**Keynote Speech by State Minister Katja Keul
Africa-Europe Forum 2025
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Ambassador Delattre,
Ms Ezekwesili,
Mr Barnes-Dacey,
Excellencies,
Ladies and gentlemen,

Thank you, Ambassador Delattre, for your warm words of welcome and for hosting tonight’s Opening Dinner of the Africa-Europe Forum 2025.

Let me begin by expressing my sincere gratitude to the European Council on Foreign Relations for inviting me as a keynote speaker.

Tonight, we are discussing “The global order and reshaping of global governance: Competing perspectives and prospects for new alignment”.

The topic could not have been chosen any better:

The challenges we are facing in the world are vast and need global solutions: from fighting the climate crisis to managing future pandemics and – most urgently – building peace and stability.

These global challenges can only be solved if Africa and Europe work together.

Our world is changing rapidly:

New global power centres are emerging, volatility is increasing, and alliances are shifting.

These developments are unfolding in a post-pandemic world.

War has returned to Europe with Russia’s invasion of Ukraine.

The international order and respect for borders are being called into question by an increasing number of players.

And all of this is happening in a context of declining support for fundamental pillars of international law and institutions such as the International Criminal Court.

I want to call upon all of us to protect this Court now that it is threatened by sanctions that could lead to the end of ongoing investigations into war crimes in Ukraine, in Gaza, in the Sudan and elsewhere.

African support made the birth of this Court possible, and most sub-Saharan African countries ratified the Rome Statute.

Even though recent arrest warrants may cause us political headaches and even if we sometimes might disagree with a reasoning:

We need to respect the independence of the Court and accept its decisions.

That is what the rule of law is all about.

It is our deepest conviction that war crimes, crimes against humanity and also the crime of aggression must not go unpunished!

Ladies and gentlemen,

We need not only to defend our common principles but also to reshape global governance.

In September last year, following negotiations co‑facilitated by Namibia and Germany, UN member states adopted the **Pact for the Future.**

The pact is a forward-driven document and points out that, as the international community, we must rectify a “historical injustice”, especially towards Africa, and adapt our institutions to today’s realities.

This, in our longstanding view, needs to include new permanent and additional non-permanent seats for Africa.

A continent that will be host to 25% of the global population by 2050 must have a permanent voice in the Council.

Therefore, it was important that the AU joined the G20, with the support of Germany.

However, more has to be done for better global economic governance.

The Pact for the Future rightly stresses the need for robust representation of developing countries in the international financial institutions and multilateral development banks.

Difficult financing conditions and high debt burdens in several countries in Africa require the effective implementation of the G20 Common Framework for Debt Treatments.

We need to tackle these questions together.

Global governance reform has already been one of the priorities of the G20 Agenda, and I am certain that this work will continue now that South Africa has taken over the G20 Presidency.

Ladies and gentlemen,

Peace and security in Africa need to be put more firmly into African hands.

In 2023, in a historic move, the UN Security Council adopted Resolution 2719, which allows for the partial UN financing of African-led peace operations.

This is good progress and a step in the right direction:

Now we need to jointly work on translating this into effective and feasible solutions on the ground.

The current discussion about the AU Support and Stabilization Mission in Somalia (AUSSOM) is a case in point.

We would like to see much stronger engagement by the African Union in the Sudan, which is facing the world’s largest humanitarian, displacement and protection crises.

Around 3.5 million people have fled to neighbouring countries. This puts a huge burden on the host communities, as I witnessed during my visit to the Chad border region last year.

For 2024, Germany will have provided a total of 325 million euro in humanitarian aid to the Sudan and its neighbouring countriesand 81 million euro to the Sudan in development cooperation.

Regional organisations must play a much more important role in matters of peace and security and in finding African solutions to African problems.

In West Africa, ECOWAS is struggling with the exit of three Sahel countries that experienced military coups.

Terrorism and the spillover of violence affect the coastal states, the Maghreb region and – yes – also us.

Without peace in Africa, there is no peace in Europe.

Global peace and security are inseparable from Africa’s peace and security.

Today, Africa and Europe need to stand together more than ever to defend the fundamental principles of the UN Charter and the AU Charter with regard to the respect of borders.

We cannot accept the breach of the territorial integrity of any country: not in Ukraine, not in the eastern DRC, where M23 troops with the support of Rwandan soldiers are quickly conquering Congolese territory.

Germany is ready to take greater responsibility in the UN for global peace.

We have therefore presented our candidacy for the UN Security Council for the 2027-2028 term.

In this context, I am pleased to announce that Germany will host the next UN Peacekeeping Ministerial in Berlin on 13 and 14 May.

This Ministerial will be an opportunity to engage with Foreign and Defence Ministers from Africa and beyond on the future of peace operations and the role of regional organisations, such as the African Union.

Ladies and gentlemen,

Just three weeks ago, we adopted our revised Africa Policy Guidelines.

These guidelines serve as a fundamental policy document and strategic framework for the entire German Federal Government.

They are closely aligned with the European Union’s Africa policy and will contribute to shaping the new European Commission’s approach to Africa.

Unlike the previous editions from 2019 and 2014, the new guidelines take a fundamentally different approach by placing the idea of **global partnerships** at their core.

For Germany, this means nothing less than a paradigm shift:

For far too long, our relationships with the African continent have been dominated by crisis management and the outdated dynamic of Western “donors” and African “recipients”.

Ladies and gentlemen,

The African continent has been at the heart of my work as Minister of State at the Federal Foreign Office.

Therefore, it is truly a pleasure to be here among such a distinguished group of policymakers and experts in the field of African-European politics.

Before I hand over to Ms Ezekwesili, I would like to mention one more dimension that I see as vital to African-European relations:

Cooperation with and between civil societies and the role of women, especially in leadership positions.

Having travelled to many different countries on the African continent, I have met so many strong and courageous African women!

We need to involve more of them to pave the way towards a more peaceful world.

Ms Ezekwesili,

You are one of these distinguished women leaders, and it is an honour to deliver this keynote speech alongside you this evening.

I will leave it here to ensure that you have ample time to speak.

Thank you once again for the invitation, and I look forward to our discussions tonight.