

DEUTSCH-BRITISCHE GESELLSCHAFT

62nd Young Königswinter Conference

Wednesday 20th July – Sunday 24th July 2022, Berlin

Conference Report



Germany and the UK: "Mehr Fortschritt wagen"

1. Autocracy, democracy and the lessons of the war in Ukraine: how do we best defend our values?
2. Climate: what are the practical next steps?
3. Brexit: where do we go from here?

Programme

Conference Venue

Europäische Akademie Berlin
Bismarckallee 46/48
D-14193 Berlin
www.eab-berlin.de

Organiser

Deutsch-Britische Gesellschaft e.V.
Pariser Platz 6
10117 Berlin
Tel.: + 49 (0) 30 – 203 985-0
Fax.: + 49 (0) 30 – 203 985-16
E-mail: headoffice@debrige.de
www.debrige.de

Date

20th – 24th July 2022

TOPICS

1. Autocracy, democracy and the lessons of the war in Ukraine: how do we best defend our values?
2. Climate: what are the practical next steps?
3. Brexit: where do we go from here?

Wednesday, 20 July 2022

- 12:00 Arrival and check in
Light Lunch at EAB
- 13:00 – 14:30 **Opening of the conference**
- The state of German-British relations. A provocation**
ANNETTE DITTERT, Bureau Chief/ Senior Correspondent, ARD UK
- THOMAS MATUSSEK**, Ambassador ret.
Chairman of the Deutsch-Britische Gesellschaft e.V.
and
JOHN KAMPFNER, Conference Chairman
Executive Director, UK in the World programme at Chatham House
- Keynote Speakers**
KIERAN DRAKE, Deputy Head of Mission, British Embassy in Berlin
DOMINIK MUTTER, Director for Security Policy, North America, United Kingdom, EFTA and Arctic Policy, Federal Foreign Office
- 14:30 Group photo and Coffee break
- 15:00 – 17:00 **Introductions** to the study group topics by selected participants
- Group I:* Captain Steven Scholz / Heather Iqbal
Group II: Philipp-Johannes Heesen / Zoe Alipranti
Group III: Anna Katharina Schennach / Adam Waddingham
- 17:00 Coffee break
- 17:30 – 19:00 Study group sessions begin
Selection of Chair and Rapporteur
- 19:30 **Dinner hosted by KIERAN DRAKE**
Deputy Head of Mission, British Embassy in Berlin

Thursday, 21 July 2022

- 08:00 Breakfast
- 09:00 – 11:00 **Lecture with regard to the topic of group II**
"Climate: What are the practical next steps?"

Speaker: DR. VERA RODENHOFF

Head of Division KC1 „Climate Action: General issues of international cooperation, implementation initiatives“, Federal Ministry for Economic Affairs and Climate Action

11:00 Coffee break

11:30 – 13:00 **Lecture with regard to the topic of group I**
“Autocracy, democracy and the lessons of the war in Ukraine: how do we best defend our values?”

Speaker: DR. LIANA FIX

Programme Director at the International Affairs department of Koerber Foundation

13:00 Lunch at EAB

14:00 – 15:30 **Study groups**

15:30 Coffee Break

16:00 – 18:00 **Study groups**

19:00 – 21:00 **Dinner at Café am Neuen See, Tiergarten**

Friday, 22 July 2022

08:00 Breakfast

9:00 – 10:30 **Study groups**

10:30 Coffee break

11:00 – 13:00 **Study groups**

13:00 Lunch at EAB

14:00 – 15:30 **Study groups**

15.30 Coffee Break

16:00 – 17:00 **Study groups**

17:00 – 18:00 Lecture with regard to the topic of group III

Speaker: BETTINE SCHMITZ, AUXO

19:00 – 22:00 **Würth Haus, Schwanenwerder**
Lecture
Concert
Reception

Saturday, 23 July 2022

08:00 Breakfast

09:00 – 10:30 **Study groups**

10:30 Coffee break

11:00 – 12:30 **Preparation of study group reports**

12:30 Lunch at EAB

13:30 – 15:30 **Presentation of working group results**
Plenary session

15:30 Coffee break

16:00 – 17:00 **Continuation of presentation of working group results**

17:00 **5 points to take away**

19:00 **Boat trip through the historical centre of Berlin with buffet**
Presentation of the Young Königswinter Alumni e.V.

22:00 **End of Conference**

Sunday, 24 July 2022

08:00 Breakfast and check-out

Conference Sponsors

The conference has been made possible by the kind support of:



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Topics for the 62nd Young Königswinter Conference 2022

Group 1: Autocracy, democracy and the lessons of the war in Ukraine. How do we defend our values?

Russia and China – partners, systemic rivals or enemies? How should we deal with them?

What are 'Western values' in the 2020s? Are they universal? Can they prevail?

What can we learn from other value systems?

What is a feminist foreign policy? (see Coalition Agreement)

Group 2: Climate: what are the practical next steps?

Growth and sustainability

Green tech, green finance, cryptocurrencies

Nuclear energy, taxonomy

What is a climate foreign policy?

Group 3: Brexit: where do we go from here?

Best practice: what can we learn from each other?

Research and science cooperation

Cultural and tech cooperation

Future collaboration between German Länder and UK nations and regions

Report

Background

The 62nd Young Königswinter Conference took place at the Europäische Akademie Berlin (Grunewald) in the very best of weather conditions from the 20th to 24th July 2022. There were 37 participants, about half of them were of German and the other half of British nationality.

The conference took place during the 5th month of war in Ukraine. Brexit was mentioned in conversations with a special focus on the post-Brexit relations between both countries. The ongoing Conservative Party leadership contest was also briefly addressed in relation to possible changes to the UK-German relation.

During the conference, the need for cooperation between Germany and the UK was repeatedly underlined, especially in the context of the war in Ukraine. The shared values, interests and policy priorities between both countries were put forward to focus on the importance of working together in a changing international environment. In a nutshell, it can be said that all participants agreed that Germany and the UK were facing similar challenges linked to the war in Ukraine, climate change and the mutual post-Brexit relations.

The yearly Young Königswinter Conference is an integral aspect of the Anglo-German relationship by bringing young people together around the issues at the heart of the cooperation between Germany and the UK.

Wednesday, 20th July 2022

Opening of conference

The conference commenced with remarks by the Chairman of the Deutsch-Britische Gesellschaft, Thomas Matussek, Ambassador ret. He heartily welcomed the participants and thanked the conference's sponsors. The Chairman of the Young Königswinter Conference, John Kampfner, also welcomed the participants and highlighted the importance of such a bilateral discussion forum.

During her opening remarks, Annette Dittert reviewed the current state and future perspectives of the Anglo-German relations after Brexit.

The British Deputy Ambassador to Germany, Kieran Drake, discussed the ongoing shared values, security and foreign policy priorities with Germany as a central ally of the British government.

Director for Security Policy, North America, United Kingdom, EFTA and Arctic Policy at the Federal Foreign Office, Dominik Mutter, focused on the role of bilateral youth cooperation in overcoming tensions in a changing geopolitical context.

Tour de Table

Every participant gave a personal introduction to the group specifying name, occupation and general background.

Study Group Introductions

Two members of each of the three study groups were asked to present their initial thoughts on a set of questions dedicated to each study group.

Group I - Autocracy, democracy and the lessons of the war in Ukraine: how do we best defend our values?

The introduction to the first study group's topic started with the statement by the first presenter that the response to the war in Ukraine has been global from Oceania to Europe over Asia. With the economic rise of China and other autocratic powers like Russia, a revisionist challenge is taking place against democratic values system. In this context, unity and friendship amongst the members of that democratic system are more important than ever.

Currently, Germany is strengthening its presence on the NATO Eastern, Baltic Sea and South-Eastern border. This type of deployment is essential to preserve NATO as an alliance. Additionally, special funding is being directed to the procurement of new defence capabilities and the modernisation of existing ones. The recent entry of new NATO members equally the common Euro-Atlantic goal of promoting the rules-based international order, international law, free trade and open societies. The UK and Germany share common values and a deep friendship. In that sense, bilateral military cooperation remains strong, based on reciprocal trust and essential for Euro-Atlantic security.

The second presenter took a closer look at developments in the UK, that could be seen as challenges to the established democratic system. The Scottish independence referendum as a democratic exercise opened a debate around the project of civic nationalism. The Brexit referendum showed the extent to which democratic practices can be limited in providing assistance to disenfranchised members of society. The spread of misinformation and hate speech through social media and to a lesser extent foreign governments directly questions the Western standards on free speech. The links between Russian oligarchs and the British government opens a debate on probity and on energy security. Finally, the general feeling of distance with politics and the answers provided by politicians constitute a challenge to the democratic system in the UK.

Despite these challenges, there also are ways to consolidate democracy in the UK. A particularly efficient solution as shown recently in Ireland with the debate around abortion is localising decision-making. This can be done through regional mayors or citizens' assemblies based on trust. Other ways are more inclusive cooperation on climate issues and cultural events that bring people together as shown by the Queen Jubilee or the European Championship in the UK.

Participants reacted to these first two introductions by focusing on the importance of domestic democratic dynamics and their interplay with wider tensions between democratic/autocratic systems. One participant also reflected on the need to think about Western values not as a normatively preferable system, but rather to open a discussion on a global values system.

Group II - Climate: what are practical next steps?

The second group's first presenter initiated the introduction by looking at the current German government's climate policy and the emergency measures taken to focus on renewable energies, especially given the reliance on Russian energy supply. The Energy Climate Club was recently

launched at the G7 summit in Germany, which is an example of an open and collaborative dialogue between states regarding climate change. From an industrial perspective, many initiatives for net zero by 2045 or 2050 exist. Some companies responsible for large carbon emissions are focusing on transition towards green energies and net zero products.

Five main ways exist to create a climate-friendly transition for industries: ensure openness to technology fostering climate transition, design a new flexible electricity market focusing on renewable energies both in developed and less developed countries, use government procurements for emission reduction as an impetus giver, have pragmatic transitional regulations and enable simplified procedures for hydrogen development.

The second group's second presenter gave an overview of the UK's net zero climate policy. The COP26 in Glasgow under the UK's patronage enabled higher Nationally Determined Contributions. The war in Ukraine and the cost-of-living crisis are currently impacting climate goals by reducing the financial availabilities for net zero programmes.

Across the British political party system, there is a wide consensus for net zero, which is not necessarily the case in other countries. The UK government is currently focusing on renewables by diversifying renewable energy sources and making their deployment easier, on green tech with the development of nuclear energy, on hydrogen and industrial decarbonation, on green finance through net zero transitions schemes and on reconsidering the role of fossil fuels particularly from Russia. Other areas include green supply chains and international partnerships like on the planned EU carbon tax. A promising potential sector of Anglo-German cooperation would be hydrogen. The presenter ended the introduction by opening questions regarding further potential sectors of Anglo-German cooperation, the dynamics going into a climate foreign policy and the overlap between companies and governments.

The other participants echoed the need for governments and industrial actors to jointly develop a climate policy. One participant underlined that the introductions largely focused on technological changes and less on behavioural changes. Another participant made a link with the topic of group I by explaining that the feeling of belonging to a value system also applies to the climate policy.

Group III - Brexit: where do we go from here?

The first presenter of the third group put the focus of the introduction on multilevel cooperation between the UK and Germany. Cooperation in research and science has been voluntarily halted by the EU in reaction to the UK's legislative proposal on the Northern Ireland Protocol. The British government proposed an alternative to the EU scheme based on multiple smaller bilateral programmes. Economic cooperation has been reduced in the context of Brexit and Covid-19. In general, companies and in particular SMEs or family-owned companies face challenges with diverging UK regulations and missing governmental information. Cooperation in culture and education like Erasmus also has been impacted without yet being replaced by a bilateral agreement.

Intercultural exchanges remain important in creating links between Germany and the UK. Cooperation between German Länder and UK nations/regions continues through town-twinning as well as local cultural exchanges. Still, this regionalised cooperation depends on local dynamics and on the compliance with the respective central government's policies. The European Council of the

Regions also recently warned that smaller and less prosperous regions might not have the financial means to develop post-Brexit diplomatic, political or economic links with the UK.

The second present of the third group analysed the historical dynamics underlying the UK's relationship with the EU. From the first referendum in 1975 to the one in 2016, the UK's attitudes towards Europe are much more nuanced and complex than often portrayed in the current political debate on the issue. In that sense, Brexit is a curious construct of interlinked issues based mainly on sovereignty. The concept of popular sovereignty used during referenda is technically incompatible in a representative parliamentary system, where the power lays with Members of Parliament. A 2019 Electoral Commission report showed that any democratic referendum should allow for a long campaign in order to best explain the issues at stake rather than simplifying the question into a binary choice. Regional disparities contributed additionally to the Brexit vote and continue to shape the post-Brexit political agenda in the UK. The levelling-up policy is as such a direct response to this problem.

Several British participants asked about the German perspective over Brexit and post-Brexit political dynamics in the UK. One participant also made a comment on the impact of the war in Ukraine in the UK's foreign policy cooperation both with Germany and the EU.

Thursday, 21st July 2022

Lecture with regard to the topic of group II

Dr Vera Rodenhoff

Head of Division KC1 "Climate Action: General issues of international cooperation, implementation initiatives", Federal Ministry for Economic Affairs and Climate Action

Vera Rodenhoff opened her speech with a warning that the extreme weather events will continue until at least until 2060 if the current level of carbon emissions doesn't increase up. This bleak picture can be countered through a common approach to limiting the temperature rise to 1.5C. Currently, the increase is of 1.2C. Any meaningful scheme to reach 1.5C under the 2015 Paris Agreement should happen within the next 8 years before 2030 to have an impact on climate change. Under the Paris Agreement, the Nationally Determined Contributions must be regularly updated. However, the last of such update in 2021 was insufficient. The current Nationally Determined Contributions would only limit the temperature rise to 1.8C instead of 1.5C, which shows the importance to be more ambitious in reducing the carbon emissions. For the German government, the goal is to be net zero by 2045 with carbon capture and storage balancing continued carbon emissions.

Several solutions exist for a more ambitious climate policy. The developed world needs to support the developing world. Development banks and the finance sector need to channel green support schemes. Governments need to cooperate to make the energy transition global. Germany currently holds the G7 presidency. In that context, the German government published a paper on climate change that specifically addressed the need for more climate policy through new climate initiatives such as the Climate Club as a level-playing field forum.

Lecture with regard to the topic of group I

Dr. Liana Fix

Programme Director at the International Affairs at Koerber Foundation

Liana Fix analysed how the war in Ukraine disrupted the general understanding of democracies and autocracies. She presented 6 lessons of the war in Ukraine.

Firstly, autocracies don't follow the same cost-benefit analysis as democracies. Germany with some other Western countries didn't understand this difference and saw the use of force as irrational. On the contrary, policy-makers in the USA rather saw war and the use of force as a credible possibility.

Secondly, there is an increasing personalisation of autocracies that increases the risk of miscalculation. Personalised systems tend to limit the circulation of contradicting information as shown in Russia with Putin or in China with Xi. In parallel, autocratic regimes have also misunderstood the mobilising and legitimising effect of democracies. Russia believed Ukraine would quickly fall, while the elected Ukrainian government created a momentum towards resistance.

Thirdly, the level of international support for Ukraine has been surprising. Most Western countries both in government and in civil society have shown great solidarity with the people of Ukraine.

Fourthly, the leadership of the USA has been essential in creating a united Western response to the war in Ukraine. The USA shares intelligence with its allies and is holding frequent meetings to coordinate action. The UK also showed leadership and much more than Germany, France or the EU.

Fifthly, public opinions in democracies are less volatile than what autocracies think. The level of support towards Ukraine will probably remain stable on the long term. The general cost of supporting Ukraine, even if high, is expected to continue to be accepted by large parts of society.

Sixthly, democracies need to be able to defend themselves militarily with a functioning army remains. Germany reduced its military investments since the 1990s, while the UK didn't. The "Zeitenwende" on military expenditure is a mindset change for both the German government and public. Before the war in Ukraine, German public opinion was reluctant towards military intervention or participation, especially given the tradition of historical reconciliation with Russia.

Friday, 22nd July 2022

Lecture with regard to the topic of group III

Bettine Schmitz

Founding Partner at Auxxo

Bettine Schmitz started her speech by reflecting on her personal relation with the UK in terms of education and career. She talked about her role as digital media innovation and explained her role

as startup incubator/accelerator in Berlin. She launched a female business initiative, which received large media attention in the context of rising female representation from 2020 on.

The cultural differences between the German and British startup scene were discussed. German work culture tends to focus on overall proficiency, while the UK tends to take pride in mistakes which is more adapted to the startup scene. Early investments are much more difficult to obtain in Germany and are more easily obtainable in the UK, while access to medium-stage investments is similar in both countries. London, Oxford and Cambridge are central startup hubs in the UK attracting a variety of talents. Berlin is a central startup hub more for the relaxed lifestyle and a easy access to Eastern European markets. Munich is also becoming an important startup hub in Germany with the recent opening of a startup centre in collaboration with local. Female representation in the startup scene is higher in the UK, but statistics of female employment increased over the last years in Germany. Bureaucracy and regulatory checks such as money laundering prevention are more rigid in Germany than in the UK. Despite these differences, both countries cooperate extensively in the fintech sector, despite the post-Brexit context.

One participant highlighted that Brexit creates more challenges than opportunities for the UK as the EU continuously produces large amounts of regulations. The limited British political capacity and legal framework to produce its own regulations risk to leave the UK behind the EU in this area.

Saturday, 23rd July 2022

Study Group Presentation

Group I - Autocracy, democracy and the lessons of the war in Ukraine: how do we best defend our values?

In their presentation, the group focused on their working assumptions, the relationship to both Russia and China and ended with overall recommendations.

Assumptions

Western values were defined by the group through a delimitation of the West as countries recognising and protecting individual rights. This was said to include countries like the USA, Canada, Japan and South Korea, even if some EU countries currently have limited recognition and protection. Values were defined as principles that help deciding what is right and wrong. Values were considered differently than interests such as economic interests. Feminist foreign policy in that sense was seen as based on values around inclusion and minority protection. The group then produced through a collective submission platform a word cloud of values, which was completed by a list of key values human dignity and rights, values, democracy, freedom, rule of law, market-based economy and equality. The group also held an interactive workshop with participants consisting in putting specific countries on a scale going from democratic to autocratic systems.

China and Russia

The group created a two-dimensional index to classify countries. The first dimension was the state of relationship and the second dimension the level of dependence. These dimensions were divided

in 8 categories: economics and trade, war in Ukraine, global order and UN system, human rights, development and infrastructure, climate, domestic critical infrastructure and energy and resources. In each of these categories, Russia and China were classified as partner, competitor or rival. A partner was defined as sharing goals, a competitor as not directly looking for confrontation but with still some level of competition and a rival as clearly seeking confrontation. Russia was considered a rival in almost all policy fields, while China was a competitor in more. The level of dependence was varying in each category with China generally being higher than Russia.

Recommendations

The group underlined the almost philosophical nature of discussions over the last days and presented the following five recommendations. First, less important fights should be put aside in order to project a unified front especially in international fora like the G7 or the EU. Second, democracy should be strengthened at home through education to show its advantages while building resilience. Third, a diversification of supply chains should take place to remove the dependence on certain supply chains regarding consumer and strategic. Fourth, smart power instruments need to be used in an efficient and targeted way next to hard power instruments. Fifth, better offers need to be made in spheres of strategic competition to show that Western values can deliver.

Group II - Climate: what are practical next steps?

The group divided the climate topic in the areas of green government, green society and green business during the study days. The presentation started with an open letter to future generations by one group member and was completed by interactive surveys on overall climate change questions. The group also held a workshop by asking participants to position themselves physically on a spectrum between yes and no asking several questions on climate-friendly behaviour.

Green government

Climate cooperation is an important area of focus in both Germany and the UK. The first recommendation is to tackle climate migration through dedicated international funds and explicit development cooperation goals. The second recommendation is greater coordination ahead of multilateral meetings such as the G7, G20 and COP meetings to harmonise positions, especially amongst big emitters. The third recommendation is geostrategic cooperation on initiatives like the Just Energy Transition Partnership to decarbonise emerging countries or the Global Gateway Initiative by the EU. The fourth recommendation is a government focus on fostering sectorial exchanges in key industries including the green tech, renewables, hydrogen and carbon capturing systems to bundle capacities.

Green society

Pandemics and heatwaves are recent examples of the impact of climate change. Technological solutions and economic mitigating ways are essential to develop sustainable solutions. The first recommendation is public awareness campaigns to make sustainable options a logical and rational choice for individuals against sometimes widespread misinformation. The second recommendation

is formal education and upskilling to make climate change a central part of the school curricula. This will allow for a new workforce to emerge and go into green economic sectors, while normalising certain climate-friendly solutions regarding diet and mobility. The third recommendation is public health protection as global warming might bring diseases from warmer parts of the world to currently cooler climates, including through the migration flows of climate refugees.

Green business

Companies need to continue operations, while transitioning to climate-friendly processes. The first recommendation is data availability, which includes the mandatory disclosure of targets and reporting to make net zero a publicly scrutinised path. The second recommendation is undiscovered knowledge based on large-scale sharing new disruptive technology through partnership programmes partially funded by government grants. The third recommendation is societal change engagement by businesses through internal campaigns and salary sacrifice benefits

Group III – Brexit: where do we go from here?

The group started with general reflections over the impact of Brexit on Anglo-German relations. In particular, the dimension of trust and communication in bilateral relations was mentioned. The presentation was divided in three key areas: political and regulatory, research, innovation, student and knowledge mobility, and connecting people.

Political and regulatory

For the first area, a recommendation is a UK-German *Freundschaftsvertrag* to give a legal framework to economic, cultural and research cooperation. This could be channelled through intergovernmental Cabinet meetings around shared policy priorities. Another recommendation is an official observer status within EU agencies and bodies for the UK to take part in discussions over common issues like data protection. Cooperation in the energy sector is another recommendation with the aim to strengthen pan-European energy transfer networks to foster energy independence. Such cooperation can happen at a regional level such as the recent Scotland-Hamburg regional cooperation network. A last recommendation is formalising bilateral cooperation at an institutional level especially around health security through a UK-German Health Security Framework.

Research, innovation, student and knowledge mobility

For the second area, a recommendation is to introduce several measures regarding education and training. This includes no visa for German and British students, joint programmes, institutional twinning, quality frameworks and alignments, a bilateral university applications system and bilateral academic games modelled after the British Universities Challenge. Another recommendation is to foster academic exchanges around research and knowledge. A possible channel could be an academic profile-matching platform to link researchers together and develop joint research programmes. A last recommendation is around innovation and technology. This would exist through a bilateral platform on joint innovation, a bilateral new academic journal and mutual data best practice sharing or support guidelines.

Connecting people

For the third area, a recommendation is to have reciprocal teaching assistant and pupil exchange programmes. This would be complemented by town and school twinning in order to create early links between pupils from both countries. Another recommendation is to streamline existing programmes and schemes to optimise information access, institutional procedures and funding. A central contact in the German and British Foreign Office with a centralised website would be created for greater coordination, including for businesses. The launch of a touristic image campaign for a GermanyTicket + UKTicket is another recommendation. A last recommendation is a shadowing programmes for sports, culture, bilateral events and visits. Many bilateral events already exist at an official level, but much less so at a non-institutional level. Shadow events would allow bilateral collaboration around sports, cultural and governmental events.

5 Points to Take Away

1. Individual actions are essential as much as complementary with governmental action to create dialogue platforms especially from a young age.
2. Regional/Länder-based, local and grassroots initiatives need to be developed without waiting for higher level government channels to open up.
3. An Anglo-German Treaty needs to be signed to create a common framework of cultural and educational cooperation similar to the Franco-German Élysée Treaty.
4. Bilateral and multilateral cooperation are vital for all three topics of autocracy/democracy, climate change and post-Brexit relations in a fast-changing world for resilient channels from supply chains to political dialogue.
5. Strategic behaving and thinking is needed both from the UK over a more conciliatory approach towards the EU and from the EU with special sectorial statuses for the UK.

Lastly

It is sufficient to say that the 62nd Young Königswinter Conference was a great success.

The last day was celebrated with a boat trip through the city centre of Berlin.

Luca Augé

Berlin, August 2022

