73% agree that Germany should contribute more towards solving global problems than economically weaker countries.

A representative survey on German attitudes to foreign policy and multilateral cooperation commissioned by Körber-Stiftung believes that more transparency by the Chinese government could have helped to mitigate or avoid the pandemic.

71% would consider it a negative development if the corona crisis caused a decrease of globalization.

36% believe that Germany should cooperate with other nations to solve global challenges even if this implies initially putting national interests in second place.

65% are in favour of returning the production of critical infrastructure back to Germany, even at the risk of higher costs.

85% consider close relations to the US more important than close relations to China and consider close relations to China more important than close relations to the US.

59% oppose the introduction of “corona bonds.”

33% think the world should prioritise climate change and 25% think the world should prioritise global health crises.

From among five global challenges, 30% oppose the introduction of “corona bonds.”
German Foreign Policy in Times of COVID-19

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From among five global challenges, 33% think the world should prioritise climate change.

25% think the world should prioritise global health crises.

A representative survey on German attitudes to foreign policy and multilateral cooperation commissioned by Körber-Stiftung.
Dear Readers,

Welcome to this special edition of The Berlin Pulse!

“Uncertainty is the only certainty” – these words are credited to the Roman philosopher Pliny the Elder, who died in the wake of an eruption of Mount Vesuvius in the year AD 79 which buried the city of Pompeii under volcanic ash. Whether or not the corona pandemic will be remembered 2,000 years from now, the virus reminds us of Pliny’s words: We may not yet know how SARS-CoV-2 will affect our societies, but affect them it will. Given this momentous event, like other organizations, we at Körber-Stiftung have had to respond with flexibility and a willingness to do things a little differently – one of the results is this special issue, juxtaposing German public opinion with international perspectives on the policy choices facing Berlin.

This pandemic is occurring at a time of profound political change. Experts and policy-makers have pointed out for the better part of two decades now that whatever happens in China is likely to affect us. The absence of US leadership, a divided Europe, the increasing prevalence of international mistrust – like a focal lens, the coronavirus has shown us in all too much detail how these dynamics might play out over the next few decades.

Germany has long struggled to adapt to these new realities. Germans have been told that their country will need to take on “more responsibility”, and that we will need to “take our fate into our own hands”. One example of how Berlin has tried to do so is through a renewed emphasis on multilateralism as a pillar of its foreign policy, not least by crafting the Alliance for Multilateralism. But how do these dynamics, and the spotlight they have cast on Berlin’s role in international affairs, square with public opinion? To answer this question remains the mission and idea of The Berlin Pulse.

I would like to say a special thank you to this year’s contributors, all of whom took time out of their busy schedules to pen their thoughts or stand ready for an interview. They include, amongst others, Ana Palacio, who served as Spain’s Minister of Foreign Affairs from 2002-04, Sebastian Groth and Manuel Lafont Rapnouil, who demonstrate that Franco-German cooperation is alive and kicking; as well as Feng Zhongping, who provides a Chinese perspective on the current pandemic.

Thanks are also due to the Pew Research Center, which has become more than an invaluable partner and our very own reminder of why the transatlantic relationship remains so special.

Lastly, I would be remiss not to thank the team behind the current issue: Christin Knüpfer, Ronja Scheler, and the editor of The Berlin Pulse, Joshua Webb. It is because of their insight, expertise and dedication that I am sure that you will enjoy the pages ahead.

As has become the universal farewell: Stay healthy!

Yours,

Thomas Paulsen

Member of the Executive Board, Körber-Stiftung, Hamburg

May 2020
Adapting to a New Normal

German foreign policy and public opinion in times of COVID-19

The COVID-19 pandemic has accelerated many of the trends and dynamics underlying the geopolitical shifts we have seen over the past decade. From a German point of view, the virus has underlined major cracks in each of the three pillars that have underpinned Berlin’s foreign policy almost since World War II: European integration, transatlantic cooperation, and its export-driven economic model. Common to each of these pillars is a dependence on an open and rules-based order that is increasingly under threat. Recognizing these challenges, Germany has gone to great lengths to promote a renewed commitment to international cooperation: From new initiatives in the UN Security Council, where the country took up its seat as a non-permanent member in January 2019, to the launch of the Alliance for Multilateralism, Berlin has placed multilateralism front and centre of its agenda.

But how are these challenges, and the purported solutions, viewed by the public, particularly in the context of the pandemic?

First things first: However geopolitical realities may be changing, Germans continue to feel rather comfortable in a deeply interconnected world. A majority of them believe that globalization has benefited their country (59 percent) and them personally (52 percent, compared to 47 and 49 percent, respectively, in the United States, as data gathered by the Pew Research Center shows). In a similar vein, Germans remain staunch supporters of international cooperation: 89 percent favour cooperating with other countries to solve global challenges (notwithstanding a minor decrease from 96 percent in 2019). There are limits to the support for global interconnectedness: A strong majority of 85 percent would like to see the production of essential goods and critical infrastructure – 5G, anyone? – returned to German soil, even at the risk of higher costs. Notwithstanding, when it comes to international challenges, clearly Germans do not like to go it alone. So how do these preferences relate to their views on European integration, the transatlantic partnership, and relations with China?

On Europe, Germans appear rather conflicted: A plurality of 38 percent say that their view of the EU has deteriorated amid the COVID-19 crisis, compared to 33 percent whose view of Europe has improved. While nearly three quarters agree that, given its status as a relatively wealthy country, Germany should contribute more than other countries towards solving global problems, it is not clear how this would pan out in Europe: A majority of 59 percent comes down against so-called corona bonds, among the most controversial topics over recent weeks. Support for European integration
becomes less ambiguous where tangible benefits are at stake: For instance, an emphatic majority of 85 percent favours a return to the Schengen Agreement, which stipulates an absence of border checks among participating states, once the virus has been defeated. Compared to the European project, German attitudes towards transatlantic cooperation have taken a significant dive. While scepticism towards Washington predates the pandemic, America’s response to the virus has clearly accelerated a feeling of estrangement on the German side: 73 percent of Germans say that their opinion of the US has deteriorated – more than double the number of respondents who feel the same way towards China. And despite the close security cooperation between Washington and Berlin, merely 10 percent of Germans consider the US their closest partner in foreign policy, compared to 19 percent in September 2019. The trend toward transatlantic estrangement is further underlined by the fact that the number of Germans who prioritize close relations with Washington over close relations with Beijing has decreased significantly, from 50 percent in September 2019 to the current number of 37 percent, almost equal to the number of those who see it the other way around (36 percent).

So out with the US, in with China? Not quite: Yes, the fact that the public is leaning towards a position of equidistance between Washington and Beijing should worry policy-makers. However, this is not to say that Germans are uncritical towards the People’s Republic. Over 70 percent believe that the Chinese government could have mitigated the pandemic by being more transparent in its handling of the situation. Neither do Chinese propaganda efforts appear to resonate with many Germans. In contrast to Serbian President Aleksandar Vučić, who in March declared that, given a lack of European solidarity, he was directing all his hopes toward Beijing, 87 percent of Germans believe that the EU is contributing more to the fight against the pandemic than China.

So what does all of this mean for the future of German foreign policy? The benefits of EU membership remain popular. However, our results suggest that the pandemic’s net effect on the image of the EU among Germans has been negative. Looking west, the Atlantic seems wider than ever. Data from previous surveys suggest that Germans’ perceptions of the US closely correlate with their perceptions of the incumbent president. Notwithstanding, the growing gap between public opinion and a foreign policy that heavily relies on close relations with Washington may well provide parties on both ends of the political spectrum with a welcome target. As experts and politicians on the cusp of filling the vacuum resulting from waning US popularity. As experts and politicians alike predict that Germany eventually will be forced to choose sides should the Sino-American rivalry continue on its current trajectory – and there is little to suggest it won’t – Beijing’s growing popularity will undoubtedly complicate such a decision.

As the corona pandemic underlines the urgent need for international cooperation, multilateralism appears to be faltering in both spirit and practice. Germans for one remain staunch optimists about the future of international collaboration, with 42 percent believing that the pandemic will lead to an increase in international cooperation. Let us hope that they aren’t in for a rude awakening.

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Germany at the Helm
Why we cannot afford to waste Germany’s presidency of the Council of the European Union

On 1 July, Germany will take over the rotating presidency of the Council of the European Union. Germany’s presidency could not have come at a more important moment in time, and carries the potential to be a game-changer for Europe. Not only because of Germany’s position at the helm of the EU-27, but because of the enormous challenges ahead. However, amidst the plethora of immediate problems Europe faces, we must not lose sight of the forest for the trees. Beyond the COVID-19 response and economic reconstruction, it will be crucial to build a foundation for effective multilateralism.

As Europe has gone from crisis to crisis over the last decade, it has exuded passivity. Being drawn into one maelstrom after another, it has found just enough strength not to drown, but not enough for a decisive course of action. There are myriad reasons for this perpetual muddling through. The absence of leadership, however, ranks prominently among them.

In this respect, the German presidency is reason for cautious optimism. Though reluctant, for at least a decade now, Germany has been the de facto leader of Europe. Nothing gets done without a tacit nod or more from Berlin. This is simply reality.

Now, by some twist of fate, Germany is to formally set the European agenda, at a time when the continent needs its leadership the most. True, the German Constitutional Court’s decision to restrict the Bundesbank’s participation in the European Central Bank’s Asset Purchase Programme has cast a shadow of uncertainty on future EU activities, on the Union’s structural integrity, as well as on Germany’s role in Europe. The ramifications of this decision, which go far beyond monetary policy, will play out over the next years. Nonetheless, Germany’s presidency represents an opportunity that we cannot afford to waste.

The immediate focus of Germany’s presidency will necessarily shift to efforts to adjust to – and recover from – the effects of the pandemic, with an emphasis on public health and the economy. Tackling these gargantuan tasks is the right course of action. Simultaneously, however, we must not forget our external environment, the shape of which is very much up in the air.

Conventional wisdom has it that trends which pre-dated the crisis, in particular the increasingly open rivalry between China and the United States, will accelerate. Such fears are fueled of course by the war of words and blame between Beijing and Washington. The international system is running an all too real risk of fracturing, with Europe caught somewhat in between, its leaders uncomfortably trying to chart a path between commercial opportunity and the transatlantic alliance.

How should we respond? Yes, Europeans must continue to increase their capacity to act on the international stage. And yes, much remains to be done to bolster European self-sufficiency, particularly in relation to technology. However, such efforts will not inoculate Europe against the impact of a world regressing towards pure power competition – a world in which Europe would be poorly positioned to compete and which it should urgently seek to avoid.

For years we have seen a progressive erosion of the institutions, instruments, and rules that guide global governance. International fora have become more about politics than policy with institutional structures serving as fiefdoms of influence rather than platforms to respond to actual challenges. The World Health Organization is an example par excellence. The consequences are now being painfully felt.

Effective multilateralism has long been a buzz word for the EU, but has rarely been put into real practice. And yet that is precisely what is needed today and what should be a core element of the German presidency’s international agenda. The global effort to develop and deploy a vaccine would be a natural platform to build a positive, cooperative agenda. Steps to this end are already being taken, most visibly the EU-organized international fundraising campaign for research into a vaccine.

But cooperation and facilitation must not mean acquiescence and should not be pursued at all costs. Prior to any negotiation, it is imperative to know your own position, including red lines and the areas in which you are willing to seek a compromise. Europe has never conducted such soul-searching, but now it must. We have to be aware of our values and commit ourselves to preserving them. This means a respect for rights, but also transparency and a commitment to rules-based approaches.

As we look forward to this most important of Council presidencies, let us hope that Germany takes advantage of this moment of fluidity and of its weight in order to build a foundation for international cooperation. It would be a silver lining to the very dark clouds surrounding us.

Has the corona pandemic changed your opinion of ...

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<th>US</th>
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<td>Deteriorated</td>
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<td>Unchanged</td>
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2020: don’t know 4%, no answer 1%
2020: don’t know 6%, no answer 1%
2020: don’t know 4%, no answer 1%
n truth, an outbreak such as COVID-19 was all but improbable: the world was put on pandemic alert several times over the last twenty years, including for diseases originating from animal viruses. Nonetheless, like a black swan event, the pandemic is likely to have a major impact, both on our societies and on international relations.

Pandemics tend to rebalance power, thereby stoking patterns of rivalry. The current competition between narratives – and, by extension, models – demonstrates how such a redistribution may play out, even absent major conflict. Simultaneously, the mitigation measures of the past few weeks have inflicted severe economic damage, and may well reinforce existing inequalities. It is hard therefore to envision the world emerging from the pandemic with an increased capacity to address the challenges it is facing, from geopolitical tensions to climate change, biodiversity, tech regulation, international trade, or disarmament.

Despite these risks, the pandemic also represents an opportunity to shape the post-COVID-19 world. To this end, Germany and France are united in their determination to promote and strengthen international cooperation and multilateralism. Bilaterally, Berlin has hosted French patients when Paris’ health system was on the brink. We cooperated closely in repatriating from all over the world not only our respective citizens, but also those of our EU partners. At the European level, both Germany and France played a key role in unlocking a stalemate within the Euro group and forging a compromise on the EU’s response to the economic fallout of the crisis. On a global level, Minister Maas and Minister Le Drian have convened a new meeting of the Alliance for Multilateralism to foster more effective cooperation and stronger solidarity in the global fight against COVID-19 and are working hand in hand to strengthen the UN’s role in the current crisis.

During the second half of the year, Germany will hold the presidency of the Council of the European Union, with France following suit during the first half of 2022. This puts both countries in a good position to work on strengthening European sovereignty and solidarity. The challenge for the EU lies not only in dealing with the crisis from a public health perspective, nor in merely alleviating the potential shock to our economies and the harm to our social fabric. Instead, Europe will need to show that it is able to protect its people, that it can organize and foster solidarity, and that it will not simply return to business as usual. Europe will need to strengthen its resilience, reorganize its supply chains, and propose an economic, social, environmental, and political model that draws the right lessons from the crisis.

Europe should also focus its efforts abroad. As both Chancellor Merkel and President Macron have pointed out, “No region can win the battle against COVID-19 alone. If it is not beaten in Africa, it will return to haunt us all”. Europeans therefore face a two-fold challenge: First, to push for greater solidarity and cooperation, e.g. by allocating the financial resources to address the pandemic and by organizing fair and speedy access to treatments (and vaccines, once they become available); and determination to promote and strengthen international cooperation and multilateralism. Bilaterally, Berlin has hosted French patients when Paris’ health system was on the brink. We cooperated closely in repatriating from all over the world not only our respective citizens, but also those of our EU partners. At the European level, both Germany and France played a key role in unlocking a stalemate within the Euro group and forging a compromise on the EU’s response to the economic fallout of the crisis. On a global level, Minister Maas and Minister Le Drian have convened a new meeting of the Alliance for Multilateralism to foster more effective cooperation and stronger solidarity in the global fight against COVID-19 and are working hand in hand to strengthen the UN’s role in the current crisis.

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Opportunity in Crisis

Europeans must seize the moment to shape the post-COVID-19 world

This article was written by the authors in their personal capacities. The opinions expressed therein do not represent the position of the French or German government.

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second, to navigate an era in which geopolitical considerations will impede international cooperation, and in which Europe will need to earn credibility and impose respect.

In order to meet these challenges, Europeans must achieve a greater level of sovereignty, defined as the capacity to act independently and more decisively. Doing so by working on our capabilities and decision-making mechanisms will help us defend our principles and interests more efficiently, in the crisis and beyond. It will strengthen our position in the post-coronavirus world. It will allow us to have more influence in the international arena. Finally, it will provide us with the power to act on the global stage, to hold others accountable regarding their commitments, and to make our own.

On the multilateral front, Europeans should prioritize supporting the WHO in the fight against COVID-19. Coordination, monitoring and information sharing are key to fighting the pandemic. We will also need others to step up, including the Global Fund, Unitaid, and Gavi, all of which have been bringing together states, international organizations, NGOs and corporations.

The crisis triggered by COVID-19 underlines the urgency of addressing a nearly endless list of global challenges including the environment, biodiversity, digital governance and data protection, human rights, and reducing inequalities. Viewed through a different lens, however, COVID-19 can broaden our understanding of what scenarios are possible for our future. There may be no magic bullet, but our destiny is not written in stone. If we don’t shape our future, others will. And it is unlikely to be the future we want.

Calls for a new Marshall Plan reverberate across Europe today. From Spain’s Pedro Sanchez to the European Commission’s Ursula von der Leyen, leaders are urging Europeans to tackle the COVID-19 crisis with a bold new joint initiative. Beyond the reference to Marshall, these proposals bear little resemblance to the massive US-financed program to reconstruct Europe after World War II. These “Marshall Plans” are not about an outside great power helping Europe; they are about Europe helping itself. However, these attempts to build solidarity among European Union members are a positive step away from the overwhelming inward-looking, nationalistic responses that marked the first weeks of countries’ responses to the pandemic.

Donald Trump’s reaction to this pandemic has been nationalist too. This is not an America looking to lead a transatlantic, never mind a global, coalition to combat the coronavirus. The pandemic is accelerating trends that were alive and well long before this new virus appeared.

The United States and every European country need to heal their own societies by getting the pandemic under control and restarting their economies to reverse as much of the damage as possible. And yet, at this time of crisis, transatlantic leadership is sorely needed. One opportunity is indeed a Marshall Plan, not for Europe, but for Africa. The African continent is woefully short on resources – both in the public health and economic sectors – to respond effectively to a pandemic. Beyond the compassion Europeans and Americans would show by helping Africans, such engagement would also be in their enlightened self-interest. That was key to the original Marshall Plan. Rebuilt European economies would become important markets for US goods.

**We Need a Marshall Plan for Africa**

Supporting Africa’s recovery from the pandemic could inject a positive agenda into transatlantic relations.
help prevent future war on the continent, and a prosperous Europe would be less vulnerable to the lure of Soviet communism.

A Marshall Plan for Africa is not a new idea. Back in January 2017, the German government launched its Marshall Plan with Africa, which Chancellor Merkel saw as a centerpiece of her policy to stem the flow of migrants. For similar reasons, Antonio Tajani, as president of the European Parliament from 2017 to 2019, called repeatedly for such a plan. If today the United States and Europe were to join forces in providing African countries with the resources to help themselves, the impact would be powerful.

This may well seem like a pipe dream given the mounting deficits caused by dealing with the pandemic and its aftermath in the United States and Europe, as well as the frayed state of transatlantic relations in 2020. How could the two sides of the Atlantic possibly come together and create an aid programme on the scale of the Marshall Plan?

We forget how contentious the Marshall Plan was back in 1947, however. Amid a sharp divide between the Democratic administration of President Harry Truman and the Republican, isolationist Congress, US officials had to spread out across the country to make the case for the Plan to war-weary Americans, who wanted to focus inward, rather than provide substantial support to help a devastated Europe recover. Ultimately, the Truman Administration, with the help of leading Republicans, successfully made the case that it was in the US interest to rebuild Europe’s economies at a time when Britain’s empire was collapsing and the appeal of Stalin’s communism in war-ravaged Europe was growing.

Similar imperatives argue for the United States and Europe, based on their collective enlightened self-interest, to join forces now in support of Africa. By 2035, Africa will be home to the world’s biggest potential labor force and, by 2050, to 20 percent of the world’s population. Roughly half of the world’s 20 fastest growing economies are located on the continent. Africa also faces enormous challenges, ranging from the climate crisis to a youth employment crisis to pandemics. Europe worries about ever more significant migration from Africa. The United States worries about the deep investment China, its major strategic competitor, is making in Africa. The countries of Africa have set an ambitious agenda for their own socio-economic transformation. The United States and Europe need to support that agenda through a new Marshall Plan.

The coronavirus has yet to hit Africa with force. Seventeen world leaders – eight of them European – believe it will and have issued a call for an enormous support package for the continent, because they believe only victory in Africa can end this pandemic. Surely, there is a role for others – from the G20 to the IMF – but no duo can galvanize global action more effectively than the US and the EU. A transatlantic Marshall Plan for Africa is essential and the time is now.
German Worldviews in Times of COVID-19

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

All US results by the Pew Research Center

In 2014, leading German politicians declared that the time had come to assume more responsibility in international affairs. Since then, Körber-Stiftung has published an annual survey on German attitudes towards international cooperation and foreign policy challenges facing Berlin. In 2017, the survey became part of The Berlin Pulse, adding contributions by leading thinkers and policy-makers to juxtapose domestic public opinion with international expectations of Germany. In response to increasing uncertainty about the transatlantic relationship, Körber-Stiftung and the Pew Research Center have entered into a unique partnership. Each year, both organizations ask select questions in Germany and the United States, tracing public perceptions of each country in the other.

As the coronavirus pandemic has caused enormous uncertainty, particularly over geopolitics, multilateralism and international cooperation, this year Körber-Stiftung decided to launch a special issue, including an update of the 2019 survey. Together or Alone? As the world around us is changing, comparing public opinion to international expectations can help chart the course.

Should Germany cooperate with other nations to solve global challenges?

Yes, definitely 61% 53%
Rather yes 28% 46%
Rather no 6% 20%
No, definitely not 3% 7%

Should Germany cooperate with other nations to solve global challenges even if this implies initially putting national interests in second place?

Yes, definitely 25% 37%
Mostly agree 42% 47%
Mostly disagree 17% 15%
Completely disagree 7% 6%

Given that Germany is a relatively wealthy country, should it contribute more towards solving global problems than less wealthy countries?

German respondents:

Completely agree 17% 25%
Mostly agree 42% 47%
Mostly disagree 17% 15%
Completely disagree 5% 6%

US respondents:

Completely agree 23% 25%
Mostly agree 45% 53%
Mostly disagree 18% 17%
Completely disagree 12% 10%

In your view, which of the following five issues should the world prioritize?

Climate change 33% 53%
Global health crises 25% 17%
Armed conflicts 17% 17%
Migration 10% 14%
Terrorism 8% 14%

No data 2020, don’t know 1% 2019, don’t know 1%

Given that the United States is a relatively wealthy country, should it contribute more towards solving global problems than less wealthy countries?

2020: don’t know 1%, no answer 2% | 2019: don’t know 2%
Which of the following actors do you trust most in the fight against the corona pandemic?

- National governments: 31%
- International organizations such as the World Health Organization (WHO): 30%
- Private companies: 3%
- Non-profit and aid organizations: 13%

Would it be good or bad if the corona crisis caused a decrease in the degree of globalization and interconnectedness?

- Bad: 65%
- Good: 24%

In the process of globalization, has Germany effectively lost freedom to develop its own policies?

- Yes, definitely: 17%
- Rather yes: 13%
- Rather no: 29%
- No, by no means: 36%

German respondents:
What would you expect once the corona crisis is over?

- States will increase their focus on national interests: 31%
- States will cooperate more: 42%

US respondents:
What would you expect once the corona crisis is over?

- States will increase their focus on national interests: 29%
- States will cooperate more: 35%

2020: don't know 8%, no answer 7%

2020: don't know 3% | 2019: don't know 4%
Overall, has globalization in the past few years been good or bad for...

German respondents: ... Germany?

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<td>Bad</td>
<td>30%</td>
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<td>Has had no effect</td>
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2020: don't know 3%, no answer 1%
2019: don't know 1%

US respondents: ... the United States?

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<td>Both good and bad</td>
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2020: don't know 3%, no answer 1%
2019: don't know 4%

German respondents: ... you personally?

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<td>Both good and bad</td>
<td>7%</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Has had no effect</td>
<td>16%</td>
<td></td>
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2020: don't know 5%, no answer 1%
2019: don't know 6%

US respondents: ... you personally?

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<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>2020</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Good</td>
<td>49%</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Bad</td>
<td>30%</td>
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<tr>
<td>Both good and bad</td>
<td>7%</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Has had no effect</td>
<td>16%</td>
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2020: don't know 5%, no answer 3%
2019: don't know 5%

German respondents: Which country currently is the most important partner for German foreign policy?

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<thead>
<tr>
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<th>2020</th>
<th>2019</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>France</td>
<td>51%</td>
<td>44%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>US</td>
<td>19%</td>
<td>10%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>China</td>
<td>6%</td>
<td>7%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Russia</td>
<td>4%</td>
<td>6%</td>
</tr>
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2020: a different country 7%, don't know 24%, no answer 5%
2019: a different country 4%, don't know 13%, no answer 2%

US respondents: Which country currently is the most important partner for American foreign policy?

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<th>2019</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>France</td>
<td>26%</td>
<td>18%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>China</td>
<td>16%</td>
<td>10%</td>
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<tr>
<td>Canada</td>
<td>9%</td>
<td>5%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Germany</td>
<td>4%</td>
<td>6%</td>
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2020: a different country 20%, don't know/no answer 20%
2019: a different country 28%, don't know/no answer 22%

German respondents: What is more important for Germany?

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<th>2019</th>
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</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Having close relations with China</td>
<td>36%</td>
<td>24%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Spontaneous response: equidistance</td>
<td>24%</td>
<td>18%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

2020: neither 4%, don't know/no answer 3%
2019: neither 2%, don't know/no answer 4%

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

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<td>6%</td>
<td>4%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

2020: neither 4%, don't know/no answer 3%
2019: neither 2%, don't know/no answer 4%
More transparency on the part of the Chinese government would have contributed towards mitigating or avoiding the current corona pandemic.

Fully agree 43%
Somewhat agree 28%
Somewhat disagree 17%
Fully disagree 9%

In your view, which of these actors is contributing more towards solving the corona crisis in Europe?

76%
The EU and its member states

Has the corona pandemic changed your opinion of...

US
Improved 5%
Deteriorated 17%
Unchanged 32%

China
Improved 25%
Deteriorated 36%
Unchanged 38%

EU
Improved 33%
Deteriorated 24%
Unchanged 38%

In your view, which of these actors is contributing more towards solving the corona crisis in Europe?

The EU and its member states 76%
China 11%
US 11%

Once the corona crisis is over, would you hope for a return to the European Schengen system?

No 19%
Yes 79%

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No 19%
Yes 79%
In light of the corona crisis, should Germany increase or decrease its civil and military engagement in the Middle East and Africa?

- Rather increase engagement: 16%
- 34% Rather decrease engagement
- 45% Remain unchanged

2019: don’t know 4%, no answer 1%

To fight the pandemic, should the government be allowed temporarily to access personal data?

- Yes: 46% (2020)
- No: 53% (2020)

2020: don’t know 1%

Should Germany return the production of critical infrastructure and essential goods back to Germany, even at the risk of higher costs?

- Yes: 85% (2020)
- No: 11% (2020)

2020: don’t know 3%, no answer 1%

Should the member states of the eurozone issue “corona bonds”?

- Yes, definitely: 10% (2020)
- In general, yes: 28% (2020)
- In general, no: 27% (2020)
- No, by no means: 32% (2020)

2020: don’t know 2%, no answer 1%

DATA BASIS
1057 interviewees in Germany; 1008 interviewees in the US, eligible to vote and aged over 18, between 3 – 9 April 2020 (Germany) or rather 21 – 26 April 2020 (the US)
Sample / surveying procedure: representative random selection, dual frame / telephone interviews (CATI)
Interviews in Germany: KANTAR PUBLIC Deutschland; Interviews in the US: The Pew Research Center
How Will COVID-19 Affect Relations between Europe and China?

Diverging perspectives on Beijing’s response to the pandemic

How would you assess the Chinese government’s handling of the corona crisis so far?

The coronavirus pandemic represents a test for all countries. China was caught off-guard. The Chinese government took measures that would have been unthinkable prior to the pandemic, and thus were deemed controversial. However, almost five months after the lockdown of Wuhan, the first city hit by the pandemic, many of these measures have proven effective. The suspension of economic activities in order to save lives, the building of makeshift hospitals, the nationwide redistribution of doctors and experts to the areas most affected – all of these were subsequently mirrored by European countries.

How Will COVID-19 Affect Relations between Europe and China?

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In your view, was the Chinese government sufficiently transparent, or could more transparency have helped to mitigate or even have prevented the situation from escalating into a pandemic?

China knows that a modern country runs on reliable data. Never before have citizens been able to check in real-time the numbers of fatalities or people infected. Most Chinese citizens trust these numbers. Of course, more transparency will always be helpful. However, if we have learned anything from this pandemic, it is the fact that even the slightest negligence will lead to a full-blown crisis.

I do not think that the handling was in any way transparent. From the data available, it appears that the first informal tests conducted by Chinese laboratories in late December were suppressed. Furthermore, there is evidence to suggest that Beijing censored early reports of the outbreak on social media. It took two months until the local authorities in Wuhan informed the WHO of the outbreak. It also seems that both local authorities and the national government deliberately reported significantly lower case numbers to the WHO.

One study concluded that, had the Chinese authorities introduced counter-measures just a week earlier, 95 per cent of China’s infections could have been prevented.

In the context of the pandemic, there has been significant media attention on Taiwan’s continued exclusion from the World Health Organization.

From your point of view, could the international community have benefitted from Taiwan being (re-)admitted to the WHO as an observer?

The World Health Organization is an international organization comprising sovereign states as its members. Politicizing Taiwan’s observer status in the WHO will serve no good, but only distract from the global effort against the coronavirus. As per the arrangement between the Chinese government and the WHO, the region of Taiwan should have no difficulties in accessing information and expertise made available by the WHO.

It remains our policy that it is the People’s Republic which represents China. My personal view is that when it comes to the health of billions of people, anyone who can help in this fight should be allowed to join.
As the virus knows no boundary, China understands that it will never be safe itself until other states are safe. China’s help generally has been welcomed by Europeans, especially in those countries which were hit the hardest, such as Italy and Spain. Some argue that China has sought to gain influence in Europe by referring to as ‘politics of generosity’. In the long run, that China has sought to gain influence in Europe by helping to stop this pandemic. However, there is too little reliable information from within China. I think it is positive that China is proactively supporting countries which have been hit by the Corona crisis, just the way we helped China earlier this year. But I am irritated by the way in which this assistance, such as the deliveries of masks and PPEs to Italy and Spain, has been accompanied by propagandistic tunes. Also, some of the equipment delivered has been of bad quality. Notwithstanding, I think that China’s help overall has been welcomed and perceived positively.

In your view, how will the pandemic affect perceptions of China’s role in the world?

The current measures taken by China are certainly helping to stop this pandemic. However, there is too little reliable information from within China. I think it is positive that China is proactively supporting countries which have been hit by the Corona crisis, just the way we helped China earlier this year. But I am irritated by the way in which this assistance, such as the deliveries of masks and PPEs to Italy and Spain, has been accompanied by propagandistic tunes. Also, some of the equipment delivered has been of bad quality. Notwithstanding, I think that China’s help overall has been welcomed and perceived positively.

In your view, how will the pandemic affect perceptions of China’s role in the world?

Neither China nor the US are cutting a good figure at the moment. It is far too early to predict the repercussions of COVID-19 on international relations. My hope is that Europe will emerge from the crisis stronger than before.

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Arguably the corona pandemic has caused Sino-US relations to further deteriorate. How might this dynamic affect Europe?

It was the trilateral cooperation between China, Europe, and the United States that saw the world through the economic crises of the 2010s. This time, such cooperation has either been absent or fallen short of what is necessary. To be sure, intensifying confrontation between Washington and Beijing is not in the interest of Europe, which would prefer to avoid choosing sides between a “Western ally” and a “strategic partner”. Against this background, the scramble over 5G to some extent has forced the Europeans to make their own decisions. To be able to do so, it will be imperative for Europeans to do their homework – autonomy and competitiveness. Looking ahead, Europe’s role may come to resemble that of a broker between the US and China.

The European Commission in March 2019 labeled China as both a “strategic partner” and “systemic rival”. How sustainable is this approach, and do you see relations tilting one way or another?

Since 2016, the West has viewed China through a more competitive lens. However, unlike the United States, in many ways Europe still approaches China as a partner, and does not want to contain China. The pandemic has opened new opportunities for China and Europe to cooperate. Meanwhile, the reshaping of global supply chains and the diverging governance narratives are likely to render the relationship even more intriguing.

A lot depends on policy choices made by the Chinese government. At the forthcoming EU-China summit, we will see whether the EU and China are able to go beyond rhetoric and to jointly tackle the significant challenges they are facing. My hope is that we will come to an agreement on questions such as foreign investment, climate change and the future of multilateralism. The current crisis has demonstrated just how dependent on global supply chains nearly every industrial sector has become. The European Union therefore should aim to grow more independent from global supply chains in a number of vital areas.

Arguably the corona pandemic has caused Sino-US relations to further deteriorate. How might this dynamic affect Europe?
Special edition – German Foreign Policy in times of CoVid-19

The corona virus has given a new sense of urgency to debates on the future of multilateralism and international cooperation. The multilateral order we have come to know was shaped at the respective ends of both world wars – two defining moments of the 20th century. However, given the growing gap between the architecture of that order and the changing geopolitical order of the 21st century, its capacity to deliver has come under growing pressure.

The pandemic is causing a massive economic and social crisis, and is bound to make a bad situation worse. Simultaneously, the heated debates regarding the origin of SARS-CoV-2, the quality of the World Health Organization’s response, and its alleged vulnerability to Chinese influence indicate that relations between Washington and Beijing are further deteriorating. Consequently, the world’s capacity for multilateral action is regressing at a time when we need more multilateral action, not less, for two basic reasons: First, the aforementioned intensifying geopolitical rivalry between China and the US. If Europeans are to preserve their autonomy, they will need to take serious steps towards coordinating their foreign and security policy, as well as their trade and industrial policy. Second, the pandemic may weaken some governments, but it will strengthen others. Stronger states in turn require stronger multilateral mechanisms.

So how can we, how should we, foster more multilateralism?

First, engage: We must build coalitions of states that care about multilateralism. Such an effort may or may not include the United States or China. While paying lip service to the cause of international cooperation, in reality both have been selectively employing multilateralism for their own, narrow purposes, thus undermining the spirit of genuine multilateral cooperation. The Alliance for Multilateralism, launched by Germany and France in September 2019, was a step in the right direction, but so far has produced little concrete results. An international initiative to cover the gap in the WHO’s budget caused by President Trump’s decision to temporarily suspend US payments, be it by the EU or an ad hoc coalition of the willing, would have provided a much-needed victory for the ideal of multilateralism. The initiative by major WTO members in April to set up a coalition to avoid food trade restrictions was a rare instance of international coordination during this crisis. For once, the EU, the US, China, and Brazil stood together – unlike India or Indonesia (at the time of writing).

Second, reshape: The international community must finally tend to the task of reforming our system of international treaties and institutions. Take the WTO: Even prior to the crisis, it had become clear that existing regulations governing international trade were too weak to level the playing field in areas such as subsidization. Personnel is a further case in point: In selecting those who lead international organizations, we need to be more open, more transparent, and more professional. And we need to continue developing formats such as the Sustainable Development Goals or the G20: The mechanisms underpinning multilateralism in the 21st century will be less like cathedrals built in stone, but rather flexible as a tent.

Finally: diversify. To do so, we must abandon our state-centric understanding of multilateralism. Instead, we should replace it with a concept that is open to different forms of non-state actors – what I have called “poly-lateralism”. This is why, on the occasion of the centenary of the first world war, the Paris Peace Forum was created in 2018: To complement states’ actions by mobilizing non-governmental organizations (NGOs), businesses, academic institutions, and large cities, to name but a few. Or, put differently, to establish a bottom-up, stakeholder-focused and project-based approach to tackling major global challenges.

If the multilateral order is to survive, it must change.
And make no mistake: With the rivalry between China and the US dominating international relations for the foreseeable future, the EU will need to take the driving seat and lead this movement. This implies a serious increase in Europe’s geopolitical clout, which in turn will require the EU to accelerate its own economic and political integration. Seen from this angle, the present catastrophe may well prove a decisive test.

I am convinced that the EU will emerge from this crisis either stronger or weaker. The answer, in no small part, lies in the hands of my German friends. We will need a colossal amount of borrowing to fix our economies. And the key to do borrowing at the lowest possible price lies in mutualizing our balance sheets. The leap from the status quo to collective debt would be similar to the “whatever it takes” of the European Central Bank under Mario Draghi during the 2008 financial crisis.

Europeans have proven that when united, they are capable of tackling great challenges. But a divided Europe simply will not be able to advance the cause of multilateralism. So yes, we need an antidote to SARS-CoV-2. But, as Jacques Delors said in April, now more than ever we also need an antidote to the virus of division.

The COVID-19 crisis has made the weaknesses of the current multilateral system painfully clear. Rather than respond to the pandemic in a coordinated fashion, the United States, China and other major powers have reacted in a confused, fragmented and ineffectual manner.

The Trump administration has failed to show leadership in the United Nations, freezing its funding for the World Health Organization over its alleged deference to China and arguing that the Security Council should refer to COVID-19 as the “Wuhan virus”. Yet Beijing has also been unable to offer a compelling plan to handle the outbreak through the WHO or UN.

It has fallen to traditional defenders of multilateralism – such as European powers – and UN officials to make the case for a global answer to this global crisis. French President Emmanuel Macron led efforts in March and April to get all five permanent members of the Security Council to back a symbolic resolution highlighting the dangers of the disease. Secretary-General António Guterres has spoken eloquently of the socio-economic impact of the disease.

Germany has emphasized similar themes, using its temporary seat on the UN Security Council to back Guterres’ call for a global ceasefire during the pandemic. The Alliance for Multilateralism, a loose group of states initiated by Foreign Minister Heiko Maas, called for “a co-operative, transparent, science-based and coordinated global response” to COVID-19.

There are nonetheless signs that even states that generally support the UN will be tight with funding for multilateral initiatives in a period of economic and political uncertainty. Although Guterres called for $2 billion of funds to help poor states address COVID-19 in late March, by mid-April the UN had received pledges for only a quarter of that sum. European diplomats fear that this funding gap is a harbinger of long-term tensions at the UN, as poor countries struggle to recover from COVID-19 while big donors are likely to cut development budgets.
The main challenge to the future of multilateral cooperation after COVID-19 will, however, be the worsening of Sino-American tensions in international organizations. This trend was clear before the pandemic began. China has been pushing for greater influence in multilateral forums for some years—securing more top jobs in UN agencies for its nationals—to increasing alarm of US officials. European officials share US concerns, and even representatives of non-Western countries with close economic ties to China fret about Beijing’s rapid increase in authority. But US allies grumble that the Trump administration, having rejected mechanisms like the Paris climate deal and quit bodies like the Human Rights Council and UNESCO, is poorly-placed to prevent China from gaining more power in international bodies.

The COVID-19 crisis has brought all these concerns into stark relief. The WHO appears to have avoided antagonizing China in its initial reporting on COVID-19, fueling US suspicions about UN officials accommodating Beijing’s positions. Yet the initial US response was crude, focused more on pinning blame on China than utilizing the WHO and the rest of the UN system as effectively as possible to manage the disease and its economic and political consequences.

There is still a chance that Washington and Beijing will find a way to cooperate in multilateral fora to manage what is, in the end, a common threat. They have joined the rest of the G20 in offering debt relief to low-income countries as part of a pandemic response plan. Perhaps the two powers will eventually follow the lead of UN officials like Secretary-General Guterres, who may well prove to have more solid ideas about how to direct a global recovery than those who have focused on nationalistic policies. European governments can both give the multilateral system a boost and make the best use of the reduced resources at their disposal by coordinating what they can give through the UN and international financial institutions.

Yet if the COVID-19 crisis foreshadows how the multilateral system will function in an era of Sino-American strategic competition, there is much to worry about. It is depressing but not surprising that great power politics is an obstacle to diplomacy in bodies like the Security Council. Even specialized agencies such as the WHO—which one might have hoped would enjoy some insulation from big power tiffs—will struggle to function if politicized in an age of geopolitical competition. In an era of global mistrust, it is hard to see how the UN can act as an effective conduit for effective cooperation on global challenges such as climate change.

The best that can be said for COVID-19 is that it has made what is at stake in the decline of multilateralism—a popular but vague topic in think-tank discussions prior to 2020—feel real and immediate. That may inspire the UN’s remaining friends to take a harder line on China than they have in the past. But if the UN is not to lose the confidence of its main supporters, the world’s governments will have to give it the resources it needs to do its job.

KÖRBER-STIFTUNG: In responding to the pandemic, many states have taken a number of measures to legalize access to citizens’ personal data. How effective have technological solutions proven in the fight against corona?

BERGMAN: In Israel, we have an app called The Shield, which is supposed to alert you in case you or anyone near you has been in danger of contracting the virus. The app relies on a database of people who have been diagnosed with the coronavirus, which mostly does not include asymptomatic cases. Consequently, such apps may provide a false sense of confidence, encouraging people to mingle when they should be keeping a distance.

Moreover, many of the technological solutions rely on data from cell phone towers, which are far less accurate than a given device’s GPS signal. In Israel, we are yet to see any professional, objective reports on how effective these efforts have been.

KÖRBER-STIFTUNG: States and private companies are developing different apps to track the spread of the coronavirus. Would you rather trust states or the private sector with such apps?

BERGMAN: It depends on the individual company or government, but I would be cautious in either case. If I had to make a call, I would choose a governmental provider rather than a private company as governments remain more accountable. In addition, compared to the private sector with its financial interests, civil servants have fewer incentives to abuse such data.

KÖRBER-STIFTUNG: Many people distrust their respective government’s handling of such data. How can states win their citizens’ trust?

BERGMAN: Transparency is the key. Rather than explaining to citizens why downloading and using an app would be to their benefit, the Israeli Prime Minister merely announced that the government would be deploying a technology that had
Central topic. What role has disinformation played in the context of the pandemic?

Bergman: The pandemic has been the basis for a number of massive attempts to manipulate public opinion via social media. Such campaigns make it seem as if independent people are tweeting their views. While it is extremely difficult to measure the effects of such operations, they are clearly being conducted by capable and sophisticated entities.

Körber-Stiftung: How would you assess the threat such campaigns pose to democratic countries?

Bergman: In George Orwell’s famous dystopian novel, 1984, “Big Brother” broadcasts to each and every screen, controlling all information. So prior to the advent of social media, we all thought that, in order to prevent a monopoly of information, you require a multitude of platforms through which everybody can say whatever they like. In a way, this turned out to be true. However, it is also false, in the sense that today’s hundreds of thousands of channels are vulnerable to abuse by entities with the capacity to dominate them. These entities are much, much harder to fight than the classical media belonging to dictatorships. When authoritarian rulers published what they claimed to be Pravda, the truth, we knew how to interpret such propaganda. With Twitter accounts, seemingly authentic but spreading false information or carrying hidden commercial messages, we do not. Moreover, for those who do know, it is very hard to explain to those who do not. Freedom of information and expression can be weaponized to achieve the exact opposite of democratic discourse. This is a challenge on par to the fight against the dictatorships of old.

Körber-Stiftung: Germans are famously protective of their privacy. Looking ahead, is this attitude more likely to save us from the adverse effects of technology or to leave the country hopelessly behind?

Bergman: Every nation’s attitudes reflect its past traumas. Israelis amplify any kind of threat to be existential and the Germans are amplifying any kind of challenge to the human rights and rights of privacy to be the basis of a tyrannical regime. This is the way it is and perhaps also the way it should be.

Proven extremely effective in the fight against terrorism. Israel’s domestic intelligence service, the Shin Bet, has been gathering non-targeted mass surveillance data on all Israeli citizens since about 2003, collecting and storing the metadata of all Israeli cell phones, being able to identify who we call and when, how long our calls last and where we were at the time. The Israeli public was completely unaware that the government had established this database.

Körber-Stiftung: Do you see an inevitable tension between the use of such data and democratic governance?

Bergman: The fact that a clandestine database existed for so long in Israel with very little oversight and scrutiny provides ample proof of the fragility of Israeli democracy. Moreover, the government’s decision to repurpose the database, from a counter-terrorism to a counter-corona tool, was taken with inconceivable ease. When Parliament refused to approve this step, the government simply pushed ahead. Changing the target of such a sensitive database may well lower the inhibition threshold towards doing so again, this time perhaps against leftists or human rights activists. This is an extremely worrying trend, and contacts from the Israeli intelligence community have been urging me to address it in my reporting. When you reach a point at which the military apparatus, the security establishment, and the intelligence community are fighting for democracy, something has gone very wrong indeed.

Körber-Stiftung: How can we mitigate such tensions in the future?

Bergman: One alternative may be to establish an emergency backup system. Cell phone providers could be required to log all geolocation data going back 30 days. In a case of emergency, such as the current pandemic, they could then supply these data to an emergency authority under strong and public supervision. Such a solution could present a compromise, providing us with the capability to track people in the case of another pandemic, but placing strong limits on its use and time-scale and thus posing a smaller challenge to the right of privacy.

Körber-Stiftung: Amidst growing geopolitical competition, disinformation has become a
“Talking with each other, not about each other!” – Strengthening multilateralism in times of crisis

BERLIN FOREIGN POLICY FORUM

Since 2011, each year the Berlin Forum has brought together more than 250 high-ranking national and international politicians, government representatives, experts and journalists. Co-hosted by Körber-Stiftung and the Federal Foreign Office, the Berlin Forum is traditionally opened by the German Foreign Minister, and provides a unique platform to discuss the foreign policy challenges facing Germany and Europe. It connects established voices with next-generation leaders, and promotes international understanding.

Programme Director: LIANA FIX
fix@koerber-stiftung.de
www.berlinforeignpolicyforum.org

Previous speakers include
URSULA VON DER LEYEN
FATOU BENSOUA
HEIKO MAAS
FEDERICA MOGHERINI
ANDERS FOGH RASMUSSEN
PAOLO GENTILONI
FU YING
ROSE GOTTEMOELLER
OLAF SCHOLZ

PARIS PEACE FORUM

Connecting actors, advancing global governance initiatives, reinforcing cooperation, and strengthening the multilateral order – these are the objectives of the Paris Peace Forum. The forum offers an annual platform for several thousands of actors from politics, economy, and society that champion transnational cooperation aimed at tackling global challenges. In innovative conference formats, heads of state and government, representatives of international organizations and members of civil society discuss projects, present initiatives and jointly seek feasible solutions.

Programme Director: RONJA SCHELER
scheler@koerber-stiftung.de
www.koerber-stiftung.de/en/paris-peace-forum

Previous speakers include
ANTÓNIO GUTERRES
ANGELA MERKEL
EMMANUEL MACRON
NADIA MURAD
WANG QISHAN
CHRISTINE LAGARDE
BRAD SMITH
MARY ROBINSON
FÉLIX TSHESEKEDI

Körber-Stiftung

Through its operational projects, in its networks and in conjunction with cooperation partners, the present focus of Körber-Stiftung is on three current social challenges: “Technology Needs Society”, “The Value of Europe” and “New Life in Exile”. Inaugurated in 1959 by the entrepreneur and initiator Kurt A. Körber, Körber-Stiftung is now nationally and internationally active from its sites in Hamburg and Berlin.

International Dialogue

Conflicts arise in situations that are fraught with misunderstandings and lack debate. Moreover, such conflicts are often grounded in the past. This is why we champion international dialogue and foster more profound understandings of history. We address political decision-makers as much as civil society representatives and emerging leaders from the younger generations. Our geographic focus lies on Europe, its eastern neighbours, the Middle East, and Asia, especially China. We strengthen discussions about history at the local level in a manner that stretches beyond national borders and encourage people to share their experiences of cultures of remembrance. Our foreign- and security-policy formats provide safe spaces for confidential talks built on trust. However, we also employ formats that involve the public, such as publications, competitions and networks, to provide impulses to the debate about common European values and inspire the further development of international cooperation.

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