

German and French Africa policies in a multipolar world

28 November 2025

Institut français des relations internationales

27 rue de la Procession, 75015 Paris

Event with simultaneous translation (FR/DE)

The world order is undergoing a profound and accelerating reconfiguration. In this multipolar context, actors such as China, Turkey, Russia, India, and Gulf region countries like the United Arab Emirates or Saudi Arabia, are increasingly asserting themselves as essential strategic partners for the continent. Simultaneously, European states are also seeking to redefine their roles on the continent.

At the same time, many African countries are adopting a strategy of multi-alignment that allows them to create new room for maneuver and to reduce their dependence on a single actor. In this changing environment, new models of cooperation are beginning to emerge - shaped by shifting power dynamics, competing narratives, and the search for more equitable partnerships.

The European Union and some of its member states, the United Kingdom, the United States, Japan, and Canada remain important partners not only in economic terms but also key actors in the areas of development assistance and security. However, they must now contend with new competitors, who introduce approaches and models that differ markedly from their own, and face the difficult question of whether and how to revise their strategies.

This conference seeks to analyze the recomposition of the world order and the new foreign policies resulting from it, focusing on the identities and strategies of different actors as well as the opportunities that Africa can seize in this context of increased international competition and new modes of cooperation. It will also be a matter of identifying which forms of partnership can truly associate African actors and ensure that natural resources and foreign investments concretely and equitably benefit populations. Discussions will revolve around three round tables dedicated to the major issues of Euro-African cooperation: development aid, strategic minerals, and peace and security.

Program

8.45 AM **Welcome and opening words**

Paul Maurice, Secretary General, Study Committee on Franco-German Relations (Cerfa), Ifri

Iris Nothofer, Desk Officer Peace and Security, Friedrich-Ebert-Stiftung (FES)

Benedikt Erforth, Senior Researcher, Department of Inter- and Transnational Cooperation, German Institute of Development and Sustainability (IDOS)

9.00 AM Panel 1: The End of Official Development Assistance?

With the dismantling of USAID, major budget cuts in almost all donor nations, and a growing contestation of the existing Official Development Assistance (ODA) system both in the Global North and South, international cooperation faces an existential crisis. This panel will examine recent developments and potential reform options of international cooperation and the ODA-architecture by analysing the political, economic, and geostrategic logics at play. This session discusses how international development cooperation can and should look like in a fragmented world, and what role France and Germany should play in the transformation of this field. Guiding questions for discussion include:

- What role for international cooperation in times of Great Power competition?
- What alternative visions and reform proposals for international cooperation exist in discussions both in Africa and Europe?
- How can France and Germany act jointly in light of these fundamental transformations?
 - **Birgit Pickel**, Director General Africa to the German Ministry for Economic Cooperation and Development
 - **Hervé Berville**, Member of National Defence and Armed Forces Committee, Member of the Assemblée nationale
 - **Zainab Usman**, Economist, Former Director of the Africa Program, Carnegie Endowment for International Peace
 - **María del Pilar Garrido Gonzalo**, Director for Development Cooperation, OECD

Chair: **Stephan Klingebiel**, Head of Department of International- and Transnational Cooperation, IDOS

10.30 AM Coffee break

11.00 AM Panel 2: The European Union and Critical Minerals – What Role for Africa?

Following the first panel, this session explores the economic, climate, and energy dynamics surrounding critical minerals essential for Europe's green transition. Faced with dependence on China, the EU is striving to secure supplies from Africa through initiatives such as the Critical Raw Material Act, the Global Gateway strategy, particularly in the Democratic Republic of Congo, Rwanda, and Zambia. A fair and equitable design of these instruments has the potential to promote local value creation and thereby support African economies. The panel will analyze the implications of these strategies for African industrial development, sustainable investments, and resource governance and whether they can live up to the expectation of mutually beneficial partnerships.

- **Benjamin Katz**, Manager, Minerals and Extractive Sector, OECD
- **Martina Matarazzo**, Coordinator, International and EU Advocacy, Resource Matters
- **Thomas Mélonio**, Executive Director for Innovation, Strategy and Research, Agence française de Développement
- **Max-Emanuel Hatzold**, Deputy Head of Programme, Regional Resource Governance in West Africa (REGO), GIZ

Chair: **Manuela Mattheß**, Desk Officer for Energy and Climate Justice, FES

12.45 PM Lunch break

2.00 PM Panel 3: Crises and Mediations in the Horn of Africa – What Approaches for Regional Peace and Security?

As conflicts across the African continent become more complex and contracted — from the Sahel to the Horn of Africa — mediation frameworks and cooperative security approaches face growing challenges: regionalized conflicts, fragmentation and multiplication of actors, shifting geopolitical alignments, and weak inclusion of civil societies. This panel will explore current conflict dynamics in the Horn of Africa and discuss models for conflict prevention and resolution at regional and international levels. Using the example of Sudan, but also taking a holistic view on the region, the discussion will focus on the impact of fragmented regional approaches and the growing engagement of other foreign actors. At the same time, it will explore options for regional and international mediation efforts. What role is there for African-led initiatives? How can Germany, France and the EU support those efforts and contribute to an effective mediation architecture in the region?

- **S.E. Bertrand Cochery**, Ambassador, Special Envoy for Sudan and the Horn of Africa, French Ministry for Europe and Foreign Affairs
- **S. E. Heiko Nitzschke**, Special Envoy for the Horn of Africa, German Ministry for Foreign Affairs
- **Samira Gaid**, Regional Security Analyst, Balqis Insights
- **Vincent Darracq**, Regional Director Sudan/Sahel, Promediation

Chair: **Alain Antil**, Director of the Sub-Saharan Africa Center, Ifri

3.30 PM Closing session

Alain Antil, Director of the Sub-Saharan Africa Center, Ifri

Opening words

Paul Maurice, Secretary General, Study Committee on Franco-German Relations (Cerfa), Ifri



Paul Maurice is General Secretary of the Committee for the Study of Franco-German Relations (Cerfa) since September 2024. He was Head of the Mission for Germany, Alpine Europe, and the Adriatic at the European Union Directorate of the Ministry for Europe and Foreign Affairs from September 2022 to August 2024. Prior to that, he was a researcher at Cerfa at Ifri from March 2020 to August 2022, where he worked in particular on issues of German domestic policy and Franco-German relations in the context of European integration. He also teaches at Sciences Po as part of the Master's program at the School of Public Affairs and is a member of the editorial board of the journal *Allemagne d'aujourd'hui*.

Iris Nothofer, Desk Officer Peace and Security, Friedrich-Ebert-Stiftung (FES)



Dr. Iris Nothofer has coordinated the Peace and Security portfolio within the Africa Department of the Friedrich-Ebert-Stiftung (FES) since November 2024. She joined FES in 2018, initially working with the regional trade union project (TUCC) in Johannesburg. She later headed the FES Country Office in Benin, where she also oversaw programme activities in Burkina Faso and Togo. Dr. Nothofer holds a degree in European Studies and completed a Master's program in International Relations in Berlin. She subsequently worked and earned her PhD in the field of peace and conflict studies, focusing on humanitarian military interventions.

Benedikt Erforth, Senior Researcher, Department of Inter- and Transnational Cooperation, German Institute of Development and Sustainability (IDOS)



Benedikt Erforth, Ph.D. is a Project Lead (Megatrends Afrika) and Senior Researcher at the German Institute of Development and Sustainability (IDOS). His research focuses on Africa–Europe relations, development finance, the role of external actors in Africa, and digital cooperation. Before joining IDOS, he taught at Sciences Po Paris and worked in both the European Parliament and the French Parliament

9.00 am | Panel 1 – The End of Official Development Assistance?

Birgit Pickel, Director General Africa to the German Ministry for Economic Cooperation and Development



More than 25 years of experience in international cooperation, including more than 14 years in management positions. Regional focus: Africa; thematic focuses: global health, pandemic preparedness, sustainable economic development, climate and biodiversity. Lived and worked in the USA, South Africa, Zambia. University studies: MA in Political Science; postgraduate certificate in Development Studies from the German Institute of Development and Sustainability (IDOS). Current position since February 2022: Director-General for Africa at the Federal Ministry for Economic Cooperation and Development. Previously: Director for Global Health, Pandemic Preparedness and One Health at the Federal Ministry for Economic

Cooperation and Development and, in that capacity, member of the Boards of the Global Fund to Fight AIDS, Tuberculosis and Malaria and of the Global Financing Facility, and Chair of the Supervisory Board of the Legacy Landscapes Fund. Language skills: German, English and French.

Hervé Berville, Member of National Defence and Armed forces Committee, Member of the Assemblée nationale



Hervé Berville was born in Rwanda in 1990. As an economist, he graduated from Sciences Po Lille and the London School of Economics. He has been a member of parliament since June 2017, representing Ensemble pour la République (formerly La République en Marche). In the National Assembly, he sits on the Foreign Affairs Committee. In 2018, he submitted a report to the President of the Republic on the modernization of French policy on partnerships and international solidarity, which led to the creation of the Innovation Fund for Development. In 2019, he was chosen by Emmanuel Macron to represent France at the

25th commemoration of the Tutsi genocide in Rwanda, held in Kigali. In January 2021, he was rapporteur for the programming bill on solidarity-based development and the fight against global inequalities, which was adopted unanimously. He created the Innovation Fund for Development, chaired by Nobel Prize-winning economist Esther Duflo. After his first re-election in 2022, he was appointed Secretary of State for the Sea and Biodiversity. In this position, he played a decisive role in the negotiations of the treaty on the high seas. He positioned France as the world leader in the fight against seabed mining. He was also behind the largest expansion of marine protected areas in Europe. In 2025, by decree of the Prime Minister, he was tasked with a temporary mission focusing on the use of artificial intelligence in the maritime sector. In 2019, he was named One Young World Politician of the Year. In 2022, he was appointed Commander of the Order of Maritime Merit, before being honored in 2023 as a European Young Leader.

Zainab Usman, Political Economist, Former Director of the Africa Program, Carnegie Endowment for International Peace



Dr. Zainab Usman was, most recently, the founding director of the Africa Program at the Carnegie Endowment for International Peace in Washington D.C. From 2021 to 2025, she built the Africa Program into a globally recognized platform for policy-relevant research, high-level convening, and impact. Under her leadership, the program raised nearly \$6 million in funding, hired and led a dynamic team of 15 experts and staff, produced research that shaped international debates on energy, trade, and global development, and convened presidents, ministers, and business leaders from across Africa, the United States, Europe, and Asia. Her work and that of her team were

featured in *The Economist*, *Financial Times*, *Forbes*, and *The New York Times*, while her events drew participation from senior officials at the White House, U.S. Congress, and more than 30 embassies in Washington, D.C. Dr. Usman's enduring area of expertise is identifying the policies and institutions that enable low- and middle-income economies to harness their natural resources for sustainable economic development. Prior to Carnegie, Usman was a public sector specialist at the World Bank, where she worked on social sustainability, energy policy reforms, natural resource management, and digital technologies. She has advised governments and development partners in Côte d'Ivoire, Morocco, Nigeria, Papua New Guinea, the Republic of Congo, Serbia, Tanzania, and Uzbekistan. Usman's research has been published across academic, policy, and media platforms. She is the author of *Economic Diversification in Nigeria: The Politics of Building a Post-Oil Economy*, selected by the *Financial Times* as one of the Best Books of 2022 on economics. She is also co-editor of *The Future of Work in Africa: Harnessing the Potential of Digital Technologies for All*. She contributed to the World Bank's flagship reports *Rethinking Power Sector Reforms in Developing Countries* and *Africa's Resource Future: Harnessing Natural Resources for Economic Transformation during the Low-Carbon Transition*. Her analyses have appeared in *African Affairs*, the World Bank's Policy Research Working Paper Series, and in edited volumes published by Oxford University Press and James Currey. Her commentary has been featured in *Al Jazeera English*, *BBC*, *Bloomberg News*, *Foreign Affairs*, *Foreign Policy*, *Project Syndicate*, and *The Washington Post*. Usman obtained her doctorate (DPhil) from the University of Oxford.

María del Pilar Garrido Gonzalo, Director for Development Cooperation, OECD



María del Pilar Garrido Gonzalo is the OECD Director for Development Co-operation since 2023. Before joining the Organisation, between May 2018 and May 2022, Mrs. Garrido was the Minister of Planning and Economic Policy in Costa Rica, responsible for the areas of climate-resilient development, sustainable public investment, public sector reform, and development co-operation policy. Also, in office, she has served as the Deputy Minister of Planning and Economic Policy, and as Chief of Staff and Senior Advisor of the Technical Secretariat of the 2030 Agenda. Prior to this, she worked for 13 years at the country level on locally led sustainable development cooperation projects in Costa Rica,

Central America and the Caribbean, and the Latin American region for UNDP, the European Union and the Diputació de Barcelona. She has also worked for NGOs on multi-stakeholder partnerships for sustainable development, particularly engaging with the private sector and civil society organizations. Mrs. Garrido is both a Spanish and a Costa Rican national, holds a BA in Political Science from the University of Costa Rica, a MSc in Economics from Trinity College and a MA in Political Science with an emphasis on democratic governance and public policy from University of Costa Rica.

Chair: Stephan Klingebiel, Head of Department of International- and Transnational Cooperation, IDOS



Dr. Stephan Klingebiel heads the research department "Inter- and Transnational Cooperation" at the German Institute of Development and Sustainability (IDOS). From 2019 to 2021, he led the Global Policy Centre in Seoul for the United Nations Development Programme (UNDP) as well as the office of the KfW Development Bank in Kigali, Rwanda, from 2007 to 2011. Since the academic year 2022/2023 he is a visiting professor at the University of Turin (Italy), a Global Fellow at Ewha Womans University (Seoul, South Korea), an Honorary Distinguished Fellow at Jindal University (India), and teaches at the University of Bonn. From 2011 to 2019, he was a regular visiting professor at Stanford University, a

visiting professor at Ewha Womans University (Seoul, South Korea) in 2023 and 2024, and a senior lecturer at the University of Marburg from 2014 to 2023. Additionally, he was a visiting scholar at the Center on Democracy, Development, and the Rule of Law (CDDRL) at Stanford University (2014) and at the College of Humanities and Development Studies at China Agricultural University (CAU) in Beijing (2017).

11.00 am | Panel 2 - The European Union and Critical Minerals – What role for Africa?

Benjamin Katz, Manager, Minerals and Extractive Sector, OECD



Ben Katz leads the work on responsible mineral supply chains at the OECD's Centre for Responsible Business Conduct. Established to promote the implementation of the OECD Due Diligence Guidance for Responsible Supply Chains of Minerals from Conflict-Affected and High-Risk Areas, the programme aims to advance the field primarily through policy advice, research and convening, and support the smooth roll-out of regulatory requirements and market expectations for minerals due diligence. The programme Ben leads increasingly examines the nexus of responsible business conduct with resilience of critical mineral supply chains. He has over 10 years of experience working on natural resource management in fragile settings. Prior to the OECD, Ben implemented responsible sourcing projects related to due diligence, traceability, and formalisation of artisanal and small-scale mining mainly in Central and Southern Africa.

Martina Matarazzo, Coordinator, International and EU Advocacy, Resource Matters



Martina Matarazzo is the International Advocacy Coordinator at Resource Matters, NGO advancing resource governance and a just energy transition in the DRC, with offices in Kinshasa, Lubumbashi, and Brussels. She works closely with Congolese and international civil society to ensure that EU and global policies on corporate accountability and transition minerals incorporate the Congolese voice. With 10 years of experience in advocacy, Martina previously worked with the Open Society Foundations, coordinating civil society efforts on EU anti-discrimination policies, participatory conflict mediation in Venezuela, and EU due diligence reforms.

Thomas Mélonio, Executive Director for Innovation, Strategy and Research, Agence française de Développement



Dr Thomas Melonio is the AFD Executive Director of Innovation and Research. From 2012 to 2017, he was Deputy Advisor, then Advisor on Africa to the President of the Republic of France. He is an economist with a degree from HEC Paris and a PhD from Sciences Po Paris who published many articles on the financing of education, higher education and international migration. Thomas Melonio is appointed Chief Economist along his current position as Executive Director since May 2024

Max-Emanuel Hatzold, Deputy Head of Programme, Regional Resource Governance in West Africa (REGO), GIZ



Max-Emanuel Hatzold is Deputy Head of the GIZ programme Regional Resource Governance in West Africa (REGO), where he leads work on environmentally responsible, transparent, and development-oriented mineral supply chains in Côte d'Ivoire and Liberia. He leads a team that advises governments, civil society, and private-sector partners on critical raw materials, supply-chain diversification, and taxation reforms, and coordinates EU- and BMZ-funded initiatives aimed at strengthening resource governance and local value creation. Previously, he coordinated GIZ's global raw materials initiative and served as lead technical expert for resource governance and

supply chains at GIZ, contributing to strategic guidance on Just Energy Transition and the governance of critical minerals. He also led a GIZ component on resource governance in fragile states, working closely with mining ministries, regulatory authorities, and the Extractive Industries Transparency Initiative (EITI). Before joining GIZ, Max-Emanuel worked with IDB Invest in Washington, D.C., assessing private-sector projects in supply chains and energy and conducting project evaluations across Latin America. His academic work focused on the political economy of natural resources in Latin America, and he holds an MSc in International Development from the University of Bath, where he specialized in mining and local development.

***Chair:* Manuela Mattheß, Desk Officer for Energy and Climate Justice, FES**



Manuela Mattheß studied Arabic and Oriental philology as well as political science at the University of Leipzig and Ankara University. She has been working for the Friedrich Ebert Foundation since 2013 and has previously served as a consultant for Southeast Europe and international energy and climate policy, as well as a project assistant in Dakar, Senegal. She currently works in the Africa Department of the Friedrich Ebert Foundation, where she is responsible for country projects in the Democratic Republic of Congo, Cameroon, and Mozambique, as well as cross-cutting issues

of energy and climate justice and gender justice in Africa. She is particularly interested in the topics of just transition, raw materials policy, and issues surrounding gender equality and care work.

2.00 pm | Panel 3 - Crises and Mediations in the Horn of Africa – What Approaches for Regional Peace and Security?

S.E. Bertrand Cochery, Ambassador, Special Envoy for Sudan and the Horn of Africa, French Ministry for Europe and Foreign Affairs



Mr. Bertrand Cochery has a sound practice of security issues, societal challenges and crisis management in Africa, through his postings as French Ambassador in Guinea Conakry (2012-2016), Congo Brazzaville (2016-2019) and more recently in Tchad, from September 2019 still end of July 2023. In N'Djamena, he also played a key role in implementing the transformation of the French policy in Africa, launched by President Emmanuel Macron during the Montpellier Summit in October 2021, aiming at reshaping the relationship with the civil societies (youth, women, artists, journalists, entrepreneurs). Back to Paris as Special Envoy for Sahel, he particularly involved himself in the Franco-

German dialogue on the ongoing crisis in the Sahelian region and its neighborhood. Since September 2024, he is posted in Addis Ababa as Ambassador Special Envoy for Sudan and the Horn of Africa.

S.E. Heiko Nitzschke, Special Envoy for the Horn of Africa, German Ministry for Foreign Affairs



Heiko Nitzschke serves as Germany's Special Envoy for the Horn of Africa since August 2023, based in Nairobi, Kenya. From 2019-23 he was Minister Counsellor and Deputy Head of Mission at the German Embassy in Addis Ababa. From 2015-19 he worked in the Policy Planning Unit at the German Foreign Office, responsible inter alia for Africa, multilateral order and relations with Think Tanks. Previously, he was a member of the Security Council team at the German UN Mission in New York covering Syria, Libya, Yemen, peacekeeping and peacebuilding, and Security Council reform (2011-15). From 2009-11, he served as Deputy Head

of Mission at the German Embassy in Sudan, and as Political Affairs Officer with the UN Mission in Sudan (UNMIS) from 2008-09. He was Desk Officer for UN Peacekeeping at the Foreign Office in Berlin from 2005-2008. He joined the Federal Foreign Office as career diplomat in 2004. Before that, he was senior program officer at the International Peace Academy (now International Peace Institute) in New York (2002-04). Heiko holds master's degrees from Columbia University's School of International and Public Affairs (SIPA), and Potsdam University. He is co-editor of "Profiting from Peace: Managing the Resource Dimension of Armed Conflict" (2006) and has authored publications on the political economy of conflict and peacekeeping, and the Sudan chapter in "The UN Security Council in the 21st Century", edited by von Einsiedel, Malone and Ugarte (2016).

Samira Gaid, Regional Security Analyst, Balqis Insights



Ms. Samira Gaid is a leading regional security analyst with over two decades of professional experience in the HoA, including a decade in the security sector working at the highest levels in Somalia. Samira served as the Principal Security Advisor to the Prime Minister of the Federal Republic of Somalia. She led the extensive transformation and reform efforts of the Somali Security Sector. She oversaw the payroll and HR reform for all Somali National Security Forces and organizational change management efforts that enhanced the accountability and performance of the forces. She is currently a Senior Horn of Africa Analyst with Balqis Insights, a Somalia-based think-and-do tank

working on peace, security, and governance in the Horn of Africa. Her work spans security sector reform, political transitions, and counterterrorism, with a particular focus on Somalia's hybrid security architecture and the geopolitical dynamics of the Red Sea and Gulf of Aden.

Vincent Darracq, Regional Director Sudan/Sahel, Promediation



Vincent Darracq is currently Regional Director for East and Central Africa at Promediation, an NGO specializing in conflict mediation. After completing a PhD in political science at the Centre d'Etude d'Afrique Noire (CEAN) at Sciences Po Bordeaux, he worked on political and security dynamics in Africa for think tanks (Ifri, Chatham House), risk consultancies, the French Ministry of Defense, and the UN (UN Panel of Experts on Sudan).

Chair: Alain Antil, Director of the Sub-Saharan Africa Center, Ifri



Alain Antil is a researcher and Director of the Sub-Saharan Africa Center at Ifri. He teaches in the geopolitics master's program at Paris I Sorbonne and the Peace, Humanitarian Action and Development master's program at the IEP in Lille. He obtained his doctoral degree in political geography from the University of Rouen. He has notably been a researcher at the Laboratory for the Study of Arid Region Development (University of Rouen), at the Institute for International and Strategic Relations (IRIS), and an external collaborator with the International Crisis Group (ICG). His research initially

focused on the importation of the state and exogenous political models in Africa, particularly in Mauritania. Since the late 2000s, he has been interested in security issues in the Sahel. He first focused on trafficking and its impacts on the political field and on insecurity, then on

the root causes of conflict in the Sahel. He currently works on the evolution of Sahelian states' presence in their territories as well as, more broadly, on the geopolitical reconfigurations taking place south of the Sahara.

3.00 pm | Closing session

Alain Antil, Director of the Sub-Saharan Africa Center, Ifri



Alain Antil is a researcher and Director of the Sub-Saharan Africa Center at Ifri. He teaches in the geopolitics master's program at Paris I Sorbonne and the Peace, Humanitarian Action and Development master's program at the IEP in Lille. He obtained his doctoral degree in political geography from the University of Rouen. He has notably been a researcher at the Laboratory for the Study of Arid Region Development (University of Rouen), at the Institute for International and Strategic Relations (IRIS), and an external collaborator with the International Crisis Group (ICG). His research initially focused on the importation of the state and exogenous political models in Africa, particularly in Mauritania. Since the late 2000s, he has been interested in security issues in the Sahel. He first focused on trafficking and its impacts on the political field and on insecurity, then on the root causes of conflict in the Sahel. He currently works on the evolution of Sahelian states' presence in their territories as well as, more broadly, on the geopolitical reconfigurations taking place south of the Sahara.