

Program

Threats & Opportunities for German and EU trade What about the world export champion?

Date & Time: 25th June 2025 at 17:00h to 18:30h

Location: European Office of the Konrad Adenauer Stiftung, Avenue de l'Yser 11, 1040 Brussels

Germany and the European Union have long been pillars of the global trading system, known for their strong export-oriented economies and commitment to free trade. Yet their roles are increasingly under pressure. Rising geopolitical tensions, a new wave of protectionism, and the intensifying rivalry between the United States and China are reshaping global trade patterns and challenging Europe's economic model.

While the Trump administration pursues industrial policies that prioritize domestic production, the EU finds itself navigating complex negotiations aimed at securing fairer transatlantic trade conditions. Although a temporary 90-day pause has created space for dialogue, persistent tariffs—particularly on steel and aluminum—continue to strain EU-US relations. In response, the European Union has tried to convey its openness for negotiation, aimed at de-escalation but at the same time communicated its willingness to defend European interests. Key areas of discussion include liquefied natural gas, agricultural products, and defense goods—sectors with both economic and geopolitical relevance. Against this backdrop of transatlantic relations, there are some who advocate a more conciliatory position vis-à-vis China although there has been little movement on fundamental issues.

A recent study for the German Foreign Office by Dr. Samina Sultan and Jürgen Matthes of the **German Economic Institute (IW)** showcases Germany as key example for why the European trade position is challenged. While Germany still dominates global exports in roughly 180 product groups—mostly in machinery, chemicals, and base metals—this number has declined steadily since 2010. Although certain industrial sectors remain strong, e.g. high-precision instruments, fertilizers, or painkillers, China's exports have risen sharply. China has been expanding its global market share in many of the same categories. The report underlines that Germany's dominant export position is weakening and warns of long-term erosion without a strategic recalibration.

In this shifting environment, several key questions arise: How should the EU position itself given trade tensions with the EU and China? What are the long-term prospects for Germany's role as a world export champion? How can Europe ensure continued strength in international trade despite growing external pressures? These and other timely questions will be addressed in an expert discussion hosted by **the Konrad-Adenauer-Stiftung Europe** and the **German Economic Institute (IW)**. We are pleased to welcome from the Parliament's Committee on International Trade (INTA) **MEP Miriam Lexmann** (EPP/SK), alongside **Jürgen Matthes**, Head of International Economic Policy at IW as well as a representant from the Commission and the German industry.

Program

The discussion will be moderated by **Sandra Parthie** from the German Economic Institute.

Agenda

16:45

Registration

17:00

Welcoming remarks

Dr. Beatrice Gorawantschy

Director of the European Office
Konrad-Adenauer-Stiftung

Presentation of the Study

Jürgen Matthes

Head of International Economic Policy
German Economic Institute (IW)

Dr. Samina Sultan

Senior Economist for European Economic Policy and Trade
German Economic Institute (IW)

17:15

Statements of the Panelists

Miriam Lexmann

Member of the European Parliament (EPP/SK)
European Parliament

Jürgen Matthes

Head of International Economic Policy
German Economic Institute (IW)

Commission Representative

Business Representative

Discussion and Q&A Session

moderated by

Sandra Parthie

Head of the Brussels Liaison Office
German Economic Institute (IW)

18:30

Acknowledgements and End of Event