

Duitsland Instituut Amsterdam
2024 DAAD Ringvorlesung
Dr. Mario Daniels/Dr. Krijn Thijs

Green Germany?
How to Tackle *Umweltpolitik* in a Shifting International Order

Call for Papers

Guest Lecture Series in Amsterdam
September-December 2024

Climate change is shaking German and European politics to its core. Virtually no aspect of economic, foreign and domestic policy is untouched by the rapid acceleration of environmental deterioration. Take the so-called “Energiewende,” or energy turnaround. As in so many other European countries, the measures to markedly reduce the greenhouse gas emissions by transitioning from fossil to renewable energy have in Germany become the center of intense controversy. The goal to wean off private households of gas and oil by dint of Federal law had enormous repercussions, raising questions about the state’s rights to regulate private property, the negative economic ripple effects of climate protection measures (for example on the construction industry and the “housing crisis”), and even social justice and the individual pains of political change. Russia’s attack on Ukraine has lent heightened urgency to these issues, as the geopolitical dependency on foreign fossil energy sources has become subject to a thorough reassessment. Since Germany’s ties to Russian energy producers was especially close, German foreign policy has ever since been driven by steps to redirect the flows of global energy markets. Accordingly, geopolitical arguments play a role in the construction of a new national infrastructure for renewable energy. But key technologies like batteries and solar cells rely on global supply chains. Especially China’s weight in global (technology) markets is increasingly seen as Germany’s Achilles heel, a perception amplified by the simmering conflicts between China and the United States. This has, of course, also the European Union increasingly strives for a stronger role in the formulation of environmental standards, but also in pursuing supranational strategies for technological innovation. In all these processes, Germany as the most powerful EU member is key.

Critics point out that the current policies have contradictory effects, stressing that the geopolitical interests are not necessarily in lockstep with the official climate goals because they focus too much on fossil fuels. But climate change responses add in similar ways challenging complexity and paradoxes to policy making in many other fields as well.



Migration towards Europe and Germany – already growing due to a great number of international conflicts – for example is also fueled by environmental crises in the global south. Should climate measures therefore be part of developmental policy? What should, more generally, an environmentally conscious foreign policy look like? And to what extent is the establishment of global environmental standards hampered by the growing economic competition between Europe, the U.S. and China? How can Germany balance the aim of a “greener” path into the future with its economic interests as an industrial powerhouse and “Exportweltmeister”? How can the German industrial competitiveness, or “Standort,” be secured in a globalized world in which limited environmental regulations often are a cost advantage? Is in the long run less globalization a possible answer? All these questions have also far-reaching domestic implications. How can the costs of climate change distributed in a socially fair and evenly manner? And how can the transition to a less resource-heavy consumer society be made socially, culturally and politically acceptable? What role do the traditions and peculiarities of the German style of environmental thinking and policy (think, for example, of the debate about the “Atomausstieg” which is an international outlier) in this process? As right-wing populism with its distinct anti-scientific tendencies puts pressure on the German democratic system these issues are far from trivial challenges.

The DIA will organize an international *Ringvorlesung* to discuss such thorny questions which defy easy answers. We invite experts from the DAAD centers (and their regional networks) and from a broad range of disciplines – like environmental studies, history, political science, economics and science and technology studies – to explore the complex ramifications of climate change for Germany, Europe and the globalized world. Thus, in monthly public guest lectures we will bring the DAAD centers in conversation with their Amsterdam colleagues, the local scholarly community and the city’s vibrant general audience. The lectures will be in Summer and Autumn 2024. We might also attach a PhD/MA student’s masterclass to the Amsterdam lecture, when topics and dates seem suited. The lectures will be assembled and published in a volume in the Amsterdam German Studies book series.

Please send an abstract (max 200 words) with a short CV to Krijn Thijs: k.thijs@uva.nl.
Deadline is May 21, 2024.

If you have any questions please do not hesitate to contact us.

Dr. Krijn Thijs (k.thijs@uva.nl) and Dr. Mario Daniels (m.daniels@uva.nl)

