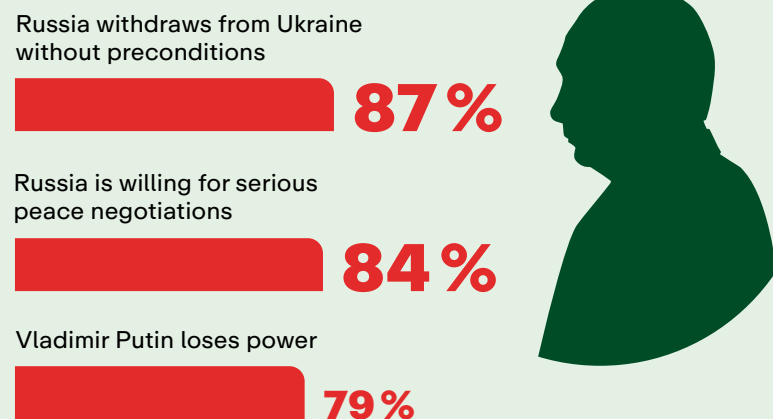
### No more trust in the Russian government

Do you trust Russia's government under Vladimir Putin?



2023: don't know 1%, no answer 1%

Would you trust the Russian government again, if ...

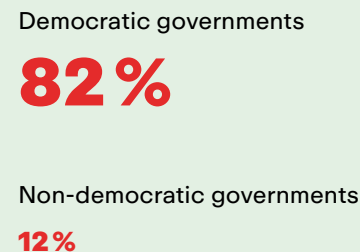


2023: answer 'don't know' ranged from 1 to 2 per cent for all issues

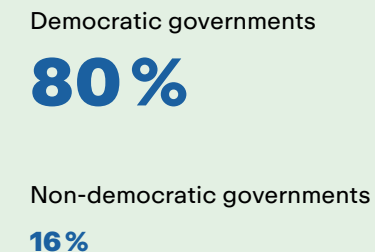
### Democracies deliver

Which system is better equipped to deal with global challenges in the long term?

German respondents:



US respondents:



German respondents, 2023: don't know 4%, no answer 2% | US respondents, 2023: don't know/no answer 4%

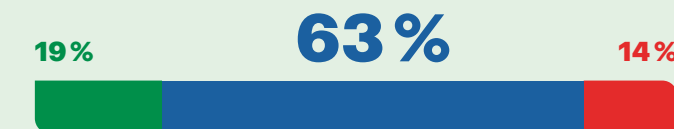
### Loss of influence

Has Germany's international influence in the world in the last two years ...?

German respondents:



US respondents:



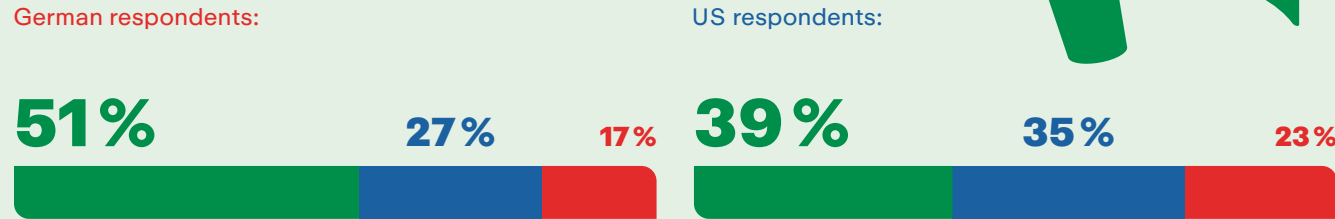
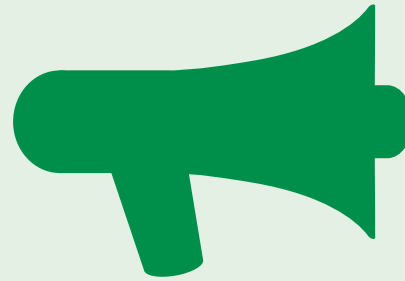
● Rather increased ● Stayed the same ● Rather decreased

German respondents, 2023: don't know 1%, no answer 1% | US respondents, 2023: don't know/no answer 5%



**Optimism towards emerging powers**

Do you think the growing influence of emerging economies like Brazil, India and South Africa is ... ?

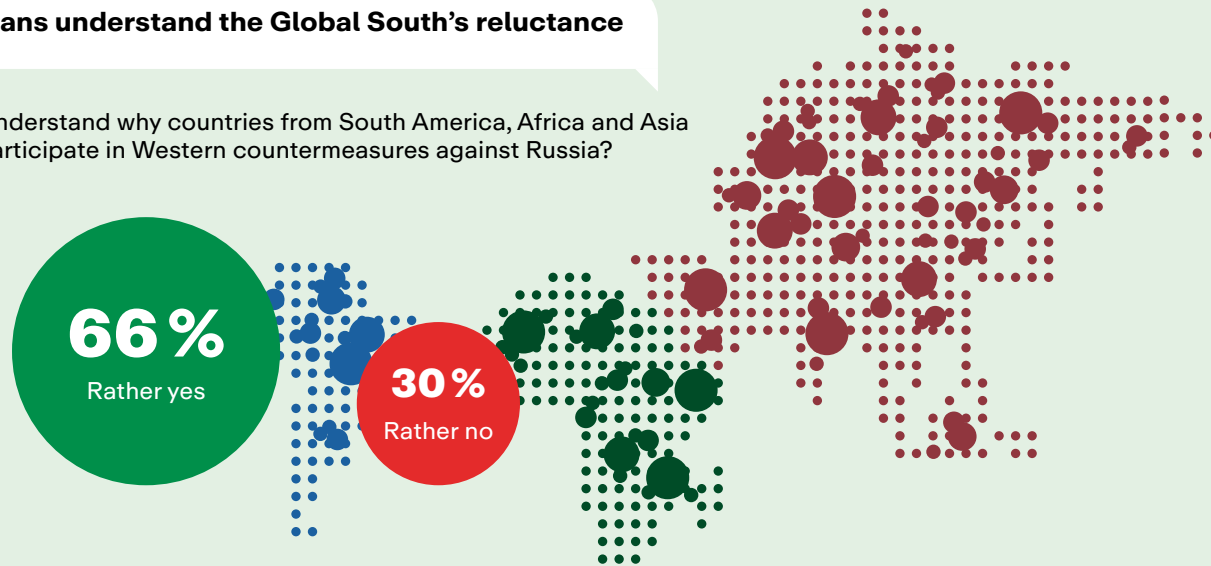


● Positive ● Neutral ● Negative

German respondents, 2023: don't know 4%, no answer 1% | US respondents, 2023: don't know/no answer 3%

**Germans understand the Global South's reluctance**

Do you understand why countries from South America, Africa and Asia do not participate in Western countermeasures against Russia?



2023: Spontaneously: Neutral 1%, don't know 2%, no answer 1%

The survey for Germany was commissioned by Körber-Stiftung and carried out by KANTAR PUBLIC Germany in September 2023. Telephone interviews conducted with a representative random sample of 1,057 participants in September (Margin of error: < 1.4 per cent for unit values of 5 per cent; < 3.1 per cent for unit values of 50 per cent). German data and results available at [www.theberlinpulse.org](http://www.theberlinpulse.org).

The survey for the United States was conducted by Ipsos for Pew Research Center in September 2023. Online interviews were conducted with a representative random sample of

1,014 participants, September 15–24, 2023 (Margin of error: +/- 3.2 per cent at the 95 per cent confidence level).

The 2023 US survey was conducted on the Ipsos Knowledge-Panel G&A Omnibus. Many questions have been asked in previous surveys on the phone and Pew Research Center's American Trends Panel. The extent of the mode differences varies across questions; while there are negligible differences on some questions, others have more pronounced differences. Caution should be taken when evaluating online and phone estimates.

# Germany's *Zeitenwende* Is at Risk

## Advice from London could help to rethink Germany's security strategy By Sophia Gaston



As China embarks on the largest hard-power military build-up since the Second World War and Russia's war rages in Ukraine, Western capitals are pivoting to a wartime footing, focused on sharpening their economic competitiveness and resilience.

In a more contested global environment Germany's *Zeitenwende* shows that political enthusiasm and financial commitments are not always enough to drive a fundamental change. Eighteen months on from Chancellor Olaf Scholz's seismic speech, Germany looks no closer to defining a new identity as a security actor. Its first National Security Strategy (NSS) shows awareness of the need for the country to have a seat at the geopolitical table.

➔ **National Security Strategy without focus**

But it fails to identify the areas in which Germany could genuinely influence global developments, and it does not outline the institutional reforms needed to deliver on them. And, while the NSS shows a government scrambling to rise to the challenges of the current environment, it shies away from considering Germany's role in addressing the contested frontiers of the future, such as space, the Arctic and new technologies.

Here, Germany should look to the United Kingdom, which has been forced to make hard choices in the face of a deteriorating international landscape and constrained domestic resources. The need to pragmatically and soberly define its strengths and vulnerabilities led to the prioritization of the Euro-Atlantic and Indo-Pacific security. London invested in new areas of global governance, such as climate policy and AI regulation, where it has legitimate claims to convene and lead.

The United Kingdom has also embarked on bold new initiatives with allies, from the trilateral AUKUS pact with Australia and the United States to bilateral agreements with the likes of Australia, Canada and Japan, supporting access to critical minerals, commodities and capabilities.

➔ **€ 100 billion is not enough**

Germany has found its voice but failed to define its intent or to express its agency. It must ensure that its €100 billion initial investment in its new security posture is backed by a multi-decade commitment that future governments cannot reverse. Berlin must also increase its contribution to the defence of the liberal order that has so profoundly served its interests. Sitting on the fence is no longer sufficient.

Reproducing the United Kingdom's National Security Council model will help Germany prioritize the application of its considerable influence and assets, such as amplifying its partners' investments to counter Chinese coercion of smaller Indo-Pacific states.

Berlin should also seek involvement in new collaborative projects such as the Global Combat Air Programme fighter jet partnership between Italy, Japan and the United Kingdom, which will persuade its partners of its long-term commitment. The world cannot wait for Germany's confidence to grow; its leaders must step boldly towards the nation's responsibilities.



# Democracy in Russia Is Possible

## How Russia can shift power from the rule of the strongest to the rule of law

By Mikhail Khodorkovsky

Vladimir Putin’s war against Ukraine demonstrates that his regime is doomed to fall. Whether it will fall in a year or five is impossible to predict, but his war has unleashed forces that will bring this about. The question is whether a power shift towards the rule of law is possible and whether the democratic opposition will be prepared for it. We must face up to the hard reality that peaceful demonstrations alone cannot succeed against Putin’s brutal regime. This means that he will not be replaced through the ballot box or peaceful protest.

Therefore, I saw an opportunity in Yevgeny Prigozhin’s attempted coup. Not out of any fondness for a man who, like Putin, was a gangster and a murderer. But his mutiny provided the kind of crisis essential for toppling the regime. The assassination of Prigozhin and his associates shows how widespread dissatisfaction with Putin is within the military and how weak the regime feels, as it felt unable to put the insurgents on trial. Change will only be possible by exploiting such splits within the regime.



**Mikhail Khodorkovsky** is one of the founders of the Russian anti-war committee, former political prisoner, businessman and pro-democracy activist.

Splits are likely to occur again, and the democratic opposition needs to be prepared for that as ‘national-patriots’ like Prigozhin will not deliver democratisation and the rule of law. We must therefore depose the regime and then be ready to defend our democratic interests. Acknowledging and accepting this is essential for any serious strategy for regime change.

**‘The break-up of Russia would be an enormous mistake.’**

Toppling Putin is a prerequisite for a democratic change, but we also need a vision of what comes next. The break-up of Russia would be an enormous mistake. The states that would emerge would inherit nuclear weapons and be ruled by local thugs like Chechnya’s Ramzan Kadyrov. A totalitarian figure could emerge, determined to rebuild the Russian empire, and the resulting militaristic, expansionist entity would again turn its grievances against Ukraine and the West.

But Putin should not be replaced by a ‘good tsar’ either. Another strongman with centralized power would mean the inevitable continuation of corruption, stagnation and repression at home as well as expansionist aggression abroad.

I therefore advocate a democratic, federal parliamentary republic. We need a federal structure that is empowered by the regions rather than a system in which a strong tsar at the centre enables petty tsars on the periphery.

One of the biggest losses to Putin’s regime has been the exodus of many of Russia’s best and brightest. But exiles provide a cadre of potential revolutionaries who, no longer under the repression of

a police state, will be better able to build Russia’s future democratic governance. Therefore, the opposition abroad needs to be recognized as a political representative of at least the anti-Putin and anti-war part of Russian society. This would help opposition-minded Russians find one voice and would signal an alternative centre of power. Germany should provide consistent backing for the creation of a coalition of Russian opposition forces, instead of driving them to remain in separate groups as they compete for support funds.

**‘A selective lifting of sanctions could incentivize struggle against the regime.’**


To empower Russia’s democratic opposition, the West also needs to be smarter in its application of sanctions. We need a predictable mechanism for the introduction and removal of personal sanctions. A selective lifting of sanctions via granting of visas, banking services and free ownership of assets could incentivize struggle against the regime. At the same time, there should be zero tolerance towards Russians who want to live in European countries but refuse to dissociate themselves from Putin’s regime. This is simply dangerous, as it implies their dependence on the regime and their likely willingness to be its tool.

I believe that not discriminating against Russian citizens who have distanced themselves from the Putin regime would undermine some of the

Kremlin propaganda and help to drive an additional segment of Russian society away from the regime.

**➔ No wall can isolate Russia**

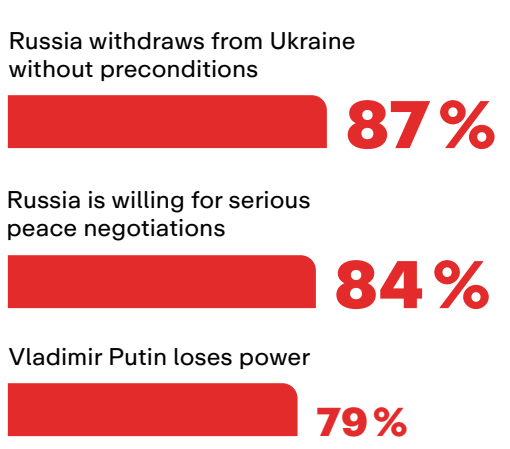
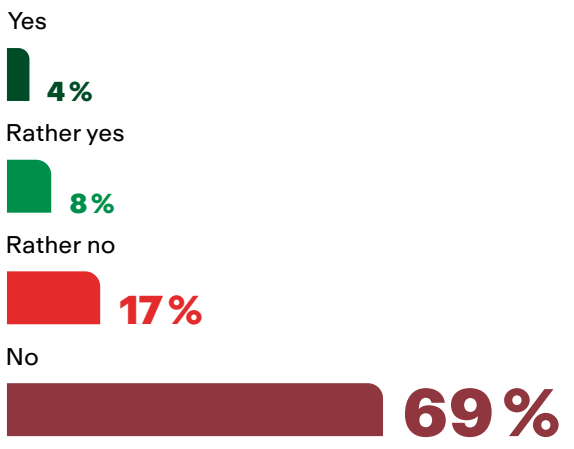
Given its long-standing and deep ties with Russian society, Germany could play a greater role in shaping European policy and influencing US policy regarding their vision of Russia’s future and practical steps, including building relationships with regional elites, the military and part of the bureaucracy. Germany needs to realize that Russia is inextricably linked to Europe and that there is no wall in the world today that can isolate it. Russia will always be a major problem or part of the solution to Europe’s existing challenges.

In Berlin, in April 2023, many members of the Russian opposition signed the Declaration of the Russian Democratic Forces and called on the West to work with us. Cracking down on the Putin regime is vital but so too is supporting those within Russian society who reject the regime’s imperialism and seek to replace it with a democratic alternative. A law-based, democratic Russia is possible, but we can no longer be faint-hearted about the steps required to achieve it. 

**No more trust in the Russian government**

Do you trust Russia’s government under Vladimir Putin?

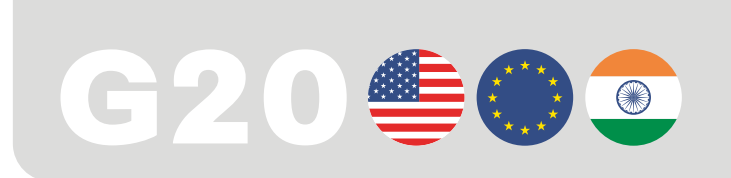
Would you trust the Russian government again, if ...



2023: don’t know 1%, no answer 1%

2023: answer ‘don’t know’ ranged from 1 to 2 per cent for all issues

# Don't Stop the Count!



## Three Munich Young Leaders on the rise of autocracy and upcoming elections in the United States, European Union and India By Peter Rough, Sara Skyttedal and Jaiveer Shergill



**Peter Rough** is senior fellow and director of the Center on Europe and Eurasia at the Hudson Institute in the United States.

### Democracy has eroded globally in the past decades. What does that mean for international politics?

**Peter Rough:** The erosion of democracy risks a more dangerous, conflict-ridden world. It is close to a truism of international relations that democracies do not go to war with one another. Moreover, liberal democracies generally outperform authoritarian regimes in unleashing human potential. More authoritarianism augurs a poorer, less vibrant world of greater suffering. In conclusion: more friction, less flourishing.



**Sara Skyttedal** is a member of the European Parliament and the chairwoman of its delegation for relations with Iraq.

**Sara Skyttedal:** The erosion of democracy means that the balance between realpolitik and idealism is becoming more difficult. There was a time when the West believed that increased economic exchange and trade with some form of automation would lead to the spread of democracy and human rights. But the past decade has shown very clearly that this is not the case. How this realisation plays into relations with China is perhaps the most difficult nut to crack on the global stage for Europe and the United States.



**Jaiveer Shergill** is national spokesperson for the Bharatiya Janata Party and a former Supreme Court lawyer in India.

### How might the upcoming elections in your country impact the state of democracy worldwide?

**Jaiveer Shergill:** India's general elections in 2024 will be the biggest celebration of democracy, with 900 million voters exercising their constitutional right to choose their government. Our democracy has weathered many storms since India's independence in 1947. Administratively unstable governments like in Pakistan or Myanmar affect the neighbourhood, so our stability is critical to the subcontinent.

**Peter Rough:** The next US president and his or her congressional partners will take decisions that will shape the outcome of Sino-American competition. The state of democracy around the world will depend on whether a hierarchical Sino-centric order supplants that of the United States. We should not forget that the democracy waves of the last century were by-products of the United States' superpower status and its Jeffersonian soul.

### How helpful is a binary concept of democracy versus autocracy?

**Jaiveer Shergill:** India is against the concept of dividing the world between democracy and autocracy. Strategic autonomy, non-alignment and interest-based coalitions are the alpha and omega of its foreign policy. That makes India an agenda setter rather than a camp follower. Now, under the leadership of Prime Minister Narendra Modi, India has friendly relationships with many partners like the United States and the EU, but also with Russia and Ukraine. And India is providing assistance to neighbouring countries like Afghanistan, the Maldives and Sri Lanka, primarily due to its non-prejudiced approach to any particular model of governance. For it, a binary concept of democracy versus autocracy has a harmful and limiting effect on the larger goal of combatting global challenges.

**Peter Rough:** Although we should encourage democratisation, it is beyond the power of the West to implant democracy across the globe. But the West should hold third countries to a basic standard: are they at peace with the existing order or not? It should partner with those that are, like Saudi

Arabia and Vietnam, and oppose those that are not, like China, Iran and Russia. Strengthening liberal democracy begins with competing against anti-Western actors.

### How can EU member states encourage democratisation? And what is Germany's responsibility in this?

**Sara Skyttedal:** The power that the EU possesses by allowing or rejecting economic cooperation with the outside world is its most important tool for improving democratic rights. One example is the General Scheme of Preferences. Using this, the EU can unilaterally remove import duties from products coming into the EU market from vulnerable developing countries if they also meet certain human rights requirements. The rationale behind this is to strengthen the union's ability for joint foreign policy-making and to improve democracy worldwide. For better or worse, like with all important changes in the EU system, Germany as the biggest member state is key for improvement. ↩

→ The Munich Young Leaders network is a joint project of Körber-Stiftung and the Munich Security Conference that provides a forum for future decision-makers to inspire new thinking in foreign and security policy.

### Democracies deliver

Which system is better equipped to deal with global challenges in the long term?

German respondents:

Democratic governments

**82%**

Non-democratic governments

**12%**

US respondents:

Democratic governments

**80%**

Non-democratic governments

**16%**



German respondents, 2023: don't know 4%, no answer 2% | US respondents, 2023: don't know/no answer 4%



# Ambitious India

## Top diplomat **Amitabh Kant** on why India wants to be the voice of the Global South and how India expects the world to change



The world is facing a multiplicity of challenges, including a global economic slowdown, a slow post-pandemic recovery, debt distress, supply-chain disruptions, and a food, fuel and fertilizer crisis. We must collectively find solutions to these challenges in an inclusive and decisive manner. For this, factoring in the concerns of the Global South, home to three-quarters of humanity, is of the utmost importance. A multipolar world order is taking shape, in which emerging markets and developing economies are significant players with immense economic potential. It is important for them to have an equal voice and to address their concerns.

India's achievements and success stories offer templates that can be replicated in other developing countries. Today, it accounts for 3.6 per cent of global GDP and has become the fifth-largest

economy in the world, close behind Germany. Digitalization has swept the length and breadth of the country. Over 840 million Indians have an online presence and another 400 million will get one by 2025. Digitalization helped India to successfully administer over 2.2 billion COVID-19 vaccinations across the country. India has also made significant strides in climate action. In this regard, the Climate Change Performance Index puts it as one of the best G20 countries, and among the five best countries in the world. These achievements are a beacon of light for the developing world.

### ➔ Climate finance is key

India has amplified the voice of the Global South during its G20 presidency, putting matters of particular interest to developing countries centre-stage. These priorities include accelerating progress towards the UN Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs), such as ramping up climate finance, reforms of multilateral institutions, technological transformation, digital public infrastructure, and women's empowerment and leadership. This is especially important given the fact that the G20 is being consecutively spearheaded by presidencies from the developing world.

The developed world, including Europe, can play an important role as a trusted friend and partner in enabling the Global South to achieve

### Optimism towards emerging powers

Do you think the growing influence of emerging economies like Brazil, India and South Africa is ... ?

German respondents:

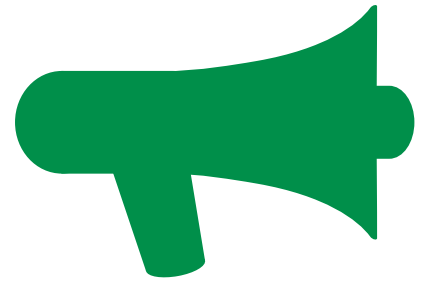


US respondents:



● Positive ● Neutral ● Negative

German respondents, 2023: don't know 4%, no answer 1% | US respondents, 2023: don't know/no answer 3%



its goals. International cooperation on climate action and finance can help address the disproportionate impact of climate change on the Global South. The advanced economies must scale up their climate finance contributions as they are crucial for the world to attain global net zero goals. Traditionally, the focus has been on mitigation efforts but now it must also be on adaptation, which is a major priority for developing countries. Furthermore, the advanced economies should enhance their actions through technology transfer and knowledge sharing. Mobilizing resources from all origins – public and private, domestic and international, including innovative mechanisms such as blended finance – can go a long way in addressing the debt vulnerabilities faced by developing countries.

### ➔ Skilled migration for Germany

As there has been backsliding when it comes to the SDGs, there is a greater sense of urgency now to accelerate their implementation. India's G20 presidency has seen development ministers unanimously adopt the 2023 Action Plan on Accelerating Progress on the SDGs. Productive international cooperation between the Global South and the developed world, Europe in particular, can boost action on the SDGs through greater financing.

The effort of India and Germany to strengthen their partnership on the skills agenda is a successful

example of productive cooperation. They have worked together on enabling the mobility of skilled certified workers and on mutual accreditation of training providers in both countries. Their collaboration should be further deepened for addressing global skill gaps and strengthening international migration and mobility partnerships.

### ➔ The mantle of an honest broker

India's G20 presidency has come at a challenging time but the country is in a unique position to build stronger bridges between developing countries and advanced economies. India is a member of the BRICS, the quad and the Shanghai Cooperation Organization as well as a G7 partner. Its presidency has fostered a meaningful dialogue in the G20, with over 200 meetings held at the time of writing and discussions in 39 tracks. These meetings have witnessed record in-person participation by over 25,000 delegates representing over 120 nationalities. To bring about greater unity in purpose within the G20, India has taken up the mantle of an honest broker working towards consensus and inclusive, action-oriented and ambitious deliverables. ↗

# South Korea's New Identity

Without historical burden, South Korea feels that it can mediate between North and South  
By Yoon Jung Choi

With US hegemony weakening and international organizations such as the United Nations and the World Trade Organization in disarray, the world faces pronounced tensions. Political crises, such as the war in Ukraine, have been punctuated by emerging risks, such as climate change and COVID-19. As the consequences of this 'polycrisis' incentivize an alternative order, states have begun to redefine their identities and roles on the global stage.

South Korea is no exception. To overcome the polycrisis, it seeks to redefine itself as a global pivotal state. With a small and open economy, peace and stability in its region are crucial for its survival and prosperity. In this light, it is South Korea's top priority to uphold a regional order based on strict norms and rules, and to pursue solidarity and cooperation with like-minded countries, such as Australia, Japan and the United States. It is also committed to multilateral diplomacy through established platforms like the UN, NATO, the G20 and the East Asia Summit.

## → Shared history with the Global South

South Korea's pivotal role in global affairs is most evident in its 'contributive diplomacy'. This development in its diplomatic approach is driven by a deep-seated sense of political responsibility. Like many other countries in the Global South, South Korea has endured periods of colonial rule and civil war. However, over the past 70 years, it has built on the ruins of war and emerged as one of the most advanced countries in the world. As the first country to transform itself from aid recipient into donor, South Korea possesses the historical experience



and the political determination required to assist countries around the world in making a similar transformation. This is the initial facet of contributive diplomacy.

Another facet of contributive diplomacy draws on South Korea's transition from the Global South to the Global North. This makes it a capable mediator that facilitates connections between the two. Countries rich in natural and human resources can make use of South Korea's ability to effectively blend technology and products that ultimately leads to commercialization and large-scale production. Additionally, South Korea has free trade agreements with 59 countries – the largest number in Asia – which positions it as the first choice in the region for facilitating the exchange of goods and services between nations.

## → Free from historical burden

From a geopolitical perspective, despite its enhanced relations with NATO and the United States, South Korea remains distinct from Western nations, free

from the historical burden that many of them carry. Moreover, it is generally perceived positively in the Indo-Pacific as it has never pursued aggressive hegemony or drawn international suspicion. By presenting itself as a peer to regional partners, South Korea as mediator offers an alternative path to cooperative development – one that does not require formal agreements between nations with historically strained relationships.

The G20 summit in India showed evidence of this conceptual expansion. South Korea's emphasis on introducing a development agenda in the G20 illustrated its ambition to shoulder more international responsibilities. At a meeting of the MIKTA (Mexico, Indonesia, South Korea, Turkey and Australia) grouping of members that was held on the summit's sidelines, South Korea also emphasized the role of middle powers in mitigating the growing global divide and finding solutions to common challenges.

One example for middle-power cooperation is South Korea's relations with the EU, which are based on shared core values of freedom, democracy and human rights, and which can catalyse active engagement and voluntary alignment with regional partners, including the Association of Southeast Asian Nations. South Korea's 'core lines of effort' within its Indo-Pacific Strategy and the 'priority areas' in the EU's strategy overlap considerably, and they can be a driving force for regional

development. These include the promotion of the rule of law; cyber, space and maritime security; capacity building in science and technology, and climate-change mitigation.

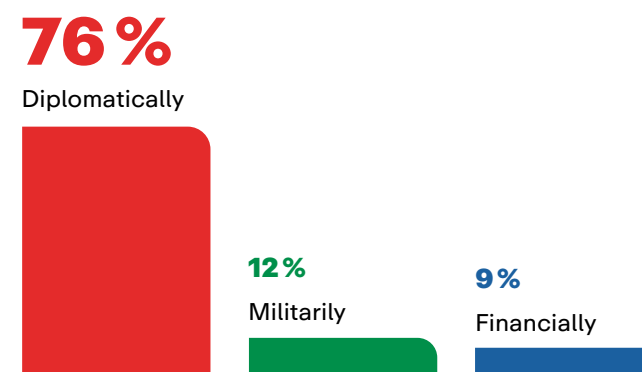
## → Together against North Korea

Furthermore, backed by Europe, South Korea can aim to suppress the multiple threats from North Korea. One example is cybersecurity. Many North Korean cyberattacks are routed through European internet protocol addresses. This makes Europe's collaboration vital in thwarting Pyongyang's attempts to steal virtual assets – a significant funding source for its nuclear and missile programs. Such cooperation can be instrumental in crafting a coordinated international response to cyberattacks and pave the way for more regional stability.

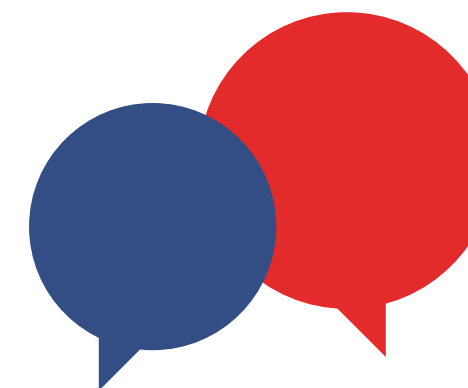
South Korea's contributive diplomacy and coordinated policies with Europe represent a deepening alliance for regional development. This bond will be further strengthened once Europe acknowledges the country's potential as a mediator with the Global South. ↗

## Diplomacy matters

Should Germany become more strongly engaged militarily, diplomatically or financially?



2023: don't know 5%, no answer 2%





# ‘Finally a Seat at the Table’

## Hafsa Maalim on what the African Union will bring to the G20 and the challenges it faces

**Körber-Stiftung: The admission of the African Union (AU) to the G20 comes with great expectations while the continent is suffering from climate crisis and conflicts. Do we have to restrain our optimism?**

**Hafsa Maalim:** We can be optimistic that after seven years of hard campaigning, the African Union has finally got a seat at the G20. This is quite historic. But engagement at the G20 is very demanding. So far, the AU has largely been an inward-looking body, not very active on global issues that do not directly affect the continent. The AU needs human resources to take on the G20 chairmanship. And there are legitimate questions about the AU’s ability to build political consensus in its capitals to represent the collective interest of its 55 member states.

**Was it a symbolic move?**

No. But there has been some symbolism in recognizing what the continent has to offer. The G20 no longer sees it as a subject but as an active player in global decision-making. This means that Africa now has a lot of homework to do in terms of how it uses this space. We have seen in the past that many countries bypassed the AU and went straight to its member states. That could change now.

**Africa is experiencing a decline in democracy and peacefulness. How can the AU represent all Africans in the G20?**

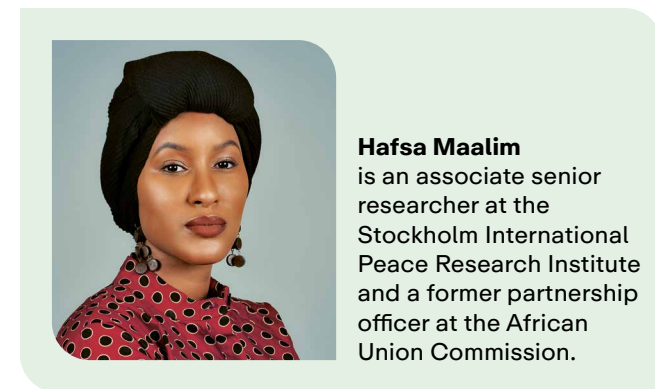
The AU has very progressive policies but it has not always implemented them. The proliferation of coups and the decline of democracy on the continent show that the AU alone is not enough. Even though member states have invoked sovereignty to prevent the AU from acting, it still carries significant political weight because it is the only platform where all member states meet to deliberate and discuss. This is significant.

**Which issues do you expect the African Union to push in the G20?**

One problem is the heavy debt burden of many African countries. African governments are in a precarious situation where they have to choose between servicing their debt and providing basic services to their people. This is linked to the issue of reform of the global financial institutions. The second priority is adaptation to climate change and the issue of loss and damage. The third issue is Africa’s position in the global economy and the continent’s ability to maximize its extractive industries in a way that can contribute to economic growth.

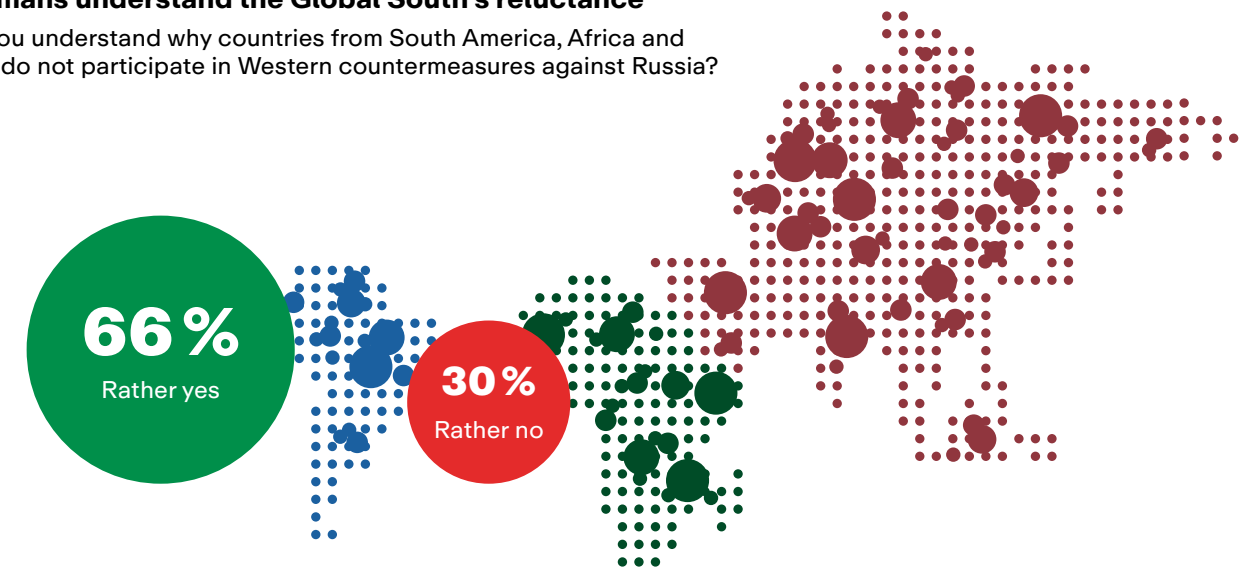
**You have said that the EU’s strategy towards Africa does not address these issues enough.**

This was in the context of the EU Strategy for Africa from 2020. I argued that the Europe-Africa partnership must be guided by African priorities as outlined in the continental development blueprint, Agenda 2063. A partnership of equals must be based on mutual respect. The same argument applies to the AU as it takes up its seat at the G20. Africa’s representation at the global level should always push to implement the Agenda 2063.



**Germans understand the Global South’s reluctance**

Do you understand why countries from South America, Africa and Asia do not participate in Western countermeasures against Russia?



2023: Spontaneously: Neutral 1%, don’t know 2%, no answer 1%

**Many African states do not clearly condemn Russia’s invasion in Ukraine. Is the AU’s membership in the G20 bad news for Ukraine?**

The African position on Ukraine has always been that no one supports war. Remember that this is a continent that is fraught with conflict and myriads of other challenges. An AU peace mission even went to Ukraine in June 2023.

**Unfortunately without success. Will Ukraine stay at the top of the agenda with the AU joining the G20?**

I don’t think the AU has enough influence on the G20 agenda to have an impact on the discussion on Ukraine.

**What about the war’s impact on the continent?**

It has had a disastrous impact on food security, with most of the grain used on the continent coming from Ukraine. Moreover, development assistance has dwindled as the EU focuses on the developments in its backyard. And Africa is very concerned about the return of foreign fighters, like those recruited by the Wagner Group, and the flow of arms. This is all the more worrying given the proliferation of coups across the Sahel region and

the increasing reliance on private military contractors for security.

**China is Africa’s largest trading partner and a major infrastructure investor. Will its influence in the G20 increase through the AU?**

I do not think this fear is valid. Africa through the AU has multiple partners and Beijing is just one of them. Regarding Africa’s development agenda, the priorities are clear and are driven from within Africa rather than by external actors. The message the AU has taken to all partnership forums is the need for a concerted effort to deliver on the ambitious continental agendas. I believe that this will continue to be the message even at the G20.

**Looking more closely at partners in Europe, what do you expect from Germany?**

Germany has been one of the African Union’s longest-standing partners in supporting its programming and policy objectives. Looking ahead, I believe that Germany and the AU have common interests and can benefit from closer cooperation. Germany should support Africa’s policy ambitions, especially on climate change and the implementation of the African Continental Free Trade Area. 

# Inertia Is our Biggest Enemy

## Why international climate action still has momentum and how to prepare for COP28 By Steven Guilbeault

It is easy to become cynical and to feel powerless when we look at the scale of the climate crisis. For a long-time environmental activist like me, it can be tempting to focus on the setbacks, but today I see an unprecedented momentum, in Canada and around the world.

Let's remember the success of last year's UN Biodiversity Conference (COP15) in Montreal. It came at a time when global assessments showed that biodiversity is declining at an unprecedented rate, with up to one million species at risk of extinction. After years of delay, no one thought COP15 would even happen. Certainly, no one thought we would reach a deal, but over two weeks we reached a historic milestone as countries agreed on the Kunming-Montreal Global Biodiversity Framework. As host, I worked with the Chinese COP15 president to broker a deal between nations with different expectations, circumstances and capacities. The international community achieved what had seemed impossible: a collective deal on the protection of 30 per cent of global lands and waters by 2030.

### ➔ End harmful subsidies

We brought together countries, the private sector, philanthropies and international financial institutions around a new finance package that helps developing countries implement the framework. This included a commitment to eliminating or redirecting environmentally harmful subsidies.

Ministers from developing, least developed and small island developing countries say they need accessible, well-targeted finance to transform their economies and energy systems, to protect nature,

biodiversity and themselves against the increasing ravages of extreme weather. I want to support them.

When I became minister of environment and climate change in 2021, the question about how to mobilize resources was challenging. Some solutions to help finance the climate and nature crises dated back over a decade but had not created progress towards existing targets.

### ➔ US\$100 billion a year for climate justice

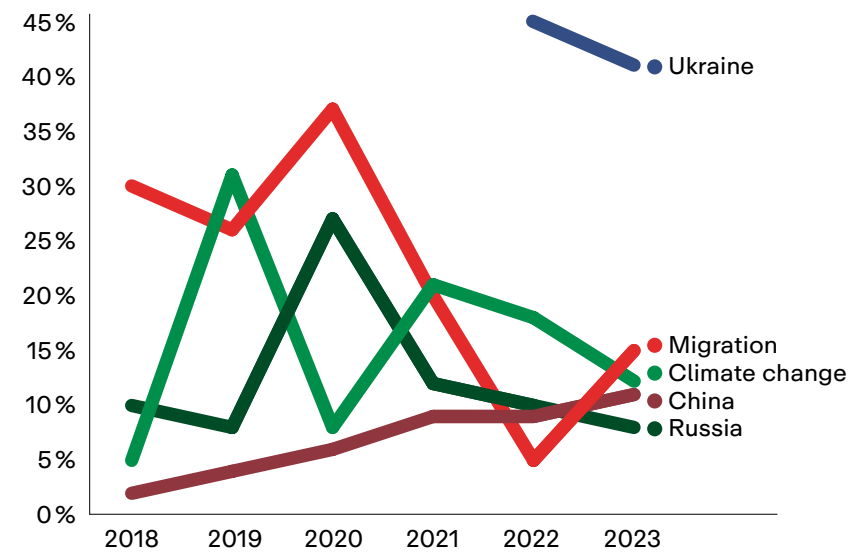
Inertia was our biggest enemy. But now, we are seeing breakthroughs. As an activist, I made a request every year to the government to increase Canada's support to developing countries, to support adaptation as much as mitigation and to increase the portion of grants provided. As reaffirmed by Germany and Canada we are now on our way to achieving the annual commitment to provide US\$100 billion a year for climate finance to address the needs of developing countries.

In 2021, Prime Minister Justin Trudeau announced Canada was doubling its climate finance



### Climate change the fourth-biggest challenge

What are the greatest challenges currently facing German foreign policy?



2023: don't know 11%, no answer 5% | 2022: don't know 13%, no answer 4%

commitment to US\$4.3 billion between 2021 and 2026. But the quality of funding also mattered. We increased funding for adaptation by 40 per cent and decided that 80 per cent of projects must integrate gender equality.

We committed the government for the first time to providing financial support for international climate action for indigenous peoples in developing countries. As we head into COP28, my German counterpart and I will use every opportunity to maintain momentum to deliver on these commitments.

### ➔ Fairer finance, better jobs

Supporting the transition to a more sustainable and clean future requires efforts beyond the mobilisation of climate finance. It also includes reforming international financial institutions and multilateral development banks. That is why Canada has increased its allocation for Special Drawing Rights to approximately US\$700 million to the International Monetary Fund's Poverty Reduction and Growth Trust. Access to concessional financing is one important way to provide long-term financing to help vulnerable low-income countries fight climate change.

Supporting the transition also includes halting support for subsidies that encourage the expansion

of fossil fuels. As a minister of the fourth-largest oil and gas producing country, I know how important it is to support policies that help reduce emissions while supporting affordability for citizens.

That is why Canada is phasing out fossil fuel subsidies in 2023, two years ahead of our G20 commitment. Less public funding for the proliferation of fossil fuels means more for the expansion of clean energy systems – and more clean and good paying jobs.

### ➔ Come prepared to COP28

We must welcome the tidal shift since COP27 on creating a separate fund to deliver support to vulnerable countries in response to the loss and damage caused by climate change. Canada was an early advocate for this, and I was part of the negotiations that led to a loss and damage fund.

For COP28, I want to work with everyone to find arrangements for loss and damage that provide vulnerable countries with urgent and adequate support. Countries need to put resources behind their priorities. Now is the time to build on past momentum and to continue breaking through what were previously thought to be impasses. Countries should come prepared with the accountability, leadership and tangible contributions for us to address the crises at hand collectively. 🌱



# Greendoing Instead of Greenwashing

As the superpowers lack consensus, environmental influencers are needed

By Izabella Teixeira

The climate crisis is no longer a scenario – it is a global reality. Humanity is in a destructive relationship with nature. This is particularly evident in certain processes. The loss of natural resources is accelerating, their depletion is announced and extreme weather events are becoming much more frequent.

This destructive perspective also applies to the ruthless exercise of power. The world lacks leaders who do not define themselves but emerge as providers of solutions. These solutions can be shared but not hegemonic, and they should not create dependence. This is a challenge for international cooperation and calls for action from countries with a bilateral tradition, such as Brazil and Germany. These countries should create innovative spaces where the private and financial sectors can also be solution providers. There is no room anymore for business-as-usual models.

## ➔ Hostage to short-term ideals

The political vision of the world we live in is out of date. We need to build a new global one that welcomes diversity and national singularities. Technological and political inclusion and sustainability should deal with social and environmental inequalities. Growing fairly with nature is no trivial task. Yet, these are times of ‘greenwashing’, not ‘greendoing’.

Decarbonisation and carbon neutralisation projects with timeframes between 2050 and 2070 show that we are still hostage to short-term ideals. However, we need them to overcome the complexity of dealing with organized crime and its links to environmental crimes, such as illegal



**Izabella Teixeira** is the former Brazilian minister for the environment (2010–2016) and co-chair of the International Resource Panel at the United Nations Environment Programme.

deforestation and the heavy dependence on fossil fuels.

Science is emerging as a political actor, heralding new environmental, climate and technological frontiers. These frontiers reveal the limits of the planet’s resilience. We are not currently inclusive by nature but, on the contrary, continue to promote a society that is increasingly exposed to risks and vulnerabilities. Meanwhile, technological innovation is creating virtual realities and tools that are changing behaviours, lifestyles and political, economic and social dynamics.

## ➔ Great-power competition threatens climate protection

Society discloses other frontiers such as gender, social inequalities and democracy. For example, inequalities and racism are being challenged by new dynamics of power shifts and climate justice. These agendas determine new dynamics and interests for environmental politics. The world is now on the move, driven by geopolitical

realignments. The fierce rivalry between China and the United States and the search for a multipolar geopolitical order have become commonplace as we grapple with the complexity of uncertainties created by the climate crisis.

We should not stop demanding geopolitical solutions to the global environmental crisis because of the bipolarity between two superpowers. Multipolarity enables diverse processes of convergence of interests and does not divide the world while pursuing common and universal goals.

## ➔ Transparency instead of populism

The transitional world is divided. Blocs are being formed, reshaped or expanded to meet the challenges of the modern age and to promote shared interests. The singularities of countries, such as the Amazon for Brazil, must be taken into account.

The G20, the BRICS+ or the Global South, guided by the dynamics of Western and non-Western global cooperation, reflect this. They must modernise the multilateral system because it is the only universal system of international cooperation. It remains to be seen whether these groups will act within the architecture of inclusive, transparent and measurable decision-making processes, and be driven by a pacifist, humanist and democratic vision, or by authoritarian and populist nationalism.

Countries such as China, India, and the United States are seeking geopolitical power based on political, economic and technological pathways to decarbonisation and emissions neutrality. Other mega-biodiverse countries, such as Brazil, have environmental assets and they want to influence and seek positive narratives of political and social

inclusion. Few have short-term solutions to accelerate the urgently needed transformations beyond international solidarity.

## ➔ We need carbon trading by developing countries

The challenge of cooperation must be met. We need to move forward and immerse ourselves in global climate governance, leading to a new vision of multilateralism, because the world has changed since 1945. Today, countries with peace, security, nature and democracy can accelerate change.

New stories need to be told about the future; for example, about carbon traded at fair prices by developing countries, not undercut by developed countries like Europe. This cannot be done without inclusive alliances and partnerships. Brazil and Germany must see transformation as a common goal, without mistrust. This requires work and humility on both sides. Bilateral understanding is essential for multilateral progress. ↩

# Local Power for Global Change

City and state diplomacy can deliver for people in Dortmund or Pittsburgh

By Nina Hachigian



from foreign direct investment (FDI). Powerful change can happen when local leaders exchange ideas or create partnerships at the international level.

We witnessed this work at the inaugural Cities Summit of the Americas in April 2023, which brought together thousands of local leaders and experts from across the Western hemisphere to discuss global issues impacting the local level, including economic inequality, human rights and democracy, climate change and the opioid crisis.

➔ **Support for occupied Melitopol**

The summit highlighted another priority for the United States and our transatlantic partners: supporting Ukraine. Ukrainian mayors attended and met with their counterparts from across the hemisphere to discuss support needed at the local level, such as expertise for reconstruction. These discussions reinforced the US commitment to Ukraine and the safeguarding of its democracy at every level, and they led to new relationships, including the signing of a sister cities agreement between Hoboken, New Jersey, and Melitopol, Ukraine, in July 2023.

The power of city and state diplomacy influences foreign policy from the bottom up. It works not only through mayors and governors, but also through personal connections forged among citizens.

The United States and Germany have a core connection of people-to-people relations. Numbering over 40 million Americans of German heritage are the largest ancestry group in the United States. This connection is evident through

For solutions to global problems, look to the local level. Antony Blinken, who in January 2023 was the first US secretary of state to address the Winter Meeting of the US Conference of Mayors, noted that ‘cities are the engines of opportunity and ingenuity in the United States. They are where challenges tend to emerge first, and solutions are often forged quickest’.

By 2050, two-thirds of the world’s population will live in cities. Therefore, we need to welcome city leaders, as well as state and provincial ones, to global discussions.

➔ **Mayors on the front lines**

These local leaders are on the front lines of threats like climate change, pandemics and backsliding on democracy. Therefore, the team I head as the US special representative for city and state diplomacy encourages them to participate on the international stage. Our argument is that it can bring benefits to their constituents, such as new approaches to handling flooding or heat waves or to creating jobs

ongoing education exchanges involving thousands of students and teachers each year.

Strong German-US economic ties also drive economic growth and opportunity at the local level through FDI. The United States is the leading source of non-European FDI in Germany and Germany is the second-largest source of FDI in the United States. This partnership has a direct impact on cities and states. For example, the US tech giant Intel plans to invest more than US\$30 billion, which includes a US\$10 billion subsidy package from Germany’s government, to build a cutting-edge wafer fabrication site in the eastern German city of Magdeburg. This investment is expected to create 3,000 permanent high-tech jobs and tens of thousands of additional jobs across the industry ecosystem. Similarly, German companies are active in the US economy. For example, BMW has invested more than US\$12.4 billion in a manufacturing plant in Greer, South Carolina, which employs over 11,000 people.

➔ **Putting *Energiewende* into practice**

Robust local-level German-US collaboration also tackles climate change. The cities of Dortmund and Pittsburgh – whose economies were dominated by coal and steel – have undergone significant structural changes and developed into hubs for business, science and innovation. They have partnered through the Transatlantic Climate Bridge as well

as bilaterally on a range of climate and innovation initiatives, including sharing best practices on decarbonizing transport and creating more sustainable food systems. In 2022, a study trip brought energy- and climate-focused state legislators from the US Midwest to Germany, where they met with their German counterparts and industry leaders to learn how German states are putting the *Energiewende* (energy transition) into practice.

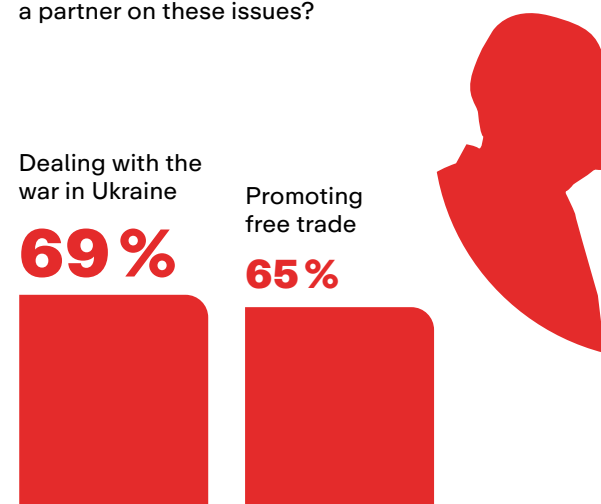
➔ **Local leaders need staff and budget**

To further advance city and state diplomacy, we need to overcome the challenge that local leaders often do not have adequate, or any, staff and budget to do this work. Therefore, we should increase resources and access for mayors, governors and other local leaders to engage internationally. We also need to expand the gathering of data that can tell the story of what cities and regions can do.

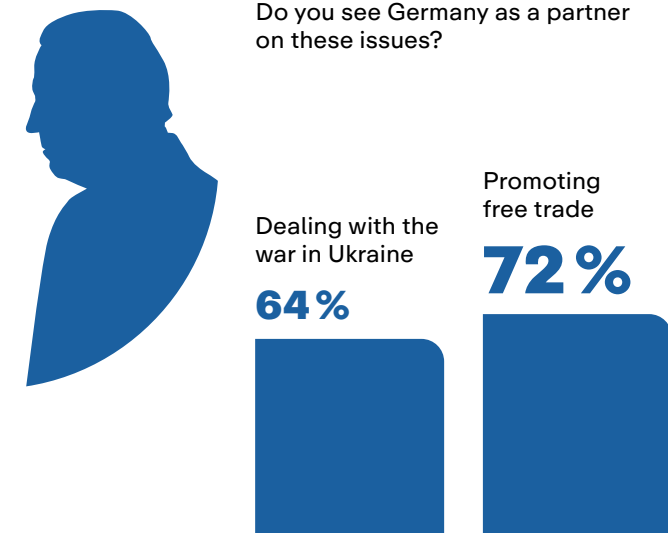
The power of city and state diplomacy can lead to better lives for regular people on both sides of the Atlantic. By recognizing the strength and expertise of our cities and states, we can elevate our local leaders and bring best practices for global issues to the forefront. ↩

**Partnership for Ukraine and free trade**

**German respondents:**  
Do you see the United States as a partner on these issues?



**US respondents:**  
Do you see Germany as a partner on these issues?



answer ‘neither’ ranged from 0 to 1 per cent for all issues

answer ‘neither’ 6 per cent for all issues



# ‘AI is a double-edged sword’

## Gao Qiqi on how China plans to regulate artificial intelligence and what this means for the power dynamics between Beijing and Berlin

**Körber-Stiftung:** In Germany, you can feel optimism towards artificial intelligence (AI), but also fear. What do people in China think about AI?

**Gao Qiqi:** The Chinese people are naturally optimistic. In China, AI is largely viewed as a tool of empowerment, especially for less educated people. Companies use it to improve productivity and students use it for research. That is the positive side, which is visible for most people in China.

**And what about the negative side?**

I am afraid that many people have never thought about the risks deeply. As we accelerate the use of AI, we endanger certain occupational fields. Take the recent emergence of the text-to-image tool Midjourney. It has directly and negatively impacted the industry of illustrators. And because Midjourney’s generated images can be transformed into short videos, it can impact the work of professional actors. Therefore, we need new legal frameworks and administrative structures. China launched the world’s first regulation for artificial intelligence in July 2023.

**The regulation you mentioned governs companies that provide text or image generating AI. It states that companies need to ‘uphold the integrity of the state and safeguard national unity’. Is the Chinese government afraid of AI?**

It is hard to say that the Chinese government is afraid of AI. The Chinese government is always open to new technologies because they increase productivity and improve the economy. But the government will also take various measures to prevent the potential risks of new technologies.

**Does this mean that the government has power over AI in China?**

Yes, the government is generally leading the development of AI. The State Council proposed an overall plan for the development of AI in 2017. Their main consideration is economic development. At the same time, companies that directly promote technological development play a more proactive role. For example, companies such as Baidu, Alibaba, Tencent and Huawei.

**Can AI also become dangerous for the Chinese state and the Communist Party?**

We often say that AI is a double-edged sword. It can be a challenge to institutions because it can form autonomous functional entities. But, if applied properly, AI can strengthen traditional political organisations such as the state and political parties. My opinion is that traditional political organisations need to be open and inclusive towards AI as it increases productivity.



**Gao Qiqi** is professor and director of the Political Science Institute at the East China University of Political Science and Law.

**Do you see China behind or ahead of the United States in the race for AI?**

My personal feeling is that currently, in terms of overall AI technology, China lags behind the United States. Take for instance products from OpenAI, like ChatGPT. They undeniably outperform similar Chinese products. Nevertheless, competition in the AI arena is an ongoing and dynamic process, with countries worldwide striving for prominence in this emerging technology landscape.

**Is this bad news for middle- and low-income countries?**

This is exactly what I am most worried about. We hope that AI will bring a certain degree of inclusiveness to the world. But low- and middle-income countries may find it difficult to benefit from AI because they do not have the infrastructure to operate it, like cloud and quantum computing. I think that international organizations such as the United Nations need to support the inclusiveness and equalization of new technologies like AI.

**In which area of AI do you think that Germany and China can work together?**

Germany has taken very active measures regarding AI governance and climate change. Those are the areas that China is currently also most concerned about. China and Germany can consider working together on AI from an ethical and governance perspective as the starting point for them to strengthen cooperation.

**In Germany, people criticise scientific collaboration with China, particularly regarding innovation that can be used for both civilian and military applications. How do you address these concerns?**

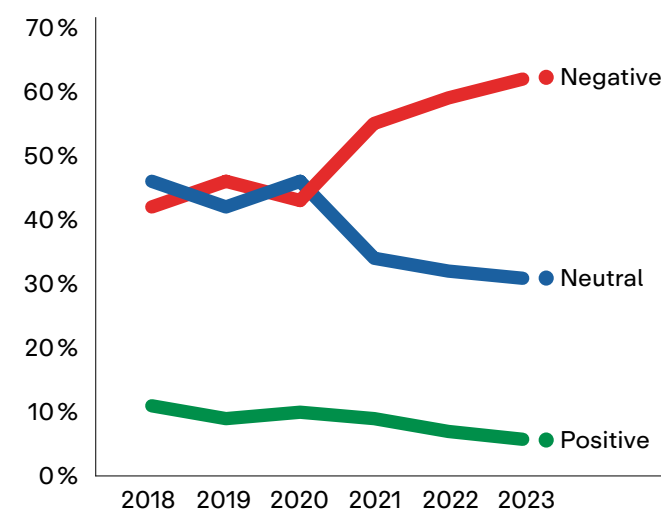
Cooperation needs to be based on mutual trust and recognition. And scientific cooperation can be carried out in many fields. Most of the scientific cooperation is beneficial to both parties. I believe that Germany and China can fully engage in more valuable scientific cooperation based on mutual equality and trust in order to make greater contributions to the world.

**The European Union is drafting AI regulations. But its approach seems very different from the Chinese one as it notably bans certain uses, such as facial recognition in public spaces.**

Every country has its own logic and has its own different aims. But we should focus on the common ground to cooperate on regulating AI. In the United States, AI is driven by risky entrepreneurship, not by the government or academia. But in Europe and China government and academia have more power. What unites Europe and China is the belief in state and government oversight of AI. ↗

**China scepticism on the rise**

How do you see China’s rising influence?



German respondents, 2023: don't know 0%, no answer 1%

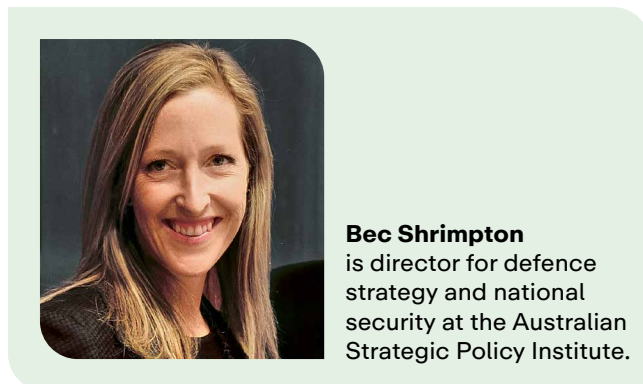


# ‘Who controls space will control the Earth’

As the space race is on, **Bec Shrimpton** explains what is there to be gained and what stands to be lost

**Körber-Stiftung: The world has many problems, from war and a food crisis to climate change. Why should people care about space?**

**Bec Shrimpton:** It is important to understand what space offers! Many of the Earth’s major challenges can be addressed with space technologies. For example, up in space, the sun shines all the time. Once the infrastructure is established you could get continuous, almost free, reliable energy that could power more than the Earth’s entire requirements.



**That sounds great. But it doesn’t help in an acute crisis, right?**

It does. One more example: When Russia invaded Ukraine, the US communications company ViaSat was taken down by a massive Russian cyberattack. The Ukrainian government turned to Elon Musk’s Starlink. And Musk’s existing space-based internet capabilities allowed Ukrainians to communicate with each other and the world, helping Ukraine defend itself against Russian aggression.

**You mentioned Russia. In August 2023, the Russians failed to land a robotic probe on the moon’s south pole. But India succeeded. What is so important about the moon?**

On the lunar south pole, there is believed to be one of the largest deposits of frozen water. And there might be a way to extract it. Till now, what has stopped us from going further into space is that we literally run out of fuel. There are no gas stations in space. But if you can access water on the moon, you can theoretically create rocket fuel. That allows the leap to Mars or other asteroids, and it could be the start of a genuine space economy. Up there you have mineral-rich asteroids predicted to be worth multiple trillions of dollars.

**Many countries have now recognized this potential. What does this mean for the balance of power in space?**

Just as on Earth, we’re heading towards a multipolar space order. The United States still has significant military and commercial advantages. But, as in other industries and technological areas, China in particular and other emerging space powers like India are catching up rapidly.

**What is China’s role in space?**

China has now a huge civil, commercial and military space sector, and its ambitions are largely driven by geopolitics. China wants to command, dominate and to control space. And what holds true for the United States does also for China and India: Who controls space will control the Earth.

**Can you give us examples of China’s action in space?**

Take technologies to manage space junk, which someone’s got to go and clean up. China has the capacity to do that, and it developed ‘inspector’ satellites and other technologies including robotic arms that can ‘grab’ space junk to remove it. But that also means it can catch US military satellites

and potentially exploit or destroy them. China is beginning to produce these kinds of capabilities at a scale and a speed that is worrying actors like the United States.

**So why did Australia then scale back its space strategy from 2018, which aimed at fostering its space industry?**

The Australian government has dramatically cut the spending for our civil and commercial space program, because it wanted to be fiscally responsible. For me, that was a short-term decision that we will regret.

**Why?**

Because we must make our stamp on the space economy and take our place in the global space race. Of course, investing in spaceports or manufacturing capabilities is expensive. Now there is a window to create the basis for a strong position in the global space economy. But that window will close as others move while Australia stands still. In my view, Australia could have become a space superpower.

**What about Germany?**

Germany is a considerable space power. It has excellent capabilities in the civil, the commercial and the military sectors, from which we can learn. And Australia can offer Germany access to space and unique collaboration operations, especially in terms of launching. We have

wide-open spaces, a huge coastline and low air and maritime traffic.

**How do you see Germany’s diplomatic role in space?**

Very active! We cooperate with Germany in fora like the United Nations to try and establish rules and norms. We collaborate with Germany and France in military space through a Five Eyes Plus grouping led by the United States and it is highly beneficial to all countries. And Germany’s strength is that it can build consensus among those actors.

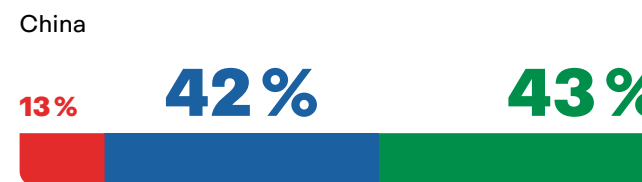
**Australia and Germany both want to maintain a democratic space order. But the world on Earth is not just made up of democracies.**

Australia’s wants to see its values and interests protected in space, as they are on Earth. This doesn’t necessarily mean that space should be democratic, but we believe that the liberal democratic principles we have on Earth should extend to space. Current treaties, such as the Outer Space Treaty, are not designed for the increased commercialization and militarization of space. So we need to set new standards for responsible behaviour. And this is an area ripe for greater cooperation between Australia and Germany. ↗

## China as a security threat

Do the following countries represent a military threat to...?

...Germany’s security? (German respondents):



...security in the United States? (US respondents):



● Major military threat ● Minor military threat ● No military threat

answer ‘don’t know’ ranged from 1 to 4 per cent for all issues



# Saudi Arabia's Moderate Islam

How religion shapes the kingdom's foreign policy and what that means for Berlin's realpolitik

By Madawi Al-Rasheed



**Madawi Al-Rasheed** is a visiting professor at the Middle East Centre of the London School of Economics and Political Science.

Abundance of oil, a good strategic location and Islam made Saudi Arabia the undisputed arbiter of Arab affairs. While it is understandable that the first two are important, the power of Islam requires some elucidating.

Since its creation in 1932, Saudi Arabia has aspired to play a leading regional and international role. Today that drive animates the country's rulers, notably Crown Prince Mohammed bin Salman (MBS), to build up its leadership role and with that its position towards Islam.

## ↳ Leader of the Muslim world

During the Cold War, Saudi Arabia played a pivotal role in mobilizing Muslims against the Soviet Union by leading the Sunni Muslim world with its conservative and puritanical Wahhabi version of Islam. This short-sighted policy precipitated a global Jihadi movement, religious indoctrination and radicalization. Europe and other regions experienced social tensions and terrorism that

partially resulted from the import of ultra-conservative Islam from Saudi Arabia.

## ↳ Power shift towards a moderate Islam

In 2017, Mohammed bin Salman announced a new idea of a moderate Islam in Saudi Arabia, introducing limits to the power of the religious police and improvements in women's rights. This was a response to domestic needs, especially after the Islamist terrorist attacks in 2008. And it was also because Saudi Arabia wanted to attract foreign businesses, which appreciate a less restrictive Islam.

MBS also believed that a moderate Islam would appease Europe and the United States after the attacks of 9/11. In return, he expected the West, especially the United States, to unconditionally arm Saudi Arabia's military.

Saudi Arabia's shift towards moderate Islam has implications for Europe, including Germany, where there are substantial Muslim minorities. The end of Riyadh's sponsorship of and patronage over Muslim institutions worldwide will facilitate the better integration of Muslim communities in their host countries, and it may lead to the consolidation of a European Islam.

MBS's new idea of a moderate Islam coincides with the shift towards a multipolar world, where the United States and its European allies face new challenges from China and Russia, and he is willing to exploit that. While waiting for a clear security partnership with the United States and European countries, Saudi Arabia oscillates between neutrality and vague condemnation of Russia's invasion of Ukraine, which baffles Europeans who expect it to stand firm on their side.

Following President Joe Biden's visit to Riyadh in 2022, MBS ignored the US request to increase oil production. It would have been a sign of goodwill during the European energy crisis to increase production to keep oil prices down. But MBS seeks to increase his domestic popularity by defying the West, asserting the independence of Saudi oil policies, adopting an ambiguous position vis-à-vis Russia's war and now joining BRICS+.

## ↳ Short-term gains and long-term risks

Germany and France's recent rapprochement with Saudi Arabia and MBS is an indicator that, following the murder of the journalist Jamal Khashoggi in Istanbul by Saudi operatives in 2018, realpolitik has prevailed in Europe. This may be Europe's only option in the short term. However, Europe knows very well the long-term costs of such a policy of appeasement that backfires. It has seen the consequences of supporting dictators in the Arab world – such as Hosni Mubarak in Egypt or Zine Al-Abidine Ben Ali in Tunisia – in the 2011 uprisings.

## 'Liberate religion from outside sponsorship'

Germany should welcome Saudi Arabia's shift towards less involvement in the religious affairs of Muslims in other countries. It is time to liberate religion from outside sponsorship and allow Islam in Europe to grow in ways that respond to the needs of local Muslim communities rather than to the agenda in Riyadh. European governments, including Germany's, should oversee Muslim institutions – such as schools, mosques and charities – on their

territory and treat them as they do other religious institutions by making sufficient funds available to them. This will work against Muslim religious and cultural centres seeking outside financial support. These will become accountable, transparent and representative of the needs of local communities.

Germany should also be careful when it comes to arming Saudi Arabia. Riyadh's intervention in the war in Yemen since 2015 has shown that it will use Western weapons to launch military campaigns that destabilize the region and add to the complexity of the challenges facing the Arab world. It is better for Germany not to get entangled in Saudi Arabia's playing of European countries, mainly France and the United Kingdom, against each other to acquire weapons. Germany's interests in the short and long term (and Saudi Arabia's) are better served by the transfer of investment, technology and knowledge. ↗

# ‘Democratisation would make Türkiye stronger’

## Galip Dalay on the contradictions of Türkiye’s middle-power foreign policy

### Körber-Stiftung: Does Türkiye want Ukraine to win the war?

**Galip Dalay:** Türkiye wants Ukraine to win the war, but it doesn’t want Russia completely to lose the war or to become a failed state. That’s the trouble.

### It also sounds like a contradiction.

It is a contradiction, but it also has a logic. On the one hand, if Russia wins, this will pose a major strategic challenge to Türkiye’s position as a major power in the Black Sea. Therefore, Ankara is against a Moscow victory. But on the other hand, Turkish policy-makers believe that if Russia gets completely humiliated in Ukraine, this will mean another unchecked Western resurgence in international politics. So, at the Russia-Ukraine level, Türkiye is pro-Kyiv. But on the Russian-Western confrontation, Türkiye engages in a geopolitical balancing act.

### This balancing has become a powerful trend defining the foreign policy of many middle powers outside of Europe. What is the rationale?

Middle powers want more autonomy in their foreign policy and a bigger say in international and regional affairs. And they reject a hierarchical relation with their traditional superpower allies, usually meaning the United States. These actors believe that they can attain their interests more effectively by balancing between different centres and adopting neutrality in great-power rivalry. And this policy is also rooted in the deepening discontent between these countries and the United States.

### In Türkiye’s case this has become especially visible in the Middle East, right?

For Türkiye the Middle East serves as a microcosm of the global order. President Erdoğan saw the United States becoming less reliable in its foreign



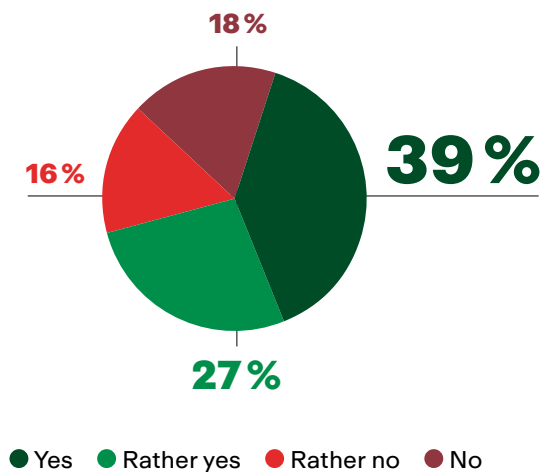
policy and less committed to the region than it once was. Washington withdrew from Afghanistan, from Iraq, and it is reducing its presence in Syria. In contrast, you have Russia that has increased its footprint in regional security and China in the regional economy over the last decade. Plus, regional actors are becoming more important. Türkiye believes that it is adjusting to the new reality.

### At the same time, Türkiye is part of NATO and wants to join the EU. Are doubts about whether it belongs to the West justified then?

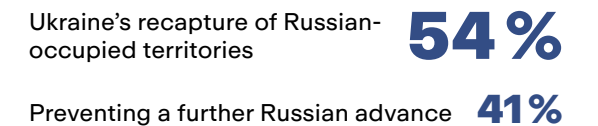
To some extent, this question of who belongs to the West is quite arbitrary. For instance, in 2014, when Russia annexed Crimea, Türkiye wanted a stronger reaction from the West, while Germany was still constructing Nord Stream 2 to Russia. It reminds me of Joe Biden’s Summit for Democracy in March 2023. This summit was more about geopolitics than about democracy or human rights. That’s why you had countries like India with a flagrant record of human rights violations being invited and Türkiye not.

### Stay with Ukraine

Should Germany continue to provide military support to Ukraine?



Which goal should Germany primarily pursue with its military support for Ukraine?



2023: spontaneously: none of the above 2%, don’t know 2%, no answer 1%

### Türkiye has seen tremendous democratic backsliding in the past decades. Looking ten years ahead, can it be a more influential middle power than today?

I think so, but provided that Türkiye has a domestic transformation and democratisation agenda. An international role solely confined to geopolitics is not a healthy one. We saw that in Russia, and we are seeing that in China and in Iran. Putting more effort into its domestic transformation and democratisation would make Türkiye’s international role stronger.

### Would that also be beneficial for EU-Türkiye relations?

A democratic Türkiye is in the EU’s interest. But for many in the EU, managing an authoritarian Türkiye is easier than managing a democratic geopolitically ambitious one. With an authoritarian Türkiye, you just engage in a transactional relationship. You don’t have to deal with the question of whether it should become an EU member if it fulfils the criteria.

### You don’t see any future for Türkiye’s EU accession?


At present, a discussion premised on the membership framework is not realistic. The accession framework has become a liability in Turkish-EU relations. We need to have a new framework that is

less of an accession framework but more than a transactional relationship.

### Türkiye has been silent regarding the situation of Muslim minorities in China. Is that a second contradiction?

Absolutely. Türkiye has been quite silent on the Chinese persecution of the Uighurs. When you compare this to Türkiye’s much more vocal stance on the suppression of Muslims elsewhere, there is a very significant gap. Here you see political pragmatism superseding moral politics. This is a big hole in Türkiye’s moral narrative globally.

### What would be your advice to Chancellor Scholz for his next trip to Türkiye?

That is a tough question. For a long time, Türkiye and Germany were hostage to their bilateral relationship, not least diaspora politics. That made them not see potential areas of cooperation elsewhere. I would recommend looking at the neighbourhood in the Balkans, the Eastern Mediterranean, the Middle East and North Africa to see how the role of Germany and Türkiye can be more cooperative rather than competitive. The future of the Türkiye-EU relationship will not be decided by the bureaucrats in Brussels, but by global and regional processes that will shape international politics in the long term. 



# Vaccine Against Autocracy

Investigative journalism has the power to save democracy, but also has many enemies

By Marcela Turati

The flow of information and news is faster than it has ever been before. Terms like ‘post-truth’ and ‘fake news’ point to a political climate in which the authenticity of information is increasingly under threat, fuelled by social media. But at the same time, it can mobilize massive protests for a just cause.

From WikiLeaks to the Panama Papers, the ability to transmit millions of documents using a small electronic device has transformed the power of whistleblowers and journalists. In Ukraine, attacks on unarmed civilians were documented thanks to the independent investigative group Bellingcat, which used open-source media and social networks to expose war crimes thousands of miles away.

## ➔ Exposing flaws in the system

With limited resources and minimal budgets, and often at the risk of their life, investigative journalists have managed to expose systemic flaws in democratic systems. They expose serious human rights abuses and deliberately manipulated news reports. The work of these journalists is like a vaccine against a virus that seeks to destroy democracies.

Governments have a duty to investigate cases reported by journalists and to prosecute the perpetrators. States should prevent the recurrence of abuse of power and corrupt practices by monitoring and protecting the press so that it can play its role as a watchdog over those in power.

This year I was honoured to receive the Theodor Heuss Medal and I became aware of the important work of German media organizations such as HateAid, Facts For Friends and CORRECTIV, which are examples of the value of fighting fake news.

## ➔ Sentence for German employees

The investigation into the 2014 attack on a school in southeastern Mexico, which resulted in the murder and forced disappearance of 43 students, also comes to mind. Weapons manufactured by the German firm Heckler & Koch were founded to have been used. This journalistic work culminated in a suspended sentence for two German employees accused of being involved in the illegal export of the weapons. This reopened the debate on human rights monitoring.

I have spent the last 15 years investigating the humanitarian crisis in Mexico resulting from the disappearance of more than 110,000 people since the ‘war on drugs’ was declared. The state is complicit in many of the cases of ‘disappeared’ people – sometimes carrying out the disappearances itself but in many other cases covering them up – and in most cases it does nothing to combat or investigate them, or to punish the perpetrators.

## ➔ Spied on by the government

Today, exposing these flaws in the system is punished, not rewarded. I am one of those affected by my government’s spying activities. First it monitored

my movements in 2015 to find out who was giving me information, and then in 2017 it gained access to all the information on my mobile phone using the Pegasus malware. This malware for monitoring private communications is like a plague that threatens international journalism.

In a country like Mexico, where we have spent 15 years reporting on the murders or disappearances of more than 150 colleagues, I consider myself lucky. Journalism has many enemies. The organized criminal gangs will always use lies and disinformation as well as weapons: they know that journalism can attack them – not with weapons but by investigating and revealing the truth.

Democracy is at risk where the press is not free to report. In 2023, Germany dropped two places in the World Press Freedom Index. The reason given ‘journalists have been increasingly threatened, harassed and physically attacked. Most violations are attributable to right-wing or far-right actors [...] Reporters covering protests are occasionally arrested.’

## ➔ Silencing of reporters rapidly spreads

In Mexico, we know that the ecosystem of press freedom deteriorates rapidly when institutions do not take drastic measures to protect it and when impunity reigns. Failure to act can cause

irreversible and fatal damage: it is an open invitation to attack the press, and the silencing of reporters spreads rapidly.

We know that attacks do not always come with bullets; they can be just a click away. They can start with a smear campaign, a doctored photo, a rumour, campaigns orchestrated by bot farms employed by private companies or public officials, the publication of information about your private life, abuse on social networks or the use of malware. And the threats escalate while the perpetrators go unpunished.

Governments, not just the one in Mexico, need to realize that journalists give them the ability to expose injustice and provide a counterbalance. Democracies need a watchdog to monitor areas that are not working well and to stop fake news.

It is vital that officials at the highest levels of government, whether in Germany or in Mexico support rigorous investigative journalism for citizens, for human rights and for democracy. Not just by making speeches but also by protecting and safeguarding the press and ensuring that it can do its work in safety and freedom. 🇲🇽



**Marcela Turati** is an investigative journalist and co-founder of Quinto Elemento Lab, a laboratory for investigative and innovative journalism.



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### Imprint

'The Berlin Pulse' representative survey carried out by KANTAR PUBLIC Germany for Körber-Stiftung, September 2023  
Publisher: Körber-Stiftung, Hamburg  
Responsible in accordance with German press law: Lothar Dittmer  
Executive Director International Affairs: Nora Müller  
Conceptualization, analysis and editing: Julia Ganter, Jonathan Lehrer, Isabel Knippel, Nicolas Bouchet  
Design and production: GROOTHUIS.DE  
Litho: Frische Grafik, frische-grafik.de  
Print: oeding print GmbH, oeding-print.de  
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