



2025 ANNUAL REPORT



AMERICAN
COUNCIL ON
GERMANY

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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. The ACG's initiatives are designed to reach a broad range of individuals to strengthen German-American relations and deepen the U.S.-European partnership. This is achieved through a combination of outreach and events designed to reach different audiences on both sides of the Atlantic to make sure they are better informed about transatlantic issues.

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 societal 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 issues such as agriculture and resource scarcity, the semiconductor industry, and social cohesion 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 of 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 the President and CEO



If 2024 was defined as an unprecedented “Superwahljahr,” 2025 became a year of political consequence and recalibration. Elections, leadership transitions, and shifting policy priorities on both sides of the Atlantic underscored the extent to which the United States and Germany are navigating a period of profound change. The return of President Donald Trump to the White House, combined with the emergence of a new German government under the leadership of Chancellor Friedrich Merz following snap elections, has introduced new dynamics into the transatlantic relationship. These developments are unfolding against a backdrop of continued geopolitical competition, Russia’s ongoing war in Ukraine, open conflict in the Middle East, economic uncertainty, and growing concerns about democratic resilience.

In this environment, the American Council on Germany’s mission to foster informed dialogue and strengthen German-American ties has remained as relevant – and necessary – as ever. Throughout 2025, the ACG provided a platform for policymakers, experts, and thought leaders to examine the evolving political, economic, and societal landscape and to assess the implications for the transatlantic partnership. Through our programming, we sought not only to interpret these developments but also to identify pathways for cooperation at a time when coordination across the Atlantic is extremely complex.

Over the course of the year, the ACG convened policy discussions in New York, Washington, DC, Germany, and through our Warburg Chapters nationwide – and reached audiences around the world through our virtual events and podcasts. We were particularly pleased to reinvigorate our national network, with events addressing key issues including the priorities of Germany’s new black-red coalition, the future of transatlantic trade and economic relations, energy security, technological innovation, and the societal challenges shaping both countries.

The importance of the German-American relationship was the focus of an official side event at the Munich Security Conference, where the ACG and the American-German Institute co-hosted Germany’s Federal Finance Minister Dr. Jörg Kukies, as well as Representative Joe Wilson (R-SC). They emphasized the importance of continued transatlantic cooperation despite tensions – highlighting shared interests such as reducing dependence on China, strengthening economic ties, and preventing excessive regulation in Europe.

Our German-American Conference, held in Berlin in partnership with the Atlantik-Brücke, brought together senior leaders from government, business, and the security community to assess the state of the alliance. The conference concluded with a keynote by H.R. McMaster, who characterized the current moment as a pivotal juncture and called for renewed European leadership in defense and security.

Complementing these efforts, the ACG convened targeted discussions on the evolving transatlantic economy. In April, we partnered with the German American Chamber of Commerce to host a symposium on the first 100 days of the new U.S. administration. We also partnered with the German Consulate General to launch an Innovators and Investors Stammtisch in New York, creating a new forum for entrepreneurs, investors, and innovators to exchange ideas and strengthen transatlantic ties within the startup ecosystem.

A defining feature of the ACG's work in 2025 was its continued investment in people-to-people exchanges. Through our Study Tours and Leadership Missions, we convened practitioners from government, business, academia, and civil society for immersive experiences that foster lasting professional relationships and generate practical insights. Programs such as the German-American Semiconductor Cities Network and the Social Cohesion Study Tours highlighted the importance of transatlantic collaboration in addressing local challenges. Our fellowship programs likewise continued to support early-career professionals as they conducted independent research and developed the networks and expertise needed to serve as future leaders in the transatlantic space.

We also deepened our engagement with emerging generations. The American-German Young Leaders Conference once again brought together a diverse group of rising leaders for a week of in-depth dialogue on the most pressing issues facing the transatlantic partnership. New this year, we introduced private dinners with alumni, strengthening intergenerational ties within this influential network. Participants also had the opportunity to meet with Chancellor Friedrich Merz, underscoring the importance of connecting future leaders directly with senior decision-makers. Our Germany Connect program similarly provided students and young professionals in New York with opportunities to engage directly with experts and build networks that will support their future careers.

At a time when information flows rapidly and attention is fragmented, the ACG has continued to adapt its programming to reach broader audiences. Our *Kaffeepause* series provided timely, accessible insights into political developments in Germany, while our State-to-State dialogue, conducted in partnership with the Aspen Institute Germany, highlighted the important role of subnational leaders in addressing shared challenges. We also honored the legacy of one of the ACG's most dedicated leaders with a Dr. Richard M. Hunt Memorial Lecture featuring Dr. Daniel Ziblatt, who offered timely perspectives on the pressures facing democratic systems on both sides of the Atlantic.

At our annual John J. McCloy Awards Dinner, we were delighted to honor Nikesh Arora, Chairman and CEO of Palo Alto Networks; Timotheus Höttges, CEO of Deutsche Telekom AG; and Ambassador Kristen Silverberg, President and COO of Business Roundtable. The awards were presented by Dr. Alex Karp, CEO of Palantir Technologies (who received a McCloy Award in 2024); Ambassador Robert M. Kimmitt, Chairman Emeritus of the American Council on Germany and Senior International Counsel at WilmerHale LLP; and Ravi Kumar, CEO of Cognizant. It was a memorable evening that brought together more than 300 members of the German-American community — including business leaders, current and former diplomats, representatives from the media and partner organizations, as well as ACG members and friends. The support we receive through our gala dinner and throughout the year enables the ACG to deliver impactful programming and continue deepening German-American cooperation.

Each year, I am struck by what our small but dedicated team is able to accomplish. The scope, quality, and timeliness of our programming are a testament not only to their efforts but also to the strength of our network. The ACG's impact is amplified by its members, fellows, partners, and supporters — individuals who carry forward the insights gained through our programs into their respective fields and communities.

In a period marked by uncertainty, the transatlantic partnership remains a cornerstone of global stability. The American Council on Germany will continue to serve as a platform for dialogue, a catalyst for collaboration, and a bridge between our two countries. We are grateful for the continued engagement and support of our members and friends, and we look forward to working together to strengthen this vital relationship in the years ahead.

Dr. Steven E. Sokol

President and CEO

May 2026

Policy Programs

Throughout 2025, the American Council on Germany convened policymakers, business leaders, academics, journalists, and emerging leaders through a robust portfolio of policy programs that strengthened transatlantic dialogue and cooperation. Through in-person events such as the German-American Conference, discussions hosted by our nationwide Warburg Chapters, and dynamic virtual programs that connected audiences across borders, the ACG created opportunities for informed and timely exchange on the issues shaping the future of the transatlantic relationship. Conversations explored a wide range of topics, including European and transatlantic security, economic competitiveness, trade and supply chains, artificial intelligence and emerging technologies, democratic resilience, elections, energy, and the evolving geopolitical landscape. By bringing together diverse perspectives from both sides of the Atlantic, these programs fostered deeper understanding, encouraged constructive dialogue, and reinforced the enduring value of the U.S.-German partnership at a pivotal moment for both countries.



German-American Conference

Each year, the ACG, together with the Atlantik-Brücke, convenes hundreds of policymakers, business leaders, journalists, and experts for the German-American Conference. The conference serves as a high-level forum for examining the most pressing political, economic, and social challenges facing the transatlantic partnership, with a focus on developing policy prescriptions.

The 2025 conference, held in Berlin, brought together senior figures from government, business, and the security community to assess the evolving transatlantic landscape. In his opening remarks, Atlantik-Brücke Chairman **Sigmar Gabriel** underlined the enduring importance of German-American ties, reflecting on their historical foundations and continued relevance in safeguarding peace and stability in Europe. ACG Chairman **Ambassador John B. Emerson** expressed confidence in the resilience of the transatlantic partnership, emphasizing its capacity to endure periods of political change.



Through a series of discussions, experts explored security challenges, shifts in global power dynamics, and the future of warfare – including emerging fronts such as cyber and space. Panelists included **Dr. Esther Brimmer**, James H. Binger Senior Fellow in Global Governance at the Council on Foreign Relations and former U.S. Assistant Secretary of State for International Organization Affairs; **Alexander Gabuev**, Director of the Carnegie Russia Eurasia Center; ACG Board member **Dr. Charles Kupchan**, Senior Fellow at the Council on Foreign Relations and Professor of International Affairs at Georgetown University; **Dr. A. Wess Mitchell**, Principal and Co-Founder of The Marathon Initiative and former U.S. Assistant Secretary of State for European and Eurasian Affairs; **Omid Nouripour**, Vice President of the German Bundestag (Alliance 90/The Greens); Bundestag member **Dr. Norbert Röttgen** (CDU); **Ambassador Kurt Volker**, Co-Chair of BGR Group and former U.S. Ambassador to NATO; and **Sven Weizenegger**, Head of the Cyber Innovation Hub of the German Armed Forces.

Speakers highlighted the continued interdependence of Europe and the United States, even amid broader geopolitical realignments. Discussions on global power rebalancing stressed the need for a coordinated transatlantic approach, particularly in addressing the strategic implications of China's rise. Panels on defense and security examined how technological innovation is reshaping modern conflict, while also underscoring the importance of European cohesion and capability.

Additional sessions addressed the growing role of space in security policy, the economic dimensions of geopolitical competition, and the intersection of regional conflicts with global strategic trends. Throughout, participants emphasized the importance of sustained cooperation, adaptability, and shared responsibility in navigating an increasingly complex international environment.

The conference concluded with a keynote by former National Security Advisor **Lt. General H.R. McMaster**, who characterized the current moment as a pivotal juncture for the transatlantic alliance and called for renewed European leadership in defense and security.

Eric M. Warburg Chapters



**Atlanta | Austin | Boston | Charlotte | Chicago | Cleveland | Columbus | Dallas
Denver | Houston | Indianapolis | Los Angeles | Minneapolis/St. Paul | Nashville
Philadelphia | Phoenix | Pittsburgh | St. Louis | San Francisco | Seattle**

The American Council on Germany's Eric M. Warburg Chapters convene local audiences across the United States to meet with leading voices on political, economic, and societal developments shaping the transatlantic relationship. Participants in Chapter events engage in dialogue with government officials, journalists, policy analysts, academics, and business leaders, encouraging substantive exchange about policy challenges and solutions affecting Germany, the United States, and the broader international landscape.

Established in 1992 in honor of founding ACG Treasurer Eric M. Warburg, the program remains a cornerstone of the ACG's nationwide outreach. In addition to engaging established audiences, the Warburg Chapters help expand public understanding of German-American relations by reaching new communities from coast to coast.

Chapter programming in 2025 looked at Germany's evolving domestic and foreign policy landscape following the federal election, priorities of the new governing coalition, and strategic policy priorities including trade, energy security, artificial intelligence, workforce needs, and social cohesion.

Local audiences had the opportunity to meet with senior political figures such as German Bundestag members **Peter Beyer** (CDU/CSU) and **Metin Hakverdi** (SPD), who also serves as Coordinator of Transatlantic Cooperation in the Federal Foreign Office; **Ilse Aigner**, President of the Landtag of Bavaria; and **Georg Eisenreich**, Minister of Justice of Bavaria, to hear their perspectives.

Journalists also gave a behind-the-scenes look at the findings of their reporting. **Vladimir Balzer** (2022 Kellen Fellow), Moderator at Deutschlandradio, discussed German-American relations in a new era, Germany 35 years after unification, and social cohesion in times of uncertainty. **Anja Wehler-Schöck**, International Editor at *Der Tagesspiegel*; **Dr. Christoph von Marschall** (1999 Kellen Fellow), Chief Diplomatic Correspondent at *Der Tagesspiegel*; and **Dr. Melanie Amann**, member of *DER SPIEGEL* Editorial Board, engaged audiences in cities across the country in conversations that explored political trends in Germany and their broader implications for Europe and the transatlantic partnership.

Additional speakers who toured Warburg Chapters included **Hans Kundnani**, Open Society Ideas Workshop Fellow and Visiting Professor-in-Practice at the London School of Economics, who discussed “Germany in Crisis?” with audiences in Los Angeles and Phoenix in October. In November, former Minister of State at the Federal Foreign Office **Dr. Tobias Lindner** visited Chapters across the country to discuss Germany’s role in foreign relations in the new *Zeitenwende* era, underlining the importance of economic security and reducing dependencies.



Other programming included events on energy, infrastructure, and workforce challenges with German Consul General of New York **Till Knorn** in Pittsburgh; implications of Germany’s federal election” with ACG President **Dr. Steven E. Sokol** in Atlanta; transatlantic trade with **Julian Heißler**, U.S. Correspondent for *WirtschaftsWoche*, in Charlotte; and a “Schnitzel Lunch” with German Consul General in Los Angeles **Andrea Sasse**.

Together these programs underscored the continued importance of the Warburg Chapters as a nationwide platform for informed transatlantic dialogue, bringing international expertise to local audiences and strengthening networks that support German-American understanding for the long term.

The ACG is grateful for the collaboration with a broad network of local partners on its Warburg Chapter programming, including German Consulates and Honorary Consuls, German American Chambers of Commerce, Goethe-Instituts, World Affairs Councils, and other community institutions, along with an array of sponsors.



New in 2025!

The ACG has launched a Warburg Chapter in Columbus, Ohio, and expanded its work in Texas to include Austin and Houston, in addition to Dallas.

Special Policy Programs

First 100 Days: Policy Shifts, Tariffs, and the New U.S. Administration

On April 30, the ACG and the German-American Chamber of Commerce (GACC) hosted a half-day symposium at the Deutsche Bank Center to convene business leaders and policy experts and assess the transatlantic economy 100 days into the second Trump administration.

Susanne Gellert, President and CEO of the GACC, opened the event, emphasizing the need for timely dialogue amid rapid policy shifts. **Stefan Simon** (on his last day as Chief Executive Officer Americas and Chief Legal Officer, Member of the Management Board at Deutsche Bank) highlighted heightened emotions on both sides of the Atlantic and framed the early Trump administration as a “wake-up call” for Europe, urging business leaders to navigate evolving political dynamics. **Till Knorn**, Consul General of Germany in New York, noted the impact of U.S. tariffs and stressed Germany’s need to strengthen transatlantic relations through coordinated yet flexible engagement. ACG President **Dr. Steven E. Sokol** echoed these concerns, describing the situation as a “five-alarm fire” that requires urgent, continued engagement between the U.S. and Europe.

In his keynote presentation, **Dr. Daniel S. Hamilton**, Senior Non-Resident Fellow at the Brookings Institution and Senior Fellow at the Foreign Policy Institute at Johns Hopkins University’s School of Advanced International Studies, emphasized the resilient and mutually beneficial nature of the transatlantic economy, underpinned by \$9.5 trillion in combined GDP and 16 million jobs, noting Europe’s strategic role for U.S. investment and innovation. **Brett Ryan**, U.S. Senior Economist at Deutsche Bank, warned that prolonged tariffs could reduce productivity and drive inflation, predicting low growth and constrained Fed flexibility.



Dr. Hamilton and Mr. Ryan joined ACG Board Member **Tara Hariharan**, Managing Director and Head of Global Macro Research at NWI Management LP, to discuss strategic challenges, including Europe’s defense and digital policies, fiscal shifts, and the need for leadership in negotiations with the United States. A second panel, moderated by Handelsblatt journalist **Katharina Kort**, featured **Ishita Aggarwal**, CFO and EVP at Siemens Corp. USA, and **Robert Cuscino**, Head of Regional Development for North America at Evonik, who stressed long-term business strategies, supply-chain resilience, and measured responses to geopolitical uncertainty.

Closing the symposium, Dr. Sokol expressed optimism, noting that the discussions reinforced confidence in the resilience of the transatlantic economy and in business leaders’ ability to navigate volatility.

Dr. Richard M. Hunt Memorial Lecture

The Dr. Richard M. Hunt Memorial Lecture honors late ACG Vice Chairman Dr. Richard M. Hunt, who was deeply committed to strengthening ties between Germany and the United States and gave exceptional support to the ACG for 50 years. He was the first and longest-serving President in the organization's history, from 1972 to 1988, and subsequently served as Vice Chairman until his passing on April 10, 2020. During his tenure, Rick Hunt worked tirelessly behind the scenes to help create the American-German Young Leaders Conference, which was launched in 1973, and the McCloy Fellowship program, which was launched in 1976 – both of which remain central to our work today. These programs are just a fraction of his many lasting legacies to the Council. The ACG would like to extend special thanks to the Hunt Family for supporting this lecture series.



The 2025 Dr. Richard M. Hunt Memorial Lecture and Luncheon took place on May 8, featuring **Dr. Daniel Ziblatt**, Director of the Minda de Gunzburg Center for European Studies and Eaton Professor of Government at Harvard University, and Co-Author of the bestseller *How Democracies Die*. He discussed the threats to democracies on both sides of the Atlantic.

Foreign Correspondent Unplugged

Foreign Correspondent Unplugged was launched by the American Council on Germany and the Goethe-Institut in April 2024 in the run-up to the U.S. election, with a focus on how journalists are covering political developments on both sides of the Atlantic. Each discussion provides 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. The events are held at Goethe-Instituts across the country and then released as podcasts.

In 2025, the series featured **McKay Coppins**, Staff Writer at *The Atlantic*, and **Rieke Havertz**, International Correspondent for ZEIT ONLINE, on January 27 in Washington, DC; **Vladimir Balzer** (2022 Kellen Fellow), Moderator at Deutschlandradio, and **Celeste Diaz Schurman**, Executive Producer/Host at Houston Public Media, on October 3 in Houston; Vladimir Balzer and **Dr. Melanie Amann**, member of the Spiegel Editorial Board, on October 7 in Boston. In October in Berlin, **Clay Risen** (2004 Young Leader), Reporter and Editor at the *New York Times*, and **Dr. Anna Sauerbrey** (2018 Kellen Fellow), Foreign Editor at *Die Zeit*, discussed political developments on the other side of the Atlantic.



Listen to Foreign Correspondent Unplugged podcasts here.

Virtual Policy Discussions

Kaffeepause: What's Abuzz in Berlin?



The American Council on Germany's Kaffeepause series provides timely analysis of political, economic, and societal developments in Germany for audiences on both sides of the Atlantic. Launched in 2021, the series features Berlin-based journalists offering a behind-the-scenes look at unfolding stories while exploring the broader political dynamics and public sentiment shaping debate in Germany. Each discussion is released as a podcast, expanding the ACG's digital programming and audience engagement.

Speakers in 2025 included journalists from leading German and international media outlets: **Dr. Melanie Amann**, a member of the Editorial Team at *Der Spiegel*; **Matthias Deiß** (2008 Young Leader), Deputy Director of ARD's Capital City Studio in Berlin and Deputy Editor-in-Chief; **Miriam Hollstein** (2008 McCloy Fellow in Journalism), Chief Political Reporter for *Stern*; **Paul-Anton Krüger**, Editor at *Der Spiegel*; **Malte Lehming**, a columnist for *Tagesspiegel*; **Nette Nöstlinger**, Political Reporter for Politico Europe; **Ines Pohl**, Washington Bureau Chief of Deutsche Welle; **Sabine Rennefanz**, a columnist for *Der Spiegel*; **Gordon Repinski**, Executive Editor for Politico in Germany; **Marc-Felix Serrao**, Editor-in-Chief in Germany for the *Neue Zürcher Zeitung*; **Anja Wehler-Schöck**, International Editor of *Tagesspiegel*; and **Clay Risen** (2004 Young Leader), a reporter and Editor at the *New York Times*.



Listen to the Kaffeepause podcasts here.

State-to-State: German-American State Legislator Dialogue

State-to-State: German-American State Legislator Dialogue is a virtual speaker series launched in 2021 by the American Council on Germany and the Aspen Institute Germany to examine how subnational leaders in Germany and the United States address shared policy challenges. The series highlights the important role of state and regional governments in advancing innovative responses to issues such as climate policy, economic development, technology, and social cohesion. While many major policy frameworks are shaped at the federal level – and in Germany often within the context of the European Union – state and local governments are frequently at the forefront of implementation and experimentation, developing approaches that can inform broader national and international strategies.



In 2025, the series continued to foster transatlantic exchange among legislators confronting emerging policy challenges. A March 20 discussion on the future of artificial intelligence and technology featured **Lashrecse D. Aird** (D) of the Virginia Senate; **Nina Eisenhardt** (Alliance 90/The Greens) of the State Parliament of Hesse; and **Franziska Müller-Rech** (FDP) of the State Parliament of North Rhine-Westphalia. The conversation explored both the opportunities presented by artificial intelligence – including efficiency, threat detection, and sustainability gains – and the risks posed by bias, misinformation, and cybersecurity vulnerabilities. The panelists underscored the need for a human-centered approach.

A second discussion, held on October 13, focused on social cohesion and democracy, informed by the insights of **Tom Brüntrup** of the State Parliament of North Rhine-Westphalia (CDU); **Lydia Glaize** (D) (2015 McCloy Fellow in Urban Affairs) of the Georgia House of Representatives; and **Simone Strohmayr** (SPD) of the Bavarian State Parliament.

Drawing on their legislative and committee work, the panelists examined strategies to strengthen social cohesion through education, civic engagement, and equitable access to opportunity, emphasizing the role of policy in reinforcing democratic resilience.

Hot Topics, Cold Realities



Many of the issues that dominated the 2024 U.S. election campaign – including polarization, migration, economic insecurity, and democratic resilience – were increasingly shaping political debate in Germany as well in 2025. In the Hot Topics, Cold Realities virtual discussion series, the American Council on Germany and 1014 bring together leading experts and practitioners to examine how contentious political debates play out in practice and what they reveal about the state of democracy and democratic institutions on both sides of the Atlantic.

A discussion about migration on January 15 featured **Victoria Rietig**, Head of the Center for Migration at the German Council on Foreign Relations (DGAP), and **Molly O'Toole**, an award-winning journalist. Trade, tariffs, and a shifting global economy were the subject of a discussion with **Benn Steil**, Director of International Economics at the Council on Foreign Relations, and **Rolf Langhammer**, former Vice President of the Kiel Institute for the World Economy, on February 3.

The green energy transition was the focus of a discussion with **Cameron Abadi**, Deputy Editor at Foreign Policy and Co-Host of FP's Ones and Tooze podcast, and **Dr. Kira Vink**, Head of the Center for Climate and Foreign Policy at the German Council on Foreign Relations, on March 27. Politics, constitutions, and the law were explored in a virtual meeting with **Professor Dr. Franz Mayer**, Chair in Public Law, European Law, Public International Law, Comparative Law, and Law and Politics at the University of Bielefeld, and **Professor Dr. Russell Miller** of Washington and Lee University on April 10. Sovereign debt was examined by ACG Board member **Tara Hariharan**, Managing Director of Global Macro Research at NWI Management, and **Professor Dr. Michael Hüther**, Director and Member of the Executive Committee of the German Economic Institute, on June 18.



New in 2025!

Meet a Bundestag Member: German Politics Today

This virtual event series offers students of German language and culture the chance to engage directly with members of the German Bundestag on timely political issues while practicing their German language skills. It is a collaboration of the American Council on Germany, the American Association of Teachers of German, and the German Studies Association. In 2025, audiences met with Bundestag members **Metin Hakverdi**, who also serves as the German Coordinator of Transatlantic Cooperation, and **Elisabeth Kaiser**, who also serves as the Federal Government Commissioner for Eastern Germany.



Highlights of Our Policy Discussions

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 societal issues on the transatlantic agenda. Here are some highlights from 2025.

"Bad Best Friends? Making the German-American Partnership Fit for Purpose Again"

In an official side event at the Munich Security Conference on February 15, the ACG and the American-German Institute hosted German Federal Finance Minister **Dr. Jörg Kukies** and **Representative Joe Wilson** (R-SC) to discuss key areas where Europe and the United States should work together, including de-risking from China and regulation. It was underlined that subnational and social ties are equally as important as relations between Washington, DC, and Berlin – and that players involved in the transatlantic relationship should remain connected.

"Financial Stability in Germany: Which Challenges Lie Ahead?"

Financial stability was a key theme of discussions throughout the year. On February 18, the ACG and the Deutsche Bundesbank hosted **Dr. Kirstin Hubrich**, Deputy Director General for Financial Stability at the Deutsche Bundesbank, in conversation with ACG Board member **Tara Hariharan** (2016 ACG Young Leader), Managing Director of Global Macro Research at NWI Management. Dr. Hubrich outlined risks facing Germany's financial system, including geopolitical tensions, weak growth, and structural vulnerabilities. While banks and markets have shown resilience, export-oriented economies like Germany remain particularly exposed to global shocks and trade disruptions.

“What to Expect from the New Government in Berlin”

The ACG and Deutsches Haus at NYU held a discussion and reception on May 28 with **Dr. Constanze Stelzenmüller** (1993 Young Leader), Director of the Center on the United States and Europe, where she also serves as a Senior Fellow in Foreign Policy, and Fritz Stern Chair on Germany and Transatlantic Relations at the Brookings Institution, at a geopolitical moment characterized by complexity and heightened vulnerability, particularly for Europe. A convergence of internal political crises, mounting external threats, and a shifting global order has created a sense of urgency for both Germany and Europe. The new German Chancellor faces a monumental agenda without the luxury of prioritization, navigating both internal domestic challenges and seismic global shifts.

“U.S.-EU Trade and Investments are Still at Top Levels: What Will the Tariffs Do?”

The interplay between trade, investment, and global supply chains remained a central topic of discussion in 2025. On June 6, **Joseph P. Quinlan**, Senior Fellow at the Foreign Policy Institute at Johns Hopkins University’s School of Advanced International Studies and Co-Author of “The Transatlantic Economy 2025,” underscored the resilience of U.S.-EU economic ties, even as tariffs and policy shifts reshape the relationship. He stressed that global interdependence, particularly involving China, remains a defining feature of the international economy.

“The Trump-Putin Meeting and the Future of Ukraine”

The ACG held a virtual event with **Dr. Angela Stent** (1982 ACG Young Leader), Senior Adviser to the Center for Eurasian, Russian, and East European Studies and Professor Emerita of Government and Foreign Service at Georgetown University and Nonresident Senior Fellow at the Brookings Institution, on August 21 to discuss the situation in Ukraine. When asked about the path forward, given that Russia can continue to reject different peace proposals, Dr. Stent said the strongest tool in the Western toolkit would be for the EU and the U.S. to increase their military support for Kyiv. This would allow Ukraine to stay in the war as long as necessary in order for Putin to agree to negotiations – which he will only do if he stops believing that Russia will prevail militarily.

[\[Watch this virtual discussion here.\]](#)

“What Should the Transatlantic Partnership Look Like in Five Years?”

Dr. Alexandra de Hoop Scheffer, President of the German Marshall Fund of the United States and Co-Author of “Rebalancing Transatlantic Relations: A Roadmap for 2030,” shared her findings with ACG members and friends on October 14, noting the United States and Europe are at an inflection point. At this pivotal time, their relationship is being redefined, challenged, and tested. These partners are too often embroiled in putting out fires rather than looking ahead to the long term. Dr. de Hoop Scheffer said rebalancing is needed on multiple fronts in the next five years, not only on transatlantic security but also innovation and competitiveness. In addition, collaborating with other partners to address various challenges, including the energy transition and conflict resolution, will become increasingly essential.



Policy focus: Technology and Innovation

As technology and innovation increasingly shape geopolitics – impacting economic competitiveness, national security, and democratic governance – the American Council on Germany continued its focus on how tech is shaping the transatlantic partnership. Through a range of discussions with policymakers, researchers, entrepreneurs, and industry leaders, the ACG explored how emerging technologies can be better utilized while also addressing the regulatory, ethical, and societal challenges they present.

The ACG convened experts to examine issues ranging from trust and transparency in AI systems to the implications of technological innovation for economic growth, public policy, and democratic societies. These conversations highlighted both the transformative potential of AI and the need for thoughtful governance frameworks that balance innovation, security, and public trust. The Council also examined how Germany and the United States can work together to remain at the forefront of technological change.

Among those sharing their insights with ACG audiences were German Bundestag member **Stephan Albani** (CDU/CSU), Deputy Chair of the Research, Space, and Technology Assessment Committee in the Bundestag; **Oliver Süme**, Partner at Fieldfisher and Chair of the Board of the Internet Industry Association (eco); and a panel that included **Daniel Cremers**, Chair for Computer Vision and Artificial Intelligence at the Technical University of Munich (TUM), and **Jeannette M. Wing**, Executive Vice President for Research and Professor of Computer Science at Columbia University.

A highlight of the year was a dynamic discussion with **Karsten Wildberger**, Germany's first Federal Minister for Digital Transformation and Government Modernization. Speaking with ACG members and friends, he outlined the German government's efforts to modernize public administration, promote entrepreneurship, expand digital access, and create conditions for innovators to thrive.



ACG President Dr. Steven E. Sokol and Karsten Wildberger,
Federal Minister for Digital Transformation



New in 2025! Innovators and Investors Stammtisch

In addition to hosting speakers to discuss emerging technologies, in 2025 the Council launched an “Innovators and Investors Stammtisch” in New York to bring together German and American founders, startups, innovators, and investors for informal, engaging conversations. Inspired by the German tradition of the Stammtisch, this regular gathering fosters networking, knowledge sharing, and transatlantic exchange in a relaxed setting. By connecting emerging and established leaders in technology and venture capital, the series strengthens transatlantic networks and contributes to a more dynamic innovation community in New York and beyond. The series is organized by the American Council on Germany together with the German Consulate General in New York. Special thanks go to ACG Vice Chair **Frances Devlin** (2012 Young Leader), Head of Strategy, Global Policy and Public Affairs at Pfizer Inc; **Ramin Niroumand**, Partner and Head of Motive Ventures at Motive Partners; and ACG Board member **Bettina Warburg**, Web3 Investor and Advisor.



Leadership and Professional Development

The American Council on Germany's professional development programs continued to cultivate the next generation of transatlantic leaders by providing immersive opportunities for learning, dialogue, and relationship-building. Through the Young Leaders Conference, bilateral study tours, and fellowship opportunities, the ACG brought together rising professionals from government, business, academia, media, and civil society to engage directly with experts and decision-makers on both sides of the Atlantic. Participants explored the policy challenges shaping the U.S.-German relationship while gaining firsthand insights into each other's political, economic, and social landscapes. By fostering meaningful professional connections and encouraging the exchange of ideas across sectors and generations, these programs strengthened the transatlantic network and equipped participants to advance cooperation long after their formal involvement with the ACG.



American-German Young Leaders Conference

The American-German Young Leaders Conference brings together influencers and emerging changemakers in the United States and Germany to deepen their understanding of the nuances of the current state of the transatlantic partnership and to cultivate lasting relationships between them – forging enduring personal connections that lie at the core of the German-American alliance. Over the course of a week, participants immerse themselves in dialogue, meeting with officials and analysts; parsing policy in working groups; sharing perspectives shaped by their professional backgrounds and national experiences; and testing one another's assumptions in an atmosphere of curiosity and respect. Each year, the conference convenes about 25 Americans and 25 Germans from government, business, academia, civil society, law, the media, and the military, with the goal of cultivating a global network of future leaders committed to strengthening German-American relations.



With a theme of “Navigating Change: Shaping the Next Chapter in Transatlantic Relations,” the 2025 conference brought together 55 Young Leaders from July 19 to 25. Participants delved into topics including national identity and values; domestic agendas and political realities; democracy and digital resilience; the geopolitical situation vis-à-vis Ukraine, NATO, and China; social cohesion; and climate policy.

The group had a special opportunity to meet with **Chancellor Friedrich Merz**, along with other officials, including State Secretaries from four ministries: **Hans-Georg Engelke** of the Ministry of the Interior, **Dr. Steffen Meyer** of the Ministry of Finance, **Dr. Jörg Semmler** of the Federal Chancellery, and **Dr. Claudia Stutz** (2012 Young Leader) of the Ministry of Transportation. Other speakers included **Hauke Burkhardt**, Global Co-Head of Lending at Deutsche Bank; **Ambassador Wolfgang Ischinger** (1978 Young Leader), President of the Munich Security Council Foundation; **Stefan Kornelius**, Government Spokesperson for the Federal Chancellery; **Alan Meltzer**, Chargé d’Affaires at the U.S. Embassy in Berlin; **Dr. Levin Holle**, Economic and Financial Policy Advisor to the Chancellor; **Dr. Matthias Roßbach**, State Representative of North Rhine-Westphalia to the Federal Government; **Nils Schmid**, Parliamentary State Secretary at the Ministry of Defense; and **Dr. Samina Sultan**, Senior Economist for European Economic Policy and Trade at the German Economic Institute (Institut der deutschen Wirtschaft Köln e.V.). Meetings took place at the offices of the German Bundestag, the Federal Chancellery, the State Representation of North Rhine-Westphalia, and the Deutscher Sparkassen- und Giroverband, with additional programming hosted by Deutsche Bank, Mercedes-Benz, Noerr, and Pfizer.



Key Findings

Among the Recommendations Reached by the Young Leaders:

- **Establish a Joint Roadmap for Ukraine**

Develop a shared U.S.-Germany framework to support Ukraine, with clear benchmarks, coordinated assistance, and mechanisms to sustain public confidence over time.



- **Advance NATO Burden-Sharing**

Strengthen burden-sharing through greater European defense capacity, deeper interoperability, and transparent contributions across the alliance.

- **Strengthen Civic and Digital Resilience**

Expand civic education, digital literacy, and anti-disinformation efforts, with stronger public-private cooperation

- **Deepen Strategic Technology Coordination**

Align investment and policy on semiconductors, clean energy, artificial intelligence, and cybersecurity to reinforce resilience and competitiveness.

In Gratitude

The ACG is very grateful to the partners and sponsors of
the 2025 Young Leaders Conference
for their generous support:

- Deutsche Bank
- Deutscher Sparkassen- und Giroverband
- Freunde des American Council on Germany e.V.
- Mercedes-Benz Group AG
- Noerr
- Pfizer
- Victoria Owen Klein Charitable Foundation

Special thanks also go to the
Young Leaders Steering Committee:

- **Edward McFadden** (2002 Young Leader)
Committee Chairman and ACG Board member
Senior Vice President for Communications at the
American Financial Services Association
- **Dr. Ronald J. Granieri** (2000 Young Leader), Professor
of History at the U.S. Army War College; and
- **Sarmad Hussain** (2005 Young Leader),
Communication Manager at the German Savings
Banks Association (DSGV) Berlin

“

“Our debates were lively, often heated, and left no sensitive issue untouched, from NATO burden- sharing to the U.S.-European Commission trade negotiations and AI regulation. The mix of representatives from both the Democratic National Committee and Republican National Committee, including members of the current administration, was one of the program’s greatest strengths! By the end of the week, we had developed a joint strategy based on our common transatlantic interests. Through this program, the American Council on Germany has proven to be an incredibly well-connected and impactful institution. ... Thank you for this once-in-a-lifetime opportunity!”

– **Capt. Markus Iven**, Policy Officer, German Permanent Military Representation to NATO and the EU

“Solutions to the most pressing geopolitical challenges are not born in isolation, but rather in partnership, unity, and trust. ... Over the course of the last days, my perspectives and ideologies have been challenged, changed, and strengthened. I’ve met and learned from the most fascinating people with the most beautiful hearts and enriching stories. I’ve better understood my counterparts on both sides of the Atlantic, and I’ve had bridging conversations between Americans and Germans about democracy, diplomacy, and partnership across a Rolodex of topics addressing the not-so-easy challenges of things like Ukraine support, AfD knowledge gaps, and fundamentals for trustful partnerships. I’ve been called on to ask questions to leaders I would have never expected to be in the same room with. ... It’s a week I’ll never forget.”

– **Caitlin Natusch**, Head of Executive Communications, Allianz SE

2025 American-German Young Leaders

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(CDU)
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Study Tour on Social Cohesion

The ACG's Study Tour on Social Cohesion brings together diverse groups of young professionals from both sides of the Atlantic for a two-part exchange on how communities strive to be more equitable. Participants meet with community organizations, local government officials, and university experts to learn about their efforts to tackle challenges such as affordable housing, access to education, workforce development, and integration. This program is funded by the Transatlantic Program of the Government of the Federal Republic of Germany, with funds from the European Recovery Program (ERP) of the Federal Ministry for Economic Affairs and Energy (BMWE).



In 2025, the ACG hosted the fourth cohort of its Social Cohesion Study Tours in Hannover and Magdeburg in September, and in Philadelphia and Nashville in December. The group, comprising 23 participants from both the United States and Germany, explored a range of critical topics facing cities today.

During their time in Hannover, the group met with government officials such as Deputy Mayor of Hannover **Thomas Hermann**, **Maimuna Davis**, and **Björn Schönfeld** from the Department of Social Participation, and **Michael Schwarz** from the Department of Education. They visited nonprofits and foundations, including the **ZeitZentrum Zivilcourage**, the **VolkswagenStiftung**, and **Kargah e.V.** Many of the conversations focused on the inclusion of all Hannover residents, regardless of their migration background or socioeconomic status.

While in Magdeburg, conversations focused largely on immigration and civic engagement. The cohort met with ACG alumni **Sandra Yvonne Stieger**, (2024 GASCN Participant) Deputy Mayor for Economy, Tourism, and Regional Cooperation and **Jörg Boettcher** (2012 McCloy Fellow in Urban Affairs), Head of the Department of Economy, Tourism, and Regional Cooperation, as well as with **Dr. Ingo Gottschalk**, Deputy Mayor for Social Affairs, Youth, and Health, who shared the challenges the city has faced in more difficult political climate. The group also visited the Saxony-Anhalt Landtag, where they held a roundtable with members of the Landtag from across the political spectrum.

Three months later, the group gathered again in the United States for the second part of the program. While in Philadelphia, **Charlie Ellison**, who serves as the Director of the Office for Immigrant Affairs for the City of Philadelphia, organized a daylong meeting with over a dozen city officials, police officers, and nonprofit leaders. Each speaker highlighted how Philly continues to strive to be the “City of Love.” The group also toured neighborhoods with local artists, had open conversations with members of the City Council, and met with several nonprofits.

While in Nashville, the group explored how history plays a critical role in policy and social cohesion today. They visited the Belle Meade Historic Site and learned about the lives of the enslaved people who once lived on the plantation. They also visited the Woolworth Theatre to hear insights from **Elliott Robinson**, Manager of the Civil Rights Room at the Nashville Public Library, about the sit-ins that took place in Nashville during the Civil Rights movement. In addition, the cohort met with nonprofits like the Nashville International Center for Empowerment (NICE), which supports refugees in Nashville, and the Civic Design Center, which works on the city’s urban planning.

After each Social Cohesion Study Tour, participants came away with a deeper understanding of initiatives to help with social cohesion and integration on both sides of the Atlantic – and an expanded network of those who are working in tandem to build a more inclusive society, one that embraces and leverages our differences for the greater good of all.

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“Beyond individual measures, the program was highly motivating. It reinforced existing goals, provided new perspectives, and offered many impulses to continue developing current approaches. I am truly grateful for the chance to meet so many inspiring and dedicated people through the program and to get a closer look at the amazing work they are doing.”

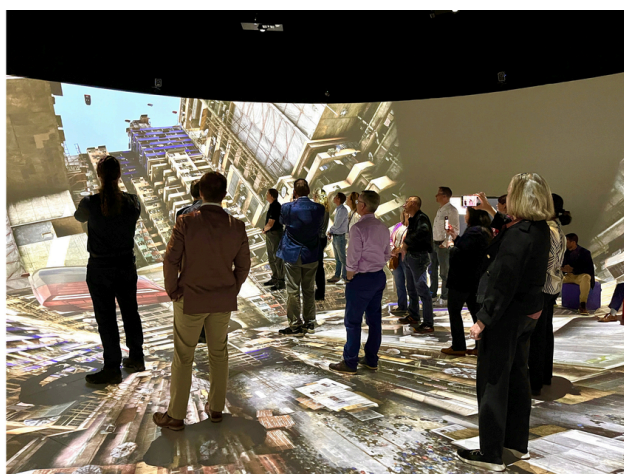
– **Laura Lubinski**, Integration Coordinator, Department of Social Affairs, Youth, and Health for the City of Magdeburg

“Ultimately, this Social Cohesion Tour expanded my worldview by reaffirming that social cohesion is not an abstract ideal or a single policy solution. It is a daily, intentional practice rooted in listening and shared responsibility. Across cities and countries, I saw that the most effective efforts to build inclusive, resilient communities are those grounded in lived experience, cultural expression, and trust built over time.”

– **Jolly Patel**, Community Coordinator, Human Impacts Institute

German-American Semiconductor Cities Network

The German-American Semiconductor Cities Network program was launched in 2024 in partnership with the City of Magdeburg to support key stakeholders from German and American cities where semiconductor companies have made, or will make, significant investments. Each year, the ACG selects cohorts of approximately 25 participants from four German and American cities to take part in two immersive fact-finding missions in each country and to engage in monthly virtual roundtable discussions, enabling them to share ideas and experiences and, most importantly, to identify specific strategies, measures, and best practices that can be implemented in their respective communities. This initiative is organized and administered by the ACG with generous support from 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 Energy (BMWE).



In the first half of 2025, participants from Chandler, Arizona, and New Albany/Columbus, Ohio joined their counterparts in Dresden and Magdeburg for a study tour in Germany. During their time in Dresden, the delegation explored Germany's advanced semiconductor and innovation ecosystem through several key visits. At the Dresden Chip Academy, they saw how the dual apprenticeship system prepares a skilled technical workforce, while the **Nanoelektronik Zentrum Dresden** and **Silicon Saxony** network showcased strong collaboration between startups, research institutions, and industry. A highlight was the tour of **Infineon Technologies'** state-of-the-art semiconductor fabrication facility, demonstrating the scale and sophistication of Europe's chip production. Additional meetings with research institutes and local agencies emphasized the importance of infrastructure, water management, and technology transfer in supporting industrial growth.

In Magdeburg, the focus shifted to urban transformation and future-oriented development tied to the semiconductor industry. The delegation toured the planned Intel factory site and learned about redevelopment efforts at the Ramsburg district, illustrating how cities balance industrial expansion with sustainable urban planning. Engagements with local utilities, housing, and transport authorities highlighted investments in infrastructure and energy, while visits to educational institutions like **Stiftungsgymnasium Magdeburg** and research centers such as the **Fraunhofer IFF** underscored the role of education, innovation, and Industry 4.0 technologies — particularly virtual reality — in preparing the workforce and supporting regional economic development.

In the second half of 2025, a new cohort was selected from Munich and Hamburg/Itzehoe in Germany to visit their counterparts in Albany, New York, and Austin, Texas. In New York's Capital Region, the group began at the Port of Albany, gaining insight into its role in logistics, energy, and infrastructure, before visiting **Rensselaer Polytechnic Institute (RPI)**, where they explored cutting-edge research, workforce training, and historic contributions to semiconductor innovation, including a tour of advanced clean rooms and a campus-based IBM quantum computer. A major highlight was the visit to **GlobalFoundries' Fab 8** in Malta, a \$15 billion manufacturing facility central to producing chips for industries like AI and aerospace, underscoring the importance of industry investment in workforce development and education. Additional stops at **Hudson Valley Community College, NY Creates**, and **Albany Nanotech Complex** further emphasized the region's strong collaboration between academia, government, and industry to build a skilled workforce and support advanced semiconductor R&D.

In Austin, the focus shifted to large-scale collaboration, workforce pipelines, and infrastructure critical to sustaining semiconductor manufacturing. At **Austin Community College**, the delegation learned about one of the nation's leading technician training programs developed in close partnership with industry, while engagements with the **University of Texas** and the **Texas Institute for Electronics** highlighted major public-private investments to expand U.S. chip production.

The tour concluded with visits to key infrastructure and industry sites, including Austin's **Walnut Creek Wastewater Treatment Plant**, which supports water-intensive chip manufacturing, and **Applied Materials**, where they observed the production of essential chipmaking equipment and discussed the challenges of scaling workforce capacity to meet rapidly growing industry demand.

“

“Personal relationships are an essential but often undervalued element of business relationships. This program creates opportunities to expand and explore common challenges and goals together.”

– **David Rooney**, Co-Executive Director, NYDesign (2025-2026 program)



Leadership Mission on Agriculture Policy

The American Council on Germany's Leadership Mission on Agriculture Policy and Resource Scarcity promotes collaboration in the agriculture sector by bringing together German and American agricultural leaders and policymakers for a firsthand look at how the U.S. agricultural industry operates. The ACG is extremely grateful for The Halle Foundation's generous support of this program.



In October 2025, 13 practitioners from Germany traveled through the American Southeast, visiting Georgia, Mississippi, North Carolina, South Carolina, and Tennessee. The group was hosted by program alumni in each state, who shared their experiences from their 2024 trip to Germany. The program kicked off with the group traveling by bus to Mississippi to visit a variety of agricultural hubs: potato production, cotton processing, rice milling, and an aquaculture operation. That evening, they were hosted by two alumni and the President of the Mississippi Farm Bureau Federation over a traditional southern fish fry dinner.

From Mississippi, the group traveled for several days through Tennessee, where they visited farms and factories and met with officials. Some highlights included having dinner with the Tennessee Commissioner of Agriculture, **Andy Holt**, a position appointed by the President of the U.S.; meeting with the National Cotton Council before riding cotton pickers on a farm; and visiting the German representative who breeds Tennessee Walking Horses.

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“The Leadership Mission on Agriculture Policy significantly deepened my understanding of the complexity and diversity of U.S. agriculture. In addition to substantive insights into labor, cost developments, market conditions, and political influence, it was particularly the wide range of program components that enabled a holistic perspective. The insights gained will have a lasting impact on my communication work. The goal remains a differentiated, fact-based, and at the same time humanly relatable presentation of agricultural concerns. ... The journey provided me with valuable insights and broadened my perspective.”

– **Marie-Claire von Spee**, Press Manager, Hessian Farmers Association

Their next stop was Georgia, where they visited the Georgia Poultry Lab to learn how the state works to prevent the spread of avian diseases. They also met with **Gary Black**, the former Georgia Commissioner of Agriculture, who welcomed the group on his private farm.

The group then traveled to South Carolina and met with **Megan** and **Richard Floyd** (2024 Leadership Mission on Agriculture Policy and Resource Scarcity), Co-Owners of Low Country Farms. Megan Floyd also serves as the Southern Region Representative on the American Farm Bureau Federation Women's Leadership Committee, and the group discussed the important role women play in the agricultural industry. Spending time in the Low Country helped the participants understand the difficulty of farming in that region, which must balance traditional farming with ever-increasing coastal and environmental problems.

The final stop was North Carolina, where they visited the University of North Carolina Wilmington's Center for Marine Science, where they had the unique opportunity to see an oyster farm. They also visited several beef production and row crop farms before arriving in Raleigh for a closing dinner with the President of the North Carolina Farm Bureau Federation.

Although the program concluded on October 19, the participants' mission to help improve the agriculture industry on both sides of the Atlantic continues. By learning from a diverse group of experts, the members walked away with a deeper understanding of the American agricultural industry. From their experiences in the American South, they could compare American and European industrial frameworks and learn from one another.

International Education Study Group

The International Education Study Group, conducted in partnership with the Pennsylvania School Boards Association's PSBA Institute, is designed to give American education leaders direct exposure to the German school system and encourage the exchange of ideas on practical approaches to shared educational challenges. In 2025, 13 school board members and administrators representing rural, suburban, and urban communities across Pennsylvania traveled to North Rhine-Westphalia from March 9 to 15, visiting Siegen, Düsseldorf, and Aachen.

The delegation's visit to North Rhine-Westphalia began in Siegen, where they explored innovative education initiatives focused on artificial intelligence and STEM. At the University of Siegen, they learned about projects that integrate AI into classrooms and connect students with real-world industry challenges, emphasizing the importance of equipping both teachers and students with 21st-century skills. Discussions also highlighted common challenges in teacher recruitment, training, and supporting increasingly diverse student populations. School visits in Olpe provided firsthand insight into the German secondary system, while meetings in Düsseldorf introduced the dual apprenticeship model, which combines vocational schooling with paid workplace training and serves about half of German secondary graduates. At the NRW Education Ministry, the group also examined policies supporting immigrant integration, multilingual education, and structured AI use in classrooms.



Throughout the remainder of the program, the delegation gained a comprehensive understanding of Germany's education system across multiple levels. They explored governance structures dividing responsibilities between state and local authorities, observed apprenticeship training in industry settings, and visited various school types—including Hauptschule, Gymnasium, and Gesamtschule—each offering different educational pathways. Emphasis was placed on inclusion, equal opportunity, and preparing students for diverse futures through academic and vocational routes. Final visits in Aachen highlighted primary education priorities, teacher training practices, and the growing role of digital tools such as AI and virtual reality in education.

The International Education Study Group fostered sustained professional exchange between German and American educators throughout their week of travel. Following the visit, participants reported gaining valuable insights that they intended to bring back to their own districts – insights that will inform the future trajectory of education in their districts.

“

“I was excited to visit Germany to learn more about their curriculum, their programs, and how they oversee the system to see what I can bring back to my school district and Pennsylvania.”

– **Kelly White**, Board President, Wyalusing Area School District

Germany Connect: New York Networking for Young Professionals

The Germany Connect program is a forum for university students and interns to deepen their understanding of transatlantic affairs while building professional networks. The program brings together emerging leaders for discussions on economic, political, and social issues shaping the transatlantic partnership, while fostering connections across sectors.



In 2025, participants took part in five events at the ACG's office, meeting with diplomats, journalists, legal experts, and business leaders working at the center of German-American relations: **Cornelia Jarasch**, Deputy Political Coordinator, Germany in the UN, and **Anton Klix**, Consul for Political Affairs at the German Consulate; **Peter Mayer**, Partner at StairsDillenbeck Finley Mayer, and ACG Board member **Eschi Rahimi-Laridjani**, Partner at Milbank LLP; **Martin Ganslmeier**, a correspondent at ARD, and **Katharina Kort**, a journalist at Handelsblatt GmbH; **Thomas Heck**, German Foreign Business Network Leader Partner on Secondment at PwC, and **Melissa Weathers** (2024 Young Leader), Director of Equity Research at Deutsche Bank; and **Till Knorn**, Consul General of Germany in New York. Together, the speakers provided participants with behind-the-scenes policy perspectives and direct exposure to a range of transatlantic career paths.

Fellowships

The ACG's fellowships give American and German journalists, scholars, and practitioners the opportunity to travel across the Atlantic to conduct research on key economic, political, and social issues in a transatlantic context. Fellows gain not only an in-depth look at these challenges but also an expanded network of contacts on the ground. Upon their return, they share their findings with members and friends of the Council through reports and virtual discussions.

Since 1976, more than 1,100 fellowships have been awarded, allowing early-career leaders to broaden their perspectives and build lasting international connections.

McCloy Fellowship on Global Trends

The McCloy Fellowship on Global Trends offers a unique opportunity for American and German journalists, scholars, and professionals to engage with the most pressing issues shaping the transatlantic relationship. Named in honor of founding ACG Chairman John J. McCloy, the program reflects his belief in the power of cross-cultural exchange to foster mutual understanding and long-term collaboration.

The 2025 McCloy Fellows on Global Trends are:

Sewell Chan (2014 Young Leader), former Executive Editor of the Columbia Journalism Review

Topic: Challenges surrounding media trust, journalistic ethics, and innovation in a rapidly evolving information landscape

Devin Corrigan, Senior Policy Associate at the Corporation for a Skilled Workforce

Topic: How apprenticeship systems in the United States and Germany are adapting to shifting labor-market demands

Mion Edwards, freelance journalist

Topic: The influence of Audre Lorde's legacy on Afro-German activism and identity in the context of rising far-right movements

Herrick Fox, a researcher and former U.S. Department of Agriculture official

Topic: Germany's biobased manufacturing sector and its relevance for advancing a circular bioeconomy in the U.S.

Eric Fraunholz, Executive Director of the Deutsch-Amerikanisches Institut Sachsen

Topic: Economic and social parallels between post-industrial regions in the United States and eastern Germany

Amélie Jaques-Apke, Founder and Director of the Young Security Conference

Topic: Transatlantic perspectives on territorial integrity and the challenges of maintaining unity amid differing strategic priorities

Curran McSwigan, Deputy Director of the Economic Program at Third Way

Topic: How caregiving responsibilities shape women's workforce experiences in the United States and Germany

Anna Seidel, Director of the World Minds Foundation

Topic: The role of private-sector investment in strengthening transatlantic innovation and technology collaboration.

Anna-Maria and Stephen M. Kellen Fellowship

The Anna-Maria and Stephen M. Kellen Fellowship, established in 1996, offers outstanding Berlin-based German journalists the opportunity to report from the United States on the most pressing issues shaping the transatlantic relationship. Named in honor of Stephen M. Kellen, a longtime Board member of the American Council on Germany and a dedicated advocate for engaging younger generations in transatlantic dialogue, the program provides fellows with direct access to policymakers, opinion leaders, and experts. Through in-depth reporting, fellows deepen public understanding of German-American relations while advancing their own professional development and contributing to broader global dialogue.

The 2025 Kellen Fellows are:

Jule Hoffmann, Reporter at Deutschlandfunk/Deutschlandradio Berlin

Topic: How public radio institutions are responding to political pressures and evolving audience expectations

Anna Neifer, a freelance journalist

Topic: The balance between technological innovation and democratic accountability in the development and governance of digital platforms

Isolde Ruhdorfer, Foreign Policy Editor at Krautreporter

Topic: How recent political shifts in the United States are reshaping its role in global leadership and transatlantic relations

Dr. Richard M. Hunt Fellowship for the Study of German Politics, Society, and Culture

The Dr. Richard M. Hunt Fellowship for the Study of German Politics, Society, and Culture, established in 2003, provides an exceptional opportunity for emerging American scholars to engage deeply with Germany's political, cultural, and social history. Named in honor of Harvard historian Dr. Richard M. Hunt. Designed to support research toward Ph.D. dissertations and major book projects, the program allows fellows to conduct archival research, collaborate with local experts, and build lasting academic connections while gaining valuable international experience.

The 2025 Dr. Richard M. Hunt Fellow is **Dr. Robert Yee**, Lecturer and Postdoctoral Scholar at Yale University, who is researching the historical development of banking law and financial regulation in Germany from 1871 through 1945.

McCloy Awards Dinner

Each year, the American Council on Germany's John J. McCloy Awards Dinner convenes leaders from business, government, and civil society to celebrate the enduring partnership between the United States and Germany. The event honors individuals whose leadership has strengthened transatlantic cooperation while bringing together a dynamic network of decision-makers, innovators, and emerging leaders committed to advancing this vital relationship.

First presented in 1993, the awards recognize leaders of American or German firms whose work has made outstanding contributions to strengthening the transatlantic partnership. The honor is named after founding ACG Chairman John J. McCloy, who had been called "the most influential private citizen in America" by *Harper's* magazine and "the godfather of the new Germany" by former German President Richard von Weizsäcker. Now in its third decade, the McCloy Awards Dinner has become one of the premier gatherings of the German-American community in the United States.



On November 14, 2025, more than 300 leaders from the German-American business and policy community gathered in New York for the latest McCloy Awards Dinner – an evening dedicated to celebrating transatlantic cooperation and forging new connections for the future.

This year's honorees – **Tim Höttges**, Chief Executive Officer of Deutsche Telekom AG, and **Nikesh Arora**, Chairman and CEO of Palo Alto Networks, who received the McCloy Award, and **Ambassador Kristen Silverberg**, President and COO of Business Roundtable and former U.S. Ambassador to the European Union, who received the Transatlantic Leadership Award – have each played an important role in strengthening transatlantic collaboration in business, technology, and public policy.

Ambassador **Jens Hanefeld**, German Ambassador to the United States, delivered remarks and shared a letter of greeting from Chancellor Friedrich Merz, underscoring the continued importance of close cooperation between Germany and the United States.

Prominent leaders from the transatlantic community presented the awards. **Dr. Alex Karp**, CEO of Palantir Technologies and a past McCloy Award recipient, presented the award to **Tim Höttges**. **Ravi Kumar**, CEO of Cognizant, presented the award to Nikesh Arora. **Ambassador Robert M. Kimmitt**, Chairman Emeritus of the American Council on Germany and Senior International Counsel at WilmerHale LLP, presented the Transatlantic Leadership Award to Ambassador Silverberg and read a letter from President Donald Trump.

In accepting his award, Mr. Höttges reflected on the legacy of John J. McCloy and the continuing importance of transatlantic cooperation. “People like John McCloy helped rebuild Germany,” he said. “The responsibility today is to renew the foundations of our countries for a digital, interconnected world. Let’s be bridge builders, not bystanders.”

Nikesh Arora likewise emphasized the importance of dialogue and shared values across the Atlantic, praising Mr. McCloy’s commitment to “shared values, leadership, and conversation” and noting that “there’s no more important time to have conversation than today.”

The evening was emceed by ACG Vice Chair **Frances Devlin** (2012 ACG Young Leader), Head of Strategy, Global Policy & Public Affairs at Pfizer Inc, together with ACG President and CEO **Dr. Steven E. Sokol**. Ms. Devlin reflected on the broader context for the partnership: “The challenges facing our democracies – from geopolitical uncertainty to technological disruption – are real. But collaboration across borders continues to drive innovation, strengthen our economies, and generate solutions that improve lives.”

The impact of the Council’s exchange initiatives was also highlighted during the dinner. Two program alumni – **Mark Covelle**, a participant in the 2024 International Education Study Tour, and **Grace Muller** (2025 Young Leader) shared their firsthand accounts of how ACG programs foster lasting connections and deepen transatlantic understanding.

Proceeds from the McCloy Awards Dinner support the American Council on Germany’s year-round work to strengthen transatlantic understanding and cooperation. By convening leaders across sectors and generations, the dinner not only honors those who have advanced the transatlantic relationship, but it also helps ensure its continued strength in the years ahead.



[Visit the photo gallery here.](#)



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