



## Summary

### **DAS Thema aktuell: 'Time for action - the reorientation of German development policy' with Parliamentary State Secretary Dr Bärbel Kofler**

Tuesday, 26.9.2023, 17:30hrs – 18:30hrs

Virtual via Zoom

## Background

The Africa policy of the Federal Ministry for Economic Cooperation and Development should become more social, ecological and more women inclusive. In January of this year, Federal Minister Svenja Schulze therefore presented her ministry's new Africa strategy. The focus was clearly on the partnership aspect of cooperation with African stakeholders, not only from politics and business, but also from various areas of science, churches and civil society. However, the world is in the midst of far-reaching geopolitical changes that are also affecting the African continent.

But what exactly has happened since January? How are the ambitious goals being realised on the ground? Which new partnerships have already been established or existing ones strengthened? What contribution are Germany and Europe making to promoting a sustainable and fair transformation of the African economy? What opportunities arise from close European cooperation and what risks might it harbour? How far away is the coalition government from a coherent German Africa policy

## Highlights

- Germany must clearly define and articulate its interests to its African partners.
- Despite the political instability in the Sahel, development cooperation - at least at local level and with civil society - must not come to an end.
- German-European and Franco-German cooperation will continue, even if anti-French resentment in West and Central Africa makes joint projects more difficult.
- Public spending is not enough to keep pace with development on the African continent. The private sector must be continually encouraged to invest. A new approach by the BMZ is the creation of one-stop shops by the Agency for Economic Development (AWE).
- Germany is one of the largest donor countries worldwide in the field of education, with the education of girls and women being a clear priority.

## German Africa Policy

The aim of making the BMZ's Africa policy greener, more social and more ecological is being taken seriously by everyone involved in the ministry and this new approach can already be seen in the concrete implementation of numerous projects on the ground. It is also about responding more closely to the needs and priorities of African partners and identifying and positively utilising overlaps with German interests and concerns. To do this, however, the German government must be in a position to define and clearly formulate Germany's interests in relation to the African continent. This is something that is repeatedly demanded, not least by the African partners themselves.

## In Dialogue

**Dr Bärbel Kofler,**

**Parliamentary State  
Secretary, BMZ**

**&**

**Christoph Matschie,**

**Vice-President, German  
Africa Foundation**



Dr Kofler saw the BMZ as having a clear responsibility for a coherent German Africa policy. The first important step had already been taken at the beginning of the year with the new strategy and this is now contributing to the joint development of the German government's Africa policy guidelines in cooperation with all relevant ministries and departments. Other relevant ministries are also involved in the implementation of projects.

Against the backdrop of the wave of coups in several Sahel countries, Federal Minister Svenja Schulze took over the chairmanship of the Sahel Alliance for the Federal Government in July 2023. Due to the political changes, the opportunities for cooperation are limited, but the actors of German development cooperation on the ground remain determined to continue to make a positive contribution and consistently pursue their objectives, for example by working remotely from the government at local level and with civil society. There are also a number of economic opportunities inherent in remaining active. This can be seen, for example, in the example of circular economy projects at municipal level in Mali, the aim of which is to jointly advance social, ecological and economic aspects.

### **African-European Cooperation**

A central concern of the BMZ's Africa policy, as well as that of the entire German government, is to give African voices and positions more prominence at global level. This includes the greater involvement of African actors in the most important multilateral forums such as the G20 and the UN.

Coordination between EU member states and work in European structures is indispensable and absolutely desirable. Even against the backdrop of current anti-French resentment in large parts of francophone West and Central Africa, there are numerous projects that would be difficult to realise without Franco-German cooperation.

Furthermore, it is also in Germany's interest for Europe to act as one on a global level, as can be seen from the *Global Gateway Initiative*. As part of the EU's 150-billion-euro investment package, Germany is involved in various infrastructure projects, such as the expansion of local public transport in Senegal and the construction of high-voltage and transmission lines in Côte d'Ivoire. Germany is also involved in the construction of solar and hydroelectric power plants in Mozambique, Côte d'Ivoire and other countries. The BMZ has set up a fund totaling 270 million euros for hydrogen development. All of this is embedded in the German government's national hydrogen strategy and is therefore also part of the German government's cross-departmental Africa policy. In fact, Germany is one of the few international donors that also provides financial support for the *African Continental Free Trade Area (AfCFTA)*. According to the German government, the promotion of intra-African trade through the development of new sales markets and the production and trade of goods on the continent is an essential part of the comprehensive transformation that is being sought

### **Private Sector Participation**

The Ministry clearly recognises that the predicted annual job requirement of 25 million jobs per year on the African continent cannot be created primarily through public funding. Similarly, the advancing industrialisation and the associated energy requirements require investment on a scale that goes beyond what is possible at a purely national level. For this reason, the economy is also required to do more. Of all the money invested in renewable energies worldwide, only around 3% is still invested in Africa. A sustainable change in this area would possibly only be possible through a reform of the international financial architecture. A reform that has been repeatedly called for by African partners, such as recently at the *Africa Climate Summit 2023* in Nairobi, Kenya.



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Fondation Allemande pour l'Afrique  
German Africa Foundation

The BMZ has also announced a reorganisation of its cooperation with the private sector. In future, the Agency for Economic Development (AWE) will act as a *one-stop-shop* for all economic actors in Germany, Europe and the partner countries of German development policy, taking into account German priorities and the needs of the partner countries.

## **Education**

According to Dr Kofler, the topic of education, which some voices had missed in the Ministry's strategy paper, was by no means neglected. On the contrary, close cooperation with African and other international partners has been successful in this area for some time. It is a mistake to want to promote education through purely bilateral programmes. Germany has now established itself as the largest or second-largest donor country in most multilateral education initiatives, especially for programmes in the field of girls' education. On the ground, it is particularly important that all solutions are compatible with the respective school systems of the countries and the actual needs, for example in relation to the labour market. Simply transferring the German dual system, as is often demanded, is therefore not a solution.