

B – BUG

No. 157

28.2.
–
20.3.
2026

Responsible leadership in business and society

You stand at the beginning of three weeks that very few leaders are granted in the middle of their careers. Time and space to step out of operational urgency and to reflect on responsibility, power, and impact. BBUG No. 157 invites you to use this pause not as a retreat from reality, but as an engagement with a world in transformation.

Our environment is shaped by overlapping crises: geopolitical fragmentation, climate change and biodiversity loss, eroding trust in democratic institutions and market economies, all amplified by accelerating technological change through artificial intelligence. For business leaders, this means that familiar assumptions and foundations of success are no longer sufficient. Decisions increasingly involve real trade-offs: between speed and legitimacy, efficiency and resilience, global integration and political fragmentation. Responsible leadership requires new perspectives and, above all, the willingness to ask tough questions.

BBUG No. 157 approaches leadership as a practical responsibility under these conditions. Responsibility here does not mean consen-

Judgement under pressure

sus or moral authority. It means judgement, credibility, and the capacity to act when rules weaken, and legitimacy can no longer be taken for granted. Leadership becomes a matter of stance as much as of strategy.

The program brings together perspectives from business, politics, science, security, culture, and civil society to explore how decisions are shaped by fragmentation, declining trust, and growing complexity. Reflection on one's own leadership practice is central. Through peer exchange, experiential formats, and moments of deliberate pause, participants examine how to decide under pressure, how to engage with difference, and how responsibility is exercised when institutions alone no longer provide orientation.

Art and reflection are integral to this approach. They open spaces in which responsibility, vulnerability, and courage can be experienced beyond the language of metrics, slide decks, and performance indicators. Not to escape decision-making, but to sharpen perception and judgement where purely analytical tools reach their limits.

Since its founding in 1955, the Baden-Badener Unternehmergegespräche have offered a protected space for open exchange, dissent, and self-critique. This space is a privilege, and it carries an obligation. We invite you to make active use of it: bring in your experience, challenge assumptions, and engage in conversations that will continue far beyond these three weeks.

Responsible leadership does not emerge from a single program or from a fixed definition of the ideal leader. It grows where people are willing to question themselves, to learn across boundaries, and to take responsibility for decisions and their consequences. If you return to your roles with greater clarity, clearer judgement, deeper humility, and stronger determination, then BBUG No. 157 has fulfilled its purpose.

8	Program
30	Speakers
88	BBUG Executive Board & Trustees
90	Information

Sun 13.

Sat 28.2.

Start	7:00	Yoga at the hotel
	8:00	
	9:00	Leadership Lab Dr. Tobias Lepprand
	10:00	
	11:00	
	12:00	
	13:00	Light lunch & midday break
	14:00	TBC
	15:00	Daniela Schwarzer

16:00	Opening remarks and introduction of the team	TBC Joachim Nagel
17:00	Leadership Lab: Speed networking Dr. Tobias Lepprand	
18:00	Housekeeping Remarks A conversation about Leadership, Innovation and Europe Dr. Karl-Ludwig Kley	Briefing for Moderators I belong to the world Nelson Makamo
19:00		
20:00		
21:00		
22:00		

Program

Week 1	Mon 2.3.	Tue 3.3.	Wed 4.3.	Thu 5.3.	Fri 6.3.
7:00	Yoga at the hotel				
8:00				Community Visits Netzwerk Asyl Baden-Baden Polizei Offenburg Tafel Baden-Baden	
9:00	Choosing integrity when the system fails: lessons from Cum-Ex Anne Brorhiker	Igniting growth innovation at the intersection of corporates and start-ups together with: Irmantas Rokaitis Dr. Oliver Schoppe, Maikle Lambarth	Risks, resilience, and competitiveness in a fragmented world Andreas Berger		Garden reflections
10:00			Group input: AI		A conversation with: Armin Pappeger
11:00	Germany's high-tech moment: Reinventing Germany as an industrial nation Michael Brigl	Personal leadership case		Three American futures in search of actors Daniel Benjamin	Debrief and briefing Light lunch & midday break Innovation management at TRUMPF in challenging times Dr. Hagen Zimer
12:00					
13:00	Introduction to Miro				
14:00					
15:00	Igniting growth innovation at the intersection of corporates and start-ups Christine Heuwing Prof. Dr. Helmut Schönenberger				
16:00	together with: Max Tarantik Andreas Unsel	Seeing beyond – how ZEISS enables progress and performance Prof. Dr. Boris Hofmann, Andreas Pecher	Performance workshop "In C" – leadership in motion A project by Kulturkreis der deutschen Wirtschaft based on "In C" by Sasha Waltz in cooperation with Sasha Waltz & guests	Light lunch & midday break How to make Europe and Germany safe and secure in a changing world Marth Jäger	Change and continuity: how "Invented for Life" guides Bosch through turbulent times Dr. Ing. Stefan Hartung
17:00				Group input: Energy	
18:00		Group input: Quantum technologies			
19:00					Values. Why their importance cannot be overestimated today
20:00					
21:00					
22:00					Prof. Dr. Meja Göpel

Week 2	Mon 9.3.	Tue 10.3.	Wed 11.3.	Thu 12.3.	Fri 13.3.
7:00					
8:00	Transfer from hotel	China and Europe in a changing world Dr. Mikko Huotari	Offsite Mercedes-Benz assembly plant in Rastatt	Energy, Europe and beyond Machteld de Haan	Building bridges Baroness Ruth Hunt
9:00		Group input: Geoeconomics	On-site talk: Automotive Industry in Germany - Way Forward Dr. Jörg Burzer		
10:00	Offsite United World College in Frelburg		Light lunch	Stability in uncertainty: how family enterprises navigate technology, politics and succession Jill Hellmann Regouby Max Schwaiger	Leadership Lab Dr. Tobias Leipprand
11:00			Transfer to Palais Biron		
12:00			Midday break	Light lunch & midday break	
13:00		Light lunch & midday break	Created for a world that no longer exists Florian Hager	Digital AI revolution: how banks and businesses are redefining their roles Dr. Bettina Orlopp	Debrief Second Week
14:00		Garden reflections			
15:00			Light lunch & midday break		
16:00		Can Europe defend itself? Strategic choices in a new security era Dr. Jana Puglierin	If mayors ruled the state. A local government view on state reform and the role of business. Anja Hähle-Posselt Ulrich Hörning		
17:00				Garden reflections	
18:00		Russia's global foreign policy in an era of confrontation with the West Dr. Hanna Notte	Arts@ BBUG (with dinner) A workshop with Nelson Makamo	Group input: Policymaking	
19:00					
20:00					
21:00					
22:00					

Program

Week 3	Mon 16.3.	Tue 17.3.	Wed 18.3.	Thu 19.3.	Fri 20.3.
7:00	Yoga at the hotel				
8:00	Yoga at the hotel				
9:00	Robert Bosch GmbH: The role of supervisory bodies in times of transformation Prof. Dr. Stefan Asenkerschbaumer	Leadership Lab Dr. Tobias Leipprand Dr. Ursula Schütze-Kreilkamp	Leadership Lab Dr. Tobias Leipprand	Group input: Technology sovereignty; Infrastructure	How to win the AI game: governing, scaling, and evolving toward intelligent and autonomous enterprises Prof. Dr. Feiyu Xu
10:00					
11:00	Deter and defend: A NATO perspective on the defense on Central Europe Ingo Gerhartz	Public mobility – digital security, automation, electrification Bernt Reitan Jensen	Leadership Lab Dr. Katrin Suder	No leadership without energy Leonhard Birnbaum	A conversation about the program Dr. Kurt Bock
12:00			Querwechler as catalysts: New perspectives for politics and society Dr. Katrin Suder		
13:00	Light lunch & midday break	Light lunch & midday break	Light lunch & midday break	Light lunch & midday break	Debrief
14:00		Earthrise: recognizing biodiversity as critical infrastructure Dr. Christof Schenck Pim Valdre	Leadership Lab: Spirit 157 Hannes Kulz	The world of today and tomorrow Dr. Samir Saran	Midday break
15:00	Technological sovereignty using the example of semiconductors Jochen Hanebeck				
16:00					
17:00	Leadership Lab Dr. Tobias Leipprand Dr. Ursula Schütze-Kreilkamp	Walk to the cinema Yellow Letters, film screening followed by a conversation about a career in arts and how to direct a filmset Ilker Çatak		Building resilience through constant reinvention: Navigating the lightning speed of change as leaders Helene von Roeder	
18:00					
19:00					
20:00					
21:00					
22:00					Closing Night at Palais Birn

Mission

We provide insights and ideas for today's and tomorrow's challenges.

Vision

Our goal is responsible leadership in business and society.

Our formats

The "**Hauptgespräch**," our core program of the Baden–Badener Unternehmengespräche, has been held twice annually since 1955 and brings together approximately 35 high-ranking executives from business, politics, administration, and science for three intensive weeks in Baden–Baden. The vision of the BBUG is clearly defined: the promotion of responsible leadership in business and society by providing thought–provoking impulses for today's and tomorrow's challenges.

The BBUG are characterized by three defining core elements: the relevance of forward–looking topics, unconventional approaches and methodology, and a strong impetus for personal and organizational development. As a place of ideas, the BBUG bring together new insights and perspectives from all areas of society and create a protected space for open exchange and deep reflection. The participants, who are mostly on the threshold of top leadership positions, engage with major future questions in various formats.

Workshops, reflection units, off–sites, fireside chats, inputs, and exchange formats address topics ranging from corporate management and innovation to climate change and biodiversity to geopolitical developments. There is a focus on strategic business development with its elements of strategy, culture, transformation, and people. In the Leadership Lab, participants reflect on their leadership actions through peer coaching and self–leadership exercises. The manageable group size and the three–week duration create the basis for a sustainable network among participants. In the diversity of their perspectives and experiences, an open dialogue emerges about responsibility — toward oneself, one's own organization, and society as a whole.

The **Follow-up Meetings** continue and deepen the development begun in the "Hauptgespräch," our core program. Former participants of the main dialogue from the two BBUG groups of a year come together for four intensive days to focus on specific aspects of responsible leadership.

The Follow-up Meetings are also characterized by forward-looking topics, unconventional methodology, and a strong impetus for personal development. These meetings take place abroad and offer a 360-degree view of relevant regions and countries. In various formats such as work sessions, expert discussions, and on-site visits, participants engage with topics such as foreign policy, digitalization, sustainability, as well as specific themes related to the countries visited.

The established familiarity among participants enables a particularly deep exchange of experiences regarding concrete leadership challenges. External contributors bring new perspectives, while the expertise of the participants themselves ensures practice-oriented discussions.

The **Alumni Formats** of the BBUG create a permanent platform for exchange among all former participants of the Main Dialogue and Follow-up Meetings. This includes both regular network gatherings and topic-specific events addressing current challenges in business and society. The alumni benefit from a cross-generational and cross-industry network of executives connected by their shared BBUG experience.

In various formats such as workshops, lectures, or informal meetings, experiences are exchanged and new perspectives gained. A special format is the Berlin Briefings, which enable intensive dialogue between politics and business and promote direct exchange on current political developments. Regional circles in cities such as Munich, Frankfurt, and Berlin also offer the opportunity to deepen cross-group encounters at the regional level.

Our Topics

Responsible Leadership

Leadership Lab: Reflecting on your leadership actions, identifying challenges, practicing self-leadership, and engaging in peer coaching

Strategic Business Development

Strategy
Culture
Transformation
People and talent

Context of Entrepreneurial Action

Innovation, digitalization, technology
Climate, biodiversity, sustainability
Energy
Democracy
Social market economy
Competitiveness
Future of the EU
Multilateral order
Education, demography, labour market
Culture

Sat 28.2.

- from 15:00 Arrival and welcome coffee
- 16:00 – 16:45 Opening remarks and introduction of the team
- 16:45 – 17:45 Leadership Lab¹:
Speed networking
Dr. Tobias Leipprand,
Founder & CEO, LEAD
Forward GmbH
- 17:45 – 18:00 Housekeeping remarks
- 18:00 – 19:45 A conversation about leadership, innovation and Europe
Dr. Karl-Ludwig Kley,
Chairman of the Supervisory Board,
Deutsche Lufthansa AG
and Honorary Chairman
BBUG e.V. (101. BBUG)
- 20:00 – 22:00 Dinner at Palais Biron

Sun 1.3.

- 7:00 – 7:45 Yoga at the hotel
- 9:00 – 13:00 Leadership Lab
Dr. Tobias Leipprand,
Founder & CEO, LEAD
Forward GmbH
- 13:00 – 14:00 Light lunch and midday break
- 14:00 – 15:45 The end of geopolitical stability – and why business can't ignore it
Daniela Schwarzer, Member
of the Executive Board,
Bertelsmann Stiftung
- 16:00 – 17:45 Central banking in an age of geoeconomic fragmentation and global uncertainty
Joachim Nagel, President,
Deutsche Bundesbank
- 17:45 – 18:00 Briefing for moderators of sessions in week 1
- 18:00 – 19:00 I belong to the world
Nelson Makamo, BBUG
Fellow 2026, guides us
through his exhibition in
Palais Biron
- 19:00 – 21:00 Dinner at Palais Biron

¹ Leadership Lab is a central element of the BBUG program. Participants reflect on their leadership behavior with their peers in various formats.

Mon 2.3.

- 7:00 – 7:45 Yoga at the hotel
- 9:00 – 10:45 Choosing integrity when the system fails: lessons from Cum-Ex
Anne Brorhilker, Executive Director, Bürgerbewegung Finanzwende e.V.
- 11:00 – 12:45 Germany's high-tech moment: Reinventing Germany as an industrial nation
Michael Brigl, Head of BCG Central Europe, The Boston Consulting Group
- 12:45 – 13:00 Introduction to Miro
Hannes Külz, Journalist, Coach for Media Interviews, Writing Skills and Editorial Workshops
- 13:00 – 15:00 Light lunch and midday break
- 15:00 – 18:45 Igniting growth innovation at the intersection of corporates and start-ups
Christine Heuwing, Managing Partner Strategic Partnerships, UnternehmerTUM GmbH
- Prof. Dr. Helmut Schönenberger**, CEO, UnternehmerTUM GmbH
- together with:
Sovereign cybersecurity - Made in Germany
Max Tarantik, Co-founder & COO, Enginsight
- Venture capital & innovation in Europe
Andreas Unsel, General Partner, UVC Partners
- 19:00 Walk to the restaurant
- 19:30 Dinner at LUIZA Rooftop Terrace

Tue 3.3.

9:00 – 10:45 Igniting growth innovation at the intersection of corporates and start-ups
Christine Heuwing,
Managing Partner Strategic Partnerships,
UnternehmerTUM GmbH

Prof. Dr. Helmut Schönenberger, CEO,
UnternehmerTUM GmbH

together with:
Programming atoms: how AI-designed biology is redefining the future of industry
Irmantas Rokaitis, CTO,
Biomatter

Dr. Oliver Schoppe,
Principal, UVC Partner

Transforming the chemical industry – how DeepTech drives a fossil-free future
Maike Lambarth, CEO & Co-Founder, Cyclize

11:00 – 12:45 Personal leadership case

13:00 – 15:00 **Light lunch and midday break**

15:00 – 15:45 Garden reflections²

16:00 – 18:00 Seeing beyond – how ZEISS enables progress and performance
Prof. Dr. Boris Hofmann,
Head of Carl Zeiss Ventures & **Andreas Pecher**, CEO,
Carl Zeiss AG
(149. BBUG)

18:00 – 19:45 Group input³: Quantum technologies

20:00 Dinner at Palais Biron

² In the Garden Reflections, participants use the Palais Biron garden as a setting to process session content and synthesize insights through focused individual reflection and peer dialogue.

³ Group Inputs are provided by participants. One or more participants give a 15-minute input, followed by a 30-minute discussion.

Wed 4.3.

- 9:00 – 10:45 Risks, resilience, and competitiveness in a fragmented world
Andreas Berger, CEO, Swiss Re Group (132. BBUG)
- 11:00 – 12:45 Group input: AI
- 13:00 – 15:00 Light lunch and midday break
- 15:00 – 15:45 Garden reflections³
- 16:00 – 19:30 Performance workshop
“In C” – leadership in motion
A project by Kulturkreis der deutschen Wirtschaft based on “In C” by **Sasha Waltz** in cooperation with **Sasha Waltz & guests**
- 19:30 Dinner at Rive Gauche

Thu 5.3.

- 8:00 – 11:15 Community Visits
Netzwerk Asyl Baden-Baden
Polizei Offenburg
Tafel Baden-Baden
- 11:30 – 13:00 Three American futures in search of actors
Daniel Benjamin, President, American Academy
- 13:00 – 14:00 Light lunch and midday break
- 14:00 – 15:45 How to make Europe and Germany safe and secure in a changing world
Martin Jäger, President, Bundesnachrichtendienst (128. BBUG)
- 16:00 – 17:45 Group input: Energy
- 18:00 Dinner at Palais Biron
- 19:00 – 20:45 Values. Why their importance cannot be overestimated today
Prof. Dr. Maja Göpel, Founder & Professor, Mission Wertvoll & Leuphana University

Fri 6.3.

- 10:00 – 10:45 Garden reflections
- 11:00 – 12:45 A conversation with:
Armin Papperger, CEO,
Rheinmetall AG
- 12:45 – 13:30 Debrief and briefing for
moderators of sessions
in week 2
- 13:30 – 14:00 **Light lunch**
- 14:00 – 15:45 Innovation management at
TRUMPF in challenging times
Dr. Hagen Zimer, Member
of the Managing Board
and CEO Laser Technology,
TRUMPF SE + Co. KG
(152. BBUG)
- 16:30 – 18:00 Change and continuity:
how "Invented for Life"
guides Bosch through
turbulent times
Dr. Ing. Stefan Hartung,
Chairman of the Board of
Management, Robert Bosch
GmbH (128. BBUG)

Mon 9.3.

- 8:00 Transfer from hotel
- 10:00 Offsite **United World College**
in Freiburg
- Liveable Cities Project Week,
an interdisciplinary science
format for first-year students.
Through workshops,
seminars and excursions, we
spend the day with the
students dealing with sus-
tainable urban planning and
models of liveable cities of
the future.
- Workshops on urban
planning, politics & money,
energy, food, well-being
& nature
- Small group excursions
organized by the students
to deepen understanding
of the topics covered in the
morning.
- 18:15 Transfer back to hotel

Tue 10.3.

- 8:30 – 10:15 China and Europe in a changing world
Dr. Mikko Huotari, Director, Mercator Institute for China Studies
- 10:30 – 12:45 Group input: Geoeconomics
- 13:00 – 15:00 Light lunch and midday break
- 15:00 – 15:45 Garden reflections
- 16:00 – 17:45 Can Europe defend itself? Strategic choices in a new security era
Dr. Jana Puglierin, Senior Policy Fellow, European Council on Foreign Relations
- 18:00 – 19:45 Russia's global foreign policy in an era of confrontation with the West
Dr. Hanna Notte, Director of the Eurasia Nonproliferation Program James Martin Center for Nonproliferation Studies (CNS)
- 20:00 Dinner at Palais Biron

Wed 11.3.

- 8:00 Transfer from hotel
- 8:30 – 11:30 Offsite Mercedes-Benz assembly plant in Rastatt
- On-site talk:
Automotive Industry in Germany - Way Forward
Dr. Jörg Burzer, Member of the Board of Management, CTO, Mercedes-Benz Group AG (148. BBUG)
- 11:30 – 12:30 Light lunch
- 12:30 – 13:00 Transfer to Palais Biron
- 13:00 – 14:30 Midday break
- 14:30 – 16:00 Created for a world that no longer exists
Florian Hager, Director, ARD
- 16:00 – 17:45 If mayors ruled the state. A local government view on state reform and the role of business.
Anja Hähle-Posselt, Head of the Office of Economic Development, City of Leipzig
Ulrich Hörning, Deputy Mayor for General Services, City of Leipzig, City of Leipzig &
- 18:00 – 21:30 Arts @ BBUG (with dinner)
A workshop with **Nelson Makamo**, BBUG Fellow 2026

Thu 12.3.

- 9:00 – 10:45 Energy, Europe and beyond
Machteld de Haan, Member of the Executive Committee and President, Downstream, Renewables & Energy Solutions, Shell plc
- 11:00 – 12:45 Stability in uncertainty: how family enterprises navigate technology, politics and succession
Jil Hellmann Regouby, Member of the Supervisory Board, Hellmann Worldwide Logistics

Max Schwaiger, Chairman, Franz Haniel & Cie. GmbH (155. BBUG)
- 13:00 – 15:00 Light lunch and midday break
- 15:00 – 16:45 Digital AI revolution: how banks and businesses are redefining their roles
Dr. Bettina Orlopp, CEO, Commerzbank AG (138. BBUG)
- 17:00 – 17:45 Garden reflections
- 18:00 – 19:45 Group input: Policymaking
- 19:45 Walk to the restaurant
- 20:00 Dinner at All Blue

Fri 13.3.

- 9:00 – 11:30 Building bridges
Baroness Ruth Hunt, Director, Deeds and Words Limited
- 11:30 – 14:00 Leadership Lab
Dr. Tobias Leipprand, Founder & CEO, LEAD Forward GmbH
- 14:00 – 14:30 Debrief second week and briefing for week 3 moderators
- 14:30 Individual weekend activities

Mon 16.3.

- 9:00 – 10:45 Robert Bosch GmbH: The role of supervisory bodies in times of transformation
Prof. Dr. Stefan Asenkerschbaumer, Chairman of the supervisory board, Robert Bosch GmbH and Managing Partner, Robert Bosch Industrietreuhand KG (RBIK), Robert Bosch GmbH (116. BBUG)
- 11:00 – 12:45 Deter and defend: A NATO perspective on the defense on Central Europe
Ingo Gerhartz, Commander, NATO Allied Joint Force Command Brunssum (JFC Brunssum), NATO
- 13:00 – 15:00 **Light lunch and midday break**
- 15:00 – 16:45 Technological sovereignty using the example of semiconductors
Jochen Hanebeck, CEO, Infineon Technologies AG
- 17:00 – 19:45 Leadership Lab
Dr. Tobias Leipprand, Founder & CEO, LEAD Forward GmbH

Dr. Ursula Schütze-Kreilkamp, Strategic Projects & Special Assignments – Top Executives (KFK/OFK1), Deutsche Bahn AG
- 20:00 Dinner at Palais Biron

Tue 17.3.

- 7:00 – 7:45 Yoga at the hotel
- 9:00 – 10:45 Leadership Lab
Dr. Tobias Leipprand, Founder & CEO, LEAD Forward GmbH

Dr. Ursula Schütze-Kreilkamp, Strategic Projects & Special Assignments – Top Executives (KFK/OFK1), DB AG
- 11:00 – 12:45 Public mobility – digital security, automation, electrification
Bernt Reitan Jønsen, CEO, Ruter AS
- 13:00 – 14:00 **Light lunch and midday break**
- 14:00 – 17:00 Earthrise: recognizing biodiversity as critical infrastructure
Dr. Christof Schenck, Director, Frankfurt Zoological Society

Pim Valdre, Head of Economic & Policy Agenda, Centre for Nature and Climate, World Economic Forum
- 17:00 Walk to the cinema
- 17:30 – 21:00 Yellow Letters, film screening followed by a conversation about a career in arts and how to direct a filmset
Ilker Çatak, Writer and Director
- 21:00 Walk to the restaurant
- 21:15 Dinner at Garibaldi

Wed 18.3.

- 7:00 – 7:45 Yoga at the hotel
- 9:00 – 11:15 Leadership Lab
Dr. Tobias Leipprand, Founder & CEO, LEAD Forward GmbH
- 12:00 – 13:00 Querwechsler as catalysts:
New perspectives for politics and society
Dr. Katrin Suder, Supervisory Board Member, Senior Advisor, DHL, Cloudflare, LEG, G&D
- 13:00 – 15:00 Light lunch and midday break
- 15:00 – 18:45 Leadership Lab: Spirit 157
Hannes Kütz, Journalist, Coach for Media Interviews, Writing Skills and Editorial Workshops
- 19:00 Dinner at Palais Biron
- Throughout the day:
Sounds for the Soul - leadership through resonance
One-on-one live music experience throughout the day for those who seek depth beyond performance. In an intimate setting, a professional musician responds in real time to the inner emotional state shared by the listener, creating a moment of focused attention, emotional resonance and mental reset.

Thu 19.3.

- 9:00 – 10:45 Group inputs
- 11:00 – 12:45 No leadership without energy
Leonhard Birnbaum, CEO, E.ON SE
- 13:00 – 14:00 Light lunch and midday break
- 14:00 – 15:45 The world of today and tomorrow
Dr. Samir Saran, President, Observer Research Foundation
- 16:00 – 17:45 Building resilience through constant reinvention:
Navigating the lightning speed of change as leaders
In conversation with
Helene von Roeder, Member of the Executive Board & CFO, Merck KGaA and Deputy Chairwoman of the Executive Board, BBUG e.V. (130. BBUG)
- 18:00 Walk to the restaurant
- 18:30 Dinner at Geroldsauer Mühle

Fri 20.3.

Sat 21.3.

9:00 – 10:45 How to win the AI game:
governing, scaling, and
evolving toward intelligent
and autonomous enterprises
Prof. Dr. Feiyu Xu, University
Professor of Industry AI,
Board Member and Senior
Advisor, German University
of Digital Science, Amber Iris
AI Consulting

Individual departure

11:00 – 12:15 A conversation about the
program
Dr. Kurt Bock, Chairman
of the Supervisory Board,
BASF SE and Chairman
of the Executive Board,
BBUG e.V. (106. BBUG)

12:30 – 13:00 Debrief

13:00 Midday break

20:00 – 1:00 Closing night at Palais Biron

– End of program –

Dialogue Companion

Dialogue Companions are experienced BBUG alumni who accompany the group throughout the program. They offer perspective and continuity, and serve as a link to the wider BBUG community. Present and attentive, they contribute through listening, reflection, and interventions, helping to deepen the dialogue without directing it.



Dr.-Ing. Michael Bolle
(135. BBUG)

Chairman of the Foundation
Council of the Carl Zeiss
Foundation, Carl-Zeiss-
Stiftung

Dr.-Ing. Michael Bolle has a PhD in engineering and has held executive positions at Bosch since 1992 – taking a break from 1999 through 2002 to establish a high-tech startup. Most recently he was a Member of the Management Board of Robert Bosch GmbH, CTO and CDO. During his time at Bosch, Dr. Bolle was the driving force behind the creation of the Bosch Center for Artificial Intelligence and helped to link up the Internet of Things with artificial intelligence (AIoT).

As Chairman of the Shareholder Council of the Carl-Zeiss Foundation, he acts as a link between the foundation and foundation companies ZEISS & SCHOTT and represents the economic interests of the Carl Zeiss Foundation towards the foundation companies.

Michael Bolle has a strong interest in innovation and technologies and therefore contributed for several years to the field of quantum technologies. He currently serves as a speaker on the program committee of quantum systems of the Federal Ministry of Education and Research.




B-BUG

Art 14 (2):

“Property entails obligations. Its use shall also serve the public good.”

Basic Law for the
Federal Republic
of Germany



Julia Jäkel
Member of the Supervisory Board
Holtzbrinck



Speakers

**Prof. Dr. Stefan
Asenkerschbaumer**

Chairman of the supervisory board, Robert Bosch GmbH and Managing Partner, Robert Bosch Industrietreuhand KG (RBIK), Robert Bosch GmbH (116. BBUG)



Stefan Asenkerschbaumer has been chairman of the supervisory board of Robert Bosch GmbH and managing partner of Robert Bosch Industrietreuhand KG since January 1, 2022. He has been a member of the board of management of Robert Bosch GmbH since 2010. He was named deputy chairman of the board of management in 2013, having previously held various management positions.

Stefan Asenkerschbaumer holds a degree in business education and a further degree in business administration at the University of Erlangen-Nuremberg, followed by a PhD (Dr. rer. pol.) on the subject of innovation management. In 2017, the University of Erlangen-Nuremberg appointed him honorary professor.

From 2019 to 2025, he was president of the Schmalenbach-Gesellschaft für Betriebswirtschaft (Schmalenbach Society for Business Administration). Asenkerschbaumer has been a member of the BASF supervisory board since April 2022 and a non-executive director of the Swiss company Stadler Rail AG since May 2022.

Daniel Benjamin
President, American Academy
in Berlin GmbH



Daniel Benjamin is the president of the American Academy in Berlin.

Prior to his Academy appointment, Benjamin was the Norman E. McCulloch Jr. Director of the John Sloan Dickey Center for International Understanding at Dartmouth College. Before he arrived at Dartmouth, in 2013, he served as Ambassador-at-Large and Coordinator for Counterterrorism at the US Department of State from 2009–2012.

Benjamin was a senior fellow in foreign policy studies and director of the Center on the United States and Europe at the Brookings Institution. He has also been a senior fellow at the Center for Strategic and International Studies and a fellow at the United States Institute of Peace. He spent more than five years on the National Security Council staff in the 1990s, where he served first as foreign-policy speechwriter and special assistant to President Bill Clinton and later as director for transnational threats.

Benjamin has written extensively on US foreign policy, terrorism, and international affairs. He is co-author of *The Age of Sacred Terror* (2002), which

was awarded the Arthur Ross Prize of the Council on Foreign Relations and named a 2002 New York Times Notable Book and a Washington Post Best Book. He also co-authored *The Next Attack: The Failure of the War on Terror* and a Strategy for Getting It Right (2005), a Washington Post and Financial Times Best Book of the Year and a finalist for the Lionel Gelber Prize. His essays have appeared in the New York Times, Washington Post, Foreign Affairs, New York Review of Books, Politico, and many other publications.

Benjamin began his career as a journalist and was Germany bureau chief for the Wall Street Journal and Germany correspondent for TIME. He received a master's degree from Oxford University, where he was a Marshall Scholar, and a bachelor's degree from Harvard University. He is a member of the United States Holocaust Memorial Council, the Council of the Auschwitz-Birkenau Foundation, as well as the advisory boards of several NGOs.

Andreas Berger
Group CEO, Swiss Re Group
(132. BBUG)

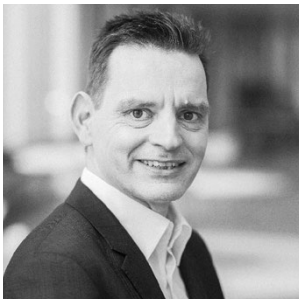


Group CEO of Swiss Re, Andreas Berger began his insurance career in 1995 at Gerling Group, where he returned in 2004 as Head of Commercial Business and International Programs and Affinity Business, after leadership positions at Boston Consulting Group. He joined Allianz Global Corporate & Specialty SE (AGCS) in 2006 as Global Head of Market Management & Communication and was appointed AGCS CEO, Regional Unit London in 2009. In 2011, he joined the AGCS Board of Management as Chief Regions & Market Officer (Central & Eastern Europe, Mediterra-

nean, Africa and Asia) and led the Global Broker Channel Distribution for Allianz Group.

Berger joined Swiss Re in March 2019 as Corporate Solutions CEO and a member of the Group Executive Committee. He was appointed as Group CEO effective 1 July 2024. Berger holds master's degrees in Law and in Business Administration. He is also Chairman of the Swiss-American Chamber of Commerce, and a board member of *economiesuisse*, Geneva Association and Advance - Gender Equality in Business.

Dr.-Ing. Leonhard Birnbaum
CEO, E.ON SE



Leonhard Birnbaum studied chemical engineering in Karlsruhe and obtained a doctorate. At McKinsey he was Senior Partner for the energy and industrial sector. In 2008, he was appointed to the Board of Management of RWE AG. In 2013, he was appointed as member of the Board of Management of E.ON SE and took on a variety of responsibilities within the Board. From 2018 until 2021 he was responsible for the innogy integration project. From 2019 to 2020, he was also Chairman of the Board of Management of innogy SE. In 2021, he was appointed to his current role as CEO of E.ON SE.

In this position, he is responsible for Communications & Political Affairs, Corporate Audit, Strategy, Group and Executive HR, Health & Safety, Sustainability, Legal & Compliance and Nuclear Coordination. Leonhard Birnbaum is Vice President of the Executive Committee of BDEW, the German Association of Energy and Water Industries, a member of the Executive Committee of the Federation of German Industries (BDI) and member of the Executive Committee of the German Member Committee of the World Energy Council.

Dr. Kurt Bock

Chairman of the Supervisory Board, BASF SE and Chairman of the Executive Board, BBUG e.V. (106. BBUG)



Kurt Bock has been Chairman of the Supervisory Board of BASF SE since 2020 and Deputy Chairman of the Supervisory Board of BMW AG since 2021. He served on the boards of Fresenius SE and Munich Re and was Chairman of the board of Fuchs SE.

Bock joined BASF's finance department in 1985. From 1992 to 1998 he worked for Robert Bosch in Germany in Brazil. In 2003 he became Chief Financial Officer of

BASF SE and, since 2007, additionally Chairman and CEO of BASF Corporation in the USA. He was Chairman of the Board of Executive Directors of BASF from 2011 to 2018.

Bock studied business administration in Germany and the US and earned his doctorate in economics from the University of Bonn. He is married and has three adult children.

What is, in your opinion, an ideal leader and why?

"An ideal leader thinks boldly about the future and has the ability to translate that vision into something others want to follow. They inspire through conviction and curiosity, challenge the status quo, and create an environment where innovation and ambition can thrive."

Andreas Unseld

"An ideal leader provides clear direction, makes decisions when it matters, and takes responsibility for outcomes. At the same time, they remain open to challenge and learning. In today's complexity, leadership is less about having all the answers and more about building trust, enabling strong teams, and staying anchored in purpose and values."

Andreas Berger

"I don't believe there is an "ideal" leader. There is the "right" leader at the right place and at the right moment in time. And such a "right leader" can be very different. But I do believe that you always recognize a leader when you meet one. And to avoid a discussion on the theory of leadership I will not define leadership attributes to be recognized. With one exception: A leader does not wait until he receives leadership, he/she grabs it."

Dr.-Ing. Leonhard Birnbaum

"An ideal leader combines independent judgment with a genuine interest in people, strong curiosity, and a passion for solving complex problems."

Dr. Katrin Suder

"An ideal leader combines clear direction with intellectual humility. [...]"

Irmantas Rokaitis

"An ideal leader is a self-aware, emotionally intelligent, adaptable person who balances results with relationships, empowers others, communicates a clear purpose, inspires and motivates, and builds a culture of trust and collaboration. [...]"

Dr. Christof Schenck

"Values only matter when they are challenged. Leadership starts with self-awareness and is built by the ups and downs of life and career."

Pim Valdre

“Those who help others grow and find joint purpose. [...]”

Dr. Oliver Schoppe

“An ideal leader is someone who combines character, competence, and empathy/genuine care for people. They provide direction, inspire trust, and enable others to perform at their best – not through authority alone, but through influence and example.”

Dipl.-Kfm. Max Schwaiger

“A good leader listens to their employees, makes clear decisions themselves, and takes responsibility for the overall result. Only in this way can he inspire his team. Only in this way can he achieve noticeable results. Only in this way can he earn recognition and respect.”

Martin Jäger

“Ideal leadership is rooted in enduring values, while its expression differs across industry, science, and politics. At its core, it combines integrity, sound judgment in times of uncertainty, responsibility for outcomes, long-term perspective, and genuine respect for people. [...]”

Prof. Dr. Feiyu Xu

“A person who brings talents together and provides them with a space in which they can thrive. That space has its own rules. The leader acts within those rules.”

Ilker Çatak

“The ideal leader is someone open-minded, leading with empathy, integrity and a strong foundation in values, able to create a compelling vision of the future and to set direction in times of high uncertainty.”

Prof. Dr. Stefan Asenkerschbaumer

“An ideal leader combines clarity with generosity: clear direction and priorities, paired with trust in people. Leadership today is less about having all the answers and more about enabling others to do their best thinking.”

Michael Brigl

“An ideal leader provides guidance, is decisive, shows empathy, communicates well and creates room for innovation and creativity.”

Dr. Bettina Orlopp

“A great leader is someone who can make others say: I did it!”

Ulrich Hörning

Michael Brigl

Head of BCG Central Europe,
The Boston Consulting Group



Michael Brigl serves as the Head of BCG in Central Europe, overseeing operations across Germany, Austria, Switzerland, the Czech Republic, Hungary, and Poland. He is deeply committed to leveraging strategy consulting to address the major challenges of our time and believes that technologies, such as Generative AI, play a pivotal role in driving solutions.

Prior to joining BCG, he worked for three years at PwC Consulting in London,

U.K. with a focus on cost reduction and performance management projects.

Michael holds an MBA from IESE Business School, Barcelona, Spain and CEIBS China Europe International Business School, Shanghai, China. He studied business at the University of Regensburg and finance at UMIST, School of Management, in Manchester.

Anne Brorhilker

Executive Director, Bürgerbewegung Finanzwende e.V.



Anne Brorhilker is a member of the four-person executive board of Finanzwende and serves as Executive Director for Financial Crime. She spent over 20 years as a public prosecutor in Cologne, leading major investigations into serious tax evasion and, from 2013, the Cum/Ex schemes, widely regarded as the largest tax fraud scandal of our time. She successfully brought perpetrators to court and secured numerous final, precedent-setting convictions, earning international recognition.

After leaving public service, Anne Brorhilker brought her expertise into civil society. At Finanzwende, she works to strengthen the fight against financial crime, advocates for better-resourced judicial authorities, and campaigns for a fairer financial system. With her clear commitment and determined stance, she has become a leading voice in the public debate on financial justice and the prevention of financial crime.

Dr. Jörg Burzer

Member of the Board of Management, CTO, Mercedes-Benz Group AG (148. BBUG)



Dr. Jörg Burzer, born in 1970 in Nuremberg, is Member of the Board of Management of Mercedes-Benz Group AG and serves as Chief Technology Officer, responsible for Development and Procurement. He joined the former Daimler-Chrysler AG in 1999 after completing his engineering studies at the University of Erlangen-Nuremberg, where he earned his Diplom-Ingenieur in 1996. He added a doctorate in 2000.

Over the years, he has held numerous international leadership roles across development, procurement,

quality management, production, operations strategy, logistics, and supply chain management, including positions in the U.S. and China. Since 2021 he has been a member of the Board of Management, initially overseeing Production, Quality, and Supply Chain Management, before assuming responsibility for Development & Procurement. His current appointment runs until November 2029.

Ilker Çatak

Writer and Director



Ilker Çatak, born in Berlin, studied film directing at the Hamburg Media School. Today, he works and lives as a screenwriter and director in Berlin. In his films, he mainly deals with themes such as identity, power structures, and social conflicts.

Ingo Gerhartz

Commander, NATO Allied Joint Force Command Brunssum (JFC Brunssum), NATO



General Ingo Gerhartz serves as Commander of NATO Allied Joint Force Command Brunssum, a position he assumed in June 2025. In this role, he directs a combined NATO staff responsible for planning, conducting, and supporting military operations on land, in the air, at sea, in space, and in cyberspace within his area of responsibility.

From 2018–2025, he served as Chief of the German Air Force. He has held major ministerial staff assignments, incl. as Deputy Spokesperson, Executive Officer to the Chief of Defence, and Deputy Director for Strategy and Operations.

A career fighter pilot with over 3,000 flight hours on the F-4F, MiG-29, Tornado, and Eurofighter, he has held multiple command positions, including as Wing Commander during the NATO Mission to Afghanistan.

His distinguished service has earned him numerous awards, including the Israeli Chief of Staff Medal of Appreciation and the U.S. Air National Guard Minuteman Award. He holds a Master's degree in Aeronautical Science.

Prof. Dr. Maja Göpel
Founder & Professor, Mission
Wertvoll & Leuphana University



Photo: Linda Schäffler

Maja spent the last 30 years researching and engaging for societal change for sustainability. Throughout her career she combined theory with practice, moving between academia, activism, political advisory work and science communication. She strongly believes in the human potential to engage for desirable outcomes and proves to be a stubborn possibilist that rather engages in understanding a new discipline or context than accepting a "no" to important outcomes.

For 10 years she worked globally for a PhD in Political Economy and 6 years of setting up the World Future

Council programmes before the second job as a mother brought her back to Germany and transformation studies as Lead Berlin Office of the Wuppertal Institute, then Secretary General of the German Advisory Council on Global Change to the German Government, co-founder of Scientists4Future, professor at the Leuphana University and since 2021 bestselling author, speaker, advisor and in 2023 founder of the Science–Society Network "Mission Wertvoll."

Sergio Roberto Gratteri
Founder & Artistic Director,
DAS HAUS



After studying musicology and cultural management in Leuven, Venice and Rome, he built an international career in cultural programming and arts mediation at organizations the International Yehudi Menuhin Foundation, Europalia, De Pianofabriek and La Monnaie. At BOZAR, as coordinator of Audience Engagement Music and transversal projects, he developed participation formats connecting new audiences with classical, jazz and world music. He conceived and co-programmed initiatives including Bozar Music Opening Night, the Big Bang Festival and United Music of

Brussels. Driven by a belief in art as a catalyst for social cohesion, he initiated urban projects such as Singing Brussels and Homelands.

In 2021, he founded DAS HAUS, a Brussels-based space for innovative classical music projects. As a freelance curator and dramaturg, he advises festivals and European institutions on innovative programming, curates leadership programs through art and teaches cultural mediation in Luxembourg. In 2024, he was nominated as a fellow of AFIELD, an international network for cultural changemakers.

Sounds for the Soul – Leadership Through Resonance

Sooner or later every one of us will face some rough and challenging episodes in our careers. Moments of e.g. intense pressure, isolation and uncertainty are inevitable. The higher the responsibility, the less space there often is to pause, reflect, or reconnect—with oneself and with others. Yet resilience, clarity and authentic strength grow precisely in those moments.

Sounds for the Soul offers a rare, one-on-one live music experience for those who seek depth beyond performance. In an intimate setting, a professional musician responds in real time to the inner emotional state shared by the listener, creating a moment of focused attention, emotional resonance and mental reset.

This is not about vulnerability as exposure, but about self awareness as a leadership skill. Music becomes a tool for reflection—opening perspective, reducing mental noise, and strengthening the capacity to lead with presence and purpose.

A quiet but powerful experience. A pause that sharpens rather than slows. Because strong leadership starts with inner alignment and every leader deserves some musical kindness.

Sounds for the Soul is a project by musicologist and artistic curator Sergio Roberto Gratteri. Since its launch in 2021, the initiative has received broad and positive recognition for its approach and impact. To date, it has already delivered hundreds of one-on-one sessions across several major Belgian cities.

The project is realised in collaboration with a strong team of experienced musicians and a broad network of cultural, corporate and healthcare partners.

What is the greatest risk and the greatest opportunity for Germany?

“The greatest risk is complacency in the face of technological disruption. The greatest opportunity lies in combining our industrial strength with digital, AI, and climate innovation at scale.”

Andreas Unseld

“Germany’s greatest risk is the absence of a clear winning strategy and the gradual erosion of excellence in a world that demands speed, focus, and execution. [...] Germany’s greatest opportunity lies in its industrial base and engineering excellence—if these strengths are intelligently transformed for the AI era. [...]”

Prof. Dr. Feiyu Xu

“[...] Greatest opportunity: our hidden champions; our research.”

Dr. Bettina Orlopp

“The greatest risk is that we consider our wealth a given and that we believe we can continue without structural reforms. Obviously, this also requires us changing our mindset. The greatest opportunity is the dynamics we could unleash if we avoid our greatest risk.”

Dr.-Ing. Leonhard Birnbaum

“The greatest risk is the rise of right wing nationalism. Opportunities are the diverse minds that populate this country.”

Ilker Çatak

“Risk: the economic downturn continues may be even accelerated (with all the consequences). Opportunity: be the economy bringing HW and SW together solving some of the worlds big challenges (climate, mobility, ...)”

Dr. Katrin Suder

<p>“The greatest risk is complacency – believing past strengths will be enough in a fundamentally changed world. The greatest opportunity lies in AI enabling Germany’s industrial depth and engineering excellence. If we act with determination and speed, Germany can again become a growth engine for Europe.”</p> <p style="text-align: right;">Michael Brigl</p>	<p>“Greatest risk: Resistance to change and the deepening social divide. Greatest opportunity: Confidence in our inherent strengths and courage for change and implementation.”</p> <p style="text-align: right;">Prof. Dr. Stefan Asenkerschbaumer</p>
<p>“The greatest risk is the rise of autocratic and populist powers worldwide. The greatest opportunity is a strong and united Europe.”</p> <p style="text-align: right;">Martin Jäger</p>	<p>“The greatest risk is complacency – assuming past success will continue without change. Demographics, geopolitics, and structural shifts demand adaptation. The greatest opportunity lies in Germany’s strengths: its industrial base, engineering excellence, and strong institutions. Combined with faster decision-making, openness to innovation, and sustained investment in skills and sustainability, Germany can remain a global benchmark for resilient growth.”</p> <p style="text-align: right;">Andreas Berger</p>
<p>“Germany’s greatest risk and greatest chance are closely connected: managing a profound transformation (economic, technological, geopolitical, ...).”</p> <p style="text-align: right;">Dipl.-Kfm. Max Schwaiger</p>	<p>“There is a big difference in the risks in terms of time perspective. In the short term, loss of democracy; in the medium term, climate change and loss of biodiversity.”</p> <p style="text-align: right;">Dr. Christof Schenck</p>
<p>“The by far greatest risk is continued inaction. We need to rediscover our appetite for driving change and taking risk.”</p> <p style="text-align: right;">Dr. Oliver Schoppe</p>	<p>“Greatest risks for not only Germany but Europe is the unraveling of the rules-based world order and the rise of “might means right”. [...]”</p> <p style="text-align: right;">Pim Valdre</p>
<p>“[...] OPPORTUNITY: Start doing simple things well again. Rediscovering our spirit of quality, pragmatism and grit.”</p> <p style="text-align: right;">Ulrich Hörning</p>	

Machteld de Haan

Member of the Executive Committee and President, Downstream, Renewables & Energy Solutions, Shell plc



Appointed April 1st, 2025, Machteld is a member of Shell's Executive Committee and President of Downstream, Renewables and Energy Solutions.

Leading an organisation of over 20,000 employees across six global businesses Machteld is responsible for managing Products Refining, Chemicals, Mobility and Convenience, Lubricants, Low Carbon Solutions (B2B, Biofuels, Hydrogen, Carbon Capture and Storage) and Power (renewable generation off/onshore wind, solar).

Prior to this role, Machteld was Executive Vice President, Chemicals and Products, where she led over 10,000 people in 12 key assets, this leading on from her role as Executive Vice President, Global Lubricants where she was responsible for Shell's B2B business, driving the transformation to a Fluid Solutions Provider. Before this her role

as Senior Vice President, Lubricants Americas, included being the CEO of Pennzoil Quaker State Company and Vice President, Lubricants Europe, Russia and Africa.

Machteld joined Shell in 1998 and has held several geographically diverse roles across the Downstream portfolio including Mobility, Strategy, Fleet Solutions.

She holds a master's degree in business economics from Erasmus University, Rotterdam. Machteld is Dutch and based in the Hague.

Florian Hager
Chair of ARD, ARD



Photo: Tim Thiel

Florian Hager, born on April 17, 1976 in Aalen, studied audiovisual media in Stuttgart and film studies in Paris and Mainz. In the course of his career, he has worked for ZDF, 3sat and ARTE. As Head of New Media at ARTE, Florian Hager drove the further development of the linear broadcaster into a multimedia program company—which led to the creation of the ARTE Mediathek.

In Munich, he was deputy program director for “Das Erste” and Channel Manager of the ARD Mediathek. Florian Hager has been the Director of Hessischer Rundfunk since March 1, 2022, and additionally, the Chairman of ARD since January 1, 2025.

As founding and program director for funk, he developed the young content network of ARD and ZDF.

Anja Hähle-Posselt

Head of the Office of Economic Development, City of Leipzig



Anja Hähle-Posselt was born in Leipzig in 1977 and has always lived in Leipzig with her family. She studied industrial engineering at the University of Leipzig. After working as a research assistant at the Institute for Urban Water Management, she began her professional career as a project engineer at BSL GmbH, a subsidiary of Leipziger Wasserwerke.

She then moved to the city administration in 2011. She began as a specialist consultant for the Department of Econom-

ics and Labour and became Head of Division for Company and Employment-Oriented Services in the Office for Economic Development in 2017. Since 1 November 2023, Anja Hähle-Posselt is responsible for the fortunes of the Office of Economic Development as Head of the Office, which she has managed since 2021.

Jochen Hanebeck

CEO, Infineon Technologies AG



Jochen Hanebeck is Chief Executive Officer of Infineon Technologies since 2022. He has been a member of the Management Board as the company's Chief Operations Officer since 2016. Prior to this, he worked in various management functions, including President of the Automotive Division from 2008 to 2016. He has been with Infineon since 1994 (Siemens AG until 1999).

"Making life easier, safer and greener" is not only the mission Infineon pursues as a company. It is also Hanebeck's personal motivation. Innovative and energy-efficient semiconductor solutions from Infineon are a key enabler for a net zero economy, and they link the real with the digital world.

Dr. Ing. Stefan Hartung
Chairman of the Board of
Management, Robert Bosch
GmbH (128. BBUG)



Dr. Stefan Hartung has been chairman of the board of management of Robert Bosch GmbH and a shareholder of Robert Bosch Industrietreuhand KG since January 1, 2022. His responsibilities include corporate strategy, corporate communications and governmental affairs, as well as the position of Chief Technology Officer (CTO), which encompasses corporate research and advance engineering, corporate intellectual property, and the corporate department Technology Manufacturing. In addition, he is responsible for the Bosch Healthcare Solutions GmbH and the Bosch Business Innovations GmbH subsidiaries and Bosch operations in China.

Born in Dortmund on January 13, 1966, Stefan Hartung is married and has two children. He studied mechanical engineering, specializing in manufacturing technology, at RWTH Aachen, where he also submitted his PhD (Dr.-Ing.) in 1993.

He joined Bosch und Siemens Hausgeräte GmbH in Munich in 2004. Before that, he worked for the Fraunhofer Society and the management consultants McKinsey & Company in Düsseldorf.

Jil Hellmann Regouby

Member of the Supervisory Board, Hellmann Worldwide Logistics



Jil Hellmann Regouby is a Supervisory Board member and fifth generation shareholder of the 3PL Hellmann Worldwide Logistics (HWL). She is also a co-founder of ElectroFleet, a sustainable energy provider focused on decarbonizing the transport sector. Passionate about family business, she aims to leverage her privileged position to drive progress. After university, Jil worked on poverty alleviation through market-based approaches like microfinance in Peru and Honduras. From 2009 to 2017, she held various operational roles at HWL, based in the USA and Hong Kong.

She then shifted focus to family governance while raising her family and completed her Master's degree in Organisational Dynamics. In 2022, she joined HWL's Supervisory Board, where she concentrates on the long-term owner strategy.

Christine Heuwing
Managing Partner
Strategic Partnerships,
UnternehmerTUM



Christine Heuwing is Managing Partner for strategic partnerships at UnternehmerTUM, Europe's leading center for Innovation and business creation.

Prior to this she headed the Start-up Incubator of UnternehmerTUM. She gained entrepreneurial experience by co-founding several start-ups, e.g. Saffronart, an internet-based auction platform for contemporary Indian art in 2000, and Apothekensiegel, a pharmacy audit company in 2012.

After her studies in Freiburg, Munich and Harvard, Christine started her career in R&D und Brand Management at Procter & Gamble, in Germany, USA and India.

Ulrich Hörning
Deputy Mayor for General
Services, City of Leipzig



Ulrich Hörning is the Deputy Mayor for General Services at the City of Leipzig (pop. 620k). In his role, he is responsible for the modernization of core administrative processes as well as the HR, legal, information technology and central citizen service functions. In addition to his line responsibilities, Mr. Hörning led the "Anti-Covid task force" and continues to lead the "Ukraine task force" at the City of Leipzig, specifically in support of the sister city Kyiv.

In previous public sector positions, Mr. Hoerning was a senior economist at the World Bank in Washington, lead a

comprehensive administrative reform project at the City of Mannheim and served as a strategy officer at the Federal Ministry of Finance in Berlin. As a project manager with Booz & Company, he led projects for private and public sector clients in Europe and Asia. Mr. Hörning holds a diploma in economics from the University of Tübingen (Germany), a certificate from the Institut d'Etudes Politiques in Paris and a Masters degree from Harvard Kennedy School.

Prof. Dr. Boris Hofmann
Head of Carl Zeiss Ventures,
Carl Zeiss AG



Boris Hofmann manages as head of ZEISS Ventures the ZEISS investments in technology-driven start-ups. The mission of ZEISS Ventures is to enable and accelerate the development and commercialization of market shaping innovations between, beyond, and disruptive to current ZEISS strategic business units. It also aims to increase the attractiveness for bright talents by partnering with developers, entrepreneurs, and co-investors who build technology-driven businesses relevant to ZEISS. In 2024 he took over as head of ZEISS

Ventures and continued to manage the Beyond Innovation Vehicle.

Previously, he worked as Senior Vice President of B. Braun's Innovation Hub & Digital Innovation where he built and managed a corporate venture portfolio. In 2005 he graduated at Julius-Maximilians-University Würzburg with a Diploma in Biology. Did his Ph.D. in Biophysics at RWTH Aachen and Research Centre Jülich with following Postdoctoral Research at Research Centre Jülich from 2006 - 2011.

Baroness Ruth Hunt
Director, Deeds and Words



I am Ruth Hunt, Baroness Hunt of Bethnal Green — a non-executive director, strategist and former chief executive with over twenty years' experience across government, national security, charities and regulated sectors. I studied English at the University of Oxford and am now a Visiting Fellow at Jesus College, Cambridge. My career grew through senior roles at Stone-wall, where I ultimately served as Chief Executive, leading the organisation through growth, influence and significant political and reputational challenge. In 2019 I was ap-

pointed as a Crossbench Peer in the House of Lords, where I provide independent scrutiny on human rights, digital safety, policing and public interest regulation, and represent the UK at the Council of Europe.

Alongside this, I co-founded Deeds and Words Ltd, advising senior leaders on governance, culture, leadership and non-financial risk. My work focuses on culture, governance and ethical leadership, and I am available for consultancy at www.ruth-hunt.com.

Dr. Mikko Huotari
Director, Mercator Institute
for China Studies



Mikko Huotari is the Executive Director of MERICS. His research focuses on China's political and economic development, foreign policy, China-Europe relations, as well as global (economic) governance and competition.

He has published on China's rise as a financial power, trade and investment relations with Europe as well as on geopolitical shifts related to China's emergence as a global security actor.

Mikko studied in Freiburg, Nanjing and Shanghai. He holds a PhD from Freiburg University and was a guest scholar at the University of California in San Diego in 2017/2018. In 2019, Mikko was appointed as one of 15 German representatives to the German-Chinese Dialogue Forum.

Martin Jäger
President,
Bundesnachrichtendienst
(128. BBUG)



Martin Jäger has been president of the Bundesnachrichtendienst since 2025. Born in Ulm in 1964, he completed his military service from 1984 to 1986. He then studied ethnology and political science in Munich. In 1994, he started the preparatory service at the Federal Foreign Office in Bonn. After that he served as Desk Officer at the Federal Foreign Office, the Federal Chancellery and the Embassy in Prague for several years. In 2004, he moved to the Federal Chancellery as a Deputy Head of Division. He joined the Federal Foreign Office as Press Spokesperson one year later. In 2008, he moved to Daimler as Head of External Affairs.

In 2013, he was appointed German ambassador to Kabul. A year later, he joined the Federal Ministry of Finance as Head of Senior Political Staff and Director General. In 2016, he became State Secretary in the Ministry of the Interior of Baden-Württemberg, from where he moved to the Federal Ministry for Economic Development and Cooperation as State Secretary two years later. In 2021, he became German Ambassador to Baghdad, and then to Kiev in 2023.

If you could change one thing in the world, what would it be and why?

“Returning to the aspiration of a global rule-based order and mode of collaboration.”

Dr. Oliver Schoppe

“I would strengthen respect and genuine dialogue between countries and cultures, instead of isolation and bloc-building. Many global challenges today stem not from a lack of capability, but from eroding trust and unwillingness to listen. In an interconnected world, respectful dialogue is not naïve—it is a strategic necessity for peace, innovation, and shared prosperity.”

Prof. Dr. Feiyu Xu

“Rekindle peoples ability (and curiosity) to listen to each other.”

Dipl.-Kfm. Max Schwaiger

“I would reduce the gap between scientific discovery and real-world impact. Enormous amounts of knowledge are generated every year, but too little of it reaches society at scale. Improving how we translate research into usable technologies would accelerate progress in areas such as sustainable manufacturing and human health.”

Irmantas Rokaitis

“That nature was understood and valued as critical infrastructure underpinning our global economy.”

Pim Valdre

“I have no idea about the one (!) thing that would make the world a better place. Thus, I try to make a positive impact on my surrounding, in my business. If this makes the world better, then I have done my part.”

Dr.-Ing. Leonhard Birnbaum

“Everybody should have the will, strength and tenacity to keep on rocking in the free world.”

Ulrich Hörning

“Stop forest loss. This is the biggest climate and biodiversity risk. We originate from nature, and we fully depend on it, with drinking water, food, air, medicine – everything. Forests contain the highest biodiversity and carbon stocks on land. And they vanish very fast. Last year, eight million hectares were lost. That is twice Switzerland.”

Dr. Christof Schenck

“Bring a new fiscal order. Because capitalism has lost its core values. The transactional nature of human relations cannot be the foundation of a just and sustainable society!”

Ilker Çatak

“Inject a gene in every human being that humanity and love is the dominating emotion.”

Dr. Katrin Suder

“I would reduce polarization. Many of today’s major challenges – e.g. social cohesion – require cooperation. Rebuilding trust, listening across differences, and focusing on shared goals would unlock significant progress for both society and business.”

Andreas Berger

“I would shift our collective focus from reacting to crises toward actively building the future we want to live in. The world is changing faster than ever, and while the challenges are real, progress becomes possible when we replace fear of failure and constant pessimism with confidence, experimentation, and the courage to act.”

Andreas Unseld

“Delete non-democratic structures.”

Dr. Bettina Orlopp

“Strengthen the understanding among nations as foundation for extensive global collaboration.”

Prof. Dr. Stefan Asenkerschbaumer

Bernt Reitan Jenssen
CEO, Ruter AS



Bernt Reitan Jenssen is Chief Executive Officer of Ruter AS, the public transport authority of Oslo and Akershus, a position he has held since the company's inception in 2008. Bernt has studied economics at BI Norwegian Business School. Prior to joining Ruter, Bernt was CEO of Nordic postal and logistics group Posten Norge AS for eight years. He has previously served as CEO of the logistics companies TNT Norge AS.

Bernt held a seat in the Norwegian government's Expert Committee on Technology and Future Transport Infrastructure.

Previously he has been a member of the governmental Council of Mobility and Technology, led by the Minister of Transport and Communications.

He is the chairman of Spekter, vice chairman of Public Transport Norway, and member of the board in Oslotech AS and DIGITALNORWAY – Toppindustrisenteret AS.

Dr. Karl-Ludwig Kley
Chairman of the
Supervisory Board, Deutsche
Lufthansa AG and Honorary
Chairman BBUG e.V.
(101. BBUG)



Karl-Ludwig Kley was born on 11 June 1951 in Munich. He is Chairman of the Supervisory Board of Deutsche Lufthansa AG. He was a member of the Executive Board of Merck KGaA from 2006 and served as its Chairman from 2007 to 2016.

Prior to that, he worked as Chief Financial Officer (CFO) at Deutsche Lufthansa AG from 1997 to 2006. Karl-Ludwig Kley is, among other things, Chairman of the Board of Trustees of the Fritz Thyssen Foundation and of the Friends of the Wallraf-Richartz Museum and the Museum Ludwig (Cologne).

Over the past 20 years, he has been a member of the supervisory boards of numerous companies, including E.ON SE until May 2023 (chairman), Bertelsmann

AG, and BMW AG (deputy chairman of the supervisory board). He was also a member of the board of directors of Verizon Communications Inc. in New York.

Karl-Ludwig Kley received his doctorate in law (Dr. jur.) from the Ludwig Maximilian University of Munich. He is an honorary professor at the WHU – Otto Beisheim School of Management, an honorary senator at the Albert Ludwig University of Freiburg, and a member of the Board of Governors of the Hebrew University of Jerusalem.

In recognition of his services, he was awarded the Order of Merit of the Italian Republic (Commendatore), the Order of Merit of the State of Hesse and the Weizmann Prize for Natural Sciences and Humanities.

Hannes Külz

Journalist, Coach for Media Interviews, Writing Skills and Editorial Workshops



Hannes Kuelz was an editor at Financial Times Deutschland, specialising in the internet economy and foreign affairs. He repeatedly trained journalists in Afghanistan and was a foreign affairs expert for the children's news programs at Deutschland-radioKultur.

As editor-in-chief of the Berlin-based media agency KircherBurkhardt (now C3), he developed newspapers, magazines and online media formats and wrote the screenplay for a comic biography about the German industrialist Robert Bosch.

Today, he heads the Print & Online department at the Austrian media training institute Intomedia.

He prepares top executives from business, academia and other associations for interviews and public appearances. He teaches Public Relations and Crisis Communication at HHL Leipzig Graduate School of Management.

In addition, he coaches professionals and executives in writing, including specialised texts for non-experts, speech manuscripts, as well as writing for the Internet/Social Media and using AI. His book "Einfach schreiben" is published by Haufe Verlag. He lives in Berlin and Vienna.

Maike Lambarth

CEO & Co-Founder, Cyclize



Maike Lambarth is CEO and co-founder of Cyclize GmbH. She studied Renewable Energies (B.Sc.) and Energy Technology (M.Sc.) at the University of Stuttgart and subsequently conducted research in the field of Power-to-X at the Institute of Photovoltaics. Her entrepreneurial career began in 2016 with Germany's first food-sharing café "Raupe Immersatt".

In 2023, she and three colleagues founded Cyclize with the aim of decoupling the chemical industry from fossil resources through defossilized synthesis gas from waste streams and CO₂. Lambarth is committed to diversity in tech & chemistry and aims to have at least 40 percent women in the team and management at Cyclize by 2028.

Dr. Tobias Leipprand
Executive Director, LEAD
Forward GmbH



Tobias is Founder and Managing Partner at LEAD Forward. With his team he supports organizations through major culture transformations and reorganizations, develops leadership teams, and coaches boards of directors. He works with industry giants in manufacturing, pharma and media, with hidden champions, leading startups like Babbel or Blinkist, and public institutions such as the German Foreign Office and NATO.

Tobias is also Co-founder of One Thousand, a leading and fast-growing AI implementation advisory with a mission to drive the AI revolution for the European industry.

In the past he helped build the independent think tank Stiftung Neue Verantwortung

and before that worked as a strategy consultant at McKinsey. He taught applied leadership at Central European University and is a member of the advisory board of the Executive MBA "Leadership and Human Resources" at Quadriga University Berlin.

Tobias completed a master's degree in theoretical physics in Munich and in Cambridge (UK), and then completed postgraduate studies in political science and economics at Harvard University, where he was a McCloy Scholar. He received his PhD from Freie University of Berlin with a thesis on how top leaders find meaning under uncertainty. Following his belief that a more balanced life leads to better decisions he practices and teaches yoga.

Prof. Dr. Joachim Nagel
President, Deutsche
Bundesbank



Joachim Nagel has been President of the Deutsche Bundesbank since January 2022. Prior to this, he had already served in management positions at the Bundesbank between 1999 and 2016, including as an Executive Board member from 2010 with responsibility for the Directorates General Markets, Controlling and IT. From 2016 to 2020, he worked for the KfW Group, including as an Executive Board member. In 2020, he moved to the Bank for International Settlements (BIS) where he became Deputy Head of the Banking Department.

Dr Nagel studied economics at the University of Karlsruhe and received a doctoral degree in 1997. He also serves as a member of the Governing Council of the ECB, a Governor at the IMF and a member of the BIS Board of Directors.

BBUG Fellowship

With the new BBUG Fellowship Program, BBUG provides outstanding personalities from science, business, art, or culture with intellectual freedom to engage creatively and across disciplines with questions about the future of the Social Market Economy.

The Social Market Economy remains one of the most effective systems for fostering prosperity, freedom, and democracy. In Germany, it combines the dynamism of a free-market system with a strong social framework, ensuring a balance between competition and private ownership on the one hand, and social cohesion, fairness, and shared prosperity on the other. Yet growing inequality,

political gridlock in the face of multiple crises, and the rise of state capitalism in authoritarian systems like China challenge both the legitimacy and trust in market economies and democracies. Meeting these challenges requires joint efforts from business, politics, and society alike.

Nelson Makamo is a Johannesburg-based independent artist born in Limpopo, South Africa, where he dedicates his art to amplifying the voices of African children. With a career spanning over two decades, Makamo has emerged as one of the world's most sought-after young visual artists. His diverse portfolio includes silkscreens, monotypes, sketches, collage works, acrylic, oil, and

watercolor paintings, as well as charcoal drawings. Central to his work is storytelling through candid portraits of children, capturing the resilience and beauty inherent in the human spirit.

Trained at Artist Proof Studio in Johannesburg, Makamo began his artistic journey with three years of intensive printmaking studies, establishing a strong technical foundation. As his practice evolved, he experimented with a wide range of materials before discovering charcoal as his signature medium. His unconventional work ethic embraces creative spontaneity, deliberately avoiding rigid plans in favor of an intuitive process.





Nelson Makamo

Independent Artist

Makamo's internationally acclaimed collections challenge stereotypical representations of African children and are held in prestigious collections around the world. Beyond the canvas, his impact extends into mainstream culture, including an appearance on "The Daily Show with Trevor Noah" and the cover of "TIME magazine".

Celebrated for creating platforms that enable young African artists to communicate through their work, Makamo's portraits convey powerful emotion, reflecting the conviction, strength, and determination of young Africans. His mixed-media approach and distinctive mark-making, position him as a trailblazer in contemporary visual art, reshaping global

perceptions of what it means to be an African child today.

During his residency in Baden-Baden and in the context of the 157th BBUG Nelson Makamo presents "I Belong to the World", a non-commercial public exhibition. The project is both deeply personal and collective, reflecting on creativity as a form of service.

The exhibition brings together paintings, drawings, and mixed-media works created over several years, each engaging with responsibility as a lived and evolving conversation. "I Belong to the World" invites viewers into Makamo's philosophy that art gains meaning only when it contributes to something greater than itself.

BBUG extends its sincere thanks to DHL for their generous support in sponsoring the transport of Nelson Makamo's artworks.



Speakers

Fellow 2026

Dr. Hanna Notte

Director of the Eurasia Nonproliferation Program
James Martin Center for Nonproliferation Studies (CNS)



Hanna Notte is the director of the Eurasia Nonproliferation Program at the James Martin Center for Nonproliferation Studies in Monterey, California, and a senior associate (non-resident) at the Center for Strategic and International Studies. She is also an associate fellow with the Kennan Institute in Washington DC. Her expertise is in Russian foreign policy, the Middle East, and arms control. Notte holds a doctorate and an MPhil in international relations from Oxford University and a BA in social and political sciences from Cambridge University.

Based in Berlin, her writing appears in outlets such as The Atlantic, the Financial Times, Foreign Affairs, the New York Times, and ZEIT Online, among others. During her doctoral studies, she was a visiting researcher with the Institute of Oriental Studies of the Russian Academy of Sciences and the Carnegie Moscow Center. Her book about Russia's global foreign policy since the full-scale invasion of Ukraine, *We Shall Outlast Them: Putin's Global Campaign to Defeat the West*, is forthcoming with W. W. Norton & Company in August 2026.

Dr. Bettina Orlopp
CEO, Commerzbank AG
(138. BBUG)



Dr. Bettina Orlopp has been the CEO of Commerzbank AG since October 2024. She is responsible for Audit, Communications, Corporate M&A and Investments as well as Legal, Strategy, Transformation & Sustainability and Research. Previously, she served as the Deputy CEO and was responsible for the CFO area including Finance, Tax, Investor Relations and Treasury. In 2017, she became a member of the Commerzbank Board, heading the Legal, Compliance and Human Resources divisions. She joined Commerzbank in 2014 as Head of Group Development & Strategy.

Dr. Bettina Orlopp began her professional career in 1995 as a management consultant at McKinsey & Company, where she was appointed Partner in 2002. She is married and has two children.

Andreas Pecher
CEO, Carl Zeiss AG
(149. BBUG)



Andreas Pecher is President & CEO of the ZEISS Group and oversees the Executive Board Office, Brand, Communications & Public Affairs, Human Resources, Patents, Research & Technology, Strategic Development and Ventures. He also is responsible for the Australasia, China, India, and Southeast Asia sales regions and he is Director of Labour Relations at Carl Zeiss AG. Andreas Pecher has also assumed the position of CEO of Carl Zeiss Meditec AG on an interim basis.

Andreas Pecher was born in 1971 in Würzburg, Germany. He studied physics at the University of Texas at Austin, USA, and graduated in 1994 (Master of Arts). In 1997 he graduated from the University of Würzburg (Diploma). In 2005 he also completed an MBA at the Kellogg School of Management in Illinois, USA, and an MEM at Northwestern University in Illinois, USA.

Dr. Jana Puglierin

Head of Office and Senior Policy Fellow, European Council on Foreign Relations (ECFR)



Dr. Jana Puglierin is a senior policy fellow at the European Council on Foreign Relations and head of its Berlin office since January 2020. Before joining ECFR she headed the Europe program at the German Council on Foreign Relations (DGAP). She worked as an adviser for a member of the Bundestag on disarmament, arms control, and non-proliferation, as well as German and European foreign and security policy. Between 2003 and 2010, she was researcher and lecturer to the chair of political science and contemporary history as well as in the program for North American studies at the University of Bonn.

She has been a member of the Advisory Board to the Federal Government for Civilian Crisis Prevention and Peacebuilding since January 2023. Her work focuses on German and European foreign, security, and defence policy, as well as Germany's role in Europe and transatlantic relations. Her recent book "Wer verteidigt Europa?" ("Who defends Europe") was published by Rowohlt in January 2026.

Irmantas Rokaitis
CTO, Biomatter



Irmantas Rokaitis is the Co-Founder and CTO of Biomatter, a company pioneering the technologies for generative enzyme design. His work focuses on the intersection of synthetic biology and artificial intelligence to program new proteins for health and sustainable manufacturing applications. He was recognised in the Forbes 30 Under 30 Europe list (Science & Healthcare) in 2022 for his contributions to the field. Additionally, he and his team were finalists for the European Patent Office's Young Inventors Prize in 2025.

Prior to his leadership role at Biomatter, Irmantas worked as a scientist at the Institute of Biochemistry in Vilnius, contributing to the development of high-throughput enzyme technologies. He holds an M.Sc. in Biochemistry from Vilnius University, graduating magna cum laude.

Dr. Samir Saran
President, Observer Research Foundation



Samir Saran is President of the Observer Research Foundation (ORF), India's premier think tank, headquartered in New Delhi with affiliates in North America and the Middle East. His research focuses on issues of global governance, climate and energy policy, technology policy, and India's foreign policy. He curates the Raisina Dialogue, India's annual flagship platform on geopolitics and geo-economics, and is founder of CyFy, India's annual conference on cybersecurity and internet governance.

He spearheads the foundation's efforts to foster new international partnerships and incubate young leaders networks and youth led conversations globally. Samir has authored five books, edited important journals and publications and written several academic papers and book chapters.

Dr. Christof Schenck
Director, Frankfurt Zoological Society



Dr. Christof Schenck is a biologist and expert on tropical ecosystems. For his PhD research he spent three years in a tent in the Peruvian rainforests. He heads the Frankfurt Zoological Society (FZS). The FZS manages comprehensive conservation programs in 19 countries on four continents to preserve large ecosystems with high biodiversity and outstanding wilderness. FZS works in close cooperation with protected area authorities and local populations.

Dr. Schenck is engaged in other boards and committees, such as the Brandenburg

Wilderness Foundation, the Foundation Conservation Carpathia, the Frankfurt Conservation Center, the Senckenberg Institution, the Hessian State Foundation, and the Polytechnic Society Frankfurt.

In 2017, Dr. Schenck was awarded the NatureLife Environmental Prize, in 2020 the EINE WELT-Medal from the Federal Ministry BMZ, in 2022, he was honored with the Environmental Award of the Deutsche Bundesstiftung Umwelt DBU and in 2026 he received the Goldene Brandeisen.

Prof. Dr. Helmut Schönenberger
CEO, UnternehmerTUM



Scalable tech-startups are Helmut's passion as co-founder and CEO of UnternehmerTUM, the Center for Innovation and Business Creation at Technische Universität München (TUM). He is especially interested in startups in the field of smart enterprises, additive manufacturing as well as smart city and mobility solutions.

With his background as a founder, aerospace engineer and venture capitalist he loves to help new ventures solve strategy, recruiting, business development and future financing challenges.

Dr. Oliver Schoppe
Principal, UVC Partner



Dr. Oliver Schoppe is a partner at UVC Partners, a venture capital fund with more than €600mn assets under management and with close affiliation to UnternehmerTUM. For UVC Partners, Oliver leads investments in artificial intelligence, enterprise software, as well as bio tech. Oliver serves as a board member for numerous companies, including Biomatter.

Prior to joining UVC Partners, Oliver advised larger corporates on strategic M&A projects in the technology and automotive industries for McKinsey & Company. With research stays at Harvard, MIT, and Oxford University, Oliver holds degrees in Engineering and a PhD in Artificial Intelligence from the Technical University of Munich.

Dr. Ursula Schütze-Kreilkamp
Strategic Projects & Special Assignments – Top Executives (KFK/OFK1), Deutsche Bahn AG



Dr. Ursula Schütze-Kreilkamp is a senior executive, physician, and leadership strategist with over 25 years of corporate and entrepreneurial experience. As Head of Group Executives at Deutsche Bahn AG, she drives leadership culture, succession, and transformation at C-suite level; earlier she built executive development at REWE Group.

For 20 years, she practiced as a physician and psychotherapist, co-founding a state-recognized institute for training in psychotherapy, psycho-oncology, and trauma

therapy. She lectures at TU Munich (guest practitioner lecture) and from November 2025 at the University of St. Gallen.

A certified supervisory board member, coach, and frequent keynote speaker, she is co-editor of a textbook on leadership diagnostics. She combines her passion for travel with NGO work and values family life as central to her leadership philosophy.

What is a belief or assumption you have changed your mind about in recent years – and why?

“It is important to stick to the rules. I thought this is common sense and also makes sense. But it is not common sense and too often also makes no sense!”

Dr.-Ing. Leonhard Birnbaum

“That certain events and behaviours in international politics are revocable.”

Dipl.-Kfm. Max Schwaiger

“You do not need to win every fight → pick your battles
Why: You can focus more on the relevant things.”

Dr. Bettina Orlopp

“The geopolitical upheavels of recent years have made it painfully clear to all of us that democracy as a form of government cannot be taken for granted and will not automatically prevail throughout the world.”

Martin Jäger

“I used to believe that technical excellence alone is sufficient to build impactful technology. Over time, I’ve learned that equally important are communication, incentives, and organizational design. Break-through ideas only matter if teams, partners, and institutions are aligned well enough to turn them into reality.”

Irmantas Rokaitis

“National Defence:
From conscientious objector working with homeless men in northern France in the early 1990s to enlisting in the Bundeswehr Homeland Defence in 2025.
Why? Integrity, example, necessity.”

Ulrich Hörning

“[...] In the age of social media and the relentless reproduction of images, I thought it would be impossible to get away with crimes—such as genocide—and blatant shamelessness. Yet you do. Accountability has become elusive.”

Ilker Çatak

“Role of the Bundeswehr and how soldiers are.”

Dr. Katrin Suder

“I used to believe speed mattered above all else. Experience taught me that sustained success comes from balancing speed with focus and thoughtful long-term decisions.”

Andreas Unseld

“I have come to believe much more strongly in evolution rather than uniform models of progress. Different countries and cultures develop their political systems and societies at their own historical pace and in their own way. Humanity has not yet reached a fixed or final form of political order, which makes openness, respect, and patience essential when engaging with the complexity of human development in a broader context.”

Prof. Dr. Feiyu Xu

“Maintaining social cohesion requires accepting unformtable trade-offs.”

Dr. Oliver Schoppe

“I have learned that speed matters as much as precision. Early in my career, I believed better analysis always led to better decisions. Experience has shown that in fast-moving environments, timely decisions – combined with the discipline to course-correct – often lead to better outcomes than waiting for perfect information.”

Andreas Berger

“That voicing vulnerability is a weakness for a leader – I consider it a connector and a strength.”

Pim Valdre

“That humanity is on the right path to developing a sustainable and resilient world. Now we are seeing a major roll-back with multiple crises, wars, and the loss of democracies and values.”

Dr. Christof Schenck

Dipl.-Kfm. Max Schwaiger
Chairman, Franz Haniel & Cie.
GmbH (155. BBUG)



Max Schwaiger is a member of the Haniel family and has served on the Supervisory Board of Franz Haniel & Cie. since 2019. In 2023, he was appointed Chairman of the Board. Prior to joining Haniel, he spent 15 years at Continental AG, where he held various leadership positions, including roles in mergers and acquisitions, finance, and general management.

He holds a degree in business administration and mechanical engineering from the Technical University of Munich, as well as a degree in international business law from Bucerius Law School.

Prof. Dr. Daniela Schwarzer
Member of the Executive Board,
Bertelsmann Stiftung



Prof. Dr. Daniela Schwarzer joined the Executive Board of the Bertelsmann Stiftung in 2023. She serves as a non-executive Board member of BNP Paribas (since 2014) and of Covivio (since 2022).

Daniela is leading expert on geoeconomics and geopolitics and has held leadership roles in several think tanks and public policy institutes. She served as Executive Director for Europe and Central Asia at the Open Society Foundations (2021-23) and ran the German Council on Foreign Relations as Director and CEO (2016-21). She served on the executive team of the

German Marshall Fund of the United States (2013-16), after leading the research group on European affairs at Stiftung Wissenschaft und Politik (SWP, since 2005). Before that, she worked Paris correspondent, opinion page editor and editorialist for Financial Times Deutschland.

Since 2025, Daniela is non-executive president of the Institute for Foreign Cultural Relations (ifa) and co-chair of the German-Japanese Forum. Daniela teaches political science at Freie Universität Berlin and is a senior fellow at Harvard University.

Dr. Katrin Suder

Supervisory Board Member,
Senior Advisor, DHL,
Cloudflare, LEG, G&D



At the heart of Katrin Suder's career is the understanding of technologies and their impact on companies, societies and individuals.

In 2000 she received her doctorate in theoretical physics and a BA in theatre and German. Afterwards, she worked for McKinsey & Company from 2000 to 2014 with a focus on the telecommunications, IT and public sector. As a senior partner she also lead the Berlin office and the public sector practise.

From 2014 to 2018, Suder was the Permanent State

Secretary for Planning, Armaments, IT & Cyber at the German Federal Ministry of Defence. She took over the chairmanship of the Digital Council of the German Federal Government under Angela Merkel in 2018 - 2022.

Since 2019, she serves as Senior Advisor and supervisory board member. Current mandates are DHL (chairperson), LEG, G&D, and Cloudflare.

Katrin lives with her wife Katja and their three kids in Hamburg.

Max Tarantik

Co-founder and Chief Operating Officer, Enginsight GmbH



Max Tarantik is co-founder and Chief Operating Officer of Enginsight GmbH, based in Jena, Germany. As an entrepreneur, he has successfully built and scaled numerous companies in the technology and high-tech sectors. His professional focus lies at the intersection of technology, organization, and market: Tarantik combines deep technical understanding with a clear vision for operational excellence and sustainable growth. In his role at Enginsight, he is primarily responsible for operational processes, product and service excellence, and the scaling of a partner-driven go-to-market model.

He is driven by the ambition to make complex cybersecurity topics understandable, manageable, and economically viable for businesses. In addition to technology, he places central importance on communication: innovations only realize their value when they are explained, contextualized, and translated into concrete actionable insights. This principle shapes both his leadership style and the positioning of Enginsight as a leading European cybersecurity platform.

Andreas Unsel

General Partner, UVC Partners



With over a decade of experience in venture capital, Andreas has dedicated his career to championing innovation in B2B software, deep tech, and mobility. As a co-founder and General Partner at UVC Partners, he has led investments in companies such as Aleph Alpha, operating at the forefront of AI research, and Enginsight, a cybersecurity and IT observability platform enabling companies to secure and automate their IT infrastructure through autonomous analytics. Andreas takes pride in backing teams that

solve hard technical problems, including DeepDrive, which is advancing highly efficient e-mobility, and Q.ANT, a photonics deep-tech company developing light-based processors to unlock major gains in performance and energy efficiency for AI and high-performance computing.

He has supported multiple companies from early prototype to successful exit and is passionate about building Europe's next generation of technology leaders.

United World College (UWC)
Freiburg



Education for Peace and
Sustainability

UWC Robert Bosch College (RBC) in Freiburg is proud to be part of a global network of 18 schools, the United World Colleges (UWC), all working to make education a force to unite people, nations and cultures for peace and a sustainable future.

As a project of the Deutsche Stiftung UWC and the Robert Bosch Foundation, RBC opened its gates in September 2014. Over the last decade, we have developed a unique curriculum with a strong focus on sustainability as well as peacebuilding.

Around two hundred students from 90 different countries live and learn together on our campus for two years – 96% of them on a scholarship. Our College is built on a foundation of deliberate diversity: we welcome students from a cross section of socio-economic backgrounds, cultures, religions, nationalities, and life experiences.

Pim Valdre

Global Head, Climate and Nature Economy, World Economic Forum



Pim is the Global Head of Climate and Nature Economy at the World Economic Forum, working to accelerate an economic systems shift towards a nature-positive and climate smart economy. She has 20 years of experience working in the intersection of international diplomacy, sustainability and climate and industry decarbonization. She served the United Nations working in the Office of the President of the General Assembly (2005-2006) and in the Executive Office of the UN Secretary General (2012-2015) covering sustainable development, humanitarian and political affairs.

She was a Special Adviser in the Ministry of Foreign Affairs during Sweden's UN Security Council membership (2017-2018).

She holds a MA and BA in political science from Uppsala University and Stockholm University also completed a Diplôme de Programme Internationale at Institute d'Etudes de Science-Politiques in Paris.

Helene von Roeder

Helene von Roeder, Member of the Executive Board & CFO, Merck KGaA and Deputy Chairwoman of the Executive Board, BBUG e.V. (130. BBUG)



Helene von Roeder has been a member of the Executive Board and Chief Financial Officer of Merck since July 1, 2023. She is responsible for the following enabling functions under her leadership: Finance, Procurement and Digital Enterprise Solutions (DES). The DES organization merges Global Enterprise Solutions (GES), Information Technology (IT) and the Merck Data & AI Organization (MDAO) into one cohesive unit to enable smarter, more connected ways of operating for everyone at Merck.

Before joining Merck, Helene served on the Executive Board of Vonovia SE since May 2018, first as the Chief Financial Officer until 2021, and then as the Chief Transformation Officer responsible for, amongst others, IT, Procurement and Innovation. Prior to that, she spent 23 years working in London, UK, and Frankfurt, Germany, at various investment banks. She started her career in 1995 at Deutsche Bank in London before moving to UBS AG in Frankfurt and London.

This was followed by 10 years in Morgen Stanley, where she was the Head of Global Capital Markets for Germany and Austria before becoming the Chief Executive Officer of Credit Suisse, Germany, Austria and Central and Eastern Europe (CEE).

Previously, Helene was also a Member of the Merck Supervisory Board and Board of Partners of E. Merck KG since 2019, serving as Chair of the Audit and Finance committees, respectively.

Helene was born in 1970 in Heidelberg, Germany. She has studied theoretical physics at the Ludwig Maximilian University of Munich, Germany, and has a master's degree of Philosophy in theoretical astrophysics from the University of Cambridge, UK. She is married and has three children.

What question do you think leaders should be asking more often right now – but rarely do?

“They should definitely keep the medium and long-term perspective in mind. Then biodiversity loss and climate change would be given much more weight as fundamental risks, and decisions would turn out differently.”

Dr. Christof Schenck

“How to take a holistic approach.”

Ilker Çatak

“How can we disrupt ourselves.”

Dr. Katrin Suder

“What would we do differently if we genuinely prioritised the long term?”

Many decisions change when viewed through a five- or ten-year lens, particularly when considering resilience, people, and societal impact.”

Andreas Berger

“How would this affect the poor neighbor’s kid from my elementary school days?”

Ulrich Hörning

“What are we assuming to be true that might no longer be true?”

Dipl.-Kfm. Max Schwaiger

“Does the team understand the full context or are they operating half-blind? It’s often easy to mistake giving instructions for sharing context. Context is what gives people the ability to make autonomous, high-stake decisions that push the needle forward.”

Irmantas Rokaitis

“What assumptions are we making today that may no longer hold tomorrow?”

In times of rapid technological, geopolitical, and societal change, leaders often focus on execution and short-term performance, but rarely pause to question whether their underlying assumptions about markets, technology, people, or power remain valid. Asking this question more often creates space for learning, adaptability, and more resilient long-term decisions.”

Prof. Dr. Feiyu Xu

“What might an effective and feasible response to current challenges look like in concrete terms?”

Martin Jäger

“How can I motivate my environment to drive continuous improvement and innovation combined with constant change.”

Dr. Bettina Orlopp

“What would we do differently today if we truly assumed that our society and economic model will change fundamentally over the next decade?”

Andreas Unseld

“As an incumbent of a system or hierarchy, how can I challenge my own assumptions.”

Pim Valdre

Sasha Waltz & Guests
Dance company



Photo: Sebastian Bolesch

The dance company Sasha Waltz & Guests was founded in Berlin in 1993 by Sasha Waltz and Jochen Sandig and celebrated its 30th anniversary in 2023. Since then, numerous artists and ensembles from the fields of architecture, visual arts, choreography, film, design, literature, fashion and music from over 60 countries have participated as 'guests' in more than 100 productions, projects and films.

The company works with a dynamic international and national network of production and guest performance partners and, since its founding, has been a guest at over 300 performance venues and festivals in more than 50 countries and 180 cities worldwide. From its repertoire of twelve active productions, Sasha Waltz & Guests presents around 80 performances per year.

The current artistic work of choreographer Sasha Waltz, artistic director of Sasha Waltz & Guests, focuses on the intensification of collaborative processes and the fusion of choreography and music. Projects such as 'In C' illustrate the company's approach to understand movement as an open dialogue between structure, improvisation and artistic expression. With its cross-genre projects and participatory formats, Sasha Waltz & Guests shapes the contemporary dance scene in Germany and internationally and stands for a lively, interdisciplinary approach to the performing arts.

In C – Leadership in Motion.
A project by Kulturkreis der deutschen Wirtschaft based on 'In C' by Sasha Waltz



Photo: Sebastian Bolesch

Since 1951, the Kulturkreis der deutschen Wirtschaft has been Germany's leading institution for corporate cultural engagement. Funded by memberships, donations, and the commitment of its members, it supports artistic freedom and responsibility across architecture, visual arts, performing arts, literature, and music.

More than 1,000 artists have received early recognition, including Nobel laureates and renowned figures such as Ingeborg Bachmann, Günter Grass, Orhan Pamuk, Marina Abramović, Georg Baselitz, and Wolfgang Tillmans. Musicians like Sabine Meyer and Elsa Dreisig also benefited from its patronage.

Beyond funding, the Kulturkreis promotes cultural education. Art-based leadership programs, such as the workshop In C, create unique experiences that connect emerging talents and business leaders, encouraging new perspectives and value-driven leadership.

Rooted in tradition yet future-oriented, the Kulturkreis continues to shape Germany's cultural landscape—anchoring artistic innovation within corporate citizenship and creative freedom.

Prof. Dr. Feiyu Xu

University Professor of Industry AI, Board Member and Senior Advisor, German University of Digital Science, Amber Iris AI Consulting



Dr. Feiyu Xu is a leading AI expert with a distinguished career spanning research, industry, entrepreneurship, and corporate governance. She is University Professor of Industry AI at the German University of Digital Science, focusing on the intelligent transformation of modern industries through cutting-edge technologies. Dr. Xu serves on the supervisory boards of ZF, Siemens Energy, and FAZ, and is a Non-Executive Director of Airbus, ChainIQ, and Zühlke. She is also a member of the advisory boards of Global Neighbours and GCORE. She co-founded several AI startups.

Previously, she was Global Head of AI and Senior Vice President at SAP SE, where she defined and led the company's enterprise-wide AI strategy. Before that, she was Vice President at Lenovo Group and Head of the Lenovo AI Lab. Earlier in her career, she was a Principal Researcher at the German Research Center for Artificial Intelligence (DFKI). In her executive roles, she gained extensive experience across the full innovation cycle—from basic research and AI development to products and commercialization.

Dr. Hagen Zimer

Member of the Managing Board
and CEO Laser Technology,
TRUMPF SE + Co. KG
(152. BBUG)



Hagen Zimer, born in Erwitte in 1973, has been a member of the Management Board and Chairman of the Laser Technology Division at TRUMPF SE + Co. KG since July 1, 2023. In this role, he is responsible for TRUMPF's laser and laser system business as well as for the global subsidiaries and regions within the Laser Technology Division. The trained physicist began his academic career by studying physical engineering at Münster University of Applied Sciences and physics at the State University of New York in Buffalo, USA. He then earned his doctorate in applied physics with a focus on solid-state lasers at Friedrich Schiller University in Jena.

After joining TRUMPF Laser-marking Systems AG in 2005 as a project manager, he held various technical management positions at different TRUMPF locations and in other companies. From 2018 to 2020, he was managing director of TRUMPF Photonics Inc. in Cranbury, New Jersey (USA), before taking over the management of TRUMPF Laser GmbH in Schramberg from 2020 to 2023.



B-BUG

“We have developed speed, but we have shut ourselves in. Machinery that gives abundance has left us in want. Our knowledge has made us cynical. Our cleverness, hard and unkind. We think too much and feel too little. More than machinery we need humanity. More than cleverness we need kindness and gentleness.”

Charlie Chaplin in
“The Great Dictator”

Radical
Candor

Uncompromising
Empathy

Ground Rules

**Boundless
Curiosity**

**Courageous
Vulnerability**

BBUG Executive Board & Trustees

The “Baden–Badener Untenehmer Gespräche e.V.” (BBUG e.V.) are a not for profit association established in 1955.

Today, about 120 of the most important German companies, primarily from industry, make up its membership, including almost all of the DAX–40 corporations as well as a substantial number of medium–sized ‘global players’ of the German “Mittelstand”. Together they represent the backbone of the German economy.

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Code of Conduct

BBUG provides a safe and open space where executives come together to exchange ideas, learn, reflect and critically address the predominant questions of society and economy. In order to maintain the immediacy and openness that characterize our unique climate of open dialogue, we must ensure that participants can be certain that everything they say will remain confidential – not only in the plenary discussion, but also during private conversations.

At every BBUG event, the Chatham House Rule applies as our mandatory minimum standard of confidentiality. It postulates that participants are free to use the information received, but neither the identity nor the affiliation of the speaker may be disclosed without that person's explicit permission. Participants at BBUG events agree to abide by this agreed-upon standard of confidentiality.

Please be considerate when using social media. It would violate the spirit of BBUG to quote speakers or other participants, or to publish images of others who are not aware they are being photographed. At the same

time, we encourage you to share personal experiences, thoughts and reflections on social media and through other channels.

Our tenet is simple: Please respect the confidential space provided by BBUG and treat others the way you wish to be treated by them.

Please note: A photographer and/or videographer will be present during the event, and photos or videos may be taken. BBUG may use this material on its website, on social media, or for internal communications and publications.

If you prefer not to be recorded, please speak with a member of our communications team on site.

If you have any questions in advance, feel free to reach out to us at any time.

BBUG Team

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Information



Notes on Devices & Wi-Fi

To ensure a focused and respectful atmosphere for all participants and speakers, please refrain from using mobile phones, tablets and laptops in the conference room, unless you are taking notes.

WLAN: BBUG-157
Passwort: BBUG-157

Helpful Telephone Numbers

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Taxi Baden-Baden
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Taxi Holl

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Hospital

Stadtklinik Baden-Baden
Balger Str. 50
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Nearest pharmacy

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