



A strategy for new cooperation with our African partners

Position paper by the
CDU/CSU parliamentary group in the German Federal Parliament

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The future development of Africa will have a significant impact on the future of Europe and Germany. This realisation is becoming increasingly prevalent in Germany in key policy areas such as foreign and security policy, economic policy, domestic policy and development policy and thus makes it all the more important to actively shape this future and to develop a fundamental concept for a strategic realignment of our policy towards our African partners.

With this position paper, the CDU/CSU parliamentary group in the German Federal Parliament would like to set the framework for more intensive political exchange, new foreign and security policy cooperation, stronger economic cooperation and better development prospects, thereby initiating an urgently needed course correction. We want to set clear, strategic priorities that contribute to greater stability, growth and prosperity and promote peace. Our cooperation is based on the foundation of national sovereignty and the resulting respectful interaction between states, an understanding of different positions and an awareness of the need for a pragmatic approach to different views and interests that cannot be imposed or unilaterally enforced. With regard to this, we are also aware of our colonial past. Together with our African partners, we would like to make the 21st century a success story for the development of Africa and Europe - a partnership in diversity that pursues common goals.

The "change of the times" ("Zeitenwende") postulated by Chancellor Scholz falls short if it focuses solely on European security and better equipping the Bundeswehr. Even before the Russian war of aggression against Ukraine, global political developments were taking place that are challenging German foreign policy; tectonic shifts that also affect Africa in particular and also emanate from Africa. For this reason, a "change of the times", i.e. a fundamental reorientation of our policy, is also imperative with regard to our neighboring continent. With this position paper, we, the CDU/CSU parliamentary group, would like to provide decisive impulses for this reorientation.

We are aware that Africa is a continent of diversity. 54 countries have their own history, their own cultures and even more languages. The diversity of the states and their respective starting positions also means that the paths of development are very different. Analyses and statements on Africa and cooperation with its countries must take this diversity into account. A "one size fits all" strategy for Africa is out of the question. Not every statement will apply to all 54 countries and not every goal that we set ourselves will be equally achievable in all countries. In some countries, opportunities may clearly outweigh risks in others. Both may change over time, as history has shown time and again.

I. STARTING POSITION

(1) Our view of Africa must change

The African continent is still often perceived by the German public - in society, business and politics - as a continent in crisis. Wars and conflicts, poverty and hunger, diseases and corruption dominate the headlines, even though many African countries are experiencing economic and social upheaval: Innovative African start-ups are contributing to strong economic growth, a young middle class is growing up and civil liberties are, in some African countries, much more pronounced than in many other parts of the world. Nevertheless, the distorted image of the continent in crisis continues to influence the actions of business and politics. Subsequently, the African continent is often seen from a lop-sided point of view from a perspective of development and security policy. This narrow vision blocks the view of the political, economic and social opportunities in a whole number of African countries and the opportunities that also arise for Germany and Europe in cooperation with these countries. A strategy for Africa must therefore never just be a strategy for crises, but above all a strategy for opportunities and progress.

At the same time, we recognize the challenges of a security policy: Following a series of coups in West Africa, a new outbreak of violence in Sudan and a continuing volatile situation in Ethiopia, an arc of instability stretches from West to East Africa, the effects of which directly affect us in Europe.

The history of the Cold War, in which Africa was the theatre of conflict between different systems, must not be repeated in a new era in which autocracies threaten the international order. Selected African players should be seen and strengthened as partners in security policy. At the same time, the countries of Africa deserve our trust to find solutions within Africa to their own problems, and to contribute their African experience to the global fight against Islamist extremism and terror, corruption and state collapse. This requires trusting relationships characterized by mutual respect with anchor states that are willing to assume responsibility for security and should therefore receive support in return.

Until the Covid pandemic, many African countries recorded long-term economic growth with growth rates of well over five per cent per year. In addition, macro-economic stability in Africa has risen continuously since 1990, the volatility of real growth has halved, and inflation volatility has been reduced to a third. This is partly due to a strengthening of institutions, government leadership and the business environment. Countries such as Ethiopia, Rwanda, Sierra Leone, Mozambique, Ghana and Uganda even recorded real economic growth of over seven per cent annually for more than ten years, and in the case of Ethiopia even more than ten per cent. There was a dip in growth at the end of the 2010s, particularly as a result of the Covid pandemic and the Russian war of aggression against Ukraine.

This was sometimes exacerbated by the turnaround in interest rates in the USA and Europe. However, many African countries have managed to leave the phase of economic weakness behind. Senegal, Rwanda, Côte d'Ivoire, Mozambique, Benin, Gambia and Togo have already returned to high growth rates of well over five per cent in some cases.

Important social indicators are also pointing in the right direction for sub-Saharan Africa, for example, although there are still major challenges: Between 2000 and 2019, the proportion of the population living in absolute poverty fell from 57 per cent to 34.9 per cent. During the same time period, life expectancy rose from 51 to 61 years. Positive trends can also be seen in access to clean drinking water, immunization rates or the schooling of children.

The African continent is younger than any other continent. Moreover, the population is growing faster than anywhere else. Today, 1.4 billion people live in Africa. Soon - in the year 2030 - there will be 1.7 billion people, and therefore more than in China or India. By 2050, the United Nations (UN) assumes that Africa will have a population of 2.5 billion. According to calculations, by 2060 more than one billion people in Africa will belong to the new middle class - the class that is the engine of every economy. Forecasts also assume that more physical infrastructure must be built in Africa in the next ten years than in Europe in the past 100 years.

In addition to the rapidly growing and young population on the continent, the special role of women and girls in society must also be addressed. Women are a driving force for the economy, health and education, but are structurally often disadvantaged. A special focus must be placed on their interests when it comes to cooperation with Africa.

A growing population, a considerable growth momentum and an ever-increasing middle class have contributed to the fact that Africa's geopolitical and economic importance has been increasing considerably in recent years. But these are by no means the only reasons for the continent's growing importance. Member states of the EU, including Germany, are called upon to reorganize their economies, reduce existing one-sided dependencies and to diversify their economic relations following a global re-ignition in the competition between political systems. Last but not least, the Covid- pandemic has revealed how dependent Europe has become on individual countries such as China along the entire value chain: when it comes to raw materials such as rare earths, for intermediate products, including in the field of renewable energies and for the export of renewable energies themselves, e.g. as hydrogen (derivatives), and end products such as vital medications.

Russia's war of aggression against Ukraine has exposed another major weakness: the European Union and Germany in particular had also made themselves too dependent on one country for their energy supply. Many African countries are in turn heavily dependent on grain and fertilizer supplies from Russia and Ukraine. The diversification of trade and investment relations that has become necessary for Germany and the European Union with the aim of "de-risking" is of great interest to Africa and Europe alike and opens up a wide range of new economic opportunities (including energy supply).

(2) Africa's growing role world-wide

China, Russia, but also Türkiye and some financially strong Gulf states have long recognised the importance and potential of Africa. While Germany and Europe preferred to focus on continuity in their relations with Africa and have only occasionally utilised fresh approaches, these players have been systematically expanding their influence in African countries for years and are becoming increasingly involved on the ground – with regards to politics, the military, economically and socially.

This is particularly true of China, which is not only providing extensive loans for infrastructure investments, but also acting politically as a champion and advocate for developing countries and attempting to channel and strengthen its influence through the circle of the so-called G77. China's toolbox includes visiting trips for African politicians, targeted political training along Chinese doctrines, the awarding of scholarships to African students, the establishment of Confucius Institutes to familiarize the African population with the Chinese language and culture, but also with the Chinese Communist Party's (CCP) way of thinking, as well as the publication and distribution of its own newspapers and magazines in Africa to influence public opinion. All this is resulting in many African countries entering into a closer partnership with China and also supporting China's positions on the international stage, including in the United Nations and other international organizations. At the same time, the risk of ever greater economic and financial dependence is increasing, e.g. in connection with investment projects of the Chinese "Belt and Road Initiative".

Today, large infrastructure projects in Africa are often carried out by Chinese companies, which regularly bring the necessary labor with them from China. This significantly limits local value creation, which is so important for creating jobs for the young African population.

Russia has also expanded its efforts in African states and is endeavoring to increase its political influence in Africa with the help of disinformation campaigns - as was recently seen against the French presence in West Africa - but also with economic measures and military and paramilitary means. Russia uses the demand for defense equipment in a number of African states to create strategic dependencies and thus gain political influence and access to sources of raw materials. The presence of the "Wagner Group" is playing an increasingly important role in some

African states, which are also highly significant for the EU and Germany in terms of a security policy. Overall, Russia is thus in a position to destabilize individual regions in Africa. The country is therefore a destructive actor in Africa, and not a positive/creative one.

The recent decision to expand the "BRICS" group into a BRICS+, which will in future include three African states - Egypt, Ethiopia and South Africa - presents us as Germany and the EU with strategic and conceptual challenges. This development is not only a further expression of the fact that the international order is in a state of upheaval and that Africa is becoming increasingly important, but also that the existing international structures are perceived as inadequate and unfair by parts of the global community. Germany should take concerns of this kind on the African part seriously, seek dialogue on this and collaborate with African partners to reform international structures. The inclusion of the African Union (AU) in the circle of the G20 is a step in the right direction.

Looking at European-African economic relations shows: the EU is still Africa's largest trading partner. The EU-27 countries' share of total imports and exports to and from Africa was 23 per cent in 2021, albeit with a strong downward trend (2019: 27%; 2020: 25.6%). In contrast, China has been able to significantly expand its share in recent years and increase it to 22% (2019: 9.2%; 2020: 19.7%). The EU-27 countries still have the highest level of foreign direct investment in Africa with 212 billion euros, followed by the United Kingdom and the USA with 41 billion euros each, and China with 39 billion euros (2018). While China and other European countries (especially France and the United Kingdom) have been able to significantly increase their involvement in Africa, Germany's economic engagement in Africa is not really gaining momentum.

The portfolio of German direct investment increased 2.6-fold between 2003 and 2021 to EUR 11.5 billion (2021), but has been stagnating at this level for more than ten years, while China was able to increase its portfolio of direct investment almost ninety-fold during the same period, albeit starting from a low base.

In 2019, only just under one per cent of foreign direct investment by German companies went to Africa. In addition, investments by German companies are only concentrated in a few countries, particularly South Africa. This shows that Africa continues to play only a minor role for Germany as a trade and investment partner compared to other global regions.

In the systemic competition with China and other autocratic states, the issue in Africa will also be whether we, as part of a democratically organized world of countries that strengthens the rules-based order, can succeed in making attractive offers: Offers that consider mutual interests; offers that are neither directly nor indirectly perceived as moralistic, paternalistic or as illegitimate interference in internal affairs.

We would like to see new partnerships established with African countries and significantly intensify our political and economic relations by identifying common interests and building our cooperation on them. In Africa, we are encountering self-confident partners with their own ideas, clear visions and a strong will to shape the future. It is therefore all the more important that we develop new cooperation concepts and formats together with African countries.

(3) Africa's multitude of internal challenges

In a world in transition, Africa, with a current population of 1.4 billion people, growing economic importance and a great cultural heritage, is becoming increasingly important and is also making a proactive contribution on the international stage. Many of the 54 African states continue to make an important contribution to maintaining and strengthening the rules-based order. Against this backdrop, it is also in our interest that the voice of African states gains greater weight in international bodies such as the United Nations.

However, the increasingly apparent systemic competition between those states wanting to maintain and strengthen the existing international rules-based order and those wanting to consciously change this order in their favor makes closer cooperation in international committees more difficult. However, this is needed in order to be able to tackle the challenges of our times even more resolutely. The fight against poverty and climate change, the effects of which are already disproportionately affecting Africa, are just two examples of this.

However, the growing strength of our neighboring continent should not obscure the fact that many African countries are confronted with some major challenges, for example in the areas of food security, education, science, infrastructure and administration, which are slowing down economic development. In addition, there is a lack of legal certainty and corruption in various African countries. They not only increase transaction costs for the economy and society, but also make day-to-day business more difficult for many African governments and their populations.

The situation is particularly difficult in parts of the Sahel region (Mauritania, Mali, Niger, Burkina Faso, Chad), but also in Libya and the Horn of Africa, where governments are barely able to fulfil essential government functions. Several risk factors come together there and form a dangerous mix. The affected countries are in a socio-economic crisis due to political instability, rampant corruption, regional and ethnic tensions and a very low per capita income, exacerbated by extremely high population growth and the consequences of climate change. Rather low rainfall or heavy rainfall are making the supply of food difficult for the region.

In search of a "better life", many people from the affected areas are making their way to the neighboring, economically stronger coastal countries or directly to Europe.

At the same time, Islamist terrorism, which many have not only joined for religious reasons but also to secure income, now finds an ideal environment for its activities in the Sahel region. This is the main reason for our involvement in this region, which we must redefine and strengthen, wherever necessary.

While the interest burden of state infrastructure investments was financially feasible in the budgets of many African countries during a phase of economic growth, the Covid-pandemic and the associated phase of economic weakness have significantly restricted the financial headroom of many countries. As borrowers, African countries are also affected by the consequences of the turnaround in interest rates to combat inflation in the EU and the USA. As a result, individual African countries are now threatened with over-indebtedness, which significantly restricts the budgetary room for maneuver for necessary investments in important areas such as food, education, health and infrastructure. Sustainable debt management is therefore a central concern that we must realize together with our African partners and other national, international and private creditors.

(4) Development cooperation in Africa: The perception of German and European involvement

Germany's political engagement in Africa continues to focus heavily on development cooperation and only covers foreign, security and economic policy aspects to a limited extent. One exception so far has been the presence of the Bundeswehr [Federal Army] in the Sahel. Although development cooperation is still predominantly welcomed by the representatives of the states, this commitment often does not fulfil African ideas and interests aimed at dynamic economic development - neither of the population nor of the elites. In addition, there is a disparity between the performance, perception and visibility of development policy support from Germany and the EU. China, for example, is much more successful at prominently positioning and marketing its own involvement (e.g. in important infrastructure projects). China has also been able to use this skillfully in the media to promote its own image during the Covid-pandemic. Additionally, our contributions to the development policy are often too small-scale, too hidden and, moreover, too inconsistently labelled.

Against this backdrop, the "Team Europe" approach - the EU's joint and coordinated foreign and development policy action - must be significantly expanded and linked to a clever communication strategy. As Europe's strongest economic player, Germany must take a leading role here. We must also always be aware of the perceptions of individual European players and take this into account when shaping our engagement in Africa. New political approaches such as the "Global Gateway Initiative", which are intended to bundle European contributions to infrastructure development in Africa and make them more visible, must therefore be reinforced, equipped with coordination expertise and financially supported.

However, partnership-based cooperation with third countries - both on the part of the EU and Germany - also requires them to fulfil their fundamental obligation under international law to take back their own citizens. Both the European Commission and the German government should utilize all available instruments to promote the willingness of countries of origin to take back their nationals.

(5) The limits of development cooperation

The development policy measures financed by the international community, including Germany, in areas of public services of general interest such as food security and health, education and vocational training, transport, water and sanitation, environmental protection, climate protection, the integrity of creation and energy, as well as good governance, the rule of law and state building, have contributed in part to an improvement in social indicators in some African countries. In order to support the sustainable development goals of the United Nations ("Agenda 2030"), development policy instruments should therefore continue to be used, especially those that strengthen good governance as the basis for sustainable economic and social development.

Nevertheless, it must be critically scrutinized how effective previous development policy action has been and to what extent it has actually contributed and can contribute to sustainable economic development. After all, development cooperation can help to create the conditions for investment by promoting the rule of law, education or infrastructure, but it is only able to create sustainable, adequately paid jobs and thus improve the opportunities and long-term prospects of the population to a very limited extent.

The last few decades have made it abundantly clear to us that development cooperation alone is not capable of fundamentally and significantly changing the major challenges facing African countries for the better. Development cooperation in Germany as well as in other EU member states and in the EU is substantially underfunded for this. In view of the many global crises, the associated expenditure and budgetary pressure, this will not change in the medium term. Against this backdrop, it is particularly important that the limited funds for development cooperation are used in a targeted and focused manner and improve the framework for private sector involvement.

In addition, despite the "Team Europe" approach, the development policies of the EU member states are still insufficiently coordinated with one another, meaning that they can hardly achieve any leverage effect. In addition, ministries and state organizations in Africa are overburdened, as they are confronted with the administration of a large number of small-scale development cooperation projects in a wide variety of countries and are therefore barely able to carry out their actual work.

The key to jobs, growth and prosperity is private sector involvement - trade and investment - either from the local population or from abroad. The private sector is the deciding "enabler" for development. That is why we, the CDU/CSU parliamentary group in the German Federal Parliament, want to dovetail development cooperation and foreign trade promotion very closely with each other and thus contribute to sustainable economic development in African countries. For this reason, the economic and legal framework conditions in our partner countries must be organized in such a way that they do not counter-act the development of the private sector, foreign trade and foreign investment. A good government that strengthens the rule of law and legal certainty (including the rules of competition and law enforcement), creates functioning administrative institutions (e.g. land registry offices) and opposes corruption, which promotes private sector involvement in Africa. At the same time, the competitive disadvantages for African countries and European companies wishing to trade with African countries and invest locally must be systematically reduced.

In the last legislative period, the German government took important steps to increase its economic policy engagement on the African continent, including the Marshall Plan with Africa, the "Compact with Africa" and the development investment fund based on it, i.e. focusing more on economic cooperation. However, the current German government is reverting to old thinking patterns reg. development aid and to assign just a subordinate role to the strengthening of private sector involvement. This is clearly a step in the wrong direction.

II. CONCLUSIONS

"Africa is the future. Where are you?" These are the words with which German government and business representatives are increasingly being confronted by their African counterparts. They emphasise African self-confidence and the increasing political and economic influence of African countries worldwide. And they make it clear that many countries on our neighbouring continent can now choose their partners.

Germany and the EU are therefore challenged to clearly define their strategic interests towards their African partners. Thereby, increased economic cooperation, foreign and security policy interests and the reform of multilateral platforms of cooperation, such as the UN, G20 or WTO are particularly important. Particularly the latter point makes close coordination with our partners in the EU, NATO and the G7 necessary.

(1) Systematically expanding the economic cooperation with African countries

Africa is no longer solely dependent on Europe and has a choice: China, Türkiye, financially strong Gulf states and other countries are offering themselves as alternative partners – not so much as donors of development funds tied to certain conditions, but more as economic partners with a focus on foreign trade and direct investment (especially infrastructure projects). This also corresponds to the self-image of many partners in Africa, who regularly confront Europe and Germany with the demand: "Focus on trade, not aid!"

Germany should therefore also focus more on other growth markets such as Africa. In addition to the Southeast and East Asian markets. After all, our neighboring continent is of strategic importance. Deeper economic cooperation with African countries offers the opportunity to build a manufacturing industry on our neighboring continent, create future-oriented jobs, accelerate economic development, diversify supply chains for Europe and Germany and thus reduce our country's one-sided dependencies (especially on the Chinese market).

We call on the German government to organize a high-level German-African economic conference once a year, initiated by the German government, with alternating focus countries, where German and African representatives from politics and business assemble in order to discuss mutual economic interests and new areas of cooperation and to define common interests.

We are calling for a structured exchange with German businesses, differentiated according to African partner countries and regions (e.g. in the run-up to bilateral government negotiations), in order to discuss local market opportunities, find obstacles to trade and investment and identify the core concerns of the German business community relating to this country.

There are too many federal advisory authorities with a wide range of offers that are too obscure, especially for small and medium-sized companies. We are therefore calling for an initial point of contact for companies that wish to enter the African continent and are dependent on expert advice (including market observation and analysis, funding programs) from a single source. We therefore welcome the fact that the office of the Africa Business Network has been transferred to the Germany Trade and Invest (GTAI) GmbH [Pty Ltd], thereby bringing together consultancy services. This path should be pursued consistently. In that sense, the Agency for Business and Development (AWE) and the GTAI should also be merged.

In German embassies and foreign missions on the African continent, the service mentality must be increasingly applied to economic questions, also with regard to concerns of external players, e.g. representatives of German business. German companies particularly in Africa are always in need of assistance from the embassy and foreign mission staff when planning new business activities. By the same token,

increased use of business consultants could also help to make it easier for German companies to enter African markets.

a) *Overcoming old thinking patterns, strengthening the role of the private sector*

For many years, German development cooperation in Africa had been characterized by small-scale development aid projects with widely divergent objectives, which even in total contributed to an economic development that was difficult to measure. When Development Minister Gerd Müller took office, a change of course began, which assigned a much greater role to private sector involvement. The BMZ's development investment fund, created in 2019 and worth around one billion euros, represented a milestone with regards to promoting private sector activities in the "Compact with Africa" (CwA) countries. With "Africa Grow" and "Africa Connect", the BMZ created two funding instruments in order to provide African start-ups with venture capital and to facilitate market entry for German and European companies through improved funding conditions. This approach was supported by other instruments of the KfW Development Bank and its subsidiary company Deutsche Investitions- und Entwicklungsgesellschaft (DEG). Even though these instruments were continued after the change of government in 2021, the Africa-strategy by BMZ published in January 2023 represents a clear change in course that has once again relegated the promotion of private sector involvement into the background. This is the wrong path, because this not only ignores African interests, but also economic legalities that must be observed with regard to any economic development.

Anyone who desires to fight poverty and create prosperity in Africa must pay much greater attention to the private sector and focus in particular on the development of local value chains. At this point in time, only seven per cent of goods worldwide produced originate from African countries. There is virtually no local refining or processing of raw materials - neither for agricultural products nor for mineral raw materials. A fundamental change in mentality is therefore needed, a close dovetailing between foreign trade policy and development cooperation, in order to contribute to sustainable economic growth.

b) *Facilitating trade and investments*

Realigning promotion and funding instruments

The economic risks associated with German companies entering the market are still high in many African countries. Although the current instruments of German foreign trade promotion, such as export credit and investment guarantees, form an important basis when it comes to securing German exports and investments, however, they often fall short, particularly in Africa. Moreover, countries such as the USA, China and the UK, as well as EU member states such as Italy, Belgium and the Netherlands, have considerably tightened up their promotion and financing instruments in recent years and developed export strategies to facilitate the entry of their domestic companies into the higher-risk African markets, among others.

This has significantly reduced the relative competitiveness of the German export industry, as impressively demonstrated by the recently published benchmark study "Learning from Others: Officially Supported Export Credits for Sub-Saharan Africa" (University of Offenburg). Subsequently, medium-sized German companies are awarded fewer contracts, when it comes to contracts in Africa, and the German industry is also awarded fewer and fewer infrastructure projects, e.g. in the climate and energy sector.

We are therefore in favor of significantly improving risk protection by the government and creating an ecosystem that makes it much easier for German companies to do business in Africa. In order to achieve this, we need more security when it comes to political and economic risks, and a further reduction in deductibles. Furthermore, a higher level of risk protection should also comprise options for hedging currency risks. This is due to the fact that African countries repeatedly impose foreign exchange restrictions that make it considerably more difficult for private companies to trade and invest.

Moreover, export-orientated companies, willing to invest, must be given better financing options when it comes to their respective African target countries. For this reason, the German government should participate in African development banks and commission the German Investment and Development Company (DEG) of the KfW Banking Group with the financing of export transactions, especially smaller export transactions of up to ten million euros. This state involvement in export financing and the state backing of export transactions through export credit guarantees may also encourage private banks to provide increased financing for export transactions by companies. We are moreover committed to setting up financing competence centers of the state export insurer Euler-Hermes in promising African markets in order to draw together and advise the market players (exporters, importers and financiers) quickly and in a purposeful manner, as recently carried out in Abidjan (Cote d'Ivoire) with the delegation of the German industry.

Not only would we like to create targeted incentives for greater economic involvement by German companies in African countries, but also with extended and subsidized guarantees as well as improved financing options with project-related grant elements. Against this background, we advocate the final implementation of the Africa Economic Fund (delivery-linked loans with a gift component in line with OECD criteria) on a multi-year budget and developing it in such a way that it can be used for trade and investment projects by German companies and establishing a level playing field, at least in competition with other OECD countries.

We need continuous political and financial support for German companies throughout the entire project cycle. The support offered by the German government to date was primarily focused on advising small and medium-sized companies (SMEs) by identifying African markets. Support measures for project development and financing of projects in Africa are lacking, especially those with a project volume of less than five million euros.

We want factors such as the quality of technological standards, life cycle costs, the use of local labor and measures such as training and further education for employees to be weighted more heavily than before when awarding tenders for state development cooperation. The "KfW Toolbox for Sustainable Procurement", developed by the KfW Development Bank in cooperation with the industry, should be used more frequently. This also offers the opportunity for German companies to receive a greater chance during the tender process. The utilization of the existing scope in the regulatory framework reduces the likelihood that development projects financed by the German state (including infrastructure projects), will be awarded to systemic rivals who will then advertise themselves by implementing these projects in the partner countries. This cannot be in Germany's interest.

Germany should also endeavor to examine whether and to what extent it is possible to adapt the regulatory framework for project awards, as part of the ongoing review process of the OECD Development Assistance Committee's rules on tied aid. Even though, according to OECD guidelines for Official Development Assistance (ODA), development loans to be tied to companies in the respective donor country are not possible, statistics show that other countries take a much more pragmatic approach to tender conditions. While, according to an OECD study from 2022, in Australia, Finland, the USA, Canada and Japan, more than 75 per cent of the contract-based funds, awarded via bilateral development cooperation, flow back to domestic companies in the form of contracts, this proportion is only around ten per cent in Germany.

We are basically in need of more flexible and faster credits in the funding of infrastructure projects in African partner countries, without neglecting quality standards in project planning. However, the lengthy contract negotiations, often taking years, are not attractive for our African partners. The political players in particular, who must stand for re-election in democratic elections, are dependent on demonstrating rapid development successes to their populations and economies.

We also call on the German government to revise the new climate policy sector guidelines for export credit and investment guarantees, because they prevent e.g. the retrofitting of fossil-fueled power plants with emission-reducing technologies from Germany from being financially secured in emerging and developing countries. This harms both climate protection and economic development in the countries concerned.

With its climate policy sector guidelines, the current German government is taking a particular path unsupported by other EU countries.

Article 6 of the Paris Climate Agreement should also be viewed in this context. It offers the signatory states the opportunity to work together when realizing their climate protection goals and forms the basis for market-based climate protection. This creates an incentive for industrialized nations to invest in climate protection measures in other countries and have these partially offset against their own climate targets. The application of Article 6 would enable developing and newly

industrialized countries to start or transition to a climate-friendly economy (leap-frogging). The German government has so far failed to utilize the opportunities offered by Article 6.

Advancing infrastructure projects – „Global Gateway Initiative“

No matter whether power plants, electricity grids or transport routes - major infrastructure projects can be a game changer for a country's economic development. This makes it all the more important to support African countries and companies in the realization of such projects. However, German companies are usually too small to be considered in large-scale infrastructure projects. Therefore we need more European consortia, where German companies can share their expertise and thus contribute to sustainable economic growth even in challenging markets.

With the "Global Gateway Initiative", the European Commission established a framework for coherent and substantial infrastructure investments for the first time in February 2022, particularly in Africa, thereby providing a response to the Chinese "Belt and Road Initiative". The initiative aims to mobilize around 150 billion euros for infrastructure investments in Africa by 2027. We would like to see the funds and projects of the "Global Gateway Initiative" contribute to the strengthening of European-African economic relations. However, both the EU as well as its member states are lagging far behind in terms of implementation. We expect the German government to join forces and provide decisive impetus for the implementation of the Global Gateway Initiative. This must be combined with internal coherence and a willingness to transfer steering competencies to the EU. Only with a robust approach will we as Europeans succeed in creating a genuine and attractive alternative to the Chinese „Belt and Road“ Initiative.

The Global Gateway Initiative must therefore urgently be organized as a political and strategic concept. It should be demonstrated that foreign, development, economic and trade policies are not pillars that operate independently of each other. The development cooperation of the EU member states and the EU Commission must be coordinated in such a way that they give the "Global Gateway Initiative" strategic clout. Furthermore, close coordination is required within the framework of the Partnership for Global Infrastructure and Investment (Partnership for Global Infrastructure and Investment - PGII), which was adopted by the G7.

Supporting the pan-African Free Trade Zone, finalizing regional trade agreements

When companies trade within Africa, they are often confronted with higher customs duties than when exporting to other continents. This is also illustrated by looking at intra-African trade: just 14.4 per cent of all African exports remain on the African continent (in the EU, the figure is around two-thirds). The African Continental Free Trade Area (AfCFTA) with more than 50 member states and 1.4 billion people points in the right direction, as it can strengthen intra-African trade and generate positive welfare effects. The Economic Commission for Africa

(UNECA) assumes that the elimination of existing import tariffs between African countries alone would increase intra-African trade by over 50 per cent.

However, great efforts are still required to realize the full potential of the free trade project, which is still far from being fully implemented. This is why Germany and the EU attach great importance to the economic integration of African states in their Africa policy. The regional economic communities and the African Union should receive comprehensive expert support in the implementation of the AfCFTA and should also be able to draw on the experience and expertise of the EU if desired by the AfCFTA member states. The quicker the African countries realize the pan-African free trade area AfCFTA, the more attractive the continent will become for economic activities. The EU should therefore have the perspective of also striving for a free trade area with Africa as soon as the framework conditions allow for this.

The ratification of the Economic Partnership Agreements (EPAs) already negotiated between the EU and African regions represents an important interim step on the way to a deepening of trade relations. It is regrettable that Germany has not yet ratified a single EPA due to development policy concerns. The concerns, some of which also exist on the African part, should be discussed in intensive talks with African, German and European partners, in order to find quick solutions.

c) Utilizing the opportunities of tourism

In many African countries, the importance of tourism should not be underestimated. It promotes local economic cycles and contributes to economic development. Examples include Morocco, Tunisia, Egypt, Kenya, Tanzania, Namibia and, especially the Seychelles, Mauritius and the Cape Verde Islands. Tourism can also support traditional, nature-friendly and sustainable forms of business in compliance with international conventions and agreements on species, nature, climate and environmental protection, such as e.g. the Washington Convention on International Trade in Endangered Species of Wild Fauna and Flora (WA), the Convention on Biological Diversity (COP 15) and the Paris Agreement on Climate Change. In many places, this also significantly contributes to the conservation of nature reserves with often unique wildlife. However, in some African countries, the local added value generated by the tourism industry is still rather low. Closer involvement of the industry in development concepts may counteract this situation and increase the local share of added value.

In many countries, travelers from Germany are among the largest groups of guests. German tour operators are not only economically active, but also promote training and business start-ups - not only in the tourism sector, but also in the industry environment (e.g. crafts, agriculture) and among suppliers. In this way, they can contribute to the sustainability of the African tourism industry, not least through the use of climate-friendly technologies. Moreover, environmental standards demanded by German tour operators can create greater awareness of environmental issues in Africa.

d) Politically support raw materials projects, facilitate the creation of value locally

Many African countries avail of large deposits of metallic raw materials, such as cobalt or platinum group metals. Without these raw materials, there would be no electromobility, no digitalization, no Industry 4.0 and no energy transition. For these reasons alone, closer cooperation on a raw materials policy with the African continent is urgently needed. Our African partners can also play a decisive role in the diversification of German and European supplies of raw materials. However, African partners rich in raw materials quite rightly demand that the added value of mining raw materials should be created locally in order to generate positive effects for growth and employment. For example, the African Development Bank (AfDB) is currently formulating its own "Critical Minerals Strategy", which focuses more strongly on the development opportunities for the African continent and identifies specific starting points for building local value creation. German and European stakeholders should build on this and propose specific projects.

In order for the extractive industry to become noticeably involved in our neighboring continent again, it is crucial that the EU and Germany provide strong political and financial support for raw materials projects and promote the sustainable extraction and processing of raw materials, which creates local jobs and enables a technology transfer. Such a raw materials policy could contribute to sustainable development in African countries. The funds of the "Global Gateway Initiative" should therefore also be used for this purpose.

Furthermore, the German government should advocate greater integration of raw materials initiatives in resource-rich countries within the G7 and in the Mineral Security Partnership (MSP), in order to use these approaches to help improve the framework conditions for the local value creation.

e) Renewable energies and green hydrogen: making key technologies widely available

In many African countries, the meteorological and climatic conditions are ideal for the development and expansion of renewable energies. This therefore also applies to the production of green, CO₂-neutral hydrogen, which a number of African countries now want to expand as part of their energy infrastructure.

Like many other industrialized countries, Germany will remain dependent on imports of energy sources from abroad - imports of fossil fuels will simply be replaced by imports of green energy sources such as hydrogen and hydrogen derivatives. This opens up new areas of cooperation between Germany and African countries and also new market and export opportunities for Africa. Even if individual countries such as Namibia or Morocco require high initial investments, e.g. for the construction of a harbor infrastructure, water desalination plants or chemical plants for the conversion of hydrogen into ammonia, such hydrogen cooperations make sense in a number of ways: they make an important contribution to the energy supply of African countries, they support technology transfer and the

creation of future-oriented local jobs, promote sustainable, low-carbon economic development and help to diversify existing energy supply relationships.

We will therefore actively support the development of hydrogen production in those African countries that are interested in cooperating in this area. With economic incentives and political support, we want to channel hydrogen investments by German and European companies into the African market - investments in an industry of the future that will provide new economic impetus and enable climate-neutral economic development in Africa and Europe.

(2) Redefining Germany's foreign and security policy engagement in Africa

For more than ten years, Germany has been involved in international and multi-lateral missions and operations on the African continent. Due to the increasingly difficult conditions in some partner countries as well as the growing resentment towards France and the French decision to reduce its presence on the African continent, Germany's involvement must be redefined and adapted accordingly. After all, our interest in stability and security in Africa is great - also because instability and insecurity can be directly felt in Europe. And the following also applies: security and economic development are mutually dependent. A security policy engagement therefore remains essential in order to also make strides in other areas.

We should not only co-finance and support multilateral approaches, but also play a greater role in shaping them. In order to achieve this, an open and honest discussion of our own role and security policy interests in the region is needed. Germany requires a debate on how much responsibility we can and want to take on and where our true potential for increased security policy engagement lies. A security policy strategy for dealing with Africa must be deduced from this.

a) Developing a comprehensive and feasible Sahel strategy

The latest developments in the Sahel region are worrying. The double coup in Mali and the announcement by the local warlords that they will no longer cooperate with the international community to the same extent as before, are not only creating a security vacuum, but also threaten to push the country back into stagnation and instability. Burkina Faso and Niger are also moving more and more in this direction following military coups, making cooperation with these countries significantly more difficult. This is already having an impact on the security situation and is once again giving terrorist groups more room to operate in. As the developments in the region have a direct impact on the Maghreb states and also on Europe, stabilizing this sub-region - despite all the difficulties and challenges - is in Germany's and Europe's national interest. It is important that the networked approach, in which military, diplomatic, economic and development policy instruments coherently work together, is once again practiced and fully implemented. Close cooperation with the African regional organizations, above all ECOWAS, should and must be the guiding principle. However, this requires significantly

more political involvement by the German government in the region and a coordinated framework for action within the European Union. The CDU/CSU parliamentary group supports this. We expect the Federal Government to present a new, comprehensive and realistic German Sahel strategy as a basic building block of a European Sahel strategy as soon as possible. This is of decisive importance in view of Germany's presidency in the Sahel Alliance. Such a strategy must also ensure that regional developments do not surprise us again or catch us unprepared. The makeshift update of the Sahel strategy put together in May 2023 to extend the Mali mandate does not even begin to fulfil these requirements.

b) Continue and intensify training and capacity building missions

Approaches to security cooperation that have proven their worth, should be continued and intensified. These include, above all, the strengthening initiative and sharing of our expertise and experience, which has been gathered, for example, as part of training and education missions such as the "Gazelle" mission. In this context, however, closer attention must be given to actually taking into account the "lessons learnt" from past missions and experiences and avoiding mistakes in the approach, such as those made in the context of "EUTM Mali". This relates e.g., to the soldiers' lack of language skills during deployment, rotation periods that are too short or the lack of alignment with reality in the training scenarios implemented.

c) Placing a stronger focus on mediation and conflict prevention

Mediation and opening channels of dialogue are already an important component of our international engagement in conflict prevention and resolution. Given the positive perception of Germany on the African continent, this would be an opportunity to take on more responsibility. Germany could play an even greater role as a third party in formal and informal negotiation and dialogue processes, strengthen peace negotiations as well as the implementation of peace agreements, assist in opening channels of dialogue and build trust between conflicting parties. However, this requires an overall greater involvement in African policy - also at the cabinet level. Against this background, Germany should play a much more preventative role. Instead of merely reacting to crises, the German government must better anticipate where conflict "hot spots" could arise in the future. For this reason, the CDU/CSU parliamentary group is in favor of Germany having a stronger presence in West and East Africa with military (liaison) personnel and being integrated into multilateral cooperation structures.

Furthermore, various studies show that greater gender equality and thus the presence of more women in conflict prevention and peacekeeping could contribute more effectively to a stabilization in the long term. Therefore, the CDU/CSU parliamentary group is also in favor of strengthening the position of women in this regard.

d) Systematically fighting organised crime

In the fight against terrorism and jihadism, the close link between these phenomena and organized crime has not yet been sufficiently taken into account. In particular, the financing of extremist activities is closely linked to organized crime. The same applies e.g., to the access to arms and explosives. These two structures cannot be considered or combated separately. Against this background, Germany should use its capacities and experience in the field of law enforcement even more intensively through BKA liaison officers, to focus on improving the cooperation with African authorities responsible for combating organized crime. This includes, among others, strengthening the structures that serve to combat illegal financial flows.

e) Strengthen governance-structures at the local level

Strengthening the capacities of regional organizations (including the AU and ECOWAS) and strengthening cross-border cooperation between African states will continue to be of great importance in the future as well. Nevertheless, these organizations are often unable to act quickly and efficiently enough due to complex structures and internal conflicts. On evaluating the approaches of the security policy over the past ten years, one can see that such interventions, in particular, that actively involved and addressed the local player-level have been (relatively) successful and sustainable. Against this backdrop, Germany could contribute more to the strengthening of local conflict management resources. This includes e.g., the provision and support of dialogue formats between the state and local stakeholders as a confidence-building measure. The identification and strengthening of structures and stakeholders contributing to the resilience of communities (including women and youth groups into account) also plays an important role here. The capacity of these players in the field of mediation as well as inter- and intra-communal dialogue, should be strengthened. Access to the relevant networks is generally available thanks to Germany's decades of involvement in many African partner countries.

f) Supporting African engagement in the UN Security Council

New African members should be offered capacity-building programs to support them in their role on the UN Security Council - including training for diplomats, an experience exchange and the strengthening of the cooperation within the UN structures. Even before they become members of the Security Council, there should be an institutionalized exchange on how common goals can be strategically pursued between European and African members of the Security Council.

g) Breaking new ground in arms cooperation

Politically and militarily, states such as Russia and China are also trying to influence the direction of African states. Defense cooperation plays a particularly important role here. In this area, too, we must show more flexibility and pragmatism, see arms cooperation as a formative element of foreign and security policy and make appropriate offers to African partners. Export control mechanisms must be integrated into African policy and not hinder it.

(3) Comprehensive consideration of old and new development policy dimensions

a) Food security as the basis for political stability

The right to food is a human right. The stability and efficiency of a state depend heavily on food security. According to the Food and Agriculture Organization of the United Nations (FAO), agricultural production must increase by 60 percent to ensure that the world can still be fed in 2050.

There is a particularly great potential for this on the African continent, which has more than a quarter of the world's arable land. However, only 20 per cent of this land is used in accordance with this, meaning that the African continent is currently dependent on grain supplies from other regions of the world. In addition, agricultural land in Africa produces less than half the yield of cultivated agricultural land in the EU and the USA. If the resources available in Africa were better utilized, the continent could not only meet its own food requirements, it would also have the potential to become a food exporter for the world.

More climate-resilient seeds, more resilient plants, modern irrigation, cooling and storage technology, mechanization of agriculture and, in some countries, the latest techniques, precision farming and digitalization are reducing Africa's dependence on food imports and increasing the continent's resilience. Sustainable intensification of agriculture not only improves the food supply situation, but also creates new jobs along the value chain in rural areas.

Financially viable, mechanized and collectively organized agriculture, e.g. via machinery rings, makes a significant contribution to strengthening rural areas as an attractive working and living environment with prospects for young people in particular. With over 130 machinery rings in Senegal and Kenya and around 30,000 predominantly smallholding farms organized in them, there have been functioning examples since 2018 of how high yield increases can be achieved through locally adapted mechanization. These structures need to be expanded with the help of development cooperation.

a) Health as the basis for sustainable human development

Nutrition, health and education are the basis for human development. As the third largest partner with a strong financial footprint, also in the multilateral area, Germany enjoys a good reputation in partnership cooperation in strengthening global health, which we want to maintain and consolidate. However, many African countries do not have a fully developed medical infrastructure. In countries where this is the case, it is not accessible to large sections of the population. Health should therefore remain a priority of German bilateral and multilateral development cooperation in Africa. The aim here is to strengthen healthcare systems that make it possible for everybody to access healthcare services ("universal health coverage"). We also strive for greater support and cooperation in the field of research, for example in the area of specific pathogens (e.g. neglected tropical diseases). We want to work together with African countries to prevent and combat potential pandemics (e.g. as part of the planned WHO pandemic treaty).

c) Strengthening the rights of women and girls

Women and girls are also disproportionately affected by poverty, hunger and violence on the African continent. In many countries, they have less access to education, healthcare and social security. Nevertheless, they are the driving force behind economic growth, innovation, education and food security: women in agriculture contribute 80 per cent of the food supply, and a large proportion of nurses and local healthcare staff are women. Women also invest a larger proportion of their disposable income in the upbringing and education of their children compared to men. In this way, they also contribute to greater prosperity and poverty reduction in the long run. Therefore, women are important drivers of development. Targeted support for their education, healthcare and social participation is a key factor for sustainable development. The CDU/CSU parliamentary group has already promoted women and girls as agents of sustainable development in previous legislative periods and treated their equality as an important part of German development cooperation. This policy must be continued: The rights of women and girls as well as their interests and concerns must continuously be strengthened in the future, especially on the growing, young continent of Africa.

d) Understanding cooperation in education and research as the key to a forward-looking partnership

Don't take a one-sided approach to promoting education

Promoting education is a decisive factor in increasing individual and social development opportunities. Currently, however, less than three per cent of the funding available for development cooperation with Africa is spent on education and vocational training projects. We are therefore committed to ensuring that educational support is given a higher priority in German Africa policy.

The BMZ Special Initiative on Training and Employment is a step in the right direction. However, priority should be given to programs supported and run by local companies for the vocational training and further education of skilled workers because, in contrast to vocational training projects run by development cooperation (e.g. vocational schools initiated by the BMZ without entrepreneurial links), they open up real employment prospects in the respective companies. We are also in favor of significantly expanding Germany's engagement in the development policy - possibly also via international organizations - in the area of basic school education (especially reading, writing and arithmetic), as many African countries have repeatedly requested of Germany.

Enable targeted skilled labor and education migration, create new scholarship programs for young Africans

We are committed to developing and implementing new models for regular channels of skilled labor and education migration from African countries. This is because the targeted migration of skilled labor and qualified people from Africa to Europe has benefits for both sides. This also includes closer cooperation in the field of education, so that universities (and community colleges) can work more closely with African universities and students can spend a semester abroad at partner universities. BMBF initiatives such as the Master's degree program on green hydrogen technologies for students from ECOWAS countries, which was launched in 2021, must be expanded. However, this cannot happen unconditionally. In order to facilitate legal migration routes in the skilled labor and education sectors, we are striving for migration partnerships that are closely linked to the obligation under international law to re-admit their own nationals and to the willingness to conclude corresponding re-admission agreements.

German scholarships for young Africans should be seen as a strategic investment. These programs should be expanded and in no case dismantled, as is currently the case. This is because other countries underline the strategic importance of such programs: China currently awards as many scholarships to young Africans as the entire rest of the world combined.

Further strengthening and expanding research collaboration

There are currently only a handful of countries in Africa that are making intensive efforts to develop research infrastructure and cutting-edge research. Yet there is great potential to use science to help tackle global challenges such as the energy transition and the fight against diseases associated with neglect and poverty. This is where the joint work of German universities, non-university research institutions and companies with African partners comes in and is extremely promising for both sides. The establishment of scientific cooperation structures creates sustainable networks and strengthens regional and continental cooperation. The implementation of joint research topics in practice raises innovation potential and helps to build value chains. This cooperation must continue to be promoted and sufficient funds must be made available to intensify it. Here, the main focus areas

are urban development, bioeconomy, food production and processing, logistics and transport, health and energy production. Particularly in the production of green energy, especially green hydrogen, it will be necessary to set up our own systems and carry out research and development locally. Here too, cooperation can lead to knowledge and technology transfer in both directions. This opportunity must be utilized.

Goethe-Institutes: Moving teaching the German language back to the center of their activities

Language is the key to culture! The high fees for language learning at the Goethe-Institute and other such institutions are often a major barrier to learning German. Costs need to be reduced in order to give more people access to the German language. It has also been shown time and again that the focus of the Goethe-Institute is predominantly on organizing cultural and networking events instead of concentrating on teaching the German language. This must change. There needs to be a return to the core task - the teaching of the German language. The teaching of the German language should also be used to attract highly qualified specialists. After all, we are in a global competition for the best minds.

e) Contribution to climate protection and the preservation of creation

The Paris Agreement obliges its signatory states to provide financial support to developing countries for mitigation and adaptation measures through climate finance, in addition to their own ambitious emission reductions. Germany is making substantial contributions here, which must be continued in future. Building on the good track record of the previous Federal Government, Germany should make an appropriately high German contribution to climate financing in order to effectively support developing countries when it comes to adaptation and mitigation measures and closely coordinate the measures within the Federal Government in order to achieve a coherent external image.

The increasingly noticeable effects of climate change, especially in Africa (extreme weather, heat, droughts, floods, declining agricultural yields, encroaching deserts) emphasize this. The CDU/CSU parliamentary group will advocate for Germany to continue to play a leading role as a climate financier worldwide, but also particularly in Africa. It is also especially important to seek joint innovative solutions in cooperation with the affected African countries. This includes projects for climate-friendly economic development as well as, for example, projects that preserve the forest of the Congo Basin as the last large remaining net CO₂ sink.

f) ***Advocate sustainable and resilient debt management, hold key players (including China) accountable***

During the Covid-pandemic, Africa experienced its first recession in over 25 years. Falling government revenues significantly restricted the scope for state refinancing, such as infrastructure projects, and at the same time led to many African countries being unable to take any economic measures to cushion this recession. The consequences are a debt crisis and over-indebtedness of individual African countries, which could massively reduce the willingness and ability of private and public sector investors to invest and the economic upswing over many years could significantly weaken - with negative consequences for e.g. poverty reduction, the education sector and the healthcare system in the affected countries.

In recent years, more and more private creditors, but also new state donors, above all China, have granted loans to African countries. China's share of loans granted to African countries between 2007 and 2017 was estimated at 40 per cent. With an average share of 12 per cent of the private and public foreign debt of African countries, China is usually the largest bilateral creditor today, although the share varies greatly from country to country (Angola: 40 per cent - 18 billion USD; Ghana 6 per cent - 1.7 billion USD). It is therefore obvious that sustainable debt management and possible debt relief for African countries can only be achieved with all participants, including China.

Meanwhile, individual African countries have run into serious payment difficulties and can no longer service their loans. They need rapid debt restructuring, possible debt relief and access to suitable financial resources in order to prevent defaults and restore their financial policy capacity. Against this background, we welcome the fact that the Paris Climate and Finance Summit of the G20 countries in June 2023 under the Chinese-French presidency succeeded in initiating a debt restructuring for Zambia in the amount of 6.3 billion USD. The G20's „Common Framework for Debt Treatments“, which was created in 2020, has thus demonstrated for the first time its practical feasibility.

We recognize that both China and the Western donor countries must do even more justice to their role as key lenders on the African continent in overcoming the debt crisis in Africa and have a responsibility to help avert the state bankruptcy of other African countries.

We advocate the creation of more transparency regarding the amount and conditions of existing loan agreements with African countries and call on the new donor countries in particular to also enable the necessary openness of loan agreements entered into. This is the basis for sustainable debt management and enables citizens and civil society in the concerned countries to exert greater influence on their governments and their debt management and to expose corruption and mismanagement.

We would like to see Germany, together with international partners and international financial institutions, offer African countries greater technical support in order to restructure their debt and achieve sustainable debt management. This also includes legal support in legal disputes with private creditors.

We are in favor of a comprehensive reform of debt restructuring mechanisms. For this reason, China and other creditor countries that are not members of the Paris Club of sovereign creditors, as well as the increasingly important private creditors, must be fully involved in debt restructuring mechanisms. This is the only way over-indebted African countries will regain the necessary financial room to maneuver.

g) *Maintaining a cooperative partnership with African countries*

Fundamental knowledge of the genesis of policy-driving positions in Africa is a prerequisite for successful negotiations with our partners. This is another reason why an in-depth examination of historical and socio-cultural aspects is necessary. The surprise for many decision-makers in the West at the high number of abstentions in the UN votes to condemn Russian aggression against Ukraine, shows above all that the historical and current references and frames of reference for politicians in Africa are not sufficiently recognized and taken into account. For example, many decision-makers were educated in Moscow and maintain close personal relationships with Russia. Moreover, Russia plays an essential role on the continent as a supplier of arms. As a result, we need to comprehensively expand our presence in Africa by better staffing the German diplomatic missions in Africa, strengthening academic institutions with a link to Africa in Germany, and through the expansion of youth exchanges and town twinning programs.

h) *Launching a communication offensive*

We need active, simple and self-confident communication into African societies. On one hand, we need to proactively counter disinformation and false narratives (e.g. by providing comprehensive support to local fact-checking organizations and intensifying media cooperation). On the other hand, we need a communication offensive that reaches not only the elites but is also accepted by the population. German and European commitment must be perceived as such (keyword: "Team Europe approach").

In this context, Germany should expand its media presence in Africa (e.g. Deutsche Welle) and examine in which African countries a cooperation with European foreign broadcasters would make a higher, positively connoted "outreach" possible. Only in this way will we be able to develop sufficient media clout in competition with systemic rivals such as China and Russia. Political foundations must play an important role in this as reference organizations to local civil societies.

(4) Implementing a new Africa policy: creating more efficient institutional structures, broadening the knowledge base

Africa's geopolitical relevance is already outstanding today and will continue to grow in the coming years. That is why our neighboring continent must become a top priority. We are in favor of appointing a commissioner in the Federal Chancellery to coordinate the German government's Africa policy activities.

To date, the Federal Government does not have a coordinated, let alone coherent, strategy for dealing with Africa. Instead, individual government departments have developed different Africa strategies or Africa policy approaches, partially contradicting each other. In view of the political tensions in the world and the conflict situation in the Sahel region, the German government must finally launch a new and comprehensive Africa strategy.

Reliable and well-founded scientific findings are essential for evidence-based decisions in politics and business. However, they are lacking when we turn our attention to Africa. There is hardly any research on Africa in Germany that is orientated towards current political and economic developments. The aim must be to gain a much deeper understanding of African structures in these two areas. We are therefore in favor of re-establishing the project of a separate institute for applied African studies modelled on MERICS, which failed in the last legislative period.

At the same time, we are in favor of consolidating and increasing the financial resources for the economic "Africa Research" cluster, created in the last legislative period, because it contains economic and business management approaches, takes a comprehensive look at the entrepreneurial perspective, and examines the key state and private players and their role in more detail. This research should therefore be transferred with the creation of an Institute for Applied African Studies.

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