

RE:THINK

ACADEMY-MAGAZINE #03

ACADEMY
INTERNATIONAL AFFAIRS
NRW

**New Horizons,
New Frontiers:**
Perspectives
on Outer Space
Affairs

MESSAGE FROM THE MINISTER FOR CULTURE AND SCIENCE



Dear Readers,

Recent months have once again shown how coarse and often unforgiving the international political climate has become. The Russian war of aggression against Ukraine that has now been ongoing for over three years, the continuous escalation of violence in the Middle East as well as a whole host of other conflicts around the world are keeping global politics on tenterhooks. What is more, since the end of the US presidential election campaign we have seen how assumed certainties in transatlantic relations are called into question on an almost daily basis.

Located in the heart of Europe, North Rhine-Westphalia, one of the strongest economic regions in Germany which also boasts vast cultural diversity, is of course not immune to these developments. Scientific monitoring, evaluation and analysis of these developments are thus all the more pressing. As a strong scientific region with our rich, closely-knit yet far-reaching further education and research landscape, we are proud to have our own institution, the

Academy of International Affairs NRW, that is dedicated to these subjects with its renowned Fellowship Programme. To better understand developments on the global political stage, it is essential to also comprehend the complex political, economic but also cultural and social interactions between nations, be they long-established players or one of the many emerging players. The study of these interdependencies can provide political decision-makers with valuable insights and impulses.

This third edition of the AIA Magazine offers an overview of the whole spectrum of research conducted in recent months at the Academy of International Affairs. A particular focus of this edition is on space exploration, having been at the heart of many of the Academy's activities and projects last year. Other articles take a closer look at conflict resolution strategies, impulses to promote peace and security, and expertise in mastering global challenges such as climate change and migration.

The scientific analysis of international relations in the 21st century thrives on professional exchange. In North Rhine-Westphalia we are committed to promoting this dialogue between different cultures and nations. In times like these, this is even more important to help to overcome misunderstandings and prejudices and strive for joint solutions. I hope you find the articles enlightening and inspiring and I wish the Academy the best of success in their essential work for the future of our federal state!

Ina Brandes MdL

Minister for Culture and Science of
North Rhine-Westphalia

EDITORIAL



Global politics is undergoing a profound structural transformation, as the tectonic plates of the international order shift—at the surface, but also at the very foundations of our societies, institutions, and systems of governance.

The challenges facing international politics today are both immediate and systemic. While acute crises—wars, forced migration, democratic erosion—dominate headlines, a deeper transformation is taking place beneath the surface, one that is reshaping the very structures upon which our societies, economies, and institutions rest. This edition of the AIA Magazine New Horizons, New Frontiers, reflects on this transformation from three key vantage points: outer space affairs, sustainable structural transformation, and the societal implications of conflict.

As humanity crosses new thresholds in outer space affairs, the need for responsible governance, technological foresight, and international cooperation has never been more urgent. This edition of our magazine opens a dialogue on the political, legal, and ethical dimensions of space—our newest strategic sphere.

Near-Earth orbit is no longer a silent void. It has become a critical domain for civilian infrastructure, scientific exploration, military planning, and commercial enterprise. Satellites safeguard everything from climate data to stock markets. Yet, as geopolitical rivalries intensify, space is at risk of becoming a theatre of conflict. This imposes an imperative on us: to shape a global framework for the sustainable and peaceful use of outer space.

North Rhine-Westphalia stands at the centre of this development. With institutions such as the German Aerospace Center (DLR), the European Space Agency (ESA), the Fraunhofer Institute for High Frequency Physics and Radar Techniques FHR, and the UN-SPIDER office in Bonn, the region is both a scientific powerhouse and a policy hub. The Academy of International Affairs offers a vital platform to engage with the complexity of space affairs—particularly as a question of international order.

While this year we are focusing on the topic of sub-national diplomacy, this edition also sets the stage for our next Fellowship cohort, focusing on Sustainable Futures and Structural Transformations. Structural change is a defining issue of our time, from energy transitions and critical infrastructures to ageing societies and new technologies. For North Rhine-Westphalia, this transformation is not abstract—it is visible in the fabric of its economy, its urban spaces, and its academic innovation. We aim to explore how governance can guide these transitions across sectors and

scales. Moreover, Societal Challenges and Conflict Transformation remains a cornerstone of the Academy's mission. In an era marked by complex conflicts that transcend traditional battlefields, we recognise the necessity of addressing the underlying social, economic, and political structures that perpetuate violence. Conflict transformation emphasises the importance of changing relationships and social systems to foster sustainable peace.

As the Academy marks its fifth anniversary this year, it is also a moment to honour the vibrant and growing Science community that has defined its spirit. Over the past five years, we have welcomed fifty Fellows from all continents—each bringing distinct disciplinary, regional, and professional perspectives to our shared endeavour. Their commitment, creativity, and intellectual courage have transformed the Academy into a truly global and interdisciplinary hub for reflection and exchange. My sincere thanks also go to my outstanding team, whose dedication and support have made this community possible. Together, they embody the very mission of the Academy: to bridge knowledge, policy, and purpose across borders.

I invite you to explore the insights presented in this edition—generated in North Rhine-Westphalia, yet reaching far beyond.



Dr. Mayssoun Zein Al Din
Executive Director of the Academy
of International Affairs NRW



CONTENT

2025



NEW HORIZONS, NEW FRONTIERS: PERSPECTIVES ON OUTER SPACE AFFAIRS

- 10** **First Come, First Served?**
The Need for Outer Space Security Governance
Adam Bower
- 12** **Keeping up With SpaceX.**
Europe's Strategic Autonomy in Space
Raúl González Muñoz
- 14** **INTERVIEW:**
Beyond the Horizon: Rethinking Outer Space as an Environmental Frontier
Güneş Ünüvar
- 16** **INTERVIEW:**
Global Planning for Post-detection. What Is the "Dear E.T. Project"?
Chelsea Haramia
- 20** **OVERVIEW:**
Shifts in the Final Frontier: Activities and Events of the Outer Space Research Group
Editorial Team
- 24** **INTERVIEW:**
Space Travel as a Profession
Insa Thiele-Eich, Gerhard Thiele

SUSTAINABLE FUTURE AND STRUCTURAL TRANSFORMATIONS

- 30** **INTERVIEW:**
Challenges of Structural Change for Germany
on a Global Scale
Cem Özdemir
- 34** Beyond Politics: The EU Green Deal and
Its Geopolitical Influence on Europe-Africa
Energy Future
Albert Ahenkan, Samuel Anuga
- 36** The Eagle S Incident: Why an Oil Tanker Under the
Cook Islands Flag Was Seized by the Finnish Navy
Milla Vaha
- 40** **INTERVIEW:**
Bonn as International Climate City
Stefan Wagner
- 44** Democracy and FDI:
Insights From the US and China
*Stephan Lewandowsky, Robert Reason,
Senay Sokullu*

SOCIETAL CHALLENGES AND CONFLICT TRANSFORMATION

- 48** The Challenge of National Dialogue
During Active War in Ukraine
Mariia Levchenko
- 50** Silence in Foreign Policy –
An Innovative Field of Research
Bernhard Stahl
- 52** From 'Migrants' to Dual Citizens: 'Turkish'
Political Participation for and From Germany
Inci Öykü Yener-Roderburg
- 54** **INTERVIEW:**
The NRW-Turkey Parliamentary Friendship Group
as a Bridge Builder
Rainer Schmeltzer
- 56** China and Afghanistan:
The Lure of Non-western Development
Katja Mielke
- 58** The Impact of Religion in the MENA Region
Evelyn Bokler-Völkel
- 60** Just Peace – A Vision of Realism and Hope
Jochen Sautermeister



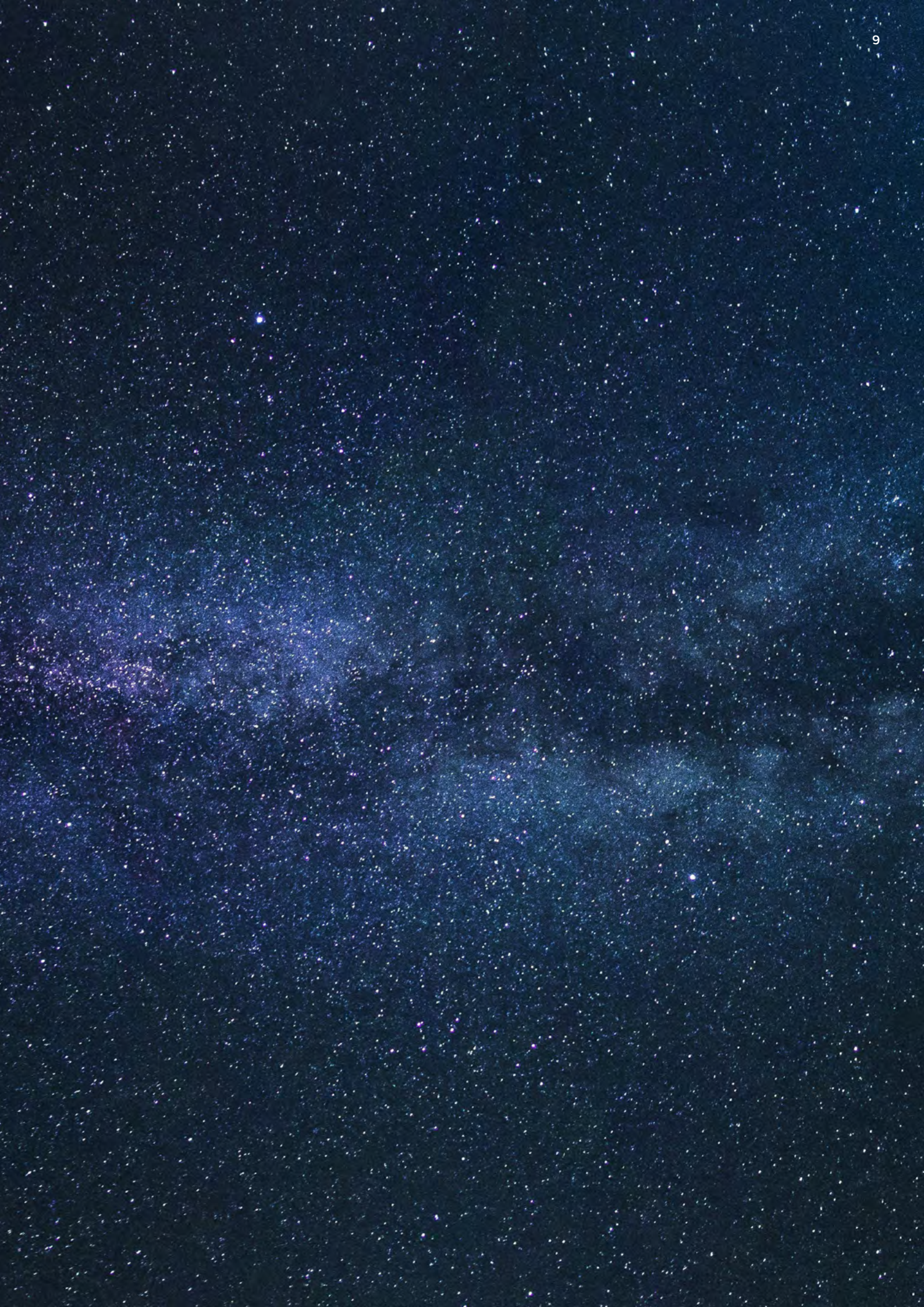
THE ACADEMY OF INTERNATIONAL AFFAIRS

- 64** **INSIDE AIA:**
Fellow Experience
- 70** Members of the Academic Board
- 72** Academy Events
- 76** Imprint



NEW HORIZONS, NEW FRONTIERS: PERSPECTIVES ON OUTER SPACE AFFAIRS

“Space, the final frontier...” is the famous intro to the Star Trek TV series. However, space-oriented topics have become increasingly relevant not only in pop culture, but also in politics. The following articles deal with security policy, environmental and future-oriented aspects of space exploration.



First Come, First Served?

The Need for Outer Space Security Governance

Modern societies rely on space-based services. The rapid growth of space activities is creating challenges requiring innovative governance approaches.



Outer space has been a venue for geopolitical competition since the dawn of spaceflight. The original Space Race between the Soviet Union and the United States was driven by a desire to harness technological achievements for political prestige and, more importantly, military advantage. Space is now a key domain of 21st Century strategic competition and is prominent in discussions concerning China-US geopolitical rivalry. What is different today is the sheer range and scale of spacefaring actors and activities.

Over 90 states now have a national space program, although the vast majority of activities are still conducted out of a limited number of territories. Most space launches and satellites are now owned and operated by private commercial actors, with Elon Musk's SpaceX being the most prominent. We are currently experiencing a rapid proliferation in the number of launches and satellites in orbit: over the past five years, the number of active satellites in Earth orbit has grown five-fold, to approximately 10,600, with plans to add many tens of thousands more over the coming years.

The benefits and risks of outer space

Outer space systems—rockets, satellites, data links, and terrestrial infrastructure—are deeply embedded into the fabric of modern digital societies and support vital civilian, scientific, and military applications. This reliance generates vulnerabilities that would be widely felt in the event of a withdrawal or loss of critical space-based services. The benefits derived from satellites, combined with the inherent difficulties in shielding objects in orbit, provides motivation for hostile actors to target these assets. Indeed, the accelerating pace of space activities raises concerns that Earth orbit is now increasingly “congested, competitive, and contested.” Major space powers now characterise orbital space as a domain of strategic military and commercial competition and potential armed conflict and are developing a range of anti-satellite (ASAT) capabilities. Alongside this, the population of human-made objects is growing quickly with the deployment of so-called mega-constellations of small satellites in low-Earth orbit and through the accumulation of debris including rocket bodies, components, dead satellites, and fragments. Finally, we are only beginning to acknowledge the serious environmental risks posed by rocket emissions and the burning-up of satellites in the Earth’s atmosphere.

Geopolitical competition and space security governance

In short, the expanding use of Earth orbit and plans for deep space exploration offer many exciting opportunities but also present a series of complex interconnected challenges requiring creative governance approaches. Yet, there are widespread concerns that existing international space law and governance mechanisms are insufficient, with significant ambiguities and gaps in existing rules. Geopolitical tensions are exacerbating these difficulties, with competing governance approaches led by China and Russia and the US and other Western states, respectively, raising the risk of a fragmentation of international space governance. An example helps to illustrate these dynamics.

In space security diplomacy, the international community has identified the Prevention of an Arms Race in Outer Space (PAROS) as a priority since the early 1980s. Yet there are differing views as to how PAROS should best be achieved, with disagreement as to the form (legally binding rules versus voluntary norms) and substance (prohibiting all or some “weapons” or a focus instead on behaviours). China and Russia have promoted a draft multilateral treaty which would ban the placement of weapons in space. This initiative has gained some support but is resolutely opposed by the

United States and its allies. Western countries increasingly advocate for the gradual development of norms which would identify and regulate responsible and irresponsible activities rather than technologies themselves. For instance, in April 2022 the US announced a voluntary moratorium on the testing of destructive ground-based anti-satellite missiles, which several Western countries have since endorsed. For now, these approaches appear to be proceeding in parallel, with duelling diplomatic processes and little prospect for consensus.



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Common goals, common grounds?

All spacefaring actors have a vested interest in maintaining Earth orbit and deep space as operationally safe environments, to ensure the continued benefits from space operations. Despite the apparent roadblocks, focusing on the intersections between sustainability and security can provide a basis for cooperation grounded in enlightened self-interest even in fraught areas of national security. For example, banning the deliberate destruction of satellites would eliminate a key source of orbital debris and a prominent means of threatening the space assets of other operators, avoiding one pathway to military escalation among the major space powers. This could begin as a global agreement to end destructive tests against one’s own satellites, generating trust that could justify a subsequent extension to prohibit the uses of destructive ASAT against others’ satellites.

Ensuring space security

There is now an urgent need for new “rules of the road” to regulate the rapidly expanding activities in Earth orbit and beyond, in order to avoid interfer-

ence, accidents, and potential conflict between satellite operators. These include more efficient and equitable allocation of radiofrequency spectrum, globally agreed procedures for managing space traffic in Earth orbit and operations on and around our Moon, and enhanced efforts to limit and ideally reduce the population of human-generated debris. While challenging, shared interest in maintaining access to space offers incentives to agree norms, rules, and principles focused on preserving outer space for future use. If this fundamental objective is taken as our guiding star, even the most contentious areas offer possibilities for finding common ground. ■



Keeping up With SpaceX.

Europe's Strategic Autonomy in Space

Our reliance on space-based capabilities has grown dramatically over the past decades, underpinning everything from secure communications to critical navigation and defence operations. The confluence of a rising multipolar world, Sino-American rivalry, and tensions in the transatlantic partnership has made space autonomy more important than ever for Europe. Although Europe boasts strong scientific institutions and industrial capabilities, it must act decisively to prevent strategic dependencies.

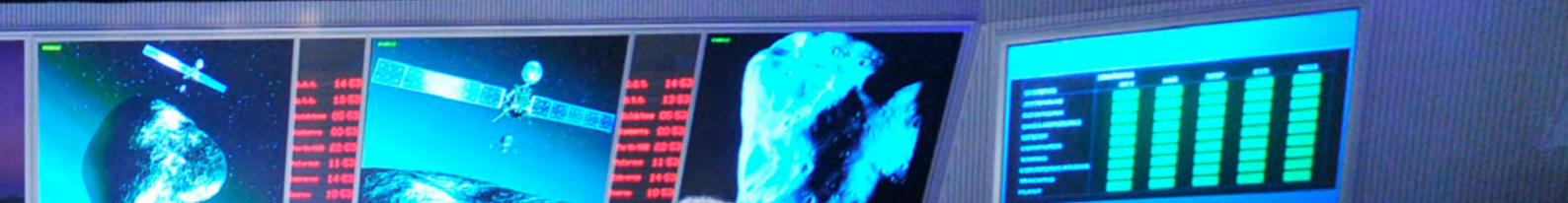
As US-American heavyweights like SpaceX continue to redefine the global space industry, many Europeans worry that their own efforts risk lagging behind. Multiple reports warn that maintaining robust space infrastructure is vital for security, economic growth, and resilience—particularly in a world shaped by intensifying Sino-American rivalry, conflicts with Russia, and shifts in global power dynamics.

Simultaneously, recent political developments between the current US executive and its European allies have triggered tensions that have damaged the Atlantic relationship. As a result, EU policymakers are pressing for greater self-reliance in security and defence, including in space—a

stance reinforced by broader discussions on the margins of the recent Munich Security Conference.

In an increasingly multipolar world, strategic high-tech sectors, with space at the very centre, have become part of systemic rivalries. The 2022 EU Strategic Compass underscored that space is becoming “contested, congested, and competitive,” calling for stronger crisis-response capacities in orbit. Whereas past European space policy primarily focused on civilian applications, recent EU strategies and initiatives indicate a clear push to integrate defence and dual-use aspects.

The political friction with Washington over defence burden-sharing and trade issues has added impetus for



Europe to pursue strategic autonomy. Both, the abrupt end to collaboration with Russia in space programs and the risk of overdependence on US commercial providers underline a vulnerability that decision-makers in Brussels and European capitals are increasingly determined to address.

Challenges of keeping pace

SpaceX's repeated technological breakthroughs—especially in reusability and satellite mega-constellations, with the Falcon 9 launcher and Starlink—have dramatically cut launch costs and sped up innovation cycles. In comparison, Europe's launch and satellite manufacturing sectors often remain fragmented along national lines.

European firms have excelled historically in satellite services, Earth observation, and telecommunications, but face hurdles in scaling quickly enough to match external competitors. European space start-ups particularly struggle to secure the large-scale financing that similar ventures in the U.S. and China receive. Analysts emphasize that bridging this gap will require new public-private partnerships, a more unified EU market, and significantly increased coordinated investments.

Policy initiatives and strategic steps forward

In an era of fracturing transatlantic ties, the EU has amplified calls for "strategic autonomy." The 2022 EU Strategic Compass explicitly urged the development of robust space defences, common threat assessments, and better protection of Europe's satellite constellations—which are indispensable for navigation, surveillance, and communication.

At the same time, analyses such as the recent Draghi Report on EU competitiveness recommend that European states initiate collaborative, large-scale flagship programs to fortify both public and private sectors. Coordinating national budgets with the European Space Agency and EU funding mechanisms can help European industry stay competitive, provided that these arrangements are accessible to industry actors and avoid creating additional bureaucratic procedures.



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Moreover, plans for a pan-European broadband constellation, IRIS², have begun to crystallize as a key element of self-sufficiency, ensuring uninterrupted connectivity for governmental and defence needs. By securing critical data flows and mitigating dependence on non-EU entities, Europe aims to increase its resilience and autonomy of action.

Charting a path to sustainable leadership

To ensure a thriving and self-sufficient space sector, Europe must weave space policy into its broader foreign and security policy. As underscored in the 2023 European Union Space Strategy for Security and Defence, space security and non-weaponization commitments must coalesce with initiatives protecting critical on-orbit assets. This approach promises continuity in Europe's traditional emphasis on international norms, while recognizing the realities of a multipolar environment. New architectures in exploration—like collaborative lunar initiatives—could demonstrate leadership that aligns with Europe's peaceful innovation ethos, while autonomous access to space and self-reliance in European space infrastructure can stimulate

high-value technological spin-offs and afford European leaders greater voice in shaping global space governance.

Outlook

Attaining greater European space autonomy will require a combination of political resolve, significant financing, deeper cross-border coordination, and a willingness to embrace ambitious flagship missions. In a high-stakes environment where space is integral to both daily life and defence readiness, Europe's credibility, prosperity, and security hinge on its ability not just to keep pace, but to show genuine leadership in the decades to come. ■

Beyond the Horizon: Rethinking Outer Space as an Environmental Frontier

INTERVIEW with **Güneş Ünüvar**

With the rise of private satellite launches and space debris, outdated regulations no longer suffice. The lack of international frameworks on space exploitation and property rights, exemplified by Luxembourg's laws, highlights the need for new regulations. **Güneş Ünüvar** researches the conceptualization of outer space as an environment to address these gaps.

To what extent can space be understood as an environment?

It's not a new idea. It has been elaborated before across different disciplines. And the principal objective of this conceptualization has always been: Can we and should we protect outer space as an environmental medium? We are at the brink of a new age, where soon we are expected to start engaging with outer space in a more direct and permanent way. Therefore, it is important that we decide what the terms of engagement will be. This is the starting point for why we should be considering outer space as an environment.

How exactly do you implement this approach in your research?

I try to expand upon this concept a little bit more. From a lawyer's perspective, environment can offer a much more comprehensive framework for our conceptualization of outer space. The environmental protection aspect is one of them. But I don't think it's limited to that. In order to delve into that notion, I looked into environmental sociology, where I have found a very interesting framework regarding outer space. James Ormrod, an environmental sociologist

from the University of Brighton, has developed this idea that environment can be conceptualized by its different productions. Space can be conceptualized as, for example, an abundant environment where we put the resources that are contained within at its center. As humanity, we need to engage with outer space from the perspective of its resources. We have to use them; we have to extract them at some point. But how do we do that in an appropriate way?

Ormrod sees three dimensions: In addition to the environmental dimension he argues that space is also a risk environment. Thirdly, he argues that it's also wilderness. In my research I try to expand into these different productions by adding two more, namely a cultural environment and a research environment. Cultural environment emphasizes that outer space is also an environment where a lot of cultural sensitivities, cultural substance is embedded. There are a lot of indigenous communities, cultures, that revere outer space. And the final, perhaps the most foundational dimension is research – at least from a regulatory perspective, as it is one of the principal uses of outer space according to international law. All of these different productions of outer space reflect a different dimension of

environment. My research argues that these productions actually present different, yet complementary, regulatory compartments, and shows that the notion of environment is a powerful discursive tool for decision-makers to regulate our activities in outer space.

What role does the private sector play in states' attempts to regulate space?

Outer space is a very contentious political playing field, even without the involvement of private entities. The more stakeholders, the more perspectives you have within the legal political domain, the more complicated it will become. Principally the involvement of private entities, companies who are presumed to have this overarching goal of generating profit, casts an ominous shadow at first glance. But I don't think this is the whole picture. We have to be cautious about private companies' involvement, but they also bring innovation, new technology, and new methods to the table, and much more efficiently than many states are able to do. Besides, as someone who has worked on foreign investment for many years, I can tell you that there is a certain sensitivity that comes from the private sector, private companies towards sustainable uses of outer space. This might not be true for all companies or sectors, but the general landscape to me seems like companies planning to engage in outer space activities are very cognizant of the importance of sustainable activities. Still, regulation to ensure that this is actually applied in their operations is essential.

What are the main areas for regulation?

Talking about international law almost always means referring to international rules, principles, and guidelines.

These can be contained in binding treaties. They can also be found in so-called soft law instruments that are not strictly speaking binding, but they're typically created by some multilateral consensus. When we talk about space regulation from a domestic perspective, this often refers to domestic laws that apply to outer space activities one way or another. For example, they can refer to more 'traditional' laws – tax laws, labor laws, or other laws regulating companies in general, or to 'space laws' that regulate licensing requirements aimed at companies intending to operate in outer space. The latter directly stem from states' international law, as they have the obligation to authorize and supervise non-state entities.

One crucial aspect is certainly the licensing framework, which is very broad. It generally applies to all operators that

may conduct space activities. Today, this almost always entails orbital operations, with a slowly but steadily growing number of companies eventually aiming to operate on celestial objects. Furthermore, states are very sensitive about the principles and rules that apply to space debris mitigation. How do we make sure that the space debris in our orbit remains manageable, and that it does not create the so called "Kessler effect"? There are other important considerations: How do we regulate the use of AI in outer space activities and the production of space-based data? How do we regulate the principles concerning cybersecurity of these activities? These are very sensitive issues, because most of the operations in outer space are entirely reliant on space data, which can be targeted by those who have malicious intent. Another important issue is how do we share information with one another? How do we cooperate? How do we coordinate? How do we make sure that we inform each other of our activities mutually?

The question of data is a crucial one for the future. Do you think there is an obligation of whoever gathers data, let's say on the moon or in outer space, to share it for the sake of humankind?

The Outer Space Treaty actually regulates this issue under its Article XI, but it is broadly worded. It notes that, "to the greatest extent practicable", states conducting activities in outer space should inform the Secretary-General of the UN, the public, and the international scientific community "of the nature, conduct, locations and results of such activities." Of course, the term "greatest extent practicable" is not defined, and states will retain a lot of information, for example if they consider an activity to be directly tied to their national security. This being

said, like orbital operations, the activities on the Moon have to be conducted on the basis of cooperation. Not only that states should conduct their activities in cooperation, but they should also do this for the benefit of all humankind. Information sharing is a recurring issue, but there are no specific rules as to how this information sharing needs to be done. The Moon Agreement tried to concretize it to some extent, but it is unfortunately not well accepted, even though it is an international agreement. It just doesn't have enough signatories. But ultimately, I think we will see some concrete framework on information sharing emerging, especially as lunar exploration programmes intensify. I hope states find within themselves the political will to develop these rules in advance, and put their insight and existing experience aside. ■



FELLOW

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Global Planning for Post-detection.

What Is the “Dear E.T. Project”?

INTERVIEW with **Chelsea Haramia**

One of the oldest questions asked by humankind is whether we are alone in the universe. This question in itself is of course speculative. But it is also linked to a whole host of other exciting aspects that **Chelsea Haramia** deals with in her research.

Let's dive straight into the fascinating scenarios your work explores. Imagine the unlikely situation where you come face-to-face with an alien — what would be the very first question or phrase you'd choose to communicate with them?

If I were to charitably answer your question, I'd say the following... I often think about these types of questions insofar as the answers tell us something about ourselves as humans, and about those of us who are searching and thinking about this kind of search. A lot of the questions and debates end up reflecting back on humans very strongly, more so than they really inform what we can know about outer space. For me, I would want to know what knowledge an alien has, asking: what do you think the laws of physics are? Or mathematical truths? More than that, I would be really interested in the things that seem very real to me and important to humanity, even though they're less tangible in terms of empirical study, like: do you have art? And, to you, what is art? Do you have comedy? I think, when we're thinking about things like communication and intelligence, having a sense of humor could be a hallmark of a being you can communicate with and connect with. But in general, thinking about meeting an alien would help us, I think, to better parse what we as humans understand about the world.

And the uncharitable answer?

The uncharitable answer is that, of course, I could not possibly tell you what I would ask an alien without context, without knowing what the circumstances are. If I'm talking to an alien because they've been observing Earth long enough and humans long enough that they can speak to me in a language that I understand and can answer, I would have so much I'd want to say, but so much of what I would decide to say would depend on what I knew about the alien. But what if we were initiating communication? If we detected something but didn't know much about what we detected, we would have no idea if and how a question to an alien would be interpreted. We might have no idea if it would even be understood to be a message, as opposed to stray technology that was unintentionally communicative. And so those are very different scenarios. Ultimately, extraterrestrial communication pertains to ethics as well as science, because context determines what's really true about what we morally ought to do when it comes to communication, and science is needed to provide crucial contextual details. Ethics often focuses on responsibility, and I'm a big proponent of the claim that our ethical responsibilities are very context-dependent.

“So, even if we never find aliens, I still think this work is fruitful for thinking about ourselves at the level of the planetary and as integrated into outer space, not separate from it.”

Chelsea Haramia



What do you see as the biggest ethical challenge, from a risk-based perspective, when considering scenarios following the successful detection of extraterrestrial life or technology?

Thank you. I like that you highlighted this question of risk management because I think that is how people often think about the aftermath of a successful detection – in terms of risk/benefit analyses. With regard to risk, people sometimes imagine global catastrophe, in part because some science fiction features interactions between humans and aliens where you have maybe very extractive or exploitative aliens who are ready to take over Earth or enslave humanity or whatever else they imagine. Some have countered this narrative with the possibility of very positive outcomes where aliens save us from ourselves, perhaps because they know how to combat climate catastrophe or things like that.

But, if we consider those polar opposite kind of scenarios, then we can see that both contacting and not-contacting aliens risks global catastrophe, so you cannot justifiably say that we ought to invoke, say, the precautionary principle and avoid contact insofar as it is at least possible that the global catastrophe happens. True, there is a non-zero risk of global catastrophe in the aftermath of a successful detection, but there's also a non-zero risk of global catastrophe if we don't make contact, isn't there? So, risk-based analyses about the effects of contact may not be the most important at this time, given that we have so little extraterrestrial data to work with. But we have plenty of data pertaining to our planet, its inhabitants, and our little corner of the cosmos, so there is a lot of value in focusing our inquiry on how the search for aliens is ethically connected to ourselves and our planetary home.

Given the speculative nature of post-detection scenarios, what are some of the key assumptions that you believe need to be reconsidered in order to create a more realistic framework for global preparedness?

One of the things discussed in literature, specifically with respect to this idea of disabusing people of a common assumption about detection, is the idea that detection will be a very singular event. If you think of science fiction movies and books, it is always a moment – all of a sudden we know for sure we're not alone. It makes for good narrative; it's a very exciting thing to imagine. And it's possible. Yet, many experts suspect—and with good reason—that it's more likely that contact will be a lengthy process and not a single moment of confirmed detection. Especially if this is a scientific detection, what will likely happen is that there will be some evidence that some group of scientists with a telescope detects, and then they'll immediately want to offer it up to the wider scientific community for intersubjective verification, which is what good science does. So they will probably not know right away if it is a successful detection of alien technology. What they will do is employ the assistance of other telescopes and experts around the world and see whether other scientists and researchers around the world can replicate their findings. That will then require even more work ruling out the naturalistic alternatives.

There have been candidate detections in the past that have been ruled out as natural phenomena, such as pulsars, which turned out to be a natural phenomenon, not aliens. Distinguishing between what is natural and what is artificial or technological is key to searching the cosmos, but the true contours of this distinction is no settled matter, even here on Earth.

How can discussions about the detection of extraterrestrial life help us address broader ethical and communication challenges, such as those posed by global actions on issues like climate change, where inclusive representation and planetary integration are often lacking?

One of the things that I think is really interestingly useful about global planning for post-detection involves the possibility that detecting aliens may not be something that ever happens. I would love to find out if we're alone, but the fact of the matter is we might never know. But we can know more about how to have healthy and fruitful global discussions. Climate catastrophe is a much more immediate and very clearly arrived-at outcome of human-caused climate change. So, even if we never find aliens, I still think this work is fruitful for thinking about ourselves at the level of the planetary and as integrated into outer space, not separate from it. I think this is very useful in part because we are going to expand further into space even if we don't find aliens. I think there are a lot of potentially useful auxiliary impacts that my research into global-level discussions and planning can have, even if it's not directly applied to post-detection scenarios. ■



FELLOW

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“Dear E.T. Project”

One facet of Chelsea’s work involves an aspirational multidisciplinary project titled *The Dear E.T. Project: Weaving Humanity’s Messages to the Cosmos through Educational STEM Workshops, Active Philosophy, and Artistic Communication*.

This is a collaboration between her and Julia DeMarines—MSc, astrobiologist, National Geographic Explorer & Educator, science educator with the Ad Astra Academy, and fellow member of the UK SETI Research Network’s Post-Detection Hub—and it includes several academic team members situated across the globe. Grassroots partners currently include communities in Vanuatu, Tanzania, Nepal, and Kenya.

The project’s leaders emphasize the importance of lateral engagement here—working with local collaborators to deliver culturally appropriate and mutually beneficial research questions, to develop immersive exploratory work, and to sustain engagement between academic and community partners.

Their goal is to generate grassroots conversations and intercultural, interdisciplinary exchanges that can help experts to ensure that potential future METI practices and policies are appropriately and globally informed.



Shifts in the Final Frontier:

Activities and Events of the Outer Space Research Group

With growing geostrategic and economic importance, space has become the fifth domain of international politics, alongside land, sea, air and cyberspace. However, research and debates about this important subject are still at a very early stage. In order to consolidate and push research in the field, AIA NRW's annual topic for its 2024 fellowship programme was the geopolitics of outer space.

Bringing together fellows in the same cohort, a research group at the Academy included the philosopher Chelsea Haramia, international relations scholar Adam Bower, the political adviser Raúl González Muñoz, and the space law expert Güneş Ünüvar. The group identified common interests and engaged in a number of joint activities, which we report about in the following.

Bridging disciplines: Exploring space and geopolitics

The establishment of the research group at the Academy covered four key aspects, which reflect important strands of ongoing debates in research on outer space. Chelsea Haramia has been researching the potential repercussions of encounters with extra-terrestrial life and technology from an ethical standpoint, whilst Güneş Ünüvar has set out proposals for classifying space as an environment with the requisite legal frameworks for its protection. Adam Bower addressed the strategic and security aspects of governing outer space, an interest shared by Raúl González Muñoz, an expert in the European space economy, who focused on

assessing the European Union Space Defence & Security Strategy.

With the aim of promoting exchange and enhancing the Academy's network with local institutions in the Bonn area, the group visited the Fraunhofer Institute for High Frequency Physics and Radar Techniques (FHR) in Wachtberg. The visit concluded with a tour of the space observation radar, TIRA. The tracking and imaging radar TIRA can be used to measure space debris, which is becoming an increasing problem due to the lack of regulation. At times, Starlink launches alone deploy 40-60 satellites in a single launch. Moreover, predictions made based on the radar's measurements can prevent evasive satellite manoeuvres and provide images of space objects for precise analysis.

Expanding the debate to the German research community, a joint panel at the 29th Annual Academic Convention of the German Political Science Association (Deutsche Vereinigung Für Politikwissenschaft – DVPW) in Göttingen engaged in debates on "The Geopolitics of Outer Space – A Key Domain in International Affairs" with Antje Nötzold



(TU Chemnitz) and an audience of interested political scientists.

A workshop organized by Adam Bower in cooperation with the German Institute of Development and Sustainability (IDOS) took inspiration from and build upon debates in the research group, linking space research to geopolitics in the Polar regions and discussing the parallel questions of governing such spaces. The aim of the workshop was to explore ongoing geopoliticization as a (renewed) trend shaping global development across policy fields. With a view to advancing the peaceful and cooperative transnational use of spaces, the participants discussed how geopolitical considerations shape policy-making, institutional approaches and relationships between various stakeholders.

A new race to the moon?!

As one of the sites of human outer space activities, the moon is once again at the center of an international geostrategic race, as it was at the height of the Cold War. However, unlike in the 1960s, today it is not only state actors, but above all private actors who show an interest in the exploitation of the moon. The number of states that are technically able and politically willing to explore the moon has also increased significantly. Therefore, it can be assumed that

up to ten nations might assert their influence on the moon in the coming years. To gauge future developments of lunar politics, Raúl González Muñoz and Güneş Ünüvar organized a workshop on the subject “To the Moon and Back: Lunar Policy-Making, Security, and Cooperation in Europe.” They brought together a variety of experts from academia, politics and industry to engage in critical discussions about the future of European lunar missions and the multifaceted challenges they present.

The exploration of the Moon is not only a technological endeavor but also a geopolitical and policy-driven challenge of significant importance. Throughout the workshop, Europe’s role within the broader context of global space exploration was examined, for instance evaluating the European position between major initiatives like the U.S.-led Artemis Program and the International Lunar Research Station spearheaded by China and Russia. One of the goals was to identify which roles the European nation states, the European Union, and the European Space Agency (ESA) play in this renewed race to the Moon, and how Europe can best navigate its path forward.



Responsibility in space for sustainability on Earth

Participation at the “Responsibility in Space for Sustainability on Earth” event during the United Nations World Space Forum in Bonn (3–6 December 2024) was a fitting highlight for the Academy and its fellows in the Outer Space fellow year. With a keynote by ESA astronaut and astrophysicist Gerhard Thiele, the event brought together three AIA fellows with other global experts to discuss the future of outer space affairs.

Astronaut Thiele reflected on his 1998 space mission, during which the Earth was geographically surveyed, and emphasized the central role of responsibility, particularly highlighting the importance of teamwork and communication, without which such a significant endeavor would not be possible.

AIA Fellows Chelsea Haramia, Adam Bower and Raúl González Muñoz commented on their insights, and a lively and at times controversial discussion with the audience followed.

The notion and conception of responsibility was raised in many comments during the side events and is the main focus of a joint book project developed by the Academy in collaboration with the research group. Responsibility implies notions of accountability, adequate behavior and

the role of future generations in the use and regulation of outer space. Mirroring debates led in policy forums including the United Nations, responsibility in different forms is implicated in the emerging sphere of conflict and cooperation. Whether it concerns space pollution, the extension of terrestrial conflicts into Earth orbit, or the control of vital digital infrastructure by private entities versus democratically elected and accountable actors, the question of responsibility in space policy remains central to ongoing and often as yet inconclusive discussions about outer space. These and other considerations will be addressed in the Academy’s first edited volume. As a collaborative endeavor with experts from academia and key institutions in the field, the book will systematically address present and future concerns of outer space governance. ■

Space Travel as a Profession

INTERVIEW with **Insa Thiele-Eich** and **Gerhard Thiele**

Many children and adults dream of becoming an astronaut. While space travel is the highlight of an astronaut's career, the profession involves many more skills and tasks, some of which have changed over time. We sat down with former ESA astronaut and physicist **Gerhard Thiele** and his daughter **Insa Thiele-Eich**, a meteorologist and researcher at the University of Bonn and, who is currently training for a commercial space mission, to learn more about their perspectives on the changing environment of space travel.

Insa, lots of children and teenagers are fascinated by space. How did having an astronaut as a father influence your childhood (and how you grew up)?

INSA THIELE-EICH:

When we were children, our father used to launch water rockets or set up telescopes with us. I also remember getting up early in the morning to count shooting stars in the cold Texan desert, and of course the front-row ticket to my father's astronaut training. These are very memorable childhood moments, and I'm sure they played an important role in my own fascination for human space flight. Then again, having parents who are astronauts was also pretty normal when we grew up in Houston, and I was never actively pushed into the space sector.

GERHARD THIELE:

As parents, we have always encouraged our children to find their own way. And we tried to support them as best as we could on that path.

What do you see as the main difference between working as an astronaut today versus in the past?

GERHARD THIELE:

Well, there is one very obvious difference. In my generation, it was seen as normal for the spouse to stay at home and look after the children. This gave me the opportunity to fully concentrate on my career. For Insa and her generation this is hopefully different to some extent.

INSA THIELE-EICH:

At the time when I was selected to train for the "erste deutsche Astronautin" programme I already had two children and hoped for more. That posed some questions: How could I make my family situation compatible with the training? And how do you combine astronaut training with a possible pregnancy, something that you cannot plan? Fortunately, I was given a lot of freedom and flexibility. The training sessions were scheduled so that I could coordinate them with my husband's work, and when I became pregnant it was taken into account in our training timeline. When breastfeeding, I was allowed to take my family with me to training sessions.

GERHARD THIELE:

What Insa describes, so far, to the best of my knowledge, only happens within the framework of such a private initia-



tive. Things certainly have changed at ESA compared to my time, but it is probably still fundamentally more difficult at ESA to combine family and career.

INSA THIELE-EICH:

During the last ESA astronaut selection, I attended a virtual Q&A where a large part was focused on the tremendous efforts ESA goes to in terms of diversity, equity and inclusion (DEI). Samantha Cristoforetti, the first female astronaut from Italy to go to space and a mother of two, was asked about her everyday life and what allowances are made for her to be able to coordinate family and work as an astronaut. Her answer? Not possible without a nanny. I found that rather odd, especially because no mention was made of the kinds of accommodations I was offered during training. And while some days definitely push us parents to our limits and beyond, I am very appreciative of being able to work in this way – without a nanny.

Apart from these observations, where do you see the main differences in how space travel operates in the public versus private sectors?

GERHARD THIELE:

The operational approach is much leaner in the private sector. I remember Max Faget, one of the pioneers of NASA, who taught a lesson to my astronaut class. He mentioned that the Apollo moon program involved some 400,000 people and concluded: We certainly could have done it with a few less, but not with a single person more. We are still carrying a long legacy with us in the public sector. Almost half of the training I did for my flight was just for the ascent phase. Science, the reason why we flew into space in the first place, took only a little over 20% of my training time. It should be the opposite! The private sector brings a lot of innovation, which is urgently needed if we really want to reach far.

INSA THIELE-EICH:

The commercial sector has the chance to be more flexible and agile. We also have the chance to ask: What do we really need to safely send a crew to space and enable them to conduct research there? I also appreciate the fact that it's now easier for us to take part in a mission and then seamlessly return to our main workplace.



“I welcome the opportunities the private sector offers for developing space, it is in my humble opinion a much needed breath of fresh air.”

Gerhard Thiele

This sounds a little bit like a conversation we could be having about many professional fields. Has space travel lost some of its magic and has being an astronaut become a profession like any other?

INSA THIELE-EICH:

(laughing) I always knew that astronauts also put their pants on one leg at a time. What's new is the fact that you can now train for this job alongside your main job.

GERHARD THIELE:

Working as an astronaut is, no doubt, still a dream job. Combining your work as an astronaut with other interests might be more difficult in the public sector. At one stage the DLR offered me a one day per week position as a researcher, but Prof. Elsässer, then Director of the Max-Planck-Institute for Astronomy in Heidelberg, rightfully said that with this little time you cannot really do research.

INSA THIELE-EICH:

Fortunately, I was able to finish my doctorate just when our training really started. But working 70% at the university in a research management position and training as

an astronaut on a 50% part-time position while having two children meant that pursuing a classic academic career was not possible. Even with the maximum support of my partner, there's still only 24 hours to my day.

Are there still reservations against private space travel?

INSA THIELE-EICH:

Unfortunately, “commercial crew” tends to be connotated with for-profit, while we understand the term in contrast to “state-run”. These commercial missions aim to conduct science and research in space, too. The private sector is also active in space tourism, which is a third category of space flight. Understanding and appreciating what each of these sectors brings to the table will probably take some time.

GERHARD THIELE:

I welcome the opportunities the private sector offers for developing space, it is in my humble opinion a much needed breath of fresh air. Nevertheless, we need to be cautious and realise that not everything that is possible is also desirable.

“What I really appreciate about my profession is that I was and am also very involved in our political activities, helping me to grow an understanding of how space policy making works.”

Insa Thiele-Eich



So, essentially, what do you appreciate about the profession of being an astronaut?

GERHARD THIELE:

The opportunity to become an astronaut was a stroke of luck.

INSA THIELE-EICH:

What I really appreciate about my profession is that I was and am also very involved in our political activities, helping me to an understanding of how space policy making works. This has caused me to reflect more deeply about my self-efficacy: Where can I help shape things as an individual? What is my sphere of influence, my handprint on our world? These aspects have contributed immensely to my personal development, and I appreciate this somewhat unexpected part of my journey to space very much.

Thank you very much. ■

Insa Thiele-Eich is a meteorologist, climate scientist and budding astronaut. She is a scientific coordinator at the Meteorology Department of the Institute of Geosciences at the University of Bonn. There she researches the effects of climate change on health. She has also been training for an ISS mission since 2017.

Gerhard Thiele is a physicist and former astronaut at the European Space Agency. His thirty years of space-related activities include a Resident Fellowship at the European Space Policy Institute in Vienna. Today he is a consultant with emphasis on managing complex processes, focusing on human factors and safety. He gives lectures at the Rheinisch Westfälische Universität (RWTH) in Aachen.



SUSTAINABLE FUTURE AND STRUCTURAL TRANS- FORMATION

The chances for a sustainable life in the future depend on the decisions taken today. Assessing the risks and identifying the right measures to tackle key challenges such as climate change, energy security and wide-ranging societal change on a global as well as local scale will be instrumental. The contributions to this section identify some of the central problem areas and show how they relate to the broader process of ongoing structural transformations.



Challenges of Structural Change for Germany on a Global Scale

INTERVIEW with **Cem Özdemir**

Structural change is a global challenge for many regions of the world. How is sustainable growth possible? What needs to be done to achieve it? How do societies have to change in order to remain democratic and enable a good life for everybody? What gives us hope for a good future? Our Director **Mayssoun Zein Al Din** discussed these and other questions with former Agriculture and Education Minister **Cem Özdemir**.

Germany is undergoing a major structural shift, particularly in its energy and automotive sectors. How do you see Germany maintaining its economic strength while transitioning to a more sustainable and digitalized economy?

Germany must take even greater advantage of the opportunities of the industrial transformations. Our excellent research offers a good starting point to do so, but we have to make significantly better and quicker use of the research results. One important approach is to think more in terms of "missions", like we recently did with our overall strategy in this area. This approach means an openness to working together with researchers, companies, policy-makers and society to revisit established value chains with a view to global trends. Research is a first step in this endeavor, for example in the development of non-fossil steel production. The automotive industry also has to become more closely aligned with global trends such as decarbonization, digitalization and changing mobility requirements. Germany's automotive industry has lost its technological leadership in e-mobility, but we continue to champion battery research

in order to close the gap in technology. We cannot afford for the same to happen with the challenge of automated and connected driving. We therefore need to create much stronger incentives for comprehensive co-development of hardware and software.

You have always emphasized in your statements that prosperity has to be earned again and again. Is prosperity dependent on growth and how can growth be made sustainable? In other words: Can we achieve green growth, and if so, how?

Advances in technology enable us to benefit from efficiency gains in the medium and long term, saving resources and energy and securing our prosperity as a result. We need intelligent solutions and value creation for a sustainable bioeconomy, for a circular economy, for the optimal and sustainable use of land and marine resources, energy-efficient IT as well as social innovations, which avoid rebound effects. The long-term goal throughout must be the separation of our lifestyle from resource consumption.



With rising competition from the US, China, and other economic powerhouses, how can Germany ensure its industries remain globally competitive while adhering to stricter environmental and social standards?

Germany's export-driven economy has long been a key to its success. However, as the US, China, and other major economies increasingly focus on self-sufficiency through domestic production, this model is facing growing challenges. At the same time, Germany, as part of the EU, follows stricter and more binding environmental and social standards than many of its global competitors.

But these standards can actually be an opportunity. Companies that adopt climate-friendly production methods early can gain a competitive edge by improving efficiency, reducing costs, and driving innovation.

A recent study shows that around 40% of German companies believe the country's ambitious climate goals increase innovation, and about a quarter even see Germany taking on a leading international role in this area.

However, the same companies cite bureaucracy and

political uncertainty as the biggest challenges. Therefore, reporting obligations need to be simplified, and application and approval processes need to be streamlined.

What are other, perhaps even new key sectors that will make Germany competitive in the future? And where can it lead sustainable transformations that do not only benefit German citizens?

We must realize that Germany's technology and innovation funding will play a decisive role in determining how competitive and sovereign we will be in the future. This will be the overriding theme for our technology development in the coming years. That is why, for example, the BMBF's (Federal Ministry of Education and Research) new Research and Innovation for Technological Sovereignty framework program pools funding for key technologies along the entire innovation chain. Communications systems are one important example, as they are the nervous system of today's digital world. This is why technological sovereignty is so important, for instance in the development of the upcoming



6G mobile communications standard. There is also enormous potential in supporting innovations for the medicine of the future. One example in this area is our support for health data research and the use of AI tools. This is how we are laying the groundwork for a high-achieving, effective health care system.

As a former member of the European Parliament and a committed European, what are the prospects for Europe and what changes need to happen there?

During my tenure as a member of the European Parliament, key topics included EU enlargement and accession negotiations—most notably with Turkey—as well as the economic and financial crisis of 2008/2009, ambitious climate targets, and the challenges posed by illegal immigration over the Mediterranean. These remain core issues in EU policy today.

Europe has to grow up – as quickly as possible. We must rely more than ever on our own strength. That means more than ever on the European Union. Defense, cyber security, developing the key technologies of tomorrow – the path to strategic sovereignty will cost an immense amount of money. But not investing in our own strength will be far more expensive: Europe will then pay with its own freedom. Today, we hear statements like Macron's assertion that "Europe is mortal" and remarks from Vice President Vance, who cautioned that "Europe's greatest danger lies within." This shift reflects a growing sense of internal vulnerability and external pressure. For decades, it was assumed that the United States and Europe shared a steadfast friendship built on common values and mutual reliance. But that certainty has been increasingly called into question.

According to the New York Times, there is a clear expectation for Germany to lead Europe's response to a changing America. In my view, Europe urgently needs a strong and capable Germany with a reliable government. Only with such leadership can Europe restore its voice on the global stage.

Structural change often leads to job displacement. What specific policies does the German government have in place to reskill and upskill workers for emerging industries?

We are seeing that accelerated structural change calls for continuing education at all levels of qualification. For one thing, the technological means to automate physical tasks have continued to develop, but highly-skilled professions are also affected.

The BMBF champions modern vocational training and targeted continuing education in particular. Our priority is to facilitate access to continuing education for all, to improve career prospects for all, and to develop the vocational education and training system further in an innovative way and make it viable for the future.

To make continuing education more accessible, the Federal Government has undertaken to develop funding instruments further to meet target group needs, support skill development of employees and to close gaps in funding. We are also establishing and expanding qualifications for continuing education mentors to boost participation in continuing education measures in sectors that are especially impacted by technological transformation.

Germany's energy transition (Energiewende) is a global model, but it also presents challenges such as energy security and costs. How can Germany balance sustainability goals with economic and geopolitical realities?

To balance sustainability goals with economic and geopolitical realities, Germany must pursue long-term, stable climate policies that are actively advanced over multiple legislative periods. Although our country has achieved significant success in reducing emissions in the power sector, challenges remain in transportation, buildings, and industry. A consistent expansion of renewable energies not only reduces dependence on fossil fuels but, when combined with modern storage technologies and smart grid systems, also ensures energy security by managing fluctuating energy supplies. Moreover, the cost of wind and solar energy has dropped dramatically in recent years, making them some of the most cost-effective sources of power today. In addition, renewables help to break free from energy dependencies and

are, in many ways, energies of freedom that offer greater autonomy.

Technological progress is crucial for boosting the efficiency of energy systems and lowering costs over time, a trend underscored by historical turning points when major technological investments restructured the global economy. As we now stand on the brink of the fourth industrial revolution, advances in digitalization, artificial intelligence, and quantum computing are poised to drive further transformation.

As Minister of Food and Agriculture, how do you see the role of agriculture in structural change? What measures are being taken to ensure food security and sustainable farming practices in Germany?

Agriculture and the food industry grace our tables daily—a contribution we must value. Yet, agriculture is at a turning point. With an aging farming population and young agricultural entrepreneurs questioning how to secure their farm's future, decisive action is needed. This challenge mandates a robust and forward-looking regulatory framework that enables businesses to plan with long-term confidence. Consider, for instance, livestock farmers: through the implementation of our comprehensive animal welfare labeling and targeted support programs for barn conversions, we are ensuring that investing in enhanced animal husbandry pays off. It is imperative that we achieve both: the protection of the natural resources on which agriculture fundamentally depends, and their sustainable utilization – two goals that are inextricably linked. To be clear: farmers who make substantial contributions to climate protection, environmental conservation, animal welfare, and biodiversity must be able to earn a living from their services to society. Supporting farms in their transition to sustainable production is not only key to ensuring food security, but also ensuring the stability of our harvests. Moreover, stable farms are the cornerstone of vibrant rural communities that underpin quality employment opportunities and create value in our rural areas.

How is the government supporting green technologies and startups to lead the structural transition while preventing economic decline in traditional industrial regions?

The BMBF promotes transformation in “structurally weak” regions by supporting strategic alliances in their development of regional innovation potential. In light of Germany's coal production phase-out by 2038, the former lignite mining regions are particularly vulnerable to major transformation challenges. The government supports these regions with an additional total of 40 billion euros to promote growth, structural change and employment at local level and to set a new course for the future. The BMBF uses a share of this funding to support local innovation ecosystems and consortia. These involve research institutions and companies as well as further regional partners which collaborate and develop modern products, technologies, and processes in addition to continuing education programs for skilled professionals.

The transformation of established industries such as steel or chemicals stands to benefit enormously from such collaborations which unite the experience of established stakeholders, fresh ideas from startups and scientific knowledge.

Structural change is not just a national issue but a global one. How can Germany work more closely with international partners to manage economic transformation in a fair and cooperative way?

Even within Europe, we must recognize that different regions are starting from very different positions – while some parts live in relative stability, countries like Lithuania and Poland face the immediate threat of regional conflict. Germany must tailor its approach to reflect these diverse realities.

We can lead by advocating for future trade agreements that integrate economic, social, and environmental aspects. The ultimate goal should be to move away from excessive tariffs so that economic exchanges can occur unhindered, benefiting all parties, as trade restrictions ultimately lead to losses across the board. Through swift, balanced, and inclusive trade policies and international cooperation, Germany can help ensure that the economic transformation benefits all and is managed in a manner that is both fair and sustainable.

Final question: What gives hope for a good future?

Hope is always built on some level of unpredictability, while confidence is a stronger belief that the good will come. In order to become confident regarding the future, we cannot simply wait for things to improve on their own; we have to be proactive. And in Europe, especially in Germany, we still have the ability to do so.

Historian and Yale professor Timothy Snyder recently remarked in an interview with Stern that “Germany is now the largest functioning democracy.” And even if this democracy was once in better form, it still exists, is robust and capable of evolving.

We need to remain an attractive location for skilled workers and scientists, and open our arms to all those professionals who may no longer find opportunities in the US. And I am proud that we are willing to solve the enduring challenges of our time – those that will not vanish if we choose to ignore or deny them. New geopolitical challenges are forcing us to act and perhaps there is also great potential to be found in this urgency. ■

Cem Özdemir is Germany's former Federal Minister of Food and Agriculture and a prominent member of the Green Party. Renowned for his long-standing commitment to social cohesion, integration, and sustainability, he is widely recognized as a key political and societal figure shaping progressive policy in contemporary Germany. He was a Member of the European Parliament (2004–2009) and of the German Bundestag (2013–2025). In the former government he served also as Germany's Minister of Education and Research.

Beyond Politics: The EU Green Deal and Its Geopolitical Influence on Europe- Africa Energy Future

EU-African relations under a European Green Deal (EGD) face many challenges. **Albert Ahenkan** and **Samuel Anuga** argue for more adaptable, mutually beneficial policies to address both energy and developmental needs of the two continents, expedite renewable energy transition and promote energy security.

The European Green Deal (EGD) represents a pivotal approach to fostering sustainable energy practices, primarily through its intricate relationship with Africa. The EGD, initiated by the European Commission, represents a profound commitment to transforming the European Union into a fair and prosperous society. Central to the EGD's objectives is the ambitious target of achieving net-zero greenhouse gas emissions by 2050, positioning the EU as the world's first climate-neutral continent. This paper explores the nuances of EU-Africa cooperation in the realm of renewable energy within the framework of the EGD, set against a backdrop of escalating geopolitical tensions and significant political shifts within the EU. The intricate dynamics of EU-Africa relations are increasingly shaped by these global and regional geopolitical events, such as Russia's invasion of Ukraine in 2022, which has dramatically influenced global energy markets and underscored the urgency for Europe to diversify its energy sources and enhance its energy security by accelerating partnerships focused on renewable energy.

EU-Africa relations are experiencing dynamic changes, primarily influenced by global geopolitical events and internal shifts within both regions. The EGD has become a pivotal element of this relationship, emphasizing sustainability and

green energy transitions as fundamental components of foreign and development policy. This initiative is particularly pertinent in the context of EU-Africa cooperation, where there is a critical need to manage global energy transitions effectively. Africa, with its abundant renewable resources, and Europe, with its technological prowess, are poised to benefit mutually from sustainable energy partnerships. The primary themes underpinning this cooperation include promoting energy democracy, enhancing energy infrastructure, and navigating the complex geopolitical shifts that influence international energy strategies. Furthermore, the alignment of the EGD with Africa's Agenda 2063, which envisions a prosperous Africa based on inclusive growth and sustainable development, ensures that these partnerships not only address climate action but also support socio-economic development across the continent.

Opportunities for collaboration

There are significant mutual benefits to be harnessed from EU-Africa collaboration in renewable energy. Co-creation and co-ownership of renewable energy technologies stand out as promising strategies to ensure these benefits are realized. Such collaboration could lead to enhanced energy security, reduced energy poverty, and foster sustainable

development by integrating African countries into global value chains for green technologies. Successful projects such as the Noor Ouarzazate Solar Complex in Morocco, which is one of the largest solar installations in the world, illustrate the potential of such partnerships. These projects not only supply clean energy but also stimulate local economies by creating jobs and building local capacities.

Challenges and barriers

Despite the opportunities, there are significant challenges and barriers. Internally, the EU faces political challenges, including the rise of far-right extremism which threatens the continuity and focus of green policies. Externally, geopolitical tensions and the resultant shifts in global energy policies affect the stability and predictability needed for long-term investments in renewable energy infrastructure. In Africa, challenges include political instability, inadequate infrastructure, and the need for substantial investment in grid modernization and expansion to support the deployment of renewable energy technologies effectively.

Policy recommendations

To enhance EU-Africa cooperation under the EGD, it is crucial to address these challenges through strategic policy adjustments. Policies should focus on creating enabling environments for investment in green technologies, fostering technology transfer, and building capacities. Additionally, EU and African policymakers should work towards establishing transparent and fair-trade practices, especially in light of mechanisms like the Carbon Border Adjustment Mechanism (CBAM). An inclusive and resilient policy framework that supports sustainable development will be essential to ensure that both continents benefit equitably from the green transition. There is the need for resilient, inclusive policies and stronger EU-Africa cooperation, leveraging global partnerships to foster a sustainable energy future. This alignment is crucial not just for addressing immediate energy needs but also for long-term developmental goals, ensuring that energy transitions contribute positively to both continents' sustainable development trajectories.

Outlook

EU-Africa relations under the EGD present a unique opportunity to drive forward the global green transition agenda. By aligning their policies and initiatives, both regions can leverage their strengths to overcome the current challenges posed by geopolitical shifts and internal political dynamics. The commitment to a long-term vision of sustainability, energy security, and socio-economic growth will be crucial in realizing these goals. The success of this cooperation will depend on continuous engagement and mutual understanding between EU and African stakeholders, ensuring that the benefits of green transitions are widely distributed and contribute positively to the global fight against climate change. ■



FELLOW

ALBERT AHENKAN is Professor of Sustainable Development at the University of Ghana Business School and an Associate Fellow of AIA NRW. He is recognized both locally and internationally for his significant contributions to academia and public policy, establishing him as a leading figure in fields such as sustainable development, climate change, and energy transitions.



FELLOW

SAMUEL ANUGA is Researcher at the University Mohammed VI Polytechnic (UM6P) in Morocco and an Associate Fellow of AIA NRW. He covers topics such as environmental policy, low-carbon development and green transitions. His current work focuses on leveraging low-carbon technologies and innovations to create economic growth and prosperity in the Global South.



The Eagle S Incident: Why an Oil Tanker Under the Cook Islands Flag Was Seized by the Finnish Navy

Geopolitics and global energy policy are closely intertwined. Taking the “Eagle S” incident as an example, **Milla Vaha** shows how difficult it seems to be for the maritime industry in particular to switch from fossil fuels to renewable energies and how vulnerable the smaller states of the South Pacific are to becoming entangled in international energy dependencies.

In an unprecedented chain of events, under cover of darkness on Christmas Day in 2024, the Finnish Coastguard and Navy seized the Eagle S oil tanker at the Baltic Sea. The vessel, carrying fossil fuels arguably sanctioned by Russia, allegedly tore through an underwater electricity and telecom cable running from Estonia to Finland with its anchor. It was operated by an international crew under the Cook Islands flag, a South Pacific Island country on the other side of the world. A few days later, the vessel's anchor was recovered by the Swedish Navy close to the damaged cables. At the time of writing, Finnish authorities had yet to establish whether the damage was intentional. The crew was interrogated by the Finnish Police and representatives of the Cook Islands visited the vessel. The cargo – 35,000 tons of unleaded petroleum – was confiscated.

The Eagle S incident is both a timely reminder of the geopolitical tensions in Europe largely caused by Russia's aggression towards Ukraine, and an example of the politics of global energy markets, heavily reliant on international maritime transportation. The maritime industry is a genuinely globalised field, forming a complex, sometimes untraceable and often exploitative network of ownership relations, labour mobility and sovereign authority of fleets

operating across the world's oceans. The Eagle S incident provides an important example highlighting the difficulty of fairly achieving the ‘phasing out’ of fossil fuels in our societies that are so deeply reliant on oil and gas where even those most vulnerable to the negative impacts of climate change are entangled in and dependent on petrodollar networks.

How did an island state across the world, the Cook Islands, get involved with an incident in the Gulf of Finland? To answer this question, we need to look at the nature of global maritime and energy transportation. Eagle S was carrying what is known as a flag of convenience, meaning that the ship is registered to a country other than the one where the ship's owner resides, in this case a company called Caravella LLC FZ registered to Dubai. It is suspected that the ship belongs to the so-called shadow fleet of Russia, used to evade the sanctions set against the country by the Western world. Statistics from the United Nations Conference on Trade and Development (UNCTAD) show that most global shipping is carried out under flags of convenience, the two leading flag nations being Panama and Liberia, with the South Pacific Island state Marshall Islands taking the figurative and controversial bronze. According to UNCTAD, the Cook Islands had a fleet of approximately 1,950 vessels



in 2023, with 980 of those being oil tankers. Flag nations seek income opportunities through selling their flag, and the Cook Islands is no exception.

The Cook Islands is an independent island nation of roughly 15,000 inhabitants – a self-governing state in free association with New Zealand. According to the association agreement, New Zealand is to be consulted for matters related to foreign policy and defense, yet the Cook Islands has its own parliament, government and political independence on most matters. The Cook Islands is one of the most developed island countries in the South Pacific region, with its income mainly coming from fishing, fruit processing and tourism. It is also one of the region's most vocal promoters of deep-sea mining and plans to be a frontrunner in the new industry.

Pacific Island Countries are, of course, Large Ocean States – the term used by these states themselves to counter the belittling term of Small Island Developing States used by the UN system. Their histories, livelihoods and social practices are deeply rooted at sea and seafaring and in the globalised capitalist world they have become reliant on maritime industries such as fishing, often operated by foreign companies within their enormous Exclusive Economic Zones.

At the same time, these societies are also at the frontline of climate change. According to the United Nations, island states are among the most vulnerable to negative climate impacts, and Pacific diplomats have been extremely important actors in the global climate regime since its origins. The region has consistently kept '1.5°C to Stay Alive' on the international negotiation agenda and frequently calls for more funding for and scaling up of climate ambition. The

countries were the first to propose that loss and damage be added as an independent article item to mitigation and adaption in the UN climate agreement, and the students of the University of the South Pacific were the driving force behind the historical initiative to request an advisory opinion on the relationship between climate change and the obligations of states from the International Court of Justice, which it is expected to provide later this year.

It is therefore intriguing that a Pacific Island country is now involved in a problematic scandal relating to a shadow fleet's transportation of fossil fuel. European countries, many reluctantly, stopped importing Russian oil and gas after the invasion of Ukraine. Over the past decades, many EU nations have become heavily dependent on Russian fossil fuels, Germany being a prime example. Due to these sanctions, Russia has been looking at new markets for its produce, transporting it with vessels that mask the origin of their cargo. While we do not know for certain where *Eagle S* was going, there is no guarantee that its contents would not have ended up back in European energy markets through third parties, such is our dependency on oil and gas and the nature of the global energy economy.

The Cook Islands, as well as New Zealand, have remained silent regarding the investigations. The question of the responsibility of flag nations in global maritime trade is a fuzzy one. In our state-based international order, the laws of the sea regulate that vessels need to be registered by countries. These countries then sell companies licences giving them the right to use their flag. In doing so, the flag nations are responsible for checking that vessels registered under their name are sea-worthy. In the case of *Eagle S*, serious safety flaws have been discovered in the vessel's

“The Eagle S incident is a timely reminder of geopolitical tensions and the politics of global energy markets.”

Milla Vaha

past, including the maintenance of the ship and its equipment – the emergency fire pump, fire alarm system, and emergency power supply, for example. According to inspectors, the ship had also neglected international agreements on emissions reduction.

It would be unfair to call out a climate vulnerable Pacific Island nation for the alleged wrongdoing of a Russian shadow vessel operated by a third-party corporation and its reportedly Georgian and Indian crew. The Eagle S incident in no way diminishes the existential threat of climate change faced by Cook Islanders, nor should it hold them accountable for this threat even if the vessel was transporting petroleum, the catalyst of our current predicament, or having neglected its emission reduction responsibilities.

However, the incident has, at least to some extent, dirtied the hands of the Cook Island authorities. It is not a good look, politically, for a climate champion to register an oil transporter that is now engaged with potentially criminal activities at sea under its flag. The same can arguably be said about the country's proposal to enter the deep-sea mining industry, which many would argue cannot be sustainably practiced and is an attempt to blue-wash our much needed 'green' energy transition by extracting the riches of the sea with so far unknown consequences.

My aim here is not to name and shame the Cook Islands, a member of the University of the South Pacific, but rather direct our collective attention to the questions of justice in energy transition that the case of Eagle S raises. How do we provide fair treatment for states that, on the one hand, are already experiencing the impacts of a warming planet, but on the other, have limited means to provide for their people and therefore engage in legal yet sometimes morally problematic practices like the flag of convenience?

Neither do I wish to argue that countries like the Cook Islands are forced to sell their flag to these operators for money, as that would just cast these nations as victims – an undeserved yet commonplace belittling treatment. Instead, it is fair to ask whether the international community and especially its developed nations – who benefit the most from unfair norms of the world order and suspectable practices of trade, the flag of convenience included – are providing sufficient opportunities and means to these countries and their people so that they do not have to serve as a front for such dirty operations?

Russia's alleged shadow fleet – and it must be noted that at the time of writing the authorities have not yet

established whether a crime has occurred – is a symptom, not a cause, of a more serious problem. Our energy demand and the transportation networks supporting it are based on an unfair system of exploitation in which actors have very different positionalities and limited responsibilities. It would be easy to point a finger at the Cook Islands as a flag nation for oversight or the crew of Eagle S for breaching international sanctions, which the Finnish authorities have established they did not as they entered the EU waters only after the invitation to do so by Finland. But that would mean ignoring the bigger picture in which we all have a role to play due to our dependency on fossil fuels, and the international norms that not only allow but indeed encourage problematic practices such as the flag of convenience. ■



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Bonn as International Climate City

INTERVIEW with **Stefan Wagner**

The Federal City of Bonn is the German UN location par excellence. 26 United Nations organizations with around 1,000 employees work here. It also hosts numerous other NGOs and scientific institutions working in the field of international politics. **Stefan Wagner**, Head of the Office for International Affairs and Global Sustainability of the City of Bonn, provides insights into his work.



Can you outline the work in your office? Which institutions are you in contact with and how do you support them in their work?

A key part of our work is maintaining contact with international organizations. Bonn is the German city of the United Nations, so we focus on the UN organizations in particular, but of course also on many other international organizations, NGOs, etc. This cooperation takes place in a variety of ways. Above all, we are concerned with the quality of the location; as a city, we want to be a good host for the institutions. We provide the services that UN employees rightly expect. We see ourselves as an interface for urban cooperation and try to make the work of the UN better known and more visible in the city. Specifically, we organize and accompany events, support conferences, promote networking and raise awareness of the UN's issues and concerns among the citizens of our city. In addition, our work raises Bonn's profile abroad at the international level by participating in international conferences or network meetings, where we represent our city.

The preparation of the international climate conferences in Bonn is particularly prominent in international politics. How is your office involved in this?



The United Nations Climate Change Secretariat is by far the largest UN organization in Bonn. Every year in early summer, the course is set for the world climate conferences in the fall. These “interim conferences” are one of the most important recurring conferences in Bonn. Our task here relates primarily to the protocol framework. Together with the Federal Foreign Office, we organize an annual reception to present Bonn as a good host to high-ranking guests from all over the world. But we are also involved in the content. For example, we have been organizing the Daring Cities event together with the city network ICLEI (Local Governments for Sustainability) and other partners for years. Daring Cities focuses on the topic of climate and municipalities, and this can be wonderfully combined with the COP preparatory conferences. We bring local stakeholders together with delegates from the climate conference. Our aim is to highlight what is being achieved by local authorities in the area of climate action and to work towards achieving better cooperation between levels of government in the fight against the climate crisis.

What does Bonn's local climate strategy look like?

Of course, like many other cities around the world, we are also pursuing a local climate policy in Bonn. Our goal is

to be climate-neutral by 2035. This is a very important and strong political priority, especially for our mayor and the council majority. To this end, following an extensive participation process initiated by civil society, the city has launched a climate plan with appropriate funding, which is now being implemented. This is a cross-sectional task for the entire administration, of which our office is only one part. It covers topics such as transport, mobility, energy transition, etc. Anyone wishing to find out about the implementation status of the climate plan can access our climate compass. Our office is trying to make a contribution to this primarily through networks such as ICLEI or cooperation with UN programs.

Can you name a few specific projects?

One example is the CHAMP initiative, in which we are very interested as a city. This abbreviation stands for “Coalition for High Ambition Multilevel Partnerships” in the field of climate. CHAMP was launched in 2023 during the 28th World Climate Conference in Dubai and is intended to help strengthen dialogue and cooperation between local, regional and national levels. Germany and numerous other countries have signed this agreement. On the initiative of our Mayor, the German Association of Cities has passed a resolution



calling on the Federal Government to include the municipal commitment to achieving climate neutrality in national reporting (Nationally Determined Contribution – NDC). We must always engage in dialogue with the federal and state levels on projects like this, as we can only implement local climate policy if the framework conditions decided at other levels are right. I have already mentioned the Daring Cities conference series. We are also involved in numerous other programs and projects in the UN context and beyond. Let's take the example of climate adaptation and urban resilience. The topics of resilience and disaster prevention are particularly important to us. This is why we are working at international level with the UN Secretary-General's Office for Disaster Risk Reduction (UNDRR), which launched the "Making Cities Resilient" initiative in 2020. The aim here is to bring municipalities around the world together to discuss how disaster prevention can be improved. Bonn is involved here as a "Resilience Hub" and promotes exchange with other cities in Europe and around the world. Many more examples could be cited.

What kind of cooperation do you have with other cities in NRW and beyond?

The international offices of the NRW cities cooperate very closely. In NRW in particular, there are a number of municipalities that, in my view, have an exemplary international commitment. We also work together with other municipalities in the context of the Association of German Cities. However, there are informal networks that have simply been established between cities that have similar interests in the field of international cooperation, too. We have regular informal exchanges here. In Bonn, the international exchange is the most important level for us in my opinion. For many German cities, the 2030 Agenda and the SDGs were the entry point into the UN context in the first place. We were always pioneers here in Bonn. At the moment, I observe that more and more small municipalities are also opening up to these issues.

"We want to be good hosts, aware of our responsibility for ONE world."

Stefan Wagner



What is the significance of scientific input for your work?

Scientific input plays a very important role for Bonn in particular, because Bonn is not only a UN city but also a city of science. We are a very strong science location with great institutions – including, of course, the Academy of International Affairs, among many others. In terms of sustainability, the Bonn Alliance for Sustainability Research has long been an alliance of scientific institutions in Bonn that work closely together on topics such as technical innovation and alternative sustainability concepts. If I was asked about the concrete implementation of scientific input, there is still a gap sometimes between scientific know-how and concrete implementation for local practitioners. However, let me give you a concrete example: As a city, we work very closely with climate researchers from the United Nations University (UNU). They recently developed a map for hotspots in the city that we can use to identify and combat urban heat. And the UNU has also just conducted a citizen survey on Bonn's climate plan.



Finally, let's have a brief outlook: Which topics will be important in the future?

Everything that can be associated with the keyword transformation. Transformation has already begun and we will encounter it everywhere, from the mobility transition in transportation to the building industry and the switch to renewable energies to climate neutrality as a whole. This is a huge topic in my opinion. Digitalization will continue to be an old topic that progresses slowly. New AI technologies in particular can provide impetus here, and it will be exciting to see when this becomes a reality in everyday municipal life. However, data protection and transparency also play an important role here. And, like society as a whole, local authorities will certainly be massively affected by demographic change and the shortage of qualified workers.

How do you think Bonn is equipped for these future challenges?

First of all, I would emphasize that a lot has already been achieved. Bonn is in a comparatively favorable position. Other locations are much more affected by structural change than Bonn as a UN city and as a strong location for science and services. I would like to see us continuing to cultivate our global partnerships in the future. We should not limit

our work to what happens here locally, but also make our responsibility in this one world clear. I occasionally worry that we sometimes lose sight of this. I hope that Bonn will continue to be a cosmopolitan city. ■

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Democracy and FDI: Insights From the US and China

Foreign direct investment (FDI) stands as one of the most visible markers of globalization, with trillions of dollars flowing across borders annually. While the economic impacts of FDI are well-documented, the political influence of investments from increasingly influential autocratic regimes on democratic institutions remains understudied.



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Foreign direct investment (FDI) – where investors from one economy establish a lasting interest in an enterprise from another – has become a defining feature of our global economy. This form of cross-border capital flow has often been heralded as a force for economic development, with an added benefit of undercutting autocratic regimes. Today's reality appears to conflict with this optimistic vision: global democracy has declined to levels not seen since the 1980s, even as foreign investment flows have reached record highs.

Two countries driving this increase in FDI are the United States and the People's Republic of China, which together contribute approximately 40% of global investment. In many ways, investment from both countries tends to follow similar patterns, being driven by interest in natural resource acquisition and market size. In both cases, concern about human rights also remains relatively common. Examples include reports of poor labor practices by Chinese companies in African countries and an analysis finding that poor human-rights records and military coup d'états were positively associated with US investment in Latin America between 1979 and 1996.

While both powers pursue larger markets, this motive appears to be more pronounced in US activities. American investment strategies tend to prioritize economic benefits (being more concerned with profit generation and market size) whereas China appears to be more diverse, considering not only the market, but other concerns such as domestic industrial overcapacity and pollution.

How can FDI affect democracy?

The relationship between the political environment of a country and foreign investment is complex. Political scientist Abel Escribà-Folch of Universitat Pompeu Fabra has identified three distinct ways in which this relationship may play out. The first possibility, often called the Washington hypothesis, emerged during the fall of the Soviet Union in 1989 amid a global wave of democratization.

According to this optimistic view, foreign investment can help liberalize authoritarian systems by weakening government control over the economy and strengthening groups pushing for reform. A second, more pessimistic perspective, argues that the foreign money might undermine democracy by creating opportunities for state officials to capture resources and enrich themselves at the public's expense.

A third perspective suggests that the effect of FDI may depend largely on who is already in power, reinforcing any existing regime. In countries with authoritarian leadership, international capital can serve as a stamp of legitimacy, suggesting global approval of the current regime. Conversely, in democratic nations, this same investment might dilute government influence over economic affairs and create rifts among political and business leaders.

How are countries affected by US or Chinese investment?

Both the United States and China use investment to strengthen relationships, promote their interests, and, in some cases, shape political systems; the way they do this – and the impact it has – can vary significantly.

China, for example, has been known to support autocratic factions. In younger democracies like Malaysia, Chinese surveillance technology has reportedly helped the government resist Western pressure for democratic reform. Some argue that this is not just an economic strategy but a political one – authoritarian governments tend to be more predictable and easier for Beijing to influence.

In an as-yet unpublished paper, we asked whether the amount of investment a country receives from the US or China can predict its level of democracy in the future. On average, the United States tended to invest in countries that were slightly more democratic than the ones China invested in. With Chinese investment, we found that higher levels of FDI were associated with reduced future levels in democracy, with this finding supporting concerns that investment does not just affect economic growth; it can also help entrench autocratic rule by consolidating power.

For the United States, we did not find a clear relationship between investment and changes to democracy. This seemingly challenges the common belief that US foreign investment promotes democracy and suggests that, in most cases, a country's political system remains largely unchanged after receiving American funding.

What might future investment look like?

Should Chinese investment be associated with democratic backsliding, developing nations may face increasingly complex strategic choices. Outwardly, China often maintains a policy of non-interference, adopting a win-win approach that emphasizes mutual benefit, shared development and soli-

darity with developing nations; in Africa, for example, some leaders view this approach as more respectful, partially due to a wariness of Western colonial legacies. While the Chi-

nese approach may be viewed as refreshing by some leaders, the long-term implications of such investments remain unclear; should developing nations wish to democratize, Chinese investment may present an obstacle. It is, however, important to be cautious with this interpretation as other factors may be contributing to this backsliding.

Meanwhile, the United States may face its own strategic challenges in this evolving landscape.

While American investment does

not appear to inhibit or accelerate democratic development, its potential neutrality in promoting democratic institutions raises important questions about the future of US soft power. Specifically, the US may risk losing its ability to shape global values and norms. Combined with the current climate of economic protectionism and the persistent threat of tariffs by President Trump, the United States could become increasingly isolated, making it harder to influence global governance – even if it seeks to reassert its power in the future.

As global FDI continues to rise, the political consequences of investment are likely to become an increasingly important issue. The coming decade may see a more fragmented international investment landscape, with regional powers also wielding significant economic influence alongside the US and China. For recipient nations, the challenge will be developing safeguards that can leverage the economic benefits of foreign investment while protecting their institutions. What remains clear is that foreign investment will continue to be not only an economic question but a profoundly political one that helps shape the future of global governance. ■

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“FDI will continue to be not only an economic question but a profoundly political one.”

Stephan Lewandowsky



SOCIETAL CHALLENGES AND CONFLICT TRANS- FORMATIONS

International politics is characterized by open as well as underlying conflicts and challenges to social cohesion. The authors of this section explore such challenges from full-scale wars to the role of radicalized religious actors and provide nuanced understandings of societal challenges in different contexts. They also point out ways to strengthen political participation and create pathways to stability and peace.



The Challenge of National Dialogue During Active War in Ukraine

National Dialogues can reshape societies, but Ukraine's active war presents unique challenges to fostering inclusivity and long-term peace.

National Dialogues have emerged as a recognized approach for managing political transitions and addressing conflicts in deeply divided societies. They aim to redefine the social contract—a foundational agreement between the state and its citizens—by fostering inclusive participation. These processes are typically organized by a combination of national stakeholders, often supported by international actors such as the United Nations or regional organizations, and can span several months to years depending on the context. National Dialogues are distinct in their scale and focus, often involving broad, society-wide participation and aiming to address systemic issues that underlie conflict or political instability. Unlike transitional justice (TJ), which focuses on accountability and reconciliation for past atrocities, National Dialogues prioritize inclusive, large-scale consultations to reframe political and social structures. Advocates highlight their potential to rebuild trust, ensure equitable representation, and address systemic grievances. However, their efficacy remains debated, as some scholars and practitioners question whether they genuinely catalyze sustainable peace and reform or merely consolidate elite dominance within existing power structures. In the context of Ukraine, the prospect of a National Dialogue presents unique challenges and opportunities. Unlike post-conflict scenarios, where the cessation of violence allows for inclusive and structured deliberations, Ukraine is grappling with the realities of active war. This raises a critical question: Is it possible to initiate a meaningful National Dialogue during an ongoing active phase of war, or must such processes wait until the guns fall silent?

The double-edged sword of national dialogues

National Dialogues can address societal divisions and foster reconciliation in conflict-affected states by forming new political orders, rebuilding institutions, or reimagining national identity. Tunisia's National Dialogue Quartet mediated factions to create a democratic constitution in 2014, while the Convention for a Democratic South Africa (CODESA) dismantled apartheid in South Africa through inclusive negotiations. However, inclusivity can also be a weakness. Elite capture, where powerful groups dominate the process and marginalize societal interests, undermines legitimacy. Yemen's 2013–2014 National Dialogue Conference struggled with factional disengagement, devolving into a superficial exercise without meaningful reform. Success hinges on careful design, timing, and accountability mechanisms; without these, dialogues risk deepening societal divisions.

Ukraine's warzone: A case of unmatched complexity

Before the full-scale invasion of Ukraine in 2022 by Russia, there were attempts to foster dialogue in Ukraine, primarily facilitated by international organizations such as the United Nations Development Programme (UNDP), the European Union, and various international and local NGOs. These efforts aimed to address divisions and promote conflict resolution, particularly in the context of the Donbas conflict, which began in 2014 when Russian-backed separatists fought Ukrainian forces in the eastern regions of Donetsk and Luhansk. This conflict led to significant loss of life, widespread displacement, and a prolonged humanitarian crisis, yet these dialogue initiatives did not evolve into formal National Dialogue. Ukraine lacked the political will, trust, and readiness required for such an inclusive process. Compounding this, Russian propaganda and disinformation



campaigns undermined these initiatives by exploiting societal divisions, promoting distrust, and spreading narratives that polarized public opinion. This interference not only derailed efforts to build trust and unity but also left Ukraine ill-prepared to navigate the challenges of a full-scale invasion or to consider inclusive strategies for addressing contested territories such as Crimea and Donbas.

In the current state of active war, National Dialogue is neither feasible nor appropriate, as the immediate priorities of the Ukrainian government and society remain focused on survival, defending sovereignty, and mitigating the consequences of the ongoing invasion. Experts and practitioners in peacebuilding often caution that National Dialogues require a stable environment, a degree of trust among stakeholders, and space for meaningful participation—all of which are unattainable amid active fighting. Nonetheless, this does not diminish the potential relevance of National Dialogue in Ukraine's long-term peacebuilding efforts. As Ukraine develops and promotes the Zelenskyi Peace Formula, incorporating National Dialogue as a complementary mechanism could offer a way to address societal grievances, rebuild trust, and foster unity.

Even now, Ukrainian society continues to face significant internal challenges despite the perceived unity and solidarity in its resistance to external aggression. Labels and categorizations, often tied to language, geographic origin, or wartime status, expose the underlying fractures within the population. For example, distinctions between internally displaced persons (IDPs), refugees, or those perceived as “hiding” from mobilization deepen divisions. A particularly divisive term, *zalisentsi*, used to describe those who

remained in occupied territories, highlights this issue. While the term translates to “those who stayed behind” and might seem neutral, it frequently carries a negative connotation, suggesting disloyalty or complicity, despite the fact that many people are unable to leave due to financial, physical, or logistical constraints. These societal fissures underscore the critical need for an inclusive process that not only recognizes and validates these grievances but also actively works to address them.

A well-structured National Dialogue is essential for Ukraine's future, not only as a tool to address societal divides but also as a means to bear the deep traumas inflicted by the war. While it may be too early to speak of reconciliation, now is the time to foster conversations about the diverse and often painful experiences of the war. Such discussions are critical to building understanding and empathy across various communities throughout Ukraine. A National Dialogue can create a space where these voices are acknowledged and their concerns addressed, helping to bridge divides and lay the foundation for the successful reconstruction and reintegration of occupied territories while strengthening social cohesion. The success of President Zelenskyi's Peace Plan and continued international support will depend on how effectively Ukraine can rebuild a cohesive society. National Dialogue is the first step in this journey,

enabling the nation to confront the varying impacts of the war while fostering trust and shared responsibility. This process must not be a symbolic exercise but a meaningful effort that reflects the needs and aspirations of all segments of society. This will be key to uniting the nation and securing sustainable peace. ■



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Silence in Foreign Policy – An Innovative Field of Research

There is a German proverb: “Talk is silver, silence is golden.” But there are good reasons to question whether this saying also applies to mass atrocity crimes in foreign policy. Silence is not only a phenomenon from our everyday lives, but also a – largely unexplored – feature of foreign policy.



In foreign policy, states attempt to systematically and consciously exert influence on their environment in order to shape their neighbourhood and the world in their own interests. In doing so, certain topics are addressed, others are even begged up, while yet others are silenced. At first glance, there are similarities to an election campaign in the domestic realm, in which the parties decide freely which issues they want to emphasize in order to underline their competence and which topics they avoid. Foreign policy can also generate topics on its own initiative in order to attract attention and gain support for the issue. One example was the launch of a ‘feminist foreign policy’ in March 2023 by German foreign minister Annalena Baerbock. Inspired by the example of countries such as Sweden, the Green party wanted to leave a mark on foreign policy. Yet it is far more common for a government to be confronted with

problems from the outside world and have to take a stand on them because international and national media, other countries and organizations expect a statement. The Russian military preparations for full-scale war in 2021 were hard to ignore but the German political elite desperately tried to do so – for instance, the extensive coalition agreement between the three parties of the incoming ‘traffic light coalition’ did not mention Ukraine once. However, the German reaction to Donald Trump’s most recent interventions shows just how different reactions can be: The tariffs on Chinese goods received utter disdain from German politicians of all camps and were rightly seen as heralds of coming levies on European and German goods. Surprisingly, Trump’s announcement on Greenland also met fierce resistance in the German

political elite yet without showing any deeper knowledge on the issue – be it Greenland’s secession from the European Communities in 1985, or the US declaration regarding Greenland when it bought the Virgin Islands from Denmark. Statements on Trump’s outreach on Canada and Panama were lukewarm but present. One issue did not trigger any governmental reactions: Trump’s proposal to send refugees to Guantanamo was ignored – silence prevailed. This example leads to the overall questions of the research project: What does silence mean in a particular foreign policy situation? How does it come about and why does it last or end?

Some theoretical insights on silence

Despite the fact that silence is commonplace, we hardly know anything about silence in foreign policy. This is surprising considering that silence represents a well-

researched issue in many other disciplines. Many forms are known to exhibit a wide array of respective meanings. Some examples: In communication, scholars stress that silence does not equate to muteness. Even when talking all the time, topics can be silenced – a case of ‘loud’ or articulated silence. In everyday Christian life, silence offers spaces for commemoration and contemplation as is the case in common rituals of sorrow. In historical memory, silence often comes across as meaningfully engaging with the past. The veterans’ silence regarding their experiences in war when coming home may obscure committed crimes but also inhibits learning for others not involved. Moreover, silence could be conceived as a manifestation of a structural force which coerces and suppresses people – for example domestic violence being a taboo which should be silenced at all costs in most societies. What is more, silence may mean support for a regime or a policy but at the same time may signal resistance. A famous case are the silent protests of the *madres de plaza de mayo* in Argentina: Their regular silent stand on a public square reminds people of their relatives’ fate, kidnapped and murdered by the military regime. Finally, silence can constitute a status-quo orientation but also bears seeds of change. When British governments fell silent on the pros of European integration over decades and avoided any public debate, many political scientists interpreted this as an expression of a permissive consensus in favour of Britain’s membership.

Yet, when called to the polls, it turned out that a powerful counter-narrative carried the day (“take back control”): The silencing thus enabled drastic change. To summarize, silence can take on many forms and meanings and only the theoretical approach, mediated by the respective discipline, is able to grasp, interpret or substantially discuss silence. Overall, ‘ambiguity’ is the key analytical term to define silence.

German foreign policy silence on mass atrocity crimes

Foreign policy is an issue area which lends itself to studying silence. For it is an area in which one would generally expect public statements to be made, for example when mass atrocity crimes are committed. Mass atrocity crimes such as war crimes (e.g., the targeted killing of civilians in war), crimes against humanity (e.g., mass rape) or genocide (the deliberate extermination of a people) are banned by the United Nations Charter and by many international treaties – virtually all states agree that they should be condemned. In addition, many Western states have set themselves the goal of combating such mass crimes. For example, the following

sentence can be found in the German government’s foreign policy guidelines (2017, 47): “Germany acknowledges the special responsibility that arises from its history. Avoiding war and violence in international relations, preventing genocide and serious human rights violations and standing up for minorities under threat and for the victims of oppression and persecution are part of Germany’s *raison d’être*.”

Of course, speaking in Germany about mass atrocity

crimes does not mean that something will be done ‘on the ground’ where the atrocities happen. Yet without a national debate – so the argument for liberal democracies goes – any action of the international community appears unlikely. As the example of the Kosovo war in 1998–99 had demonstrated, the mass atrocities in Kosovo were intensely debated before Germany participated in the negotiation efforts and finally the bombing campaign against Serbia’s regime. A more recent example are the excessive war crimes committed by the Russian army in Bucha and elsewhere in Ukraine since 2022. The German political elite lauded the arraignment against Putin in the wake of the Russian war of aggression against Ukraine. By contrast, Israel’s war crimes and crimes against humanity in Gaza are downplayed in the German debate, for instance, with the German government siding with Israel in the ICJ’s case of genocide and avoiding any statement on the ICC’s arrest warrant against Netanyahu and Gallant. Silencing here means that the government would like to refrain from



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taking any action. The two cases suggest that ‘strategic silencing’ applies – governments set agendas and silence issues as they please. Such an understanding, though, only tells half of the story. Despite the international guidelines and the national commitments, the federal governments have remained silent on current proven mass crimes in recent years: Whether war crimes in Yemen or Sudan, crimes against humanity in Ethiopia and the DR Congo, or genocides against the Rohingya in Myanmar and the Uyghurs in China, in most of the mass atrocity cases of our time, not only the federal governments but also the Bundestag did not want to talk about such mass atrocity crimes. When the entire political elite shies away from discussing the most severe atrocities humans can commit against other humans, ‘strategic silencing’ cannot explain this – it seems more adequate to speak of an ‘order of silence’. Probably, such orders of silence correlate with the bad results of external state-building (Iraq, Afghanistan) and the crisis of the Responsibility to Protect (Libya). However, how such orders of silence come about and why they prevail should be researched in more depth. ■

From ‘Migrants’ to Dual Citizens: ‘Turkish’ Political Participation for and From Germany

The new German Citizenship Act of 2024 is expected to boost political participation, especially among long-term non-citizen residents, notably Turkish citizens eligible for German citizenship.

Germany's recent citizenship reform, enacted in June 2024, has the potential to reshape the political engagement of residents originating from Turkey. By allowing dual citizenship, the new law removes a long-standing barrier that discouraged many from naturalising, i.e. also becoming German citizens. This change could significantly increase political participation in German elections while reinforcing engagement with Turkish politics through external voting.

For decades, migrants originating from Turkey and their descendants in Germany faced a difficult choice: acquiring German citizenship meant renouncing their Turkish nationality. Many, particularly from the first generation, chose to retain their Turkish passports, maintaining strong ties to their origin country. As a result, their political participation in Germany remained limited, even as they actively voted in Turkish elections since 2014. The new legislation eliminates this dilemma, allowing eligible individuals to hold both nationalities—a



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shift expected to increase applications for German citizenship, particularly among descendants and newcomers who previously hesitated due to the requirement to forgo their Turkish passports.

Preliminary fieldwork reveals two primary groups responding to the change. The first consists of Turkish citizens who have long resisted German naturalisation but now see an opportunity to obtain political rights in Germany while maintaining their Turkish citizenship. Many in this group express enthusiasm about finally participating in German elections. The second group includes former Turkish citizens and their descendants, some of whom had given up their Turkish citizenship in the past. Now, they view reacquiring Turkish citizenship as a way to remain engaged in Turkey's political landscape while retaining their German citizenship.

A comparative perspective with France, where dual citizenship has long been permitted, offers insights into what might unfold in Germany.

In France, a significant portion of migrants originating from Turkey hold dual nationality, and their descendants maintain strong ties to Turkey while participating in French politics. This suggests that Germany could see a similar trend, with increased civic engagement in both countries. The reform signals a shift in how diaspora communities navigate their identities and political affiliations. This change also has broader implications for Germany's approach to diverse communities that are also 'locals' of the larger society. By recognising dual or multiple national identities, the law reflects an evolving understanding of citizenship in a multicultural society.

The historical context of turkish migration to Germany

The 1961 bilateral labour agreement between Germany and Turkey initiated large-scale migration, with Turkish workers arriving as so-called 'guest workers.' Initially intended as temporary labourers, many remained permanently, establishing families and communities in Germany. However, restrictive citizenship laws meant that despite decades of residence, Turkish migrants and their descendants often lacked formal political rights in their country of residence.

German citizenship law was traditionally based on *jus sanguinis*, or 'right of blood' nationality. Until reforms in 2000, Germany did not offer a clear path to naturalisation for long-term residents. The 2000 reform introduced elements of *jus soli*, allowing children born in Germany to foreign parents to acquire German citizenship under certain conditions. However, these individuals were often required to choose between their German and Turkish citizenship upon reaching adulthood. The new 2024 law removes this requirement, allowing individuals to retain both nationalities indefinitely.

Political implications and future trends

The reform's impact extends beyond individual citizenship choices. It has the potential to influence electoral outcomes and political engagement in both Germany and Turkey. The historically low turnout of naturalised German citizens of Turkish descent in German elections could shift as more individuals originating from Turkey gain the right to vote without relinquishing their Turkish citizenship. This may also lead to increased representation of politicians originating from Turkey in German political parties and institutions.

At the same time, Turkey has actively sought to maintain ties with its diaspora, viewing non-resident citizens as an extension of its political and cultural influence abroad. Turkish political parties, particularly the ruling Justice and Development Party (Adalet ve Kalkınma Partisi, AKP), have engaged in extensive outreach to voters in Europe. With a growing number of dual citizens of Turkish origin in Germany, Turkish political actors may intensify mobilisation efforts, seeking to leverage diaspora support in Turkish elections.

Additionally, diaspora organisations that have ethnic



focus (e.g., Federation of Kurdish Associations in Germany, NAV-DEM/KON-MED), religion-centered (e.g., Turkish-Islamic Union for Religious Affairs, DITIB; Alevi Federation Germany, AABF), and civil society actors (e.g., Union of International Democrats, UID/UETD) play a crucial role in shaping political identities and participation among communities originating from Turkey. The reform may encourage new forms of activism, both within Germany and in transnational contexts. Whether this leads to greater integration or reinforces separate identity politics remains an open question that warrants further research.

The coming years will reveal the full impact of this legislative change, shedding light on the complexities of dual citizenship, multiple loyalties, and its political power in modern democracies. ■

Parliamentary meeting with Öykü İnci Yener-Roderburg:

"From Migrants to Dual Citizens – A Potential New Voter Group: Turkish Political Participation for and from Germany", December 19, 2024

Öykü İnci Yener-Roderburg shared her findings from her field study on the political engagement of Turkish diaspora groups, including external voting during the last national elections in Turkey. In the discussion with the parliamentarians, she underlined that the Turkish diaspora in Germany cannot be seen as a homogeneous, AKP-fixated group. Traditional voting behavior has changed over time. She warned against treating Turkish diaspora voters as a group with clearly defined, common political interests: "Their political preferences can therefore not be reduced to their so-called 'Turkishness', but are characterized by a complex interplay of transnational ties and local experiences, which highlights a dynamic identity that defies clear classification."

The NRW-Turkey Parliamentary Friendship Group as a Bridge Builder

INTERVIEW with **Rainer Schmeltzer**

Last year, the Academy and its Fellows were twice guests of the NRW-Turkey Parliamentary Group in the North Rhine-Westphalia state parliament. We spoke to its Chairman, State Parliament Vice-President **Rainer Schmeltzer** (SPD), about the group's work.

How long has the NRW-Turkey Parliamentary Group existed and what were the original motives for setting it up?

Parliamentary groups are voluntary associations. Incidentally, the NRW state parliament is unique in Germany with eight such groups. At the beginning of a legislative period, we discuss in the Presidium which and how many parliamentary groups are feasible. It is particularly important to me to emphasize that the work in the parliamentary groups enables MPs to exchange ideas across party lines. The groups are not made up of members from different parliamentary groups. Any interested parliamentarian can join a group. Becoming a member is not only possible at the beginning of a legislative term, but at any time. Personal interest is more important than party-political proportional representation.

The NRW-Turkey Group has existed since 2002 and, unlike many other parliamentary groups, the initiative did not come from the Presidium, but from Wolfgang Rören (SPD) from Gladbeck. With almost one million people, North Rhine-Westphalia has the largest German-Turkish community. Many generations have already lived here, so it made sense to found such a parliamentary group.

How does your parliamentary group work in concrete terms and where do you focus your activities?

I'm only speaking for the NRW-Turkey Parliamentary Group now, because each parliamentary group works independently. We meet for more or less regular working meetings, usually before plenary sessions. However, we have also organized external visits. We often involve external discussion partners from the German-Turkish community, such as academics or people from the consulates. Our focus is on city partnerships. We maintain existing partnerships and encourage the establishment of new ones. We help where we can. However, we can only support them from a state parliamentary perspective, i.e., we can give advice and encourage networks, but the actual initiative has to be developed and supported locally. Youth exchange programs are also a focus of our activities. We have very close contacts with the German-Turkish Youth Bridge in Düsseldorf, for example, with whom we meet regularly. Then there are always specific occasions when we become active: One example is the earthquake disaster in Turkey. As a parliamentary group, we got involved very quickly and tried to help in a trusting partnership with the state government.

Is it fair to say that your work focuses primarily on interpersonal exchange?

Yes, personal exchange is at the heart of both city partnerships and youth exchanges. Exchanges between young

people do a lot to break down prejudices. It is a problem that many young people only get their image of Turkey from the so-called social media, but have never been there and dealt with people of Turkish origin. This is where exchanges between youth groups, sports clubs etc. helps. This also promotes the community and exchange here in North Rhine-Westphalia. It is therefore very important to us that we support such processes.

You have just mentioned the consulates and academia as important cooperation partners. How can we imagine your cooperation with these institutions?

We don't have just one consulate like most other federal states – this is also a special feature of North Rhine-Westphalia – we have four and a half. There are four traditional consulates in Münster, Cologne, Düsseldorf and Essen. There is also another consulate in Hesse, which is responsible for some parts of East Westphalia-Lippe. We are in regular contact with these consulates.

In the academic field, the Center for Turkish Studies and Integration Research (ZfTI) in Essen is a constant point of contact and is a permanent guest in our parliamentary group. I am also thinking of the two lectures given by your fellows from the Academy of International Affairs last year, which were immensely enriching for the members of our group. In both cases, we agreed that the time was far too short and that we would have liked to have had much longer discussions with you. We benefit immensely from the exchange with academia for our parliamentary work.

Were there any major hurdles and challenges that you experienced during your time as Chairman?

I can spontaneously think of my speech on Turkey's National Day in 2023, when President Erdogan had made headlines a few days earlier with his critical statements on the terrorist attack by Hamas. I was invited as a keynote speaker at three consulates and made a conscious decision to keep going and speak openly, even after the President's statements. I proof-read my speech several times because it was a very critical situation. Some of the feedback afterwards was positive, some of it was critical. But overall, I would say we overcame that hurdle. It was important for us to express our opinion and our point of view in well-chosen diplomatic words.

Finally, perhaps a personal question: Why did you decide to chair this group and not other topics?

I shouldn't forget to mention that I am also a member of the NRW-UK Parliamentary Group. I am involved in both groups out of personal conviction. I was born in 1961 and, as a child, it was completely normal for me to go to school with children of Turkish origin and to play club sports – in my case, basketball at the time. It was absolutely normal for me to grow up with people of Turkish origin of all kinds. This was the case in my hometown of Lünen, a former mining town. In my early political career, the integration council of the city of Lünen approached me and asked me to deepen a town twinning with Batin on the Black Sea. I have been passionately involved here for many, many years. And so,

after the departure of my predecessor Carina Gödecke, I didn't hesitate for a second when I was offered the chairmanship of the NRW-Turkey Parliamentary Group. And I can already promise that I will remain involved in this area when I retire in two years' time.

Thank you very much for the interview! ■

Rainer Schmeltzer has been a member of the North Rhine-Westphalia State Parliament since 2000 and a member of the SPD since 1977. From 2015 to 2017, he was appointed Minister for Labour, Integration and Social Affairs in the state of NRW. Schmeltzer is currently the first Vice President of the North Rhine-Westphalian State Parliament and Chairman of the NRW-Turkey Parliamentary Group.

**Parliamentary meeting with Hüseyin Cicek:
"Integration as a Field of Tension: Perspectives for
NRW and Germany", February 29, 2024**



AIA Fellow Hüseyin Cicek presented the key findings of his research project. Cicek emphasized right at the beginning that Islam is neither historically nor currently a homogeneous religious community. Within the individual countries and regions in which it is spread, it forms a very heterogeneous movement. He then gave an overview of Ditib's links with Turkey. Based on this, he problematized the possible tensions that could arise from this, such as a loss of trust in religious institutions, a division within society and an impairment of social harmony. He concluded his speech by emphasizing: "Muslims are an integral part of German society, and the question of whether Islam belongs to Germany is superfluous. This has long been a reality. Only those who recognize this reality will be able to develop lasting prevention concepts that strengthen our society."

China and Afghanistan: The Lure of Non-western Development

The year 2025 marks 70 years since Afghanistan and China established diplomatic relations. It could also be(come) the year when bilateral relations between both countries reach a new peak of mutual exchange and intensity of Chinese engagement in the Hindu Kush.

Following the renewed takeover of the Taliban and the establishment of an interim government of the Islamic Emirate of Afghanistan (IEA) in the second half of 2021, there was much speculation and hope on the Afghan side that Chinese support would provide a lifeline to the economy. Afghans see the prospect of increased Chinese engagement in Afghanistan as highly beneficial for several reasons, given the precarious humanitarian and economic situation, which is amplified by frozen international currency reserves, droughts and natural disasters, and the lack of international recognition. Although the impact and sustainability of its engagement is internationally contested, China has a reputation as a non-normative arbiter in the development and reconstruction sector in other parts of the world without trying to impose certain political models and liberal peace agendas. Because China was not a partisan stakeholder in the international military intervention between 2001 and 2021, it is considered as 'neutral' and more trustworthy than Western states. In addition to Afghanistan's strategic location, China recognises its enormous geo-economic and geopolitical potential. At the same time, it is hesitant and intends to avoid the mistakes of the former intervening powers, the Soviet Union (1979–1988) and the United States (2001–2021). With up to 80

per cent of the Afghan budget dependent on Western donors over the previous decade, China has neither the political will nor the capacity to substitute Western funding. Thus, China initially adopted a cautious wait-and-see attitude towards the new rulers, although it had already been in constructive diplomatic and political contact with the Taliban since 2014 and did not close its embassy in August 2021.

The republican government of Afghanistan was one of the first signatories of the Belt and Road Initiative (BRI),

established in 2013. However, a close analysis of China's engagement in Afghanistan prior to 2021 shows that it prioritised security cooperation, trade, (planned) resource exploration and humanitarian aid—none of which were linked to the BRI and its underlying connectivity through infrastructure narrative. By cooperating with the Republic and its (Taliban) adversaries in

How have the Afghan-Chinese relations evolved since the Taliban came to power in 2021?

the pre-2021 period, the Chinese regime aimed to secure its western border and to take counterterrorist measures to control the movements of the separatist Uyghur militants of the East Turkestan Islamic Movement (ETIM), whose members had joined the Taliban and its rival, the so-called Islamic State Khorasan Province (IS-KP). In addition to its security interests, China has long had economic interests linked to hydrocarbon and metallurgical resources and their



exploitation. In 2008, its state-owned China Metallurgical Group Corp. successfully secured a 30-year mining concession for the world's second-largest copper deposit at Mes Aynak—two years before the US Geological Survey found that Afghanistan's mineral wealth could be worth US \$1 trillion. While the exploration of the mine remained unrealistic before 2021 due to the war-like conditions in Afghanistan, activities in 2024, with a groundbreaking ceremony in July, indicate an intention to start exploration in the very near future. Likewise, post-2021, China won a concession for oil production in the Amu Darya basin in northern Afghanistan; work has already started, and oil extraction equipment was delivered in 2024. With these activities, China is consolidating its favorable strategic position to access other raw materials, such as Afghanistan's vast lithium deposits that are indispensable for electric car batteries and other tech products.

In parallel, Chinese actors—companies, technology groups, state-owned enterprises and security providers—are proactively engaging in transregional transportation, trade and raw materials infrastructure projects involving Afghanistan that are already underway. These include pipelines, electricity and rail links, such as the Jiangsu–Hairatan cargo freight train, which completed its first journey via Kazakhstan and Uzbekistan in November 2024. In other mobility dimensions, the Taliban had announced the completion of the Little Pamir Road in early 2024, which is the only road link between the two countries and crosses high mountain terrain on both sides of the border. Its viability as a trade route is uncertain, and even without relying on it, China is one of Afghanistan's top four trading partners, with a reported annual volume of US \$1 billion. Both governments are also currently exploring the expansion of passenger flights. Certainly, there has been an increased presence

of Chinese entrepreneurs, traders and business representatives in Afghanistan over the past three years, and the Taliban are committed to ensuring their safety after sporadic targeted attacks. Chinese companies are involved, for example, as contractors conducting geophysical and geotechnical feasibility studies for critical infrastructure or as licensed local cement producers—at a time when the Taliban government has just decreed that public construction projects should rely on locally produced materials. Huawei Technologies—a key player in the 'digital Silk Road' elsewhere—is supplying the Taliban regime with thousands of surveillance cameras to control public spaces in Kabul and across the country. Since October 2024, China has been granting Afghan

companies tariff-free access to its construction, energy and consumer sectors.

The extent to which Chinese engagement is driven by the BRI's stated rationale of achieving stability, peace and prosperity through larger-scale infrastructure projects in and across countries and regions versus the desire to secure valuable minerals and ores in a type of post-2021 Afghan resource frontier, remains to be analysed. Undoubtedly, both motivations are relevant, indicating that the BRI is a flexible label for pursuing a wide range of objectives. Pakistan's efforts to extend the China–Pakistan Economic Corridor (CPEC) into Afghanistan to secure access to Afghan resources and transport routes is a case in point, relying on mixed financing that involves traditional funders such as the Asian Development Bank (e.g., the Peshawar–Jalalabad road link over the Khyber Pass). Certainly, China does not need Afghanistan to realise its vision of BRI connectivity or to link its existing northern and southern corridors with a north–south route through Afghanistan. But the current Afghan regime benefits greatly, including from the political advocacy of Chinese diplomats at the regional and UN levels. Without having recognized Afghanistan *de jure* to date, China has repeatedly called for the release of Afghanistan's frozen international assets in New York. ■

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The Impact of Religion in the MENA Region

Why we need to understand the religious dimension in dealing with the attractiveness of religious actors in the MENA region.



German engagement in Afghanistan remains a pivotal topic for the Federal Government, especially after the abrupt end of the mission in August 2021 which marked it as the Bundeswehr's most costly and loss-heavy deployment to date. In response, an *enquete commission* was established to assess lessons learned. Previous editions of our magazine highlighted the lack of a clear strategy and unequal communication with partners. Former Afghan Foreign Minister Rangin Dadfar Spanta also argued that external state-building efforts are fundamentally flawed. The commission's report now emphasizes the need for closer integration of defense, diplomacy, and development. While short-term improvements in living conditions were achieved, they proved unsustainable. In this issue, Ms. Bokler explores the significant role of religion — particularly in the MENA region — and the far-reaching consequences of political instability.

While many observers in the western world are repeatedly surprised by the return of religious actors, one might wonder whether a certain belief has ever left the people, especially with regard to the MENA region (Middle East and North Africa). As a holy land and home to all the Abrahamic religions, religion has always played an important role there, including in socio-political issues – and still does. In order to analyze the present dramatic political situation in the Middle East, the nature of these actors must be understood. Religions in general have always claimed to provide people with answers to longing questions about the meaning of life. At the same time, they offer comfort and strength when communities are confronted with injustice and suffering. Thus, since their beginnings, especially the Mosaic religions Judaism, Christianity and Islam have contained a revolutionary spark that is capable of igniting a fight for justice in the name of God – be it non-violent or violent. This fight is usually understood as a defensive struggle

by the community that is attacked by an enemy.

People's faith can thus establish societal norms which, depending on the context, can have varying effects on political system concepts. This is particularly true in times of crisis. People who experience their political orders as unstable, arbitrary and unjust look for answers in these existential crises: The greater the hardship and despair,

the stronger the desire for clear, simple interpretations of the world that correspond to the experienced logic of war.

The states of the MENA region see their political systems challenged for various reasons. The normative orders of many states are experiencing a crisis of legitimacy. A lot of societies in the MENA region are confronted with death and suffering. Many inhabitants mourn victims in their families and are severely traumatized by violence and war, such as in Libya, Iraq or Yemen. In Syria, we are now at a crossroads: the Assad regime has been toppled but after 14 years of civil war, what normative order according to which political concept is now going to be established in the country? Various, especially also religious, actors with different socio-political ideas are now vying for influence and power.

Politically unstable conditions in areas of violence are therefore the hour of religious fundamentalist groups regardless of religion. The push factors are obvious: states do not appear to be in a position to ensure security through a clear monopoly of power. Their rule is perceived as corrupt, brutal and unjust. While fundamentalist religious actors offer meaning and comfort like all ideologies. They do not let the many dead die in vain, portraying them instead as them martyrs before God. And they claim to be fighting for a better, fairer order that will lead people out of the misery they have experienced: for an order according to God's laws. However, the social concepts of religious fundamentalists lead to closed societies. They represent the opposite of open societies, which define a different relationship between religion and politics. Closed religious societies recognize a higher value in the founding of a state: the state is established in order to implement God's laws on Earth. It serves as a means to an end and is not an end in itself, as in the liberal constitutional state, for example. The latter is self-sufficient. Fundamentalists believe that they have the ultimate truth on their side, as they are firmly convinced that they are acting in the interests of God as per the credo of whoever fights for God is always right! They leave no room for alternative lifestyles, as anything that deviates from their guidelines blasphemes God.

Above all, suppressing free thinking is imperative to them. This is illustrated particularly pertinently by the example of ISIS, deeply influenced by the Saudia Arabian Wahhabi interpretation of Islamic sources and its imaginations of a closed society. Its relationship to God, the strict judge, is clearly structured: All their love is for him, all their hatred for his enemies. Failure to kill God's enemies makes

“The West can only understand the success of their ideologies if it grasps the needs of the people, their desire for justice, security and peace.”

Evelyn Bokler-Völkel

them liable to punishment before God for allowing him to be insulted. This could bring God's wrath upon them, as they had not shown themselves to be sufficiently loving and hating in his name. This ideology therefore only knows friend or foe. Either you join, or you are damned. The rigorous logic of war makes Islamists such as the jihadists relentless. The establishment of their ideal society is ultimately about overcoming the state of injustice, suffering and the anarchic destruction of unstable power relations. No sacrifice is too great for this.

This can prove to be a diabolical temptation to those with no legal certainty in the legal sphere, exposed to arbitrariness and anarchic conditions, confronted with corrupt rulers. The forces of attraction are considerable. Actors who finally promise justice, stable conditions and security, and do so in the name of God, can be highly attractive to people: a promise of security is more important to them than freedom.

These backgrounds must be understood when dealing with actors in the MENA region, especially at present in the Middle East. It is the only way to deal with actors such as Hamas, ISIS or Hezbollah in a knowledgeable manner. They pose not only a military but also a social challenge as they try to ensnare the Muslim majority in the region. The West can only understand the success of their ideologies if it grasps the needs of the people, their desire for justice, security and peace. There is no particular cause to fear religion in general nor Islam in this respect. The key question is whether developments lead to an open or closed society. As a Western neighbor, the EU ought to do everything in its power to ensure these people's basic needs are met, in turn making sure that religious fundamentalists are not the only people offering solutions. An open society can then finally prevail. ■

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Just Peace – A Vision of Realism and Hope

Open conflicts and new technologies of warfare confront the principles of peace ethics. A just peace approach has to reflect the dynamics of security, justice, and peace. It highlights the necessity of common hope.

The just peace approach

The just peace approach characterizes theological peace ethics. Peace implies more than the absence of conflict and war. Even if there is no war, injustice, exploitation and human rights violations can still exist. Conditions of permanent severe injustice are violent and prone to violence. They have the potential for armed conflict. Violent conflicts and wars are – analytically speaking – ways of settling conflicts between social actors and regulating them. Without justice real peace is impossible.

In the Second Vatican Council (1962–1965), the Catholic Church formulated a just peace approach to promote peace and justice. In the face of current conflicts and wars and the emergence of new warfare technologies, the principles of just peace have to be applied to determine the conditions for security, social justice, and peace. The just peace approach aims to ensure that all people can lead a dignified life. It must therefore be ensured that all people have what they need to lead a dignified life. In addition, various prevention, intervention and reappraisal measures are required, for example:

- Criticizing polarizations, images of the enemy, ideological, nationalistic or religious narratives that legitimize violence and war, and establishing narratives of reconciliation, justice and peace instead;
- Uncovering human rights violations at an early stage, drawing attention to violent conflicts and taking action against them;
- Promoting human rights, the rule of law and democracy and defending them against weakening from within and outside
- Encouraging and supporting diplomatic and civil society initiatives for encounters, reconciliation, understanding and peace.

Talking peace, defense and security

Given the violent conflicts, advancing erosion of the existing international security infrastructure towards world disorder, and new military and war-like challenges such as hybrid



warfare and autonomous weapon systems, the question arises as to how the just peace approach can be further developed. The Russian war of aggression against Ukraine is a reminder of how important effective deterrence is in order to safeguard legitimate security interests and protect human rights. Moreover, the systemic conflict between democracies and authoritarian regimes exacerbates the need to massively strengthen defense capabilities. The just peace approach must therefore be expanded in terms of security policy and security strategy in order to serve the goal of justice and peace in a realistic and visionary manner.

Securing human rights and values (especially freedom, tolerance, democracy, the rule of law) for a dignified life sometimes requires the use of means that are considered evil (e.g., nuclear deterrence for defense as opposed to nuclear armament). A peace ethic informed by security policy is faced with a particular challenge: the paradox of “minimizing evil” so that good can prevail. Due to the intertwined nature of geopolitics, there is no one particular way of successfully pursuing a vision of just peace. A just and peaceful coexistence in certain regions remains fragile and threatened. Military strength is therefore a necessary prerequisite for effectively advocating and securing peace.

A further security paradox exists: when confronted with an opponent’s military power, strengthening one’s own defense force may in turn be viewed as a threat by the opponent, thus accelerating the momentum of an escalation spiral. This can be mitigated by disarmament pledges, themselves requiring all the more consistent and reliable political action based on human rights and international law. This also requires a commitment to the reliability and effectiveness of international institutions, including the necessary reforms.

The just peace approach thus stands for a principle-oriented ethics of responsibility in the face of enduring ambivalences and paradoxes. For there is an indissoluble simultaneity between peacebuilding and the use of force. The threat of violence for defense purposes is part of the prevention of violence. It must imply the realistic possibility of the use of force in order to be taken seriously in terms of strategic ambivalence.

The utopia of just peace and the necessity of hope

Since violent conflicts and wars are a way of resolving disputes the vision of just peace is an ideal and a regulative idea that can never be fully and comprehensively realized. Ethical considerations and political measures can therefore only ever have a provisional character. This applies not only to efforts to achieve security and justice as the basis for the realization of human rights, but also to all areas of peacebuilding and peacekeeping.

A realistic Christian peace ethic can therefore only ever constitute a provisional morality. This is precisely how it can portray the vision of just peace as a “Utopia” that cannot be realized by force. All efforts to establish peace through violence ultimately fall short and are doomed to failure.

A metal sculpture by Yevgeny Vuchetich stands in front

of the UN headquarters. It depicts a man forging a sword into a plow with his hammer. The sculpture takes up the vision of the end-time kingdom of peace as depicted by the two prophets Isaiah and Micah in the Hebrew Bible and the Old Testament respectively. The image of peace is that of “swords being forged into plowshares” (Isaiah 2:2-5; Micah 4:1-5). The United Nations has taken up this image and sees measures for global disarmament and arms conversion as an important contribution to international peace. However, this is not sufficient for a just peace.

From a theological perspective, it must be remembered that all peace efforts are provisional and temporary because a final peace remains a Utopia. At the same time, such visions of peace are needed. For they stand for the hope that, despite all open conflicts, wars and setbacks in peace efforts, it makes sense to work for justice, reconciliation and peace in the long term. Therefore, talking peace also means talking about the possibility and the reality of a common hope. ■

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EVENT at the AIA “Talking Peace in a World of Open Conflicts”



This text emerged from an event that took place at the Academy in September 2023. The topic was discussed from a decidedly peace-ethical perspective. In addition to political science analyses, theological perspectives were also included. Public debates on these armed conflicts have so far been dominated primarily by security policy considerations. The logic behind this may be understandable, but there is a risk that a well-founded peace ethics perspective will be overlooked.



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Fellow Experience

The AIA Fellowship programme is at the heart of the academy and is designed to provide academic and practical support for outstanding scholars and practitioners to engage in high-impact research and collaborate with leading institutions within the AIA network.

Our programme encourages cross-disciplinary thinking and fosters exchange through a range of events, including our Summer Academy, workshops, panel discussions, and research colloquia. We also recognise the importance of social engagement and community-building. A variety of social activities are integrated into the programme to help fellows build meaningful connections, both professionally and personally. Additionally, we are committed to creating a family-friendly environment, offering support to fellows with caring responsibilities to ensure they can fully participate in the programme.

Throughout the fellowship, participants will produce policy briefs, research papers, and articles to keep the general public, as well as policy leaders and professionals, abreast of the latest developments in international politics.

Upon completion, fellows join our alumni network, continuing to engage with the programme's community and benefiting from ongoing opportunities for collaboration and exchange.



The AIA provides an unparalleled platform for high-level policy engagement. The fellowship helped me develop my research, policy, and professional skills. The fellowship exposed me to larger industry personnel, like-minded people, and media, which opened new prospects for me in my career.”

Samuel Anuga



As a researcher with a family, the AIA stands out as especially supportive of a healthy work-life balance, and I believe I was able to make even greater strides in my professional efforts as a result of the Academy’s facilitation in this area.”

Chelsea Haramia



Overall, the Fellowship at the AIA NRW was a great experience. It came with many things that I cherish as a researcher – outstanding logistical support, flexible working hours, safe and serene work spaces and a viable network of colleagues to interact with.”

Abiodun Egbetokun



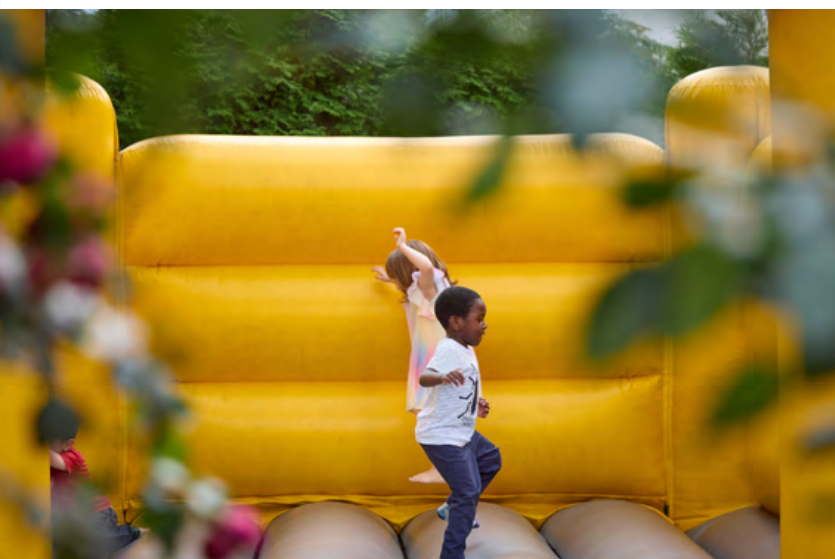
My time as a Fellow at the Academy of International Affairs NRW has been one of the most rewarding professional experiences of my career. In an increasingly complex and challenging global landscape, having the space to fully dedicate myself to research and practice, while surrounded by a vibrant academic community-has been both a privilege and an inspiration. The Academy fosters a rare environment with interdisciplinary exchange, and thought-provoking events and discussions. This experience has reinforced my belief in the power of dialogue and scholarship to navigate the pressing challenges of our time."

Mariia Levchenko



The AIA staff were absolutely *fantastic* in supporting me both before and during my time in Bonn/ Bad Godesberg. The team were incredibly kind and helpful and made it a genuine joy to come to the office each day. This is really important as temporarily moving your life and work can be stressful and potentially lonely. But I loved every minute of my time at the Academy and this was most of all due to the people."

Adam Bower



As a future fellow of the Academy of International Affairs NRW, you are stepping into a unique environment rich with interdisciplinary expertise. I urge fellows to take full advantage of the diverse backgrounds of your fellow scholars. Actively engage in conversations that bridge disciplines, challenge conventional thinking, and push boundaries. I'm convinced that collaboration is the cornerstone of innovation and by embracing it, you can contribute to addressing the world's most pressing challenges. The connections I formed during my fellowship have already begun to yield fruitful collaborations and opportunities. I am confident that the networks you establish will be equally invaluable. These networks will not only enrich your immediate experience but also open doors for future projects, partnerships, and professional growth."

Albert Ahenkan



The **Fellowship Programme** of the Academy of International Affairs.

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The interdisciplinary **Academic Board** decides on the awarding of fellowships and advises the Academy on scientific issues. It thus makes an important contribution to the Academy's profile and its central tasks.



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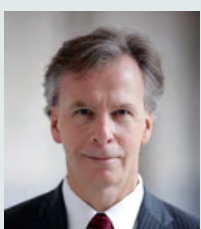
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London



**DR.
MAHA YAHYA**

Malcolm H. Kerr Carnegie Middle
East Center, Lebanon

ACADEMY EVENTS

09/24–03/25

2024

COFFEE & CAKE

"The Influence of Religion in International Relations in the MENA Region"

05.09.

with Evelyn Bokler-Völkel, University of Münster

VISIT

Fraunhofer Institute/TIRA Wachtberg

09.09.



with Stephan Stanko, Fraunhofer Institute

VISIT

Visit by Federal Office Personnel Management from the German Armed Forces (Bundeswehr)

17.09.

PANEL DISCUSSION

Inside the US Election Campaigns

(in cooperation with the Amerikahaus NRW)

18.09.



with Jazmine Ulloa, New York Times, Philipp Adorf, University of Bonn

VISIT

Visit by Serap Güler, Member of the German Bundestag, at the Academy of International Affairs

01.10.

COFFEE AND CAKE

International Space Law and the Question of Legally Binding vs. Soft Law Instruments

10.10.

with Ranjana Kaul, Dua Associates Law Offices, New Delhi, India and Nayoung Youn, Policy Team of the Korean Aerospace Research Institute

EVENT**United Nations Day at Market Place Bonn****12.10.**

All-day event, presentation of the Academy's activities

VISIT**Visit of MSIS students (Master of Arts in "Strategy and International Security") from the University of Bonn for exchange with AIA Fellows****16.10.****WORKSHOP****"Weaponized Interdependence and Renewable Energy Transitions in Africa-Europe Relations: Impact of the EU Green Deal"****06.11.**

initiated by AIA Associate Fellows Albert Ahenkan, University of Ghana Business School and Samuel Anuga, University of Ghana

WORKSHOP**(Critical) Geopolitics, Sustainability and "Global" Spaces****11.-12.11.**

Expert Workshop with the German Institute of Development and Sustainability (IDOS) and Adam Bower, University of St. Andrews and AIA Associate Fellow, Julian Bergmann, IDOS; Benedikt Erforth, IDOS; Patrick Flamm, Peace Research Institute Frankfurt (PRIF); Charlotte Gehrke, Nord University, Alfred-Wegener-Institut (AWI); Jacqueline Götze, IDOS; Lena Gutheil, IDOS; Sebastian Haug, IDOS; Jonas Hein, IDOS; Irit Ittner, IDOS; Niels Keijzer, IDOS; Stephan Klingebiel, IDOS; Daniele Malerba, IDOS; Adreas Raspotnik, Fridtjof Nansen Institute; Johanna Vogel, IDOS; Dorothea Wehrmann, IDOS

CONFERENCE**Indo-Pacific Conference in cooperation with the Embassy of the Republic of Korea (Bonn office), Heinrich-Heine-Institut, Düsseldorf****12.11.**

with Du Hyeogn Cha, Asan Institute for Policy Studies; Mahima Duggal, German Institute for Global Area Studies (GIGA), Hamburg; Deniz Kocak, Helmut Schmidt University/University of the Armed Forces Hamburg (HSU/UniBw H); Alexandra Sakaki, Asia Division at the German Institute for International and Security Affairs/Stiftung Wissenschaft und Politik (SWP), Berlin; Gudrun Wacker, Asia Research Division at the German Institute for International and Security Affairs (Stiftung Wissenschaft und Politik, SWP), Berlin

WORKSHOP**"To the Moon and Back: Lunar Policy-Making, Security and Cooperation in Europe and Beyond"****14.11.**

initiated by AIA Associate Fellows Güneş Ünüvar, Luxembourg Centre for European Law (LCEL), University of Luxembourg and Raúl González Muñoz, University of Leicester; Marco Aliberti, European Space Policy Institute (ESPI); Ulpia-Elena Botezatu, Romanian Space Agency; Adam Bower, University of St. Andrews and AIA Associate Fellow; Rafael Harillo Gómez-Pastrana, Stardust Consulting; Leonardo Alberto López Marcos, Complutense University of Madrid; Martin Reynders, German Aerospace Centre (DLR); Stephan Stanko, Fraunhofer-Institut für Hochfrequenzphysik und Radartechnik; Antonino Salmeri, Lunar Policy Platform, Open Lunar Foundation; Aníbal Villalba Fernández, PLD Space

PANEL DISCUSSION**"Afghanistan at a Crossroads. 23 Years of the Afghanistan Conference – Challenges and Opportunities"****27.11.**

with Hamid Karzei, former President of Afghanistan; Rangin Dadfar Spanta, former Foreign Minister of Afghanistan; Katja Mielke, Senior Researcher, Bonn International Center for Conflict Studies, BICC

CONFERENCE**Side Event at UN World Space Forum Bonn****02.12.**

with Gerhard Thiele, ESA astronaut and astrophysicist and AIA Associate Fellows Adam Bower, University of St. Andrews; Chelsea Haramia, Spring Hill College, USA; Raúl González Muñoz, University of Leicester

WORKSHOP**Responsibility in Space****09.-11.12.**

with Almudena Azcárate Ortega, UNIDIR; Ingo Baumann, BHO Legal; Daliah Raquel Bibas, Free University Brussels; PJ Blount, Durham University; Adam Bower, University of St. Andrews and AIA Associate Fellow; Laetitia Cesari, University of Luxembourg; Roohi Dalal, Outer Space Institute; Rossana Deplano, University of Leicester; Francesca Faedi, University of Leicester; Katharina Glaab, Norwegian University of Life Sciences; Raúl González Muñoz, University of Leicester and AIA Associate Fellow; Katja Grünfeld, University of Cologne/Institute for Air Law, Space Law and Cyber Law; Béatrice Hainaut, IRSEM; Chelsea Haramia, Spring Hill College, USA and AIA Associate Fellow; Tegan Harrison, Cardiff University; Stephan Hobe, University of Cologne/Institute for Air Law, Space Law and Cyber Law; Christopher D. Johnson, Secure World Foundation; Gabrielle Leterre, University of Luxembourg; Leonardo Alberto López Marcos, Complutense University of Madrid; Agnieszka Lukaszczyk, hiALTitude Consulting; Guilhem Penent, Space Policy Advisor; Lina Pohl, ESPI; Jacqueline Reichhold, University of Cologne / Institute for Air Law, Space Law and Cyber Law; Martin Reynders, German Aerospace Centre (DLR); Haley Rice, University of St. Andrews; Shrawani Shagun, National Law University Delhi; Cassandra Steer, Australia National University; Kristina Tamane, High Growth Company Creation Scottish Enterprise; Natalie Trevino, Space Ethics Group Open University; Güneş Ünüvar, Luxembourg Centre for European Law (LCEL), University of Luxembourg and AIA Associate Fellow; Cris van Eijk, PhD Student, University of Newcastle; Clément Vidal, Free University Brussels; Frans von der Dunk, University of Nebraska

ROUND TABLE

with the NRW-Turkey Parliamentary Group in the North Rhine-Westphalian State Parliament in Düsseldorf
“From Migrants to Dual Citizens – A Potential New Group of Voters: Turkish Political Participation for and from Germany”?

19.12.

with Inci Öykü Yener-Roderburg, University of Duisburg-Essen and AIA Associate Fellow, hosted by Rainer Schmeltzer, Vice President of the State Parliament

2025**PANEL DISCUSSION****Trump Reloaded – What would Ludwig Erhard say?****07.01.**

with Birgit Ulrike Münch, University of Bonn; Ulrich Schlie, Center for Advanced Security, Strategic and Integration Studies (CASSIS); Nathanael Liminski, Minister for Federal and European Affairs, International Affairs and Media of the State of North Rhine-Westphalia and Head of the State Chancellery; Roland Koch, former Minister President and Chairman of the Ludwig Erhard Foundation; Stefan Brüggemann, Bonn Academy for Research and Teaching of Practical Politics (BAPP)

PANEL DISCUSSION

Infrastructure, AI and Europe's Path to Digital Sovereignty

14.01.

with Christian Bauckhage, University of Bonn/Fraunhofer Institute; Francesca Musiani, The National Centre for Scientific Research (CNRS); Fabienne Tegler, Federal Office for Information Security (BSI); Susanne Gössl, University of Bonn

WORKSHOP

Region meets International Politics / Cooperation Event AIA NRW and the Society for Rhenish History
31.01.



with Frank M. Bischoff, GRhG; Helmut Rönz, LVR Institute for Regional Studies and Regional History; Alexander Olenik, GRhG; Ferdinand Kramer, München; Leah Raith, Bonn; Jamie David Duponcheel, Anna Gonchar, München; Leon Stein, Trier

MEETING

AIA Fellows with KFIBS (Kölner Forum für Internationale Beziehungen und Sicherheitspolitik e.V)
21.02.

with Sascha Arnautović, Lena Osbelt, David Isken, Nikola Dragoljević

EVENT

AIA Fellow Meet-up: The World After Trump
07.03.

with Māris Andžāns, John Austin, Hüseyin Cicek, Abiodun Egbetokun, Raúl González Muñoz, Chelsea Haramia, Reza Hasmath, Karolina Kluczevska, Tonka Kostadinova, Nene-Lomo Kuditchar, Stuart MacDonald, Ifedayo Grace Malachi, Katharina McLarren, Debora Prado, Juris Pupcenoks, Iulian Romanyshyn, Dmytro Shevchenko, Anna Shpakovskaya, Bernhard Stahl and Inna Supac

WORKSHOP

Social Media Communication in Science and University Marketing

10.03.

with Philip Dunkhase; Insa Thiele-Eich, Institute for Geosciences, University of Bonn; Katharina Coort, Department of Meteorology, University of Bonn

PANEL DISCUSSION

Handshake or Trade War? Fair World Trade in Times of Geopolitical Rivalries

26.03.



with Ludger Kersting, Regional Office NRW, Friedrich Naumann Foundation for Freedom; Clara Brandt, German Institute of Development and Sustainability (IDOS); Rolf Steltemeier, German UNIDO Office for Investment Promotion and Technology Transfer (ITPO Germany); Marcus Kaplan, Development and Peace Foundation (sef:)

PANEL DISCUSSION

The Sino-Russian Alliance and the Return of the Power Blocs: Mao's and Stalin's Long Shadows?

27.03.

with Susanne Weigelin-Schwiedrzik, University of Vienna; Kirsten Bönker, Northeast-Institute; Maximilian Mayer, University of Bonn; Lorenz Lüthi, McGill University, Montreal

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