



2024

ANNUAL REPORT

AMERICAN COUNCIL ON GERMANY



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MISSION AND VISION

MISSION

The American Council on Germany (ACG) is an independent, nonpartisan nonprofit organization that was founded in 1952 to strengthen German-American relations. Today, the ACG works across generations to provide a deeper understanding about Germany, Europe, and the importance of the transatlantic partnership. Through a range of programs and activities, the ACG addresses the most pressing economic, political, and social challenges of the day to ensure better mutual understanding.

VISION

The American Council on Germany is the leading U.S.-based forum for strengthening German-American relations. It delivers a nuanced understanding of why Germany matters, because the only way to understand contemporary Europe is to understand Germany's role within Europe and around the world. And, the only way to understand contemporary Germany is to put it in a European context.



The Council is committed to:

FORGING MUTUAL UNDERSTANDING TO MEET TOMORROW'S CHALLENGES

Through a range of activities, the ACG provides opinion leaders and decision-makers in a variety of fields with ideas and perspectives on important political, economic, and social developments on both sides of the Atlantic and around the world. Online programming and in-person events engage multipliers from government, business, nongovernmental organizations, academia, the military, and media on both sides of the Atlantic. The ACG conducts immersive programs on special topics to examine challenges facing our societies and to develop possible strategies and collaborative solutions for the future.

SHAPING TOMORROW'S LEADERS

The ACG invests in the future of the transatlantic relationship by helping the next generation of leaders in Germany and the United States learn about this indispensable partnership, exchange best practices, and build networks across the Atlantic. The ACG convenes the American-German Young Leaders Conference, fellowships, and leadership missions to bring together the next generation of German and American academics, journalists, and other professionals from diverse fields to deepen their understanding about transatlantic issues while forging lasting bonds with one another.

ADDRESSING GLOBAL ISSUES NATIONWIDE – AND BEYOND

The ACG recognizes the importance of presenting global issues not only to policymakers in Washington, DC, and business leaders in New York but also to decision-makers, practitioners, and the community at large at the local level. Through its online programming, the ACG has reached viewers in all 50 states and all 16 Bundesländer – and in more than 60 countries – for discussions on the most pressing economic, political, and social issues on the transatlantic agenda that in turn affect their communities. The Council remains committed to national outreach through its network of Eric M. Warburg Chapters.

INFORMING MEMBERS AND THE COMMUNITY AT LARGE

The Council reaches across generations, sectors, and regional boundaries to inform the community at large. The ACG keeps its alumni, members, and friends informed about important issues shaping the transatlantic partnership through a range of programs and activities. Online programming and regular updates have made the ACG a valued resource for news and information about the transatlantic relationship. Members receive the ACG's news digest with opinion pieces and analysis twice a week.

A MESSAGE FROM PRESIDENT AND CEO DR. STEVEN E. SOKOL

2024 was not just another election year. It was a “Superwahljahr” with an unprecedented number of national elections in a single calendar year, making it one of the most consequential years for global democracy in recent history. More than 70 countries held national elections, and roughly half the world’s eligible voters had the opportunity to go to the polls. These elections coincided with shifting great-power rivalries – U.S.-China competition, Russia’s war in Ukraine, and Middle East conflicts – and took place against the backdrop of growing concerns over democratic backsliding, populism, polarization, and authoritarian resilience.



November 6, 2024 – the day after the U.S. election – was a decisive day for the United States, Germany, and the transatlantic partnership: Sufficient results had accumulated by early morning so that major news outlets were able to project Donald Trump’s victory. On the same day, German Chancellor Olaf Scholz dismissed Finance Minister Christian Lindner, causing the Free Democrats to withdraw from the coalition government with the Social Democrats and the Greens. This triggered the collapse of the federal governing coalition – which set off a political crisis and paved the way for a vote of confidence then snap elections in February of 2025.

The many national elections worldwide as well as political developments in Germany and the United States provided grist for the American Council on Germany’s policy discussions in 2024. Through in-person and virtual gatherings, the ACG gave audiences the opportunity to gain perspectives from policymakers, experts, and thought leaders from both sides of the Atlantic on key political, economic, and social issues on the transatlantic agenda. Over the course of the year, the ACG held more than 150 events, including virtual discussions reaching thousands of viewers, as well as in-person events in New York City, at its Warburg Chapters across the United States, in Washington, DC, and in Germany.

The ACG also used its significant convening power to bring people together in different formats. Our successful American-German Young Leaders Conference brought together more than 50 high potentials for an in-depth week of discussion. We organized immersive study tours and leadership missions on topics including education, agricultural policy, and social cohesion, and we engaged with communities through our German-American Semiconductor Cities Network. We named five McCloy Fellows on Global Trends to travel overseas and conduct research on pressing global challenges. We also launched another initiative to bring together the next generation of transatlanticists – Germany Connect – by convening summer interns in New York for a series of discussions and networking opportunities.

We collaborated with the German Consulate in New York to produce a series of virtual events focused on the challenges posed by disinformation. We continued our partnership with the Aspen Institute Germany on the State-to-State: German-American State Legislator Dialogue by bringing together state representatives for virtual events to discuss the challenges facing their local communities. The ACG also partnered with the Global Coalition on Aging to host a summit in Berlin. In the runup to the event, we organized webinars on demographic challenges and opportunities.

In collaboration with the Goethe-Institut, we launched two speaker series. Foreign Correspondent Unplugged features journalists across the United States discussing the issues shaping political discourse here and abroad. Double Exposure brought together German and American academics and thought leaders to explore the concept of solidarity in various contexts. And, of course, we continued our successful Kaffeepause series, with regular conversations with Berlin-based journalists about the headlines of the day. These events were released as podcasts to reach a broader audience.

In 2024, the ACG held two John J. McCloy Awards Dinners. In January, the Council honored Belén Garijo, Chair of the Executive Board and CEO of Merck KGaA, Darmstadt, Germany, and Alexander C. Karp, Co-Founder & CEO of Palantir Technologies Inc. In November, we presented Carsten Spohr, Chairman and CEO of the Lufthansa Group, with a McCloy Award and *Wall Street Journal* Reporter Evan Gershkovich with the inaugural Torch of Freedom Award.

Each year as I reflect on what the small team at the ACG accomplished, I am impressed – and extremely proud. The number of events, their quality, timeliness, and relevance are remarkable. The ACG serves as a valuable source of information about the issues shaping the German-American partnership – and transatlantic relations more widely.

2024 was a very active year for the American Council on Germany. We are lucky to have great partners in carrying out our mission. We look forward to continuing to work with you to strengthen the transatlantic partnership.

2024 GERMAN-AMERICAN CONFERENCE

Each year, the American Council on Germany and Atlantik-Brücke convene hundreds of policymakers, analysts, and thought leaders for the German-American Conference to take a close look at the key political, economic, and social challenges on the transatlantic agenda and policy solutions to address them.

In 2024, the German-American Conference looked at “The New Realities for Democracy and Transatlantic Relations in an Election Year Unlike Any Other” on April 15 and 16 at the AT&T Forum and the Senate Dirksen Building in Washington, DC. With more than half of the global population going to the polls over the course of the year – and against the backdrop of ongoing conflict in Ukraine and Gaza, political polarization, economic insecurity, and distrust in government – the conference looked at how these elections could impact democratic institutions, values, and processes.

The conference also saw the release of “The State of Trust in the U.S.-German Partnership: A Transatlantic Survey,” commissioned by the ACG and Atlantik-Brücke and with the generous support of Allianz. The survey found that: 1. Trust in the German-American partnership has declined since 2022. 2. Business is the most trusted institution in both countries and must play a key role in the partnership. 3. There are high expectations for the German-American partnership. Nearly 1 in 2 of those surveyed believed the partnership is addressing issues that are personally relevant to them, but more transparency and collaboration on defense and economic security would drive further trust. Still, the partnership remains “strong and plays a crucial role in the world’s stability.”



[Read the survey](#)



Terrell Jermaine Starr, Founder and Host of Black Diplomats



Senator Christopher Murphy (D-CT)

Sigmar Gabriel, Chairman of Atlantik-Brücke, said we are witnessing three sets of ongoing major declines: a global economic decline, violent conflicts that create geopolitical decline, and the notion that liberal democracies – and indeed democracy itself – are in crisis. Keynote speaker **Senator Christopher Murphy** (D-CT) underscored that there is strength in democracy, and we must do more to address issues together.

Other speakers included **Dr. Phyllis Berry**, National Intelligence Officer for Europe at the National Intelligence Council; **Axel Dittmann**, Charge d’Affaires of the Embassy of the Federal Republic of Germany in Washington; **Dr. Andreas Dombret**, Global Senior Advisor at Oliver Wyman; **Claudia Donzelmann**, Global Head of Regulatory and Public Affairs at Allianz SE; **Deborah Düring**, member of the German Bundestag (Greens); **Dr. Christof Ehrhart**, Executive Vice President for Corporate Communications and Governmental Affairs at Robert Bosch GmbH; **Dr. Evelyn Farkas**, Executive Director of the McCain Institute; **Allison Meakem**, Associate Editor of *Foreign Policy*; **Ambassador Jovita Neliupšienė**, EU Ambassador to the U.S.; **Ines Pohl**, Washington Bureau Chief of Deutsche Welle; **Dr. Norbert Röttgen**, member of the Bundestag (CDU/CSU); **Dr. Majid Sattar**, Washington Correspondent for the *Frankfurter Allgemeine Zeitung*; **Friederike von Tiesenhausen**, Global Head of Public Affairs at Bloomberg LP; and many others, including ACG Chairman **Ambassador John B. Emerson** and ACG Board members **Dr. Charles Kupchan**, Senior Fellow at the Council on Foreign Relations, and **Dr. John Lipsky**, Senior Fellow at the Foreign Policy Institute at Johns Hopkins University School of Advanced International Studies.

Among the key takeaways from the conference:

- **Elections:** From a European perspective, the U.S. election results could potentially affect the trade, security, and democracy pillars that are cornerstones of the relationship. In the European Parliament, an increasing shift to the right as well as the fragmentation of parties in Parliament were noted.
- **The Economy:** Despite underlying trade tensions between the U.S. and Europe, economic figures are strong.
- **Defense:** It is vital to support Ukraine and combat Russian aggression: President Putin is challenging the rules-based order, and if we do not stop him now, he might well continue through Europe.

ERIC M. WARBURG CHAPTERS



[Atlanta](#) | [Boston](#) | [Charlotte](#) | [Chicago](#) | [Cleveland](#) |
[Dallas](#) | [Denver](#) | [Indianapolis](#) | [Los Angeles](#) |
[Minneapolis/St. Paul](#) | [Nashville](#) | [Philadelphia](#) |
[Phoenix](#) | [Pittsburgh](#) | [St. Louis](#) | [San Francisco](#) | [Seattle](#)

The American Council on Germany launched the Eric M. Warburg Chapters in 1992 to provide a dynamic forum where political, economic, and social issues on the transatlantic agenda could be examined from the perspectives of local communities across the United States. The Chapters provide a platform for German and American government officials, journalists, policy analysts, academics and students, business and civil society representatives, and other practitioners to engage with one another and parse policy solutions.

Through the Warburg Chapters, the ACG not only engages those already interested in Germany but also actively works to broaden the community of individuals who have an awareness and understanding of German-American affairs. The Chapters work with a network of local partner organizations, including German Consulates and Honorary Consuls, German American Chambers of Commerce, Goethe-Instituts, World Affairs Councils, and other local community institutions to offer quality programming.



Dr. Sharon Nazarian, President of the Y&S Nazarian Family Foundation and Inaugural Gahl Hodges Burt Scholar at the American Academy in Berlin, and Bruce Clark (2019 Transatlantic Cities of Tomorrow), Executive Director of the Center for Digital Equality at Queens University of Charlotte



Andreas Jahn (third from left), Director of Government Affairs and Foreign Trade at the German Association of Small and Medium-Sized Businesses (BVMW), meeting with the Chicago Warburg Chapter, including Chapter Director and ACG Board member Elke Rehbock (2017 Young Leader, right), Partner at Dentons US LLP

Several members of the German Bundestag visited Chapter cities through the course of 2024 to share their perspectives and engage in conversation with local audiences. **Metin Hakverdi** (SPD) gave a global outlook on Germany at the Boston Warburg Chapter on February 8 at an event held in cooperation with the Consulate General of Germany in Boston, the Goethe-Institut, and the German-American Business Council of Boston. **Michael Georg Link** (FDP), Coordinator for Transatlantic Cooperation at the German Federal Foreign Office, gave an update on U.S.-German relations in a multipolar world at an event on March 25 in Nashville held in cooperation with the Tennessee World Affairs Council. **Peter Beyer** (CDU) met with ACG members and friends at the Los Angeles Warburg Chapter on May 2, delineating a “Path Forward for the German-American Partnership in a Period of Crises.” **Alexander Radwan** (CDU/CSU) visited the San Francisco Warburg Chapter on May 20 for a discussion and luncheon on “Unraveling Alliances? Assessing the U.S. Role in NATO.” That event was held in partnership with the Hanns-Seidel-Stiftung.

Journalists visiting the Warburg Chapters included **Simon Book** (2016 Kellen Fellow), U.S. Correspondent for *Der Spiegel*, and theologian **Arnd Henze** of WDR. Mr. Book told “The Tale of Two Economies: Europe and the United States after the Pandemic” at a discussion and Schnitzel lunch on June 4 at the Los Angeles Warburg Chapter. Mr. Henze spoke on the politicization of Dietrich Bonhoeffer, a Protestant Pastor who resisted the Nazi regime, at a discussion and reception at the Indianapolis Warburg Chapter on July 10 hosted by Allisonville Christian Church and at a discussion and luncheon at the Minneapolis/St. Paul Warburg Chapter hosted by the Germanic-American Institute on July 11.

Providing a European business perspective, **Andreas Jahn**, Director of Government Affairs and Foreign Trade at the German Association of Small and Medium-Sized Businesses (BVMW), spoke in Chicago, Pittsburgh, and Seattle about the challenges the German Mittelstand faces. Many of the meetings focused on new U.S. investment opportunities for German small and medium-sized businesses in light of the U.S. Inflation Reduction Act (IRA).

In the fall, **Dr. Sharon Nazarian**, President of the Y&S Nazarian Family Foundation and Inaugural Gahl Hodges Burt Scholar at the American Academy in Berlin, completed a two-week tour to the Charlotte, Cleveland, Phoenix, and Pittsburgh Chapters to discuss how international cooperation can strengthen democracy while combating antisemitism. The ACG and its Warburg Chapters collaborated with a range of partners, including the Jewish Federation of Greater Charlotte, ADL Cleveland, the Jewish Federation of Cleveland, Rekindle, Classrooms Without Borders, the German-American Chamber of Commerce’s Pittsburgh Chapter, the Rodef Shalom Congregation of Pittsburgh, the Phoenix Committee on Foreign Relations, and Global Ties Arizona.

The ACG would like to express its great thanks to the Warburg Chapter Directors across the country who volunteer their time to convene people to discuss these key issues on the transatlantic agenda – for the betterment of local communities and the wider German-American community.



Andreas Jahn, Director of Government Affairs and Foreign Trade at the German Association of Small and Medium-Sized Businesses (BVMW), and James Myers, Senior Director for Business Investment at the Pittsburgh Regional Alliance



Dr. Sharon Nazarian (second from right), President of the Y&S Nazarian Family Foundation and Inaugural Gahl Hodges Burt Scholar at the American Academy in Berlin, with (from left) Matt Fieldman (2022 Transatlantic Cities of Tomorrow), partner on Stronger Together Workforce Missions and Founder of the Rekindle Fellowship, as well as Keshia Johnson and the Rev. Jereme Sykes, Vice Chairs of the Rekindle Fellowship

KAFFEEPAUSE DISCUSSION SERIES



At the start of the workweek, the American Council on Germany offers listeners the chance to hear an up-to-the-minute update on political, economic, and social developments in Germany through its Kaffeepause Series. Each installment in the series – officially titled “Kaffeepause: What’s Abuzz in Berlin?” – is a conversation between a Berlin-based journalist and ACG President and CEO **Dr. Steven E. Sokol**. Speakers share their insights on developing stories and also on wider sentiments and trends shaping political discourse. The series was launched in 2021. Each Kaffeepause is released as a podcast.

The themes covered in 2024 included the Superwahljahr, conflict in Ukraine and Gaza, the changing economic landscape, and much more. The featured journalists included **Stephan Detjen**, Chief Correspondent for Deutschlandradio and Director of the Berlin Studio; **Miriam Hollstein** (2008 McCloy Fellow), Chief Reporter for *Stern* in Berlin; **Matthew Karnitschnig**, POLITICO’s Chief Europe Correspondent; **Paul-Anton Krüger**, Parliamentary Correspondent in the Berlin Bureau of the *Süddeutsche Zeitung*; **Malte Lehming**, Opinion Writer for *Der Tagesspiegel*; **Stefan Kornelius**, Political Editor of the *Süddeutsche Zeitung*; **Anna Sauerbrey** (2018 Kellen Fellow), Foreign Editor for *DIE ZEIT*; and **Erika Solomon**, Berlin Correspondent for the *New York Times*.

[Listen to our Kaffeepause podcasts here](#)



(Left to right) Stefan Kornelius of the *Süddeutsche Zeitung*, Miriam Hollstein (2008 McCloy Fellow) of *Stern* in Berlin, Anna Sauerbrey (2018 Kellen Fellow) of *DIE ZEIT*, and Stephan Detjen of Deutschlandradio

STATE-TO-STATE: GERMAN-AMERICAN STATE LEGISLATOR DIALOGUE

While U.S. and German policy on important issues such as climate change and economic development largely takes shape at the federal level – and in Germany even on the level of the European Union – local governments are often on the front lines of these issues. Local, regional, and state-level governments often have more flexibility than federal governments in confronting these issues, allowing them to experiment with innovative policy. In turn, these policies can inspire broader national or global strategies. The German-American State Legislator Dialogue was initiated by the American Council on Germany and the Aspen Institute Germany to focus on the role of state representatives from the United States and Germany in addressing common challenges. In 2024, this virtual discussion series addressed migration, public trust, and infrastructure.

On March 6, **Franziska Baum** (FDP) of the State Parliament of the Free State of Thuringia and **Senator Brian Fernandez** (D) of the Arizona State Senate discussed how best to navigate immigration challenges in the U.S. and Germany. On May 23, the topic of discussion was citizen engagement and how best to build trust in government, featuring **Senator Roger Niello** (R) of the California State Senate, **Marion Schiefer** (CDU) of the State Parliament of Schleswig-Holstein, and **Senator Cindy Winckler** (D) of the Iowa State Senate. And on September 12, a panel of state legislators from the U.S., Canada, and Germany together looked at how municipalities can build resilience and protect critical infrastructure.



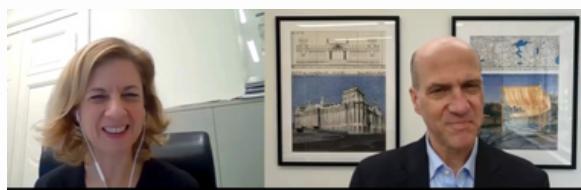
Top row, left to right: Iowa State Senator Cindy Winckler, Marion Schiefer of the State Parliament of Schleswig-Holstein, and ACG President and CEO Dr. Steven E. Sokol; Bottom row: Dr. Stormy-Annika Mildner, Executive Director of the Aspen Institute Berlin, and California State Senator Roger Niello

OTHER VIRTUAL EVENT SERIES

SUPERWAHLJAHR 2024

Beginning with Taiwan in early January through the U.S. Presidential election in November was a Superwahljahr. With around 4 billion eligible voters in more than 70 countries holding national elections, the year profoundly reshaped global politics. The Superwahljahr 2024 Virtual Event Series addressed how trends in global politics influenced elections worldwide – trends including an increase in popularity of far-right populist parties in governments across the world; economic challenges such as inflation, unemployment, and climate change; as well as an erosion of trust in democratic institutions. This series examined the implications of elections in France, Pakistan, Turkey, and the United Kingdom, among others, for both domestic and international politics. With a global economy still recovering from the effects of the COVID-19 pandemic, inflation and general economic instability remained at the forefront for electorates around the world.

The speakers were **Dr. Sinem Adar** of the Center for Applied Turkey Studies; **Friederike Böge**, Correspondent for the *Frankfurter Allgemeine Zeitung*; **Annette Dittert**, ARD's London Bureau Chief; **Cathryn Grothe**, Research Analyst at Freedom House; **Dr. Stefan Meister**, Head of the German Council on Foreign Relations' (DGAP) Program on International Order and Democracy; **Dr. Nicolai von Ondarza**, Head of the EU/Europe Research Division at the German Institute for International and Security Affairs (SWP); **David Pfeifer**, South-East Asia Correspondent for the *Süddeutsche Zeitung*; **Professor Dr. Conrad Schetter**, Director of the Bonn International Centre for Conflict Studies; and **Sabine Schicketanz**, Editor-in-Chief of the *Potsdamer Neueste Nachrichten*.



Sabine Schicketanz, Editor-in-Chief of the *Potsdamer Neueste Nachrichten*,
and Dr. Steven E. Sokol, ACG President and CEO

DEALING WITH DISINFORMATION

With the advent of AI and the surge of social networking serving as a primary news source for many, manipulations of information have become not only more common but also much more sophisticated in recent years. Responding to this, the American Council on Germany and the German Consulate General of New York launched a series of virtual discussions on Dealing with Disinformation. The series addresses the resiliency of nation-states and the international order as well as providing prescriptions for combating disinformation.

On February 29, 2024, the series featured NPR journalist **Shannon Bond** and psychologist **Pia Lamberty**, Managing Director of the Center for Monitoring, Analysis, and Strategy, for a discussion on the societal impact of conspiracy narratives. On April 18, tracing disinformation's origins to economic and political motives centuries ago, **Dr. Walter J. Scheirer**, Professor of Engineering in the Department of Computer Science & Engineering at the University of Notre Dame, and **Dr. Heidi Tworek**, Canada Research Chair and Associate Professor of International History and Public Policy at the University of British Columbia in Vancouver, warned of the increasing prevalence of political memes, noting that they can often be more harmful than deepfakes due to their viral nature. On May 22, **Cathleen Berger**, Co-Team Lead for Upgrade Democracy and Research Director on future technologies and sustainability at the Bertelsmann-Stiftung, and **Dr. Claire Wardle**, Co-Founder and Co-Director of the Information Futures Lab and Professor of Practice at Brown University's School of Public Health, brought attention to disinformation's threat to elections and explained how foreign actors exploit divisions, including through fake news sites mimicking legitimate media in Europe. On June 17, **Josephine Ballon**, CEO of HateAid, and **Aaron Keyak**, Deputy Envoy to Monitor and Combat Antisemitism at the U.S. Department of State, discussed how antisemitism spreads online, with social media algorithms amplifying extremist content. A common theme among speakers was an emphasis on the importance of international cooperation to counter disinformation.

NEW INITIATIVES LAUNCHED IN 2024

FOREIGN CORRESPONDENT UNPLUGGED



Gaining a full and accurate account of today's news stories can be challenging amid the evolving media landscape on both sides of the Atlantic. Click-bait, echo chambers, groupthink, and mis- and disinformation can all be hurdles to arriving at the truth. In order to address this, the American Council on Germany and the Goethe-Institut launched a series of in-person discussions called Foreign Correspondent Unplugged in 2024. Each discussion provided unfiltered, unvarnished viewpoints on the economic, political, and social issues of our time from both a German and an American journalist who are covering these stories firsthand. The events were held at Goethe-Instituts across the country.

The events included a discussion about the concept of freedom in Germany and the United States with **Susan B. Glasser**, Staff Writer at *The New Yorker*, and **Julian Heißler**, U.S. Correspondent for *WirtschaftsWoche*; a discussion about tolerance and wokeness with **Charles Lane**, Deputy Opinion Editor and Columnist at the *Washington Post*; and author **René Pfister**, U.S. Correspondent for *Der Spiegel*. Other offerings included an exchange on fragmentation and polarization in Europe and the United States with **Annett Meiritz**, U.S. Correspondent for *Handelsblatt*, and **Juliane Schäuble**, U.S. Correspondent for *Der Tagesspiegel*; a conversation about the political left in Germany and the United States with **Dr. Sheri Berman**, a political scientist and author of *Democracy and Dictatorship in Europe: From the Ancient Regime to Present Day*; and **Lukas Hermsmeier**, a journalist and author of *Uprising – Amerikas Neue Linke*. Rounding out the series were a discussion about reporting on the war in Gaza with journalists **Hanno Hauenstein**, **Alena Jabarine**, and **Ben Mauk**; an event with music journalists **Aida Baghernejad** and **August Brown** from the *Los Angeles Times*; and an event on climate activism and the election with **Luisa Neubauer**, German climate activist; **Bill McKibben**, environmental activist, educator, and author; and **Sabrina Shankman** of the *Boston Globe*. A recording of each event was released as part of a series of podcasts.

[Listen to our Foreign Correspondent Unplugged podcasts here](#)

DOUBLE EXPOSURE SERIES

At a time of pronounced polarization, the American Council on Germany and Goethe-Institut Chicago organized a series of events under the heading "Double Exposure" to analyze the concept of solidarity in various contexts through German and American lenses. In addition to the virtual events, in-person events were held in Chicago, New York City, and Washington, DC, and a series of podcasts was also released. Among the topics covered were the intersection of politics, ethnicity, race, and solidarity in today's complex world; the concepts of human dignity and equality enshrined in the German Basic Law and the Declaration of Independence; what unites individuals to engage in political struggles across geographical, social, religious, and political divides and perceived boundaries; how solidarity movements challenge the interests and positions of powerful states and systems; how societies in heated environments can create an atmosphere of mutual respect and healthy debate; historical injustices and their implications today; and interest politics, including the roles of independent courts, political parties, and a free press.

The speakers included historian and philosopher **Dr. Leora Auslander**, Chair of the Department of Race, Diaspora, and Indigeneity at the University of Chicago; **Dr. Delia Baldassari**, Julius Silver, Roslyn S. Silver, and Enid Silver Winslow Professor in the Department of Sociology at New York University; **Dr. Clara van den Berg** of the Wissenschaftszentrum Berlin, WZB; **Omri Boehm**, Associate Professor of Philosophy at The New School for Social Research; **Dr. Emily Marker**, Associate Professor of History at Rutgers University; American philosopher and writer **Dr. Susan Neiman**; and literary critic **Dr. Mirjam Wenzel**, Director of the Jewish Museum Frankfurt am Main.

[Listen to our Double Exposure podcasts here](#)

SYMPORIUM: THE TRANSATLANTIC ECONOMY AFTER THE U.S. ELECTION

The 2024 elections saw a victory for President Donald Trump and the Republican Party. As results were still coming in, German Chancellor Olaf Scholz dismissed German Finance Minister Christian Lindner, triggering a collapse of the three-party coalition government and paving the way for early elections. A week after these momentous developments, on November 13, the American Council on Germany, the American-German Institute, and the German-American Chamber of Commerce held a symposium looking at the future of the transatlantic economy. The event was generously hosted by Deutsche Bank.

Among the key takeaways of the symposium:

- The U.S. election results deliver a “very clear mandate for Trump and the Trump administration,” and significant structural and fundamental changes in the country’s economy and society should be anticipated. Germany and the United States will need to reevaluate their business models.
- The new administration’s proposed trade policies, including a range of tariffs, have the potential to negatively impact economic growth, exacerbate inflationary pressures, and disrupt supply chains.
- The volatile global political climate calls for stepped-up international cooperation.

The speakers were **Martin Daum**, a member of the Board of Management of Daimler Truck Holding AG and Daimler Truck AG; ACG Board members **Michael Heinz**, Chairman of BASF Corporation, and **Dr. John Lipsky**, Senior Fellow at the Foreign Policy Institute of Johns Hopkins University School of Advanced International Studies; **Matthew Luzzetti**, U.S. Chief Economist at Deutsche Bank; German Ambassador to the United States **Andreas Michaelis**; **Stefan Simon**, Chief Executive Officer for the Americas, Chief Legal Officer, and a member of the Management Board at Deutsche Bank; and **Dr. Guido Skudlarek**, President for North America at Evonik Corporation, with moderators **Heike Buchter**, Founder of New York German Press and New York Correspondent with *DIE ZEIT*, and **Katharina Kort**, U.S. Bureau Chief and Correspondent for *Handelsblatt*.



GERMANY CONNECT: NEW YORK NETWORKING FOR GLOBAL PROFESSIONALS

The American Council on Germany is committed to serving as a forum for younger generations to gain insights into transatlantic issues, to exchange ideas, and to form connections with one another. In 2024, the ACG launched a summer program for students and young professionals completing internships in New York City called Germany Connect: New York Networking for Global Professionals. Over a series of five events at the ACG’s office in July and August, the 20 participants met with experts on German-American affairs to discuss key economic, political, and social issues affecting the transatlantic partnership and network with one another. The speakers included **Martin Ganslmeier**, Correspondent and Director for ARD in New York; **Thomas Heck**, PwC Partner on Secondment and German Foreign Business Network Leader; and **Anton Klix**, Consul for Political Affairs at the German Consulate in New York. The program forges nothing short of a new generation of transatlanticists.



EVENTS IN GERMANY

POLICY DISCUSSIONS

As the 2024 Munich Security Conference convened, the tone and tenor reflected growing collective concern about the ongoing war in Ukraine and a wide range of other geopolitical flareups. The perceived gravity grew when participants got word of the death of Russian opposition leader Alexei Navalny. In 2024, the American Council on Germany convened several discussions in Germany, including an official side event at the MSC.

The foreign policy implications of the elections in 2024 were the focus of the ACG's Breakfast Briefing on February 16 in Munich with **Simone Menne**, President of the American Chamber of Commerce in Germany; **Dr. Constanze Stelzenmüller** (1993 Young Leader), Director of the Center on the U.S. and Europe and Fritz Stern Chair at the Brookings Institution; and **Ambassador Kurt Volker**, Senior International Advisor and Advisory Board Member at BGR Group, in conversation with ACG Chairman **Ambassador John B. Emerson**, former U.S. Ambassador to Germany and Vice Chairman at Capital Group International.

The ACG held a Summit at the Munich Security Conference on "Shattered Illusions: How to Preserve and Update Transatlantic Resolve" featuring **Boris Pistorius**, German Federal Defense Minister, and **Ambassador Julianne Smith**, U.S. Ambassador to NATO, followed by an open discussion with U.S. and German legislators on February 17. And on February 20, the Council held a discussion in Berlin to look at how the security community was preparing for global elections, featuring **Dr. Jana Puglierin**, Senior Policy Fellow and Head of the Berlin office of the European Council on Foreign Relations, and **Cathryn Clüver Ashbrook**, Executive Vice President and Senior Advisor at the Bertelsmann Foundation.

The results of the European elections and their implications for the transatlantic alliance were analyzed at a discussion on June 4 in Berlin with **Dr. Laura von Daniels**, Head of the Americas Research Division at the German Institute for International and Security Affairs (Stiftung Wissenschaft und Politik, SWP), and **Sudha David-Wilp** (1996 McCloy Fellow in Journalism), Regional Director of the German Marshall Fund's Berlin office and a Senior Fellow. The event was held in partnership with the Freunde des American Council on Germany e.V.

The Council also held events in Germany later in the year to analyze the implications of elections around the world. A discussion and reception on October 14 in Berlin looked at the impact of the U.S. elections on the transatlantic economy. The speakers included **Andrew Frank** (1997 Young Leader), Founder and President of KARV; **Zev Furst**, Chairman and CEO of First International Resources; **Isabell Hoffmann**, Senior Expert at the Bertelsmann-Stiftung and Head of eupinions; **Jeff Liszt**, Partner at Impact Research; **Dr. Steven E. Sokol**, President and CEO of the ACG; and **Anja Wehler-Schöck**, Head of the International Politics department for *Der Tagesspiegel*. This event was held in cooperation with KARV and First International and hosted by CMS Hasche Sigle Partnerschaft von Rechtsanwälten und Steuerberatern mbB, with support from the Freunde des American Council on Germany. After the U.S. Presidential election, the Council held a discussion with **Simon Book** (2016 Kellen Fellow), U.S. Correspondent for *Der Spiegel*, looking at the election's effects on German-American relations. The event was held on November 14 in Munich in cooperation with Atlantik-Brücke.

SILVER ECONOMY FORUM

Amid the super election year, the issue of aging came to the forefront when initially both main candidates for U.S. President were ages 78 and 81, before Democratic candidate Joe Biden stepped down from the ticket. In a world of changing leadership not just in the United States, and with the demographic shift toward more old than young accelerating globally, the American Council on Germany together with the Global Coalition on Aging analyzed what is needed for successful leadership across issues and generations through a webinar series then a hybrid conference in Berlin. The webinars looked at today's demographic challenges – and opportunities – and led up to the "Silver Economy Forum: Defining Leadership in an Aging World" in Berlin on October 15 and 16, 2024. 200 guests from across business, government, academia, think tanks, and civil society attended the conference in person, with thousands more participating in the live broadcast. The conference highlighted key themes at the intersection of leadership, successful aging, and the Silver Economy, including health-care and financial challenges, technology's impact on aging, and the future of traditional consumer businesses.

AMERICAN-GERMAN YOUNG LEADERS CONFERENCE



Every year the American Council on Germany's American-German Young Leaders Conference brings together about 25 Americans and 25 Germans from a variety of backgrounds for one week to analyze political, economic, and social issues on the transatlantic agenda; to exchange perspectives from across disciplines and borders; and to foster a network of transatlanticists who will continue to build on their cooperation and friendships in the long term. 2024 was the 44th iteration of the conference, which is now held annually.

The Young Leaders Conference brought together policy experts, Bundestag members and state and local representatives, individuals from finance and the corporate world, lawyers, journalists, and academics to look at "New Realities for Transatlantic Relations: What Is the Future for Democracy, Security, and Growth?" from July 20 to 25 in Berlin. The group discussed topics including what defines Americans and Germans; our principles, values, and interests; domestic and global priorities; trade agendas; social cohesion; and NATO's future. Through meetings with high-level officials and experts, along with presentations and working groups, they plied today's complex array of geopolitical challenges.

During a Fireside Chat with ACG Chairman **Ambassador John B. Emerson**, Vice Chairman of Capital Group International and former U.S. Ambassador to Germany, and **Ambassador Emily Haber**, a member of Macro Advisory Partners' Global Advisory Board and former German Ambassador to the United States, breaking news changed the course of the discussion: President Joe Biden had announced he was no longer running for reelection in November. This led to engaging dialogue in real time about the implications.

Young Leaders' other meeting partners included multiple Bundestag members, including **Jakob Blankenburg** (SPD) and **Paula Piechotta** (The Greens) of the 2024 cohort, along with **Torsten Herbst** (FDP) (2011 Young Leader) and **Thomas Silberhorn** (CSU). They had briefings with **Professor Luise Hölscher**, State Secretary in the Federal Finance Ministry, and **Colonel Glenn McCarran** of the U.S. Marine Corps Defense Innovation Unit (DIU) at the U.S. Department of Defense and Embed in the U.S. European Command. The Young Leaders also discussed Germany's approach to geopolitical challenges with German Federal Government Spokesperson **Steffen Hebestreit**, and the nuances of cybersecurity with **Dr. Markus Richter**, State Secretary in the Federal Ministry of the Interior. **Dr. Thomas Bagger**, State Secretary in the Federal Foreign Office, inspired the cohort with his overview of policy challenges and a call for leadership at a seminal time. The Young Leaders also visited the Chancellery for briefings with **Dr. Steffen Meyer**, Chief Economic Advisor to Chancellor Olaf Scholz, and **Dominik Bohnen**, Deputy Head of the Division for Security Policy, Non-Proliferation and Arms Control, Relations with the USA, Canada, Northern, Western, and Southern Europe, and Turkey at the Federal Chancellery, delineated Germany's National Security Strategy.

The weeklong conference is only the beginning of the Young Leaders' engagement with the ACG. Young Leaders continue to meet over time both at official alumni events and in less formal settings to exchange ideas and deepen the bonds forged during the conference. The ACG looks forward to strengthening the connections among Young Leaders in the months and years to come – all in an effort to further German-American cooperation.



“It was an incredibly intensive but equally exciting week, filled with many insights, great conversations, and numerous new connections.”

- Ilka Rasch (2024 Young Leader)



[Read the Conference Report](#)

The Council is extremely grateful to the sponsors who helped make the conference possible, including the Anna-Maria and Stephen Kellen Foundation, the German Marshall Fund of the United States, and the Victoria Owen Klein Charitable Foundation.

Great thanks also go to those who generously hosted the group for meetings at their offices – the Bertelsmann Foundation and the German Savings Banks Association (Deutscher Sparkassen- und Giroverband, DSGV) – and those who sponsored dinners:

Deutsche Bank, Freunde des American Council on Germany e.V., Mercedes-Benz Group AG, Noerr, and Pfizer Inc.

2024 AMERICAN-GERMAN YOUNG LEADERS

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2024 AMERICAN-GERMAN YOUNG LEADERS (CONT'D)

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Jannis Poestges Senior Sales Partner Netflix Berlin	Thomas Ulbrich Director German Federal Chancellery Berlin								
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Sophie Schäffer Chief of Staff & Policy Advisor for Defense Policy, MdB Niklas Wagener Alliance 90/The Greens Berlin	Young Leaders Steering Committee and ACG Staff								
Julia Schellhaas Senior Advisor, Supply Chains Organization for Security and Co-operation in Europe (OSCE) Berlin/Vienna	<table><tbody><tr><td>Robin Cammarota Senior Program Director American Council on Germany New York, NY</td><td>Sarmad Hussain Communication Manager German Savings Banks Association (DSGV) Berlin (2005 Young Leader)</td></tr><tr><td>Frances Devlin Head of Strategy, Global Policy and Public Affairs Pfizer Inc New York, NY (ACG Board Member & 2012 Young Leader)</td><td>Ed McFadden (Steering Committee Chairman) Senior Vice President, Communications American Financial Services Association (AFSA) Washington, DC (2002 Young Leader)</td></tr><tr><td>Karen Furey Executive Vice President American Council on Germany New York, NY</td><td>Michele Ruehs Steinbuch Vice President American Council on Germany New York, NY</td></tr><tr><td>Alexandra Schindel M&A Finance, Long-Term Target Setting (Finance) BMW Munich</td><td></td></tr></tbody></table>	Robin Cammarota Senior Program Director American Council on Germany New York, NY	Sarmad Hussain Communication Manager German Savings Banks Association (DSGV) Berlin (2005 Young Leader)	Frances Devlin Head of Strategy, Global Policy and Public Affairs Pfizer Inc New York, NY (ACG Board Member & 2012 Young Leader)	Ed McFadden (Steering Committee Chairman) Senior Vice President, Communications American Financial Services Association (AFSA) Washington, DC (2002 Young Leader)	Karen Furey Executive Vice President American Council on Germany New York, NY	Michele Ruehs Steinbuch Vice President American Council on Germany New York, NY	Alexandra Schindel M&A Finance, Long-Term Target Setting (Finance) BMW Munich	
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With many thanks to the Steering Committee
for all of their time and effort

STUDY TOURS AND LEADERSHIP MISSIONS

Exchanging perspectives, sharing policy solutions, and gaining insights with practical applications – these are some key goals of the American Council on Germany's study tours and leadership missions. The study tours give practitioners and experts from across sectors the opportunity to travel across the Atlantic and meet with their professional counterparts to exchange best practices and explore pressing topics in their fields. Each group talks with officials, business leaders, experts, and one another to gain a better understanding of today's challenges in their field and to strategize about solutions for the greater good of their communities and the wider world.

In 2024, the ACG conducted five study tours through the following initiatives:

- International Education Study Group
- Study Tours on Social Cohesion
- German-American Semiconductor Cities Network
- Leadership Mission on Agriculture Policy and Resource Scarcity

Together these study tours allowed more than 80 German and American professionals to engage in nuanced discussions about issues affecting their fields. After their travels, participants are encouraged to continue the discussion with their peers in the long term, and to apply lessons learned in their local communities.



“Sharing experiences across the Atlantic is invaluable for the participating cities in the **German-American Semiconductor Cities Network** – Chandler, AZ, Columbus/New Albany, OH, Magdeburg, and Dresden. The challenges are similar, but the framework conditions are sometimes different. Active discussions about solutions, strategies, and experiences bring benefits to each of the partners involved. Without the ACG, this network would not have come together. I am extremely grateful for the ACG's commitment to bringing together decision-makers at the local level and look forward to the next steps together!”

**- Sandra Yvonne Stieger, Deputy Mayor,
City of Magdeburg**

“The **International Education Study Group** was a transformative experience. Being able to meet with policymakers and key stakeholders in the German education system was both eye-opening and reassuring that other developed nations are also grappling with similar challenges: emerging technology, post-COVID student engagement, and competing actors. This trip will remain a high point in my tenure as a school director and an even more significant milestone in my career.”

**- Claire Guth, School Board Member,
Mt. Lebanon School District**

INTERNATIONAL EDUCATION STUDY GROUP

The American Council on Germany collaborated with the Pennsylvania School Boards Association on the International Education Study Group, an initiative that gives school board members and school administrators from across Pennsylvania a firsthand look at the German education system. The goals of the project are to gather ideas from German practices and to develop recommendations for changes Pennsylvania school districts could implement to enhance district academics, operations, facilities, and culture. The 18-member delegation, representing rural and suburban school districts from across the state of Pennsylvania, traveled to Bonn, Düsseldorf, Dortmund, and Cologne from April 14 to 20, 2024.

The delegation began its visit in Bonn, where they engaged with representatives from the German Ministry of Education and Research to explore the ministry's responsibilities, challenges, and innovations within the German education system. They also met with the Standing Conference of the Ministers of Education and Cultural Affairs to understand how education policy is coordinated across Germany's federal and state levels. Visits to local institutions such as Finkenhof Elementary School and BONNEUM Beuel introduced the group to innovative scientific and digital learning programs for students from kindergarten through secondary school. At the Marie-Kahle Comprehensive School, the principal shared insights into the comprehensive school model used in North Rhine-Westphalia, highlighting its advantages over the traditional German system that tracks students into separate schools after fourth grade. In Düsseldorf, discussions with the Ministry of Education of North-Rhine Westphalia focused on state-level responsibilities including school funding, curriculum design, and alternative performance assessments, helping to build foundations for future educational cooperation between North-Rhine Westphalia and Pennsylvania.

In Dortmund, the delegation examined the role of municipal school administrations and observed firsthand how schools like Stadtgymnasium Dortmund and Droste-Hülshoff-Intermediate School integrate digital tools, inclusive education, and the UN Sustainable Development Goals into their teaching. Visits to KITZ.do and the Robert Bosch Vocational School highlighted Germany's strong emphasis on STEM and vocational education, especially within the dual system of theoretical and practical training. The week concluded with visits to a Mittelstand company – where they learned more about the German dual system of apprenticeship training, providing Germans ages 16 to 20 with practical training in more than 325 recognized occupations – and the University of Cologne and Center for Teacher Education, where they gained perspectives on teacher education.

For many delegates, the trip was a transformative experience to learn about and study the structure, curriculum, and governance of German schools and reinforced the value of international collaboration in enhancing education back home in Pennsylvania.



STUDY TOURS ON SOCIAL COHESION

The American Council on Germany's Study Tours on Social Cohesion bring together young German and American professionals to discuss communities' approaches to diversity, equity, inclusion, and accessibility (DEIA) and exchange best practices. The program is funded through the Transatlantic Program of the Government of the Federal Republic of Germany through funds of the European Recovery Program (ERP) of the Federal Ministry for Economic Affairs and Climate Action (BMWK).

In 2024, the project brought together 10 American and 10 German young professionals for two weeklong study tours on either side of the Atlantic. The participants are the third cohort of the program.

The study tour began in Erfurt on June 9, the same day that Germany voted in the European Parliamentary elections. The results would be discussed throughout the week. The group was united by their commitment to making society more equitable and their readiness to discuss challenges and experiences.

The week began at the Thuringian Landtag and various ministries with conversations on immigration policy, education, and affordable housing. The group was enlightened about the daunting challenges confronted by migrant communities, notably the necessity to learn German to secure employment.

Throughout the week, the group visited sites that emphasize both the historical and present-day importance of standing up against injustice. In Erfurt, the group toured the former site of Topf und Soehne, the manufacturer of crematories used during the Holocaust, and met with members of Decolonize Erfurt to discuss Germany's colonial legacy.

In Frankfurt, the group met with various German organizations focused on platforming DEIA policies and norms within Germany. They met with representatives from the Frankfurter Jugendring, which supports youth groups throughout the city, promotes democratic values, and fights against ageism. Meeting with the Kommunale Auslaendervertretung (KAV) (Foreigners Advisory Council) for Frankfurt, the cohort engaged in discourse on current migration policies and the hurdles the German government has been facing.

The study tour was designed to provide a historical context of injustice before delving into meetings with those who are working to achieve social cohesion. At the end of the week, the group met for wrap-up sessions to discuss their takeaways. The group recognized the commonalities between the two countries and expressed concern about what far-right influences might mean for social cohesion.



Three months later, on September 15, the same group met in Atlanta for the second part of the exchange. That evening, during a reunion dinner, the group reflected on the recent German elections and looked ahead to the 2024 U.S. elections. On both sides of the Atlantic, many expressed concerns about the future of democracy and civil rights. The next morning, the Georgia House of Representatives welcomed the cohort for insightful roundtable discussions on voting rights, employment, and housing. **Representative Lydia Glaize** (2015 McCloy Fellow in Urban Affairs) and **Representative Saira Draper; Yvonne Brooks**, President of the Georgia State AFL-CIO; and **George Brown**, Asset Management Division Director for the U.S. Department of Housing and Urban Development, discussed the most significant issues in their work today.

Additionally, the group visited cultural centers that emerged to combat injustice, such as Mary Mac's Tea Room, a soul-food restaurant where the cohort dined, which was established during the Jim Crow era as a safe space for black women. They toured the National Center for Civil and Human Rights, where they explored the legacy of the American Civil Rights Movement and drew parallels to current global struggles for human rights and justice.

The group then traveled to Denver, where they encountered familiar issues faced by minority communities, including disparities in affordable housing and income inequality. During their visit to the History Colorado Center, they learned about the state's indigenous history and discussed the lasting impact of U.S. policies on marginalized communities.

In their final wrap-up session, the group compared the four cities: Erfurt, Frankfurt, Atlanta, and Denver. Despite regional differences, they noted that all regions had passionate individuals working tirelessly to create more equitable societies. The participants left with a broader perspective on how to address challenges in their respective fields – and how to apply these transatlantic insights in their own communities.



GERMAN-AMERICAN SEMICONDUCTORS CITIES NETWORK

Germany and the United States are working to build up their semiconductor infrastructure since the dire chips situation manifested by the COVID-19 pandemic. While investing in major semiconductor projects is a positive step in addressing supply-chain issues and volatility, the influx of this new investment in local communities is having a pronounced social and economic impact. Local governments are being called upon to map out long-term strategies with community stakeholders to ensure that both the investing companies and local communities thrive.

Helping these communities collaborate and learn from one another is the goal of the American Council on Germany's German-American Semiconductor Cities Network. This three-year project is designed to help key stakeholders from German and American communities in the semiconductor industry connect with one another to share ideas and experiences while identifying strategies and best practices that can be implemented to address the social, economic, and structural impacts of semiconductor investments in their communities. The program is organized and administered by the ACG and supported by the Transatlantic Program of the Federal Republic of Germany, funded by the European Recovery Program (ERP) of the Federal Ministry for Economic Affairs and Climate Action (BMWK). The City of Magdeburg also provided support.

In the first year, the German cities of Magdeburg (Saxony-Anhalt) and Dresden (Saxony) and the U.S. cities Chandler (Arizona) and Columbus/New Albany (Ohio) took part. Two to four cities will be added in each of the subsequent two project years. Six decision-makers from each city are selected to participate in one delegation trip to the United States and one to Germany. In addition, stakeholders regularly exchange information in monthly virtual roundtables throughout the year on five key issues: sustainable project development; a welcoming culture; urban development; education, training, and human resources development; and the semiconductor ecosystem.

In October 2024, the ACG led a delegation of German business, academic, and policy leaders for the first study tour to Arizona and Ohio, key hubs for semiconductor innovation. In Arizona, the delegation visited Microchip Technology's Fab 2 in Tempe and Intel's Ocotillo Campus in Chandler, where two new semiconductor fabs are under construction. The group visited Chandler's Ocotillo Water Reclamation and Brine Reduction Facilities and talked with Chandler city officials about the importance of regional collaboration in areas like planning and land use, housing, infrastructure, and workforce development. Arizona State University's contributions were also highlighted, including its Innovation Zones, MacroTechnology Works, and its role in the Department of Defense's Microelectronics Commons initiative. The group learned about new educational programs tailored to the semiconductor industry as well, such as the Chandler Unified School District's Chips and Wafers summer camp and the Maricopa County Community College District's Semiconductor Technician QuickStart boot camp.

In Ohio, the group toured the Central Ohio Transit Authority's McKinley Facility and got a VR overview of LinkUS Columbus, a public-transit initiative to support regional growth. The group also met with the Columbus Public Utilities Department to discuss water infrastructure planning and learned about housing policies that ensure access, stability, and opportunity for members of the community. In New Albany, they toured Intel's future fab site and learned about regional planning efforts coordinated by local and state agencies to support semiconductor investment. The program concluded at Columbus State Community College, where officials shared workforce-development initiatives like the Ohio Semiconductor Collaboration Network and a new certificate program focused on semiconductor fundamentals.



LEADERSHIP MISSION ON AGRICULTURE POLICY AND RESOURCE SCARCITY

Since 1980, the American Council on Germany has promoted transatlantic exchange in agriculture. More than four decades later, the ACG continues to foster dialogue between U.S. and German agricultural leaders through initiatives like the Leadership Mission on Agriculture Policy and Resource Scarcity.

From November 17 to 24, 2024, the third cohort of this program gathered in Berlin for a week of policy discussions, farm visits, and cultural engagement. Sponsored by The Halle Foundation, the program brought together 12 participants representing Georgia, Mississippi, North Carolina, South Carolina, and Tennessee. The program highlights shared agricultural challenges and practices across the Atlantic.

The program opened with a scenic river cruise and welcome dinner joined by **Roger Fechler** (2012 McCloy Fellow in Agriculture), Head of Livestock at the German Farmers' Association (Deutscher Bauernverband, DBV). Conversations touched on Germany's agricultural structure, sustainable farming, and the war in Ukraine's impact on food security.

The next day, at the German Federal Ministry of Food and Agriculture, **Dr. Burkhard Schmied**, Head of Agricultural Production, Horticulture, and Agricultural Policy, shared insights into Germany's climate-resilient agricultural strategy. The group then met with **Christian Gaebel** (2015 McCloy Fellow in Agriculture), **Heinz Möddel**, and **Katharina Geiger** at the DBV for deeper discussions on arable crops, economics, and the EU Common Agricultural Policy (CAP).

Later, at the U.S. Embassy, agricultural counselors from the Foreign Agricultural Service explained how they promote American farming interests abroad. The U.S. exports \$20 billion in agricultural products to the EU annually, with Germany alone accounting for \$3 billion.

After visiting the Berlin Wall Memorial and PeaceBread Association, participants returned to the DBV to learn more about the EU's Common Agricultural Policy. Over dinner, they were joined by **Theresa Krätner** (2023 Leadership Mission in Agriculture), Policy Advisor for Renewable Energy and Social Policy, who also leads the DBV's initiative to involve more women in agriculture.

Midweek, the group traveled to Hannover and visited farms in Bergen and Ottenstein. At Hohls Becklingen, a fifth-generation pig farm and biogas producer, participants explored innovations in energy and livestock care. At Weserbergland Milch, farmer **Kai Schomburg** shared how he expanded his dairy operation from 50 to 1,700 hectares through automation and diversification.

The delegation met with **Jörn Ehlers** (2017 McCloy Fellow in Agriculture), Vice Chairman of Landvolk Niedersachsen, and later with **Nelly Wendt**, an asparagus farmer and Policy Advisor at the Lower Saxony Ministry of Food and Agriculture, who addressed challenges like low farm income and land access.

In Münster, the group met with **Hubertus Beringmeier**, President of Westfälisch-Lippischer Landwirtschaftsverband (WLV), and **Dr. Thomas Forstreuter**, WLV Secretary General. Final discussions explored renewable energy, biodiversity, and future pathways for sustainable farming.

The mission concluded with a deeper appreciation of shared challenges and a renewed commitment to collaboration, innovation, and resilience in the face of a rapidly evolving global agricultural landscape.



FELLOWSHIPS

The McCloy Fellowships on Global Trends empower young American and German professionals to explore critical global issues such as national security, sustainability, technology and innovation, and economic challenges. Named after founding ACG Chairman John J. McCloy, the program fosters cross-cultural exchange and collaboration, with more than 1,000 fellowships awarded since its inception. The fellowships allow early-career professionals to design their own research and examine key global topics, enhancing transatlantic connections and broadening international perspectives.

The 2024 McCloy Fellows on Global Trends include **Kristina Arakelyan**, Director of Strategic Planning for the New York City Office of Asylum Seeker Operations (OASO), and **Sylvia Fall**, Integration Officer for the City of Emmendingen, Germany, who are researching how American and German communities respond to rapidly growing migrant populations. **Meral Kaufman**, Chief of Staff for Bundestag member Ricarda Lang (Alliance 90/The Greens), is exploring how the Inflation Reduction Act impacts transatlantic relations. **Thomas König**, Director of China for the German Chamber of Commerce and Industry (DIHK), is examining a path forward for U.S.-EU relations with China. **Mattis Körber**, a consultant for international public affairs for navos, is researching the potential of aligned transatlantic hydrogen policy and the possible impacts on developing green hydrogen initiatives in the Global South.

“My month-long research trip was exciting, exhausting, and eventful. It took me to the states and to the people who will decide the election. The nomination of J.D. Vance brought new urgency to the research idea, allowing me to understand the narrative the Republicans are using in their campaign. So far, several articles and a piece for Deutschlandfunk Kultur have emerged from this research. I am very grateful for this opportunity, which allowed me to make connections and develop my skills further. I owe a debt of gratitude to the American Council on Germany.”

- Lena Fiedler (2023 Kellen Fellow)

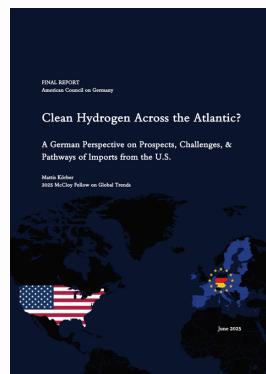
Fellows share their research with ACG members and friends during or after their research trip at an in-person or virtual discussion and also with a final report.

[Read a fellowship report here](#)

“Clean Hydrogen Across the Atlantic? A German Perspective on Prospects, Challenges, & Pathways of Imports from the U.S.”

By Mattis Körber

2024 McCloy Fellow on Global Trends



PROGRAMMING THEMES

The American Council on Germany's policy discussions – both in person and virtual – give audiences the opportunity to gain perspectives from policymakers, experts, and thought leaders from both sides of the Atlantic on key political, economic, and social issues on the transatlantic agenda. Over the course of 2024, the ACG held more than 150 events, including virtual discussions reaching thousands of viewers around the globe together with in-person events in New York City, at its Warburg Chapters across the United States, in Washington, DC, and in Germany.

2024 was a seminal year, witnessing elections in more than 70 countries and determining the leadership of around 4 billion people. Unrest continued unabated in Ukraine and Gaza. The global economy was hampered by conflicts and climate emergencies, and high inflation and rising debt too posed obstacles to growth. International cooperation to address global challenges experienced setbacks. Artificial Intelligence continued to advance in leaps and bounds, presenting both opportunities and challenges for international relations and security, including the potential for use in disinformation campaigns.

Later in the year, Americans elected a former U.S. President to a second term in office. Mere hours later, the world watched the dramatic collapse of the federal governing coalition in Germany – the so-called traffic-light coalition made up of the Social Democrats, the Greens, and the Free Democrats – that had been in power since 2021. The upheaval left Germany in a state of political chaos. The turn of events triggered a vote of confidence (ultimately no confidence) in the German Bundestag, and later an early federal election.

The ACG's policy discussions analyzed the situation on the ground as these headlines unfolded, always with an eye toward the implications for German-American relations. Our policy discussions in 2024 had a special focus on the following themes:

- German-American Relations in a Global Context;
- The Transatlantic Economy; and
- Security Issues Around the Globe.



ACG President and CEO Dr. Steven E. Sokol and Eckart von Klaeden (1997 Young Leader), Vice President and Head of External Affairs of Mercedes-Benz Group AG



Dr. Thomas Gstaedtner, Head of Division in the Banking Supervisory Arm of the European Central Bank, and ACG Board member Dr. John Lipsky, Senior Fellow at the Foreign Policy Institute at Johns Hopkins University School of Advanced International Studies

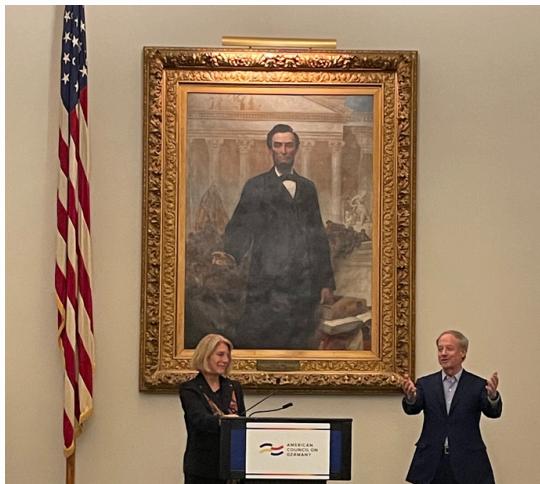
GERMAN-AMERICAN RELATIONS IN A GLOBAL CONTEXT

The American Council on Germany's policy discussions in 2024 underscored Germany's evolving role in an increasingly complex international arena. Between the increasingly dire situation of the Ukraine war, shifting power dynamics in the global economy, and political gridlock in the United States, 2024 was a moment for reflection and reorientation for Germany as a global and regional power.

On February 6, the ACG was joined by **Dr. Stefan Fröhlich**, Professor of International Politics at the University of Erlangen-Nuremberg, who discussed how Germany is redefining its position within the shifting international order. He emphasized that Germany, long hesitant to assume a robust geopolitical role, has begun embracing a more assertive foreign policy stance in response to systemic challenges, including Russia's war on Ukraine and growing transatlantic tensions. Dr. Fröhlich argued that Germany's *Zeitenwende* signifies a strategic pivot from its traditional model of economic dependency and military restraint toward a greater commitment to European security and global burden-sharing. The Kreditanstalt für Wiederaufbau's designation of the 2020s as a "decisive decade" speaks to the transformative challenges facing Europe, from climate change to technological advancement.

German Bundestag member **Metin Hakverdi**, Chairman of the USA/North America Working Group within the SPD Parliamentary Group, met with ACG members and friends on February 7 to share an outlook on Germany's changing role in the world. He saw the West as having two main guiding principles in its rhetoric about Ukraine: First, Russia must not win this war. (He said that if you want to see how moving borders by force works out in Europe, read your history book.) Second, NATO will not be a combatant in the conflict; neither will it send soldiers nor will it be aligned fighting behind Ukraine. Germany would continue to play a key role in supporting Ukraine.

On April 18, in connection with the American Council on Germany's Annual Meeting, **Dr. Karen Donfried**, Senior Fellow at the Belfer Center for Science and International Affairs at the Harvard Kennedy School and former Assistant Secretary of State for European and Eurasian Affairs, as well as a longtime member of the ACG, delved into the transatlantic response to the war in Ukraine. American leadership has been key in the West's response to Ukraine, but multiple factors have been inhibiting continued support and aid. There is a real danger that the stress to Ukraine's front lines will dramatically worsen. The implications of the war have been existential for Ukraine, terrible for Europe, and incredibly concerning for global stability.



ACG Chairman Ambassador John B. Emerson (right) and ACG Annual Meeting speaker Dr. Karen Donfried, Senior Fellow at the Belfer Center for Science and International Affairs at the Harvard Kennedy School and former Assistant Secretary of State for European and Eurasian Affairs



German Bundestag member Metin Hakverdi, Chairman of the USA/North America Working Group within the SPD Parliamentary Group, and ACG President and CEO Dr. Steven E. Sokol fielding questions from ACG members and friends

On May 8, Germany's responses to multiple crises were the focus of a discussion with **Professor Dr. Daniela Schwarzer**, a member of the Bertelsmann Stiftung Executive Board and author of *Krisenzeit – Sicherheit, Wirtschaft, Zusammenhalt – Was Deutschland Jetzt Tun Muss*. She said that if you want to be a leader in Europe, you must work together and bring others to the table. Germany is a defender of the global order, but the shrinking fiscal space has been posing difficulties.

A discussion with **Stefan Wintels**, CEO of the Kreditanstalt für Wiederaufbau (KfW), on May 29 emphasized Germany's broader economic challenges, including declining competitiveness, underinvestment in critical sectors like IT, and the urgent need for structural reforms to foster innovation and growth. Together these conversations painted a picture of a nation at a crossroads, seeking to apply its influence amid shifting global dynamics.

At a Breakfast Briefing on June 20, **Dr. Franziska Brantner**, Parliamentary State Secretary in the German Federal Ministry for Economic Affairs and Climate Action and a member of the Bundestag (The Greens), discussed the future of transatlantic relations at an electoral crossroads. She noted that the collaboration between Germany and the United States has been crucial in addressing climate change, navigating global conflicts, and supporting Ukraine. The two countries also boast the world's most extensive economic and trade relations. The elections presented an opportunity to revitalize the transatlantic alliance, yet they were not without risks. She emphasized the need to ensure future-proof transatlantic ties, independent of the EU Commission President or the White House occupant.

On July 11, **Professor Dr. Norbert Lammert**, Chairman of the Konrad Adenauer Foundation and former President of the Bundestag, spoke of democracy and the outlook for transatlantic relations. The event was held in collaboration with the Konrad-Adenauer-Stiftung in New York. He expressed concern for the prevalence of populism and extremist movements and said the only effective way to counter these trends is through elections: Mass participation in elections can decisively shift the political landscape, though mobilizing such efforts remains a significant challenge.

The year wrapped up with a candid discussion on German politics and the future of German-American relations with **Till Knorn**, German Consul General in New York, on December 17.



Till Knorn, German Consul General in New York

THE TRANSATLANTIC ECONOMY

In 2024, the American Council on Germany hosted multiple events that shed light on critical economic challenges and opportunities for Germany, Europe, and the United States. These conversations revealed striking contrasts between the booming U.S. economy and Germany's struggles with stagnation, while also highlighting shared concerns about demographic shifts and the need for structural reforms to boost competitiveness in an era of geopolitical uncertainty.

ACG members and friends met with **Melanie Vogelbach**, Managing Director of International Economic Policy at the Deutsche Industrie- und Handelskammer (DIHK), on February 9 for an overview of the economic landscape in Germany. This event was held in partnership with the German-American Commerce Council. With its strong dependence on exports, Germany can be vulnerable economically. She prescribed derisking, diversifying, and also reassuring investors. She said taxes for businesses should be lowered and foreign direct investment should be a priority.

Turning to issues at the European Central Bank, the ACG met with **Dr. Thomas Gstaedtner**, Head of Division in the Banking Supervisory Arm of the European Central Bank, on February 26. He outlined supervisory priorities for the Central Bank in 2024.

On March 8, the ACG had the special opportunity to hold a roundtable discussion with **Robert Habeck**, Vice Chancellor of Germany and Federal Minister for Economic Affairs and Climate Action. The event brought together economic-development professionals from Connecticut, New Jersey, and New York for a frank and open exchange. The event was held in partnership with the German Marshall Fund of the United States.

On April 3, **Simon Book** (2016 Kellen Fellow), U.S. Correspondent for *Der Spiegel*, contrasted America's technological dynamism and investment-friendly policies like those in the Inflation Reduction Act with Germany's high energy costs, labor shortages, and unclear industrial strategy. He said the German economy has been grappling with a slow recovery from the COVID-19 pandemic, high energy prices following the war in Ukraine, and the high cost of labor. Big companies and industry leaders have argued that the government is not moving fast enough; however, the German government does not currently have the resources to invest in large economic recovery programs.

Economic development on a local level was the focus of a roundtable on June 13 with Mayors from seven German and four American cities, including **Markus Lewe**, Lord Mayor of Münster and President of the Deutscher Städtetag/Association of German Cities. They gathered to share innovative approaches to urban challenges – from repurposing vacant malls into cultural hubs to building climate-resilient infrastructure – demonstrating how cities serve as laboratories for economic revitalization despite limited resources. They also discussed the long-lasting impacts of the COVID-19 pandemic, emphasizing a need for affordable housing, social hubs for people to revitalize their communities, and walkable and accessible main streets to encourage economic activity and community-building. The event was held in collaboration with the Deutscher Städtetag.

Burkhard Balz, a member of the Executive Board of the Deutsche Bundesbank, met with ACG audiences twice in 2024, first on June 27 at a luncheon held in cooperation with the German American Chamber of Commerce. He explained the nuances of the “digital euro,” which will be a Central Bank Digital Currency that allows for online transactions to go through the nation’s central bank. The German Central Bank is working together with teams throughout Europe to create this new format. Later in the year, on December 3, he said the Bundesbank expects the economic slump to continue, and that structural change is needed to combat the decline. Mr. Balz was asked about his thoughts on the Draghi report, published in September. He said he thought it truly addressed some of the most pressing issues in the European Union, and that the EU and the incoming German government, whichever parties it is made up of, should focus on repairing what is highlighted in the report.



Sudha David-Wilp (1996 McCloy Fellow in Journalism), Regional Director of the German Marshall Fund's Berlin Office; Robert Habeck, Vice Chancellor of Germany and Minister for Economic Affairs and Climate Action; and ACG President and CEO Dr. Steven E. Sokol

Eckart von Klaeden (1997 Young Leader), Vice President and Head of External Affairs of Mercedes-Benz Group AG, visited the offices of the ACG on September 23 and shared a German business perspective looking ahead to German-American relations after the U.S. election.

Relations with China was the focus of a discussion on October 2 with **Thomas Heck**, Partner and the German Foreign Business Network Leader at PwC US, and **Frauke Steiner**, Partner and the Leader of the German Business Network in the U.S. at EY. Based on their experiences in China, they painted a picture of a land of stark extremes and contradictions – one with an intensely entrepreneurial spirit. The relationship between the West and China is a balancing act that requires dialogue, but the West needs to have additional competencies to understand China's risks and plans. Ultimately both speakers were optimistic about relations between China and the West, but alignment between Western partners will be key.

On October 24, the ACG offered a Breakfast Briefing with **Markus Blume**, Bavarian State Minister for Science and the Arts and member of the Bavarian State Parliament (CSU), covering a swath of topics, zooming in on Bavaria's economic advantages as a hotspot for innovation and technological development. With institutions like the Technical University of Munich being recognized as Europe's top incubator for tech startups, he emphasized that with the right investments, there is the potential for what has been referred to as "hypergrowth."

The theme of transatlantic divergence reappeared on October 2 when **Professor Dr. Michael Hüther** of the Cologne Institute for Economic Research warned that Europe risks falling further behind unless it embraces EU-wide investments in decarbonization and defense, while carefully managing its economic dependence on China. Dr. Hüther said the European market is significantly more reliant on the Chinese one than the other way around. He said that between 2018 and 2024, the U.S. economy decreased its dependence on the Chinese economy by 18 percent whereas the EU saw an increase in dependency on China of 30 percent.

On October 22, the American Council on Germany had another special opportunity to host a German Federal Minister, this time Finance Minister **Christian Lindner**, for a candid exchange with corporate members and members of the ACG's Chairman's and President's Circles. He discussed the nuances of the German economy and its ongoing potential – depending on the economic policy choices that are made going forward. The main themes that were discussed echoed the Free Democrats' platform: promoting free trade, less regulation, and more innovation. The event was held in cooperation with the Friedrich-Naumann-Stiftung and was under the Chatham House Rule.

Together, these discussions painted a picture of economies at an inflection point. While Germany grapples with industrial transformation and energy transition, and the U.S. leverages its innovation ecosystem, both face the common challenges of adapting to demographic change and maintaining competitiveness in a fragmenting global order. The recurring emphasis on local experimentation, cross-border policy learning, and balanced approaches to regulation versus innovation suggests pathways forward – provided that policymakers can translate these insights into coordinated action. As these conversations made clear, the economic choices made today will determine whether societies emerge stronger from this period of transition or find themselves constrained by outdated structures and thinking.



German Federal Finance Minister Christian Lindner (middle) with Martin Biesel (1986 Congressional Fellow and 1995 Young Leader, second from left), Head of the Regional Office for North America at the Friedrich Naumann Foundation; and ACG Board members (left to right) Elke Rehbock (2017 Young Leader), Partner at Dentons US LLP; ACG Vice Chair Frances Devlin (2012 Young Leader), Head of Strategy, Global Policy and Public Affairs at Pfizer Inc; ACG President and CEO Dr. Steven E. Sokol; ACG Counsel Dale L. Ponikvar, Senior Corporate Tax Partner (ret.) at Milbank LLP; and ACG Treasurer William R. Harman, Managing Director at Venture Capital Fund of America

SECURITY ISSUES AROUND THE GLOBE

Against the turbulent backdrop of the war in Ukraine, a conflict whose hybrid tactics have reshaped global security paradigms, and the ongoing conflict in Gaza, the American Council on Germany convened thought leaders to address security concerns facing Germany and the United States.

On April 4, the ACG hosted **Omid Nouripour**, a member of the Green Party and Co-Chair of Alliance 90, to discuss Germany's growing role in handling the Ukraine war within the broader EU. Noting an uptick in political gridlock in the United States, Mr. Nouripour emphasized Germany's position as the second-largest aid provider to Ukraine, coupled with the fact that the country had already taken in over 1 million Ukrainian refugees. He advocated for EU members to take a large role in working toward resolving the conflict. He warned that Russia's actions pose a threat not only to Ukraine but also to global democratic resilience.

Balancing economic interests with security concerns is a delicate task for Germany, including in its engagement with authoritarian regimes like China. This was explored during a discussion on May 23 with **Professor Dr. Joybrato Mukherjee**, President of the DAAD (Deutscher Akademischer Austauschdienst e.V., German Academic Exchange Service) and Rector of the University of Cologne, and **Christopher Walker**, Vice President for Studies and Analysis at the National Endowment for Democracy. The new German strategy reflects a nuanced approach, recognizing the unique challenges of scientific collaboration while striving to uphold democratic values such as academic freedom. The discussion was moderated by **Lily McElwee** (2021 DZ BANK Fellowship on Transatlantic Business and Finance), Deputy Director and Fellow in the Freeman Chair in China Studies at the Center for Strategic and International Studies (CSIS), and held in partnership with the German Center for Research and Innovation (DWIH) and the University of Cologne office in NYC.

Cathryn Clüver Ashbrook, Executive Vice President and Senior Advisor at the Bertelsmann Foundation, met with ACG members and friends on June 13 to reflect on the results of the European Union's parliamentary elections and their implications for the future of Europe. She described the elections as a "pivotal moment geopolitically." The EU has traditionally left defense largely to individual member states, taken in tandem with NATO. However, there is a pressing need to enhance the EU's defense capabilities across military, cybersecurity, and other vital components. Despite her optimism regarding the creation of an EU Defense Commissioner, the central challenge remains the availability of financial resources and increased coordination.

At a discussion held on September 12, **Heather Conley** (2007 Young Leader), President of the German Marshall Fund of the United States, called for integrated security governance to address the convergence of physical and digital threats. The international system is under construction. There are those who want to keep it in place but there are adversaries who have a new vision for the international system and are willing to act in their own interests. There are several dynamics and events ongoing, for instance it is the year of elections, we are in the midst of a cycle of isolationism, and shifting alliances. As such, it is important that the world continues to keep its attention on Ukraine.

On October 24, **Lt. General (ret.) Ben Hedges**, Senior Advisor to Human Rights First and former Commanding General of U.S. Army Europe, and **Dr. Claudia Major**, Head of the International Security Research Division at the German Institute for International and Security Affairs (Stiftung Wissenschaft und Politik, SWP), shared their insights with members and friends of the ACG. They expressed concern about Europe's unpreparedness for long-term instability. They stressed that Germany and the EU must develop more autonomous defense capabilities, particularly amid uncertainty around future U.S. leadership. A potential Ukrainian defeat could spark a refugee crisis and damage Europe's strategic credibility.

In the meantime, emerging technologies like AI and machine learning are being adapted from wartime applications to anticipate and manage evolving security threats. **Moritz Gathmann**, Reporter at *Stern*, met with the ACG on October 31 to shed light on adaptive security frameworks capable of real-time responsiveness – a critical asset in a landscape defined by rapid escalation and unpredictability.

Collectively, these discussions helped chart a path forward for confronting emerging security challenges while reinforcing the imperative for a unified, agile approach to safeguarding our interconnected world. After all, the ripple effects of the war in Ukraine extend far beyond conventional battlefields.

McCLOY AWARDS DINNERS

The American Council on Germany's McCloy Awards Dinner pays tribute to American and German leaders who have played instrumental roles in the mutually beneficial relationship between our countries while also celebrating the thriving partnership between Germany and the United States. The John J. McCloy Awards, first presented in 1993, are named in honor of John J. McCloy, the founding Chairman of the American Council on Germany and the first civilian U.S. High Commissioner for Germany after World War II. Hundreds of members of the American and German business community and dignitaries are in attendance each year.

The ACG would like to express its great thanks to the many supporters who helped make the gala dinners a success. The proceeds provide crucial support for the ACG's discussions, conferences, and exchange programs that bring together transatlantic peers to examine political, economic, and social issues and develop collaborative solutions to today's challenges. The American Council on Germany held two McCloy Awards Dinners in 2024.

30TH GALA DINNER

On January 31, the American Council on Germany honored **Belén Garijo**, Chair of the Executive Board and CEO of Merck KGaA, Darmstadt, Germany, and **Alexander C. Karp**, Co-Founder & Chief Executive Officer of Palantir Technologies Inc., at its 30th John J. McCloy Awards Dinner, for their commitment to forging transatlantic economic cooperation and harnessing innovation for a better world. **Ambassador John B. Emerson**, Chairman of the American Council on Germany, served as the master of ceremonies. About 300 thought leaders, decision-makers, and stakeholders from both sides of the Atlantic gathered to pay tribute to the honorees while celebrating the longstanding partnership between Germany and the United States.

Ambassador Andreas Michaelis, German Ambassador to the United States, delivered remarks and also read a greeting from German Chancellor Olaf Scholz. Ambassador Emerson shared a greeting from President Joe Biden.

In her acceptance speech, Dr. Garijo – the first woman to lead one of Germany's 30 largest listed companies on the DAX – talked about the potential for solving global problems by pooling efforts beyond borders and working together. Dr. Karp talked about his formative years working on his Ph.D. at Goethe University Frankfurt and his education on both sides of the Atlantic, all of which helped inform the founding of Palantir, whose work today includes thwarting terrorist attacks.



McCloy Award honoree Belén Garijo, Chair of the Executive Board and CEO of Merck KGaA, Darmstadt, Germany, and Ambassador John B. Emerson, Chairman of the American Council on Germany



ACG Chairman Ambassador John B. Emerson and McCloy Award honoree Alexander C. Karp, Co-Founder & Chief Executive Officer of Palantir Technologies Inc.

31ST GALA DINNER

At its 31st John J. McCloy Awards Dinner on November 13, the American Council on Germany honored **Carsten Spohr**, Chairman and Chief Executive Officer of the Lufthansa Group, with a McCloy Award and *Wall Street Journal* Reporter **Evan Gershkovich** with the inaugural Torch of Freedom Award. About 325 people were gathered at the Mandarin Oriental in New York City to celebrate the German-American partnership while paying tribute to these two remarkable individuals.

ACG Chairman **Ambassador John B. Emerson** served as the emcee and also shared a greeting from President Joe Biden. **Ambassador Andreas Michaelis**, German Ambassador to the United States, delivered remarks and read a letter from German Chancellor Olaf Scholz.

ACG President and CEO **Dr. Steven E. Sokol** gave an overview of the ACG's activities, and two alumni attested to the impact the Council has had on their career trajectories: **Zeynep Alraeqeb** (2022 Duisberg Fellow), an MBA candidate at Columbia Business School and previously an economic analyst at the German Bundesbank, and **Keome Rowe** (2024 Young Leader), a Foreign Service Officer at the U.S. State Department.

The significant effort to bring Evan Gershkovich home from Russia was a resounding testament to the importance and value of the transatlantic partnership. **Ambassador Robert M. Kimmitt**, ACG Chairman Emeritus, Senior International Counsel at WilmerHale, and Lead Independent Director at Meta – also a former U.S. Ambassador to Germany – played a pivotal role in the prisoner exchange. In this capacity, he presented the Torch of Freedom Award to **Paul Beckett** of the *Wall Street Journal*, who accepted the honor on behalf of Evan Gershkovich, whose latest dateline was to be Berlin.

The award presentations were followed by a fireside chat between Mr. Spohr and **Chelsea Spieker**, Editor of *The Pioneer*, to take a closer look at key issues of the day.



Ambassador John B. Emerson, Chairman of the American Council on Germany; Paul Beckett of the *Wall Street Journal*, who accepted the Torch of Freedom Award on behalf of Evan Gershkovich; Ambassador Robert M. Kimmitt, ACG Chairman Emeritus, Senior International Counsel at WilmerHale, and Lead Independent Director at Meta; and ACG President and CEO Dr. Steven E. Sokol



McCloy Award honoree Carsten Spohr, Chairman and Chief Executive Officer of the Lufthansa Group, in a fireside chat with Chelsea Spieker, Editor of *The Pioneer*



Program alumni Zeynep Alraeqeb (2022 Duisberg Fellow, left) and Keome Rowe (2024 Young Leader, right) with ACG President and CEO Dr. Steven E. Sokol

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