

ANNUAL TOPIC 2025: Resources of democracy

Thursday, October 9, 2025, 7 pm

Bruno Kreisky Forum für internationalen Dialog, Armbrustergasse 15, 1190 Wien

Please register!

Irene Horejs in conversation with Kathryn Nwajiaku-Dahou and Stephan Klingebiel

DOES THE “ZEITENWENDE” MEAN THE END OF INTERNATIONAL AID?



At the beginning of 2025, President Trump started his 2nd Presidency by shutting down USAID and 90% of US foreign aid. The “stop work order” hit aid organizations and vulnerable communities particularly in Africa like a bomb. Aid organizations stopped working from one day to the other, US financed medicines stopped being distributed, health centers and medicine stores remained closed. Some UN agencies like UNHCR and WFP, both highly dependent on US finance, were forced to drastically reduce their operations and staff– all with a devastating impact on the affected populations.

However, Donald Trump was not the first one to cut down foreign aid agencies and budget. In 2020, Boris Johnson dissolved DFID, the highly prestigious aid agency of the UK and merged parts of it into the Foreign and Commonwealth Office. More recently, other EU donor countries like the Netherlands, Belgium, France, Germany and Austria reduced their aid budgets and framed them into short term interests like curbing migration, securing trade and others.

Does the “Zeitenwende” mean the end of international solidarity and of development as a global good coordinated by a set of norm giving, multilateral institutions? Are we confronted to a new politization of aid? Or is this only an “easy” way to save strained budgets in face of the new imperative of rearmament? What is the impact on developing countries, affected populations and how do they react? Are there any alternative means to finance not only humanitarian aid, social and economic development but also the necessary actions against climate change?

Dr. Kathryn Nwajiaku-Dahou, Director of the Politics and Governance programme at the Overseas Development Institute (ODI), UK

Dr. Stephan Klingebiel, Head of the research department "Inter- and Transnational Cooperation" at the German Institute of Development and Sustainability (IDOS)

Moderator:

Irene Horejs, Former Director of DG ECHO and former EU Ambassador to Peru, Mali and Niger

This second event under the focus “Humanity in der Zeitenwende” is organised in cooperation with the Austrian Research Foundation for International Development (ÖFSE).

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