Commission
A Changing World – Germany and the Global South

Recommendations for the Realignment of Germany's Relations with the Countries of the Global South

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BACKGROUND

The world is in upheaval. The previous world order is being called into question. A multipolar world is already a reality today and at the same time is under more pressure than ever. The West, as a global model of values and order, is on the defensive. It was against this background that *Global Perspectives Initiative* launched the Commission **"A Changing World – Germany and the Global South."** Since mid-2024, 10 high-ranking representatives from politics, business, civil society and academia have been working with experts from the Global South to address the question of how in an era of geopolitical shifts Germany should (re)shape its relations with the Global South in key policy areas. The aim of this is to develop recommendations for a new German government. The Commission's detailed final report will be published in spring 2025, but the following key findings can already be identified today – just a few weeks before the German parliamentary elections.

CHANGE OF PERSPECTIVE
NEW REALITIES IN A MULTIPOLAR WORLD ORDER

In times of multiple crises, international engagement is more important than ever. However, it cannot continue as before. Instead, it requires a broader perspective. In response to the new geopolitical realities, an interest-based approach should be the starting point for Germany's engagement – including in countries of the Global South. Traditional donor-recipient patterns must increasingly be replaced by relationships in which the interests of both sides are realistically formulated and openly negotiated. In this context, aid during humanitarian emergencies, health care, food security and poverty reduction must be given equal weight in an interest-based international policy. It is therefore not about abandoning values and principles, but about further developing existing positions, building new bridges and equipping Germany politically, economically and socially for the future. This requires a broader approach, both in terms of the actors involved and the levels of cooperation.

Against this background, the topics covered by the Commission have given rise to the following key recommendations:

- **Work together in clusters:** The current massive upheavals in the international order mean that foreign policy is becoming increasingly relevant to domestic policy, and vice versa. International cooperation determines the day-to-day work of almost all the federal government departments. Cross-departmental strategies, formal interdepartmental coordination and summarized information on countries and regions are some of the current forms of cooperation, but they do not do justice to the complex reality. Therefore, the existing instruments must be expanded in such a way that they create a genuine cluster cooperation. To this end, the role of the Federal Security Council should be enhanced and – building on the National Security Strategy of June 2023 – the establishment of a National Security Council should be considered.

- **Strategically align development cooperation:** In a multipolar world, international cooperation needs to be intensified. Development cooperation is a cornerstone of this. To make it even more effective, it needs to be financially secured, strategically realigned and better coordinated, both within the German government and within the European Union, which is the largest donor worldwide.

- **Engage in coalitions of the willing:** Multilateralism is key for Germany. To preserve it, it must be reformed. This will take time. Therefore, in the meantime, the German government should increasingly take the lead in "coalitions of the willing" to develop solutions to global challenges.

- **Promote trade agreements:** At a time when economic policy is again being pursued with tariffs, trade agreements are an important response and a central instrument for promoting prosperity and security. However, they should be streamlined and concluded with new regions in the world in a timely manner.

- **Scale private investment:** German investment in the Global South, particularly in Africa, must be strengthened through new incentives, risk guarantees and capital funding, while partner countries should for their part create investment-friendly conditions.

- **Manage labor migration:** Germany relies on labor migration due to its aging population. The German government should manage this migration based on a needs assessment conducted with the business community and further develop existing instruments in line with a binding strategy.

- **Create a national immigration agency:** A central immigration agency at the federal level should expedite labor migration by pooling responsibilities and simplifying entry procedures ("*fast-track regulation*").

- **Strengthen development banks financially:** Development banks are a particularly good instrument for using increasingly scarce funds more effectively. They should be strengthened financially.

- **Restructure debt:** New initiatives are needed to invigorate the international debt restructuring framework in order to sustainably resolve impending liquidity and solvency crises, particularly in the poorest countries. This includes consistently calling new creditor countries such as China to make contributions, while at the same time involving private creditors more closely in debt restructuring. In return, indebted countries would have to pursue responsible economic policies and improve their tax systems.

- **Establish international carbon markets:** CO_2 should be priced worldwide in order to achieve the climate targets. The funds generated could be invested in adaptation and prevention measures in those countries most affected by climate change.

- **Set up tax clubs for new funds:** In order to mobilize more funds for international climate protection, there should be an assessment of how international aviation could be taxed without negative effects on the German economy and competitiveness. The idea of tax clubs, in which participating states levy coordinated tax rates, could be one potential approach.

WHAT GUIDES US

2025 marks the 80th anniversary of the end of the Second World War. The international order that emerged in the wake of the rupture in civilization perpetrated by Germany is now in a state of upheaval. What will remain of it and exactly what it will look like in the future is yet to be determined. What is certain is that Germany, as the world's third-largest economy – embedded in the EU and NATO – has probably benefited more than any other country from this post-war order. That is why it is important to actively shape the future structures and not to lose oneself in a romanticized view of past geopolitical realities – or to advocate a "Germany first" policy. What is needed is an in-depth political debate about the right goals and paths for international cooperation, to which we as a commission want to contribute with a clear position:

- **Instead of less, more international engagement, because in times of global upheaval, foreign policy and strong economic relations are decisive for the national wellbeing.**
- **Instead of a return to nationalism, safeguarding interests with the help of strong alliances.**
- **Instead of playing off values against interests, clearly state both and pursue them pragmatically.**
- **Instead of lengthy organizational changes, rely on intelligent cluster solutions.**
- **Instead of ducking populist defamation, strategically align Germany's international engagement and actively seek approval.**

The principle here is that countries enforce their legitimate interests on the basis of international law and not through sheer force. Only this kind of world is a fair world in the long term and capable of improving people's lives. Solutions to the key issues for the future can only be developed together with the countries of the Global South. They are disproportionately affected by current crises such as climate change, migration and geopolitical tensions. At the same time, they are gaining in strategic importance due to their demographic development, their raw material deposits and their key role in future technologies. Western arrogance, know-it-all attitudes or condescension are misplaced. We must also guard against Eurocentrism, which pushes the 80 percent of the world's population living in non-Western countries to the periphery of our vision.

With growing self-confidence, the countries of the Global South are making demands of the Western world, to which Germany, as an exporting nation and a major donor of development services must find constructive answers. We are aware that the countries of the Global South do not form a homogenous block. Rather, a differentiated approach is required, while the term itself is problematic as a crude generalization. Nevertheless, we are using it, not for geographical classification, but – for lack of convincing alternatives – in a geopolitical sense. Especially since countries of the Global South themselves use it with an emancipatory claim and it points to fault lines in international politics.

International cooperation is more necessary than ever, especially in times of upheaval and despite limited funds. Germany has legitimate self-interests in this regard, which it should clearly identify and pursue (as is common practice within the EU, NATO and the G7). This interest-based approach should also guide cooperation with countries of the Global South, in which both sides negotiate their respective interests in such a way that ideally leads to win-win situations. Such an approach differs from other countries that are interested in exploitation for their own purposes. A rules-based international order is essential for international cooperation to function. That is why we are committed to strengthening multilateral organizations so that they adequately reflect the reality of today's world. To do this, reforms are needed to strengthen the countries and interests that have not been adequately represented so far and to make them allies when it comes to the rules-based order.

On the basis of our values, we nevertheless have fundamental humanitarian obligations that we should and must continue to meet in order to alleviate hardship, particularly in times of increasing crises and conflicts.

International cooperation is vital for our country. To this end, we need an open debate about the pros and cons, costs and benefits, as well as the way in which it is conducted. With our recommendations, we want to contribute to a debate in the best democratic sense.

The recommendations do not represent a radical break with previous practice in international cooperation. Rather, the aim was to reassess and pragmatically further develop existing practices. The recommendations focus on five areas that we consider particularly relevant for the future design of international cooperation: **I. Geopolitics and Development**, **II. Economy and Trade**, **III. Labor Migration**, **IV. International Finance**, and **V. Climate Policy and Financing**.

RECOMMENDATIONS

I. GEOPOLITICS AND DEVELOPMENT

The decline of the rules-based liberal world order is becoming obvious. The global balance of power has shifted considerably. At the same time, the United States is increasingly turning away from the role of "global policeman." Instead, a kind of global disorder has emerged, characterized by numerous wars and conflicts as well as a globalized economy in crisis. In the current phase, multipolar tendencies are intensifying, with various poles claiming a large degree of strategic autonomy. Against this background, Germany must reposition itself and that includes a strategically improved calibration of its relations with the Global South. Particularly in this phase of transition toward a new world order, the countries of the Global South are particularly important as partners for Europe and Germany.

We therefore make the following recommendations:

- **Strengthen Europe as an independent pole in a multipolar world:** Germany should advocate for the EU to become a global pole in this increasingly multipolar world – without falling into Eurocentric thought patterns. To this end, it is crucial to strengthen Europe's defense and foreign policy capabilities. For a long time Europe, and Germany in particular, was able to rely on the protective power of the United States. This principle no longer applies. Therefore, Europe must improve its military position. This requires a comprehensive European defense industry and increased military cooperation within Europe. This must primarily take place through the European pillar of NATO. In the future, defense spending amounting to 2 percent of GDP will no longer suffice. At the same time, the EU must be able to act quickly and effectively in foreign and security policy matters due to the intense dynamic in the international system and to a certain extent become "capable in world affairs." The goal must therefore be to replace the unanimity rule that currently exists in the EU with the qualified majority rule in most cases. Germany should clearly advocate for this change in the EU framework.

- **Engage in new alliances and coalitions of the willing:** The multilateral organizations have been weakened and, due to the rivalries between superpowers and major powers, have only a limited capacity to act. In order to make progress on pressing challenges despite this, Germany should, on the one hand, work to strengthen and reform multilateral organizations and, on the other hand, become more involved in minilateral clubs and "coalitions of the willing" and also take an active leadership role here. These could develop solutions in smaller groups and feed them back into the international organizations. Bodies such as the G7 and G20 should also be used more in this regard.

- **Strategically align development cooperation:** Functioning, reliable partnerships based on trust with countries of the Global South are of central importance in multipolar times. Development cooperation (DC) is an essential instrument for this. The aim is to focus DC more sharply and to use the funds strategically, efficiently and effectively. To multiply the impact, development efforts must be coordinated even more closely between ministries, but also between EU countries, because the EU and its member states are together the largest donor of public development aid worldwide. This strength should be exploited even better through joint development policy and implementation.

- **Develop attractive cooperation concepts together with countries of the Global South:** In a multipolar world, the traditional division of donors and recipients in development cooperation has become obsolete. Instead, partnerships are needed from which both sides benefit and in which all parties clearly communicate their interests. Therefore, Germany, together with the EU and countries of the Global South, should develop attractive cooperation concepts in trade, investment, infrastructure, energy, raw materials and climate partnerships.

II. ECONOMY AND TRADE

Geopolitical shifts and climate change are creating new economic challenges. As one of the world's largest export and trading nations, Germany is directly affected by international market developments and is therefore highly vulnerable. New business models are needed to ensure that it can remain competitive and secure long-term prosperity as an industrialized country with few natural resources. In the context of climate change, the task is also to combine economic goals with climate and environmental protection. This is the only kind of business model that will be sustainably successful. Digitalization and artificial intelligence are revolutionizing production and communications and require additional infrastructure and raw materials. In this environment, Germany must maintain its innovative strength. It is important to identify and pursue the specific interests and needs of the economy. If the German economy is to remain successful, it needs to cover the increasing energy demands at competitive costs, access raw materials, open up new markets, secure supply chains and recruit labor and skilled workers. To achieve this, reliable relations with the countries of the Global South and effective financing instruments are essential, because this is where, in addition to raw materials and energy partnerships, the markets and labor forces of the future will be found.

We therefore make the following recommendations:

- **Reduce dependencies on critical minerals and raw materials:** Germany will remain dependent on supplies of raw materials. To reduce this dependency, imports should be diversified. This requires an interest-based raw materials foreign policy that strikes a balance between Germany's own security of supply and the development goals of countries in the Global South. Germany should invest more in raw materials partnerships, including a stronger presence in

mineral-rich countries and regular exchanges on the ground. To this end, it is important to develop long-term prospects together, rather than relying on short-term commitments in contrast to other countries.

- **Push ahead with trade agreements:** At a time when politics is again being conducted through tariffs, free trade agreements are of central importance. But the negotiations take too long because they are often overburdened with technical standards and many details. In the EU, Germany should push for a faster pace and leaner agreements. A timely 70 percent agreement is better than a 100 percent agreement that is never realized. The EU should move forward quickly on behalf of the member states and – similar to the case of Mercosur – push ahead with negotiations with new regions in the world.

- **Establish local value chains:** Germany should invest in the development of value chains and manufacturing in countries of the Global South, as well as remove trade barriers for corresponding products. This contributes toward the desired diversification as well as the development of new markets. The resulting jobs are in the interest of both Germany and the governments concerned, particularly in Africa. Germany can support this process by transferring knowledge and technology and developing training systems, and in return can share in innovations, for example in the production of hydrogen.

- **Scale private investment:** Many countries in the Global South depend on foreign investment. However, only a fraction of German direct investment goes to Africa, for example. Additional incentives, efforts and guarantees are needed to attract more private capital to these countries, to open up new, promising markets for German companies and to overcome existing concerns about risk. The measures taken so far are insufficient; more venture capital and equity capital are needed, for example. This applies above all to the funding for new technologies and start-ups. By cushioning risks, German companies should be motivated to invest in new markets. This will be all the more successful if the partner countries create an investment-friendly culture and adhere to good governance standards.

- **Promote a new mindset:** Companies and the German government must recognize the potential of cooperation with countries of the Global South. There is an urgent need for a change of attitude, especially among the next generation of managers, in order to overcome the lack of knowledge and the sometimes still low intercultural competence, particularly with regard to the African continent and Asia. Here, appropriate initiatives should be taken and capacities built by policymakers in cooperation with civil society. This requires more contact, exchanges, knowledge and further training, especially at the management level, but also at universities through partnerships with universities in the Global South, in order to make the economic potential of these respective countries more visible.

III. LABOR MIGRATION

Germany is a country of immigration. People have always left their homelands for a variety of reasons, especially from Europe, and will continue to do so in the future. In the past, labor migration has been a success for host economies and is increasingly becoming a necessity in this country due to the aging population and shrinking labor force. At the same time, many countries in the Global South are looking for job opportunities for their growing young population. In Africa alone, around 12 million people of working age enter the labor market every year, but there are only enough jobs for around three million of them. This is where the opportunity arises to enter into triple-win partnerships that benefit all parties involved: the destination country, the country of origin and the individual. However, this will only function if there is a binding strategy from the German government and the various paths to Germany are clearly defined and separated. In this way, labor migration can be managed in a targeted and needs-based manner.

We therefore make the following recommendations:

- **Promote labor migration:** To facilitate the (temporary) immigration of workers and skilled labor, the various paths to Germany need to be separated and clear rules established, including by reducing bureaucracy and creating a positive, service-oriented administrative culture in the diplomatic missions and domestically. To do this, all steps must be carefully thought out and coordinated. The share of irregular migration decreases as soon as more legal pathways for labor migration are opened.

- **Improve communication about labor migration:** If there are clear pathways for those interested in working, this should also be communicated separately from refuge and asylum. The narrative of irregular, uncontrollable migration is misleading because labor migration can be flexibly managed depending on the demand of the domestic labor market. The federal government should use public relations and education to ensure that the necessity, benefits and flexible manageability of labor migration are recognized. This will also help to counteract xenophobia and racism.

- **Establish a national immigration agency:** In order to facilitate labor migration, there is a need for a "*fast-track regulation*" that provides quick entry options and a central federal migration agency. This would allow for the pooling of responsibilities and the creation of simple access structures, resulting in a central digital database that all authorities can access. The agency would also be responsible for residence permits and visas and should be set up in a timely manner – without creating additional bureaucratic hurdles.

- **Strategically assess demand and establish demand management:** In order to manage labor migration, it is necessary to work with the business community to assess demand and set clear targets. Only then can strategic partnerships be entered into with countries and managed according to the specific demands of the domestic labor market.

- **Recognize professional experience:** One obstacle to the rapid recruitment of skilled workers is the recognition of certificates and diplomas. The goal must be to recognize acquired professional experience without a lot of red tape. Further liberalization and, above all, digitalization should be introduced here.

- **Strengthen language and cultural support:** In order for skilled workers to quickly settle in Germany and be an asset to companies, language support should be expanded at home and abroad. This requires even more targeted courses that reflect the reality of life for foreign skilled workers in Germany. The public sector should invest even more in such educational modules, at state institutions such as the Goethe-Institut, but also at private language schools.

- **Establish a talent fund:** Private and civil society service providers can be easily integrated into the recruitment of skilled workers. They cost money, but the investment pays off: The recruitment costs are covered by a positive net fiscal amount within a few months. To this end, the German government should set up a talent fund that draws on an ecosystem of such service providers.

- **Establish a mobility fund:** To make development and economic cooperation more efficient, the German government should establish a labor mobility fund. The fund would consist of two parts: a *Working Capital Facility* to provide financial start-up assistance to projects and young companies in the labor migration sector, and a *Guarantee Facility* to attract investors by sharing risk. The aim is to strengthen companies such as language schools or fair recruitment companies so that they become independent of public funding.

IV. INTERNATIONAL FINANCE

The countries of the Global South have recently been hit by various "external shocks" that have severely challenged their economies: The pandemic caused a massive economic and financial crisis for many of them. This crisis was further exacerbated by Russia's war of aggression in Ukraine, which has led to further shortages of food, fertilizer and energy as well as rising prices. In addition, there is worldwide inflation. Furthermore, climate change is affecting the Global South disproportionately as well as causing increasing damage here, which requires enormous financial resources to cope with, but these are not available. Due to all these factors, poorer countries have been struggling with financial challenges for about five years following a period of upswing, which is severely hindering their economic development. In this situation, international financial institutions capable of action are particularly important. However, the Bretton Woods institutions, founded after World War II and responsible for monetary and financial stability, are in a structural crisis and no longer fit for purpose: Their governance still reflects the world of the mid-20th century. The interests of many states, particularly the countries of the Global South, are not being taken into account enough, thus placing them at a disadvantage in their development. It is in Germany's interest to reform these institutions and make them more inclusive. If it wants to diversify and invest in new regions of the world, economic growth and stability are crucial. At the same time, supporting the reform efforts will enhance Germany's reputation and credibility among partners in the Global South.

We therefore make the following recommendations:

- **Press ahead with the reform of the Bretton Woods institutions:** The German government should advocate for the further development of the *International Monetary Fund (IMF)* and the *World Bank*. These must become more inclusive and devote more attention to the major risks facing humanity in our time, such as climate change and the loss of biodiversity, which were not yet priorities when these institutions were founded but deserve to be today. If countries of the Global South do not receive more influence and say in these institutions in the foreseeable future, there is a risk that important global actors will withdraw from them in the medium term. It is therefore important to press ahead with substantive adjustments and reforms for fairer governance and power distribution in the Bretton Woods institutions. Germany can take on the role of a prudent broker here.

- **Strengthen development banks financially:** Development banks are a particularly good instrument for using increasingly scarce funds more effectively. They can multiply every publicly invested euro with funds from the international financial markets. It is therefore important to provide the development banks with better financial resources. This also applies to the European development banks, whose work can also be used to articulate and realize their own interests.

- **Increase use of guarantees:** Public budgets are not sufficient to meet the transformation challenges ahead. In the past, however, the private sector was rather reluctant to invest in the Global South, with the exception of emerging markets. To cushion risks for private companies, guarantees and security mechanisms should be used more. The German government should advocate for a more intensive use of such instruments and lead by example.

- **Restructure debts:** Many countries in the Global South are heavily indebted. In the coming years, there will be a growing risk of liquidity and solvency crises, particularly in some of the poorest countries. Their debt problems cannot be solved by taking on more and more new debt. New initiatives are therefore needed to revitalize the international debt restructuring framework. From the perspective of many debtor countries, this is not very attractive and has not been used enough. In addition, contributions from new creditor countries such as China should be consistently demanded, and private creditors, who have so far largely avoided fair debt relief and restructuring measures, should be more involved in debt restructuring. In return, indebted countries must pursue responsible economic policies and improve their tax systems.

- **Reduce harmful subsidies:** Misguided subsidies from governments around the world – for example, in fossil fuels, overfishing or inefficient agricultural practices – create the wrong incentives and therefore cause more harm than good for the economy as a whole. This applies to the EU, where agriculture is still the largest recipient, but it also applies to many countries in the Global South. Germany should push for a different subsidy policy within the EU and promote international initiatives to redirect unsustainable subsidies from energy, agriculture and fisheries to sustainable areas. It is not necessarily a question of fewer subsidies, but of more targeted ones that are geared to the

needs of of people affected by change and to sustainable economic growth. A transformation to sustainable economic activity can only succeed if a social safety net is created for people who are negatively affected. Income redistribution and social security measures are often indispensable in this context.

V. CLIMATE POLICY AND FINANCING

Damage caused by climate change is already inflicting enormous costs on all continents. If emissions continue to rise, this damage will multiply by the end of the century. Developing countries are particularly affected. Throughout Africa, particularly in the Sahel region, on the Arabian Peninsula, in India and Pakistan, in parts of South America and in parts of Southeast Asia, climate damage will be well above the global average by the mid-century. Many countries in these regions have historically contributed relatively little to climate change. However, in recent years, emissions have also increased in emerging markets. At the same time, developing countries in particular lack the financial resources and access to international credit to bear the costs of climate transformation and implement the necessary adaptation measures. On the other hand, the economic development of emerging markets is accompanied by a growing energy demand, intensive construction activity and thus rising greenhouse gas emissions. Some countries of the Global South are also heavily dependent on the export of fossil raw materials. For all these reasons, international cooperation and targeted climate strategies for working with countries of the Global South are essential to limit global warming.

We therefore make the following recommendations:

- **Tax fossil fuels:** The use of global common goods must be regulated if the devastating consequences of overuse are to be avoided. The pricing of fossil fuels via the two EU emissions trading systems (ETS) is of key importance here because, on the one hand, they reduce the demand for oil, coal and gas. This makes selling fossil fuels on the world markets less profitable and increases the pressure on exporting countries to transform their economies. On the other hand, revenues are generated that can be used for social security measures or to promote renewable technologies. The German government should therefore work within the EU to maintain the ETS reduction paths.

- **Establish international carbon markets:** The German government should work to establish carbon pricing mechanisms on all continents. Carbon pricing can help developing and emerging economies to leapfrog a fossil fuel-driven development. It is crucial to take into account the local context, the distributional effects and interactions with other development goals of the countries concerned, as well as possible economic or institutional constraints. It makes sense to introduce such mechanisms gradually and to combine them with compensatory mechanisms such as targeted subsidies or cash transfers. Carbon pricing in countries of the Global South can be anchored in reciprocal climate partnerships.

- **Promote *Carbon Dioxide Removal (CDR)*:** Global warming will exceed the 1.5° Celsius mark in the next few years. It is therefore essential to actively remove CO_2 from the atmosphere and store it. This is the only way to offset unavoidable residual emissions in the medium to long term and reduce the emissions overshoot. The German government should therefore also promote *CDR* measures in the Global South.

- **Promote the sale of removal certificates:** For countries in the Global South, the development of *CDR* projects and the international sale of removals offers a lucrative new economic concept. Many countries have good conditions for the implementation of *CDR* due to geological storage capacities and great potential for solar energy. Exporters of fossil raw materials also have an incentive to invest in *CDR*. Withdrawals could be traded via emissions trading systems if a new type of certificate – so-called *"clean-up" certificates* – were introduced. The German government should therefore advocate for the integration of these *"clean-up" certificates* into emissions trading and the establishment of a *buyers' club*. This would enable countries of the Global South to internationally trade the removals they generate. This also means that compliance with social and ecological standards must be monitored under Article 6 of the Paris Climate Agreement.

- **Establish tax clubs for additional funding:** At COP29 in Baku, the member states agreed on a financing target of 300 billion US dollars by 2035 without specifying the sources of the funds. One way to mobilize additional funds for climate protection is to examine how international aviation could be taxed without negatively impacting the German economy and competitiveness. The idea of tax clubs, in which states commit to levying a certain tax rate on flights to partner countries and incoming flights from third countries, could be a viable approach. This model would have the potential to reduce global emissions from the burning of fossil fuels by around 10 percent. Furthermore, it would generate financial resources that could flow to the Global South through an international climate fund for carbon pricing mechanisms. A portion of the funds could also be used to finance other global public goods, such as biodiversity conservation or pandemic prevention. Germany should advocate for these kinds of tax clubs.

WHAT THIS MEANS FOR GOVERNMENT ACTION

As a large economy at the center of Europe, Germany cannot afford to ignore the new global realities and challenges. The need to act is enormous. The next German government must therefore quickly realign relations with the countries of the Global South and pursue a paradigm shift. To do this, the federal government needs to be more coherent on the issue of international cooperation and use funds more efficiently.

In order to truly establish partnerships with countries of the Global South in a strategic way, to reinvigorate them and to harmonize international activities, more coordination at the federal level is needed, as is the establishment of a pragmatic cluster logic that works across departments and overcomes silo thinking. What is needed is a process that consistently defines national interests from the top down and leads to coherent strategic decisions and the tasks derived from them. To this end, the Commission recommends, firstly, a comprehensive strengthening and further development of the Federal Security Council based in the Federal Chancellery. Secondly, the establishment of a National Security Council should be considered – a further development of the National Security Strategy of June 2023 – which could combine geopolitical analysis, scenario development, planning tasks and policy coherence of the departments with international contacts.

Instead of a major organizational reform, for example by merging ministries, the Commission recommends further developing existing forms of cooperation with the aim of intelligent cluster cooperation. Simply shifting departments between ministries in Germany takes a lot of time and slows down work processes. Time that is not available in view of the rapid changes taking place in the world. This does not preclude the elimination of individual redundant units. The basic prerequisite for successful cluster cooperation is a common understanding of the starting position, the relevant actors, the interests and interoperabilities. To this end, all relevant data for decision-makers at the parliamentary and ministerial level should be compiled in a corresponding cluster database.

Ultimately, the goal is to position Germany strategically and organizationally in an internationally savvy way and to implement this change as quickly as possible. The proposals put forward here are certainly not all-encompassing. Rather, the Commission sees its recommendations as a contribution to the upcoming coalition negotiations. As a contribution to the further development of existing positions in order to make Germany internationally future-proof – politically, economically and socially.

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