

Part I. Germany's Soft Power Approaches in Geopolitical Context

1. The Key Question

This foresight project focuses on a key question confronting German foreign policy in the future: *Given changing geopolitical and economic relationships among major powers and divergent global scenarios for foreign affairs, what soft power approaches are possible?*

To address this question, we identify major drivers of future international developments and their implications for Germany's soft power approaches¹ in terms of narratives, strategies, goals, policies, and programmatic activities. The aim is to put Germany in a comparative framework of international relations that considers soft power in the context of prevailing geopolitical and economic relations between the European Union, the United States of America, and the People's Republic of China as well as other global players, as applicable.

First, however, a note on terminology seems in order as we consider the role of soft power relative to hard and sharp power options. Hard power refers to military strength, and sharp power to economic coercion and manipulation. The term soft power was originally coined by Joseph Nye, who defined it as 'when one country gets other countries to want what it wants' through non-military and non-coercive means. The term is rarely used in the official context of German foreign policy, preferring 'external cultural and educational policy' instead. Another commonly used term is 'external cultural policy' (ECP), which covers arts and culture, education, higher education, science and research.² The European Union refers to cultural relations. We will use these terms interchangeably, but mostly soft power approaches to emphasize the geopolitical aspects of German foreign policy in the context of international security and trade. Thus, when using the term 'soft power approaches' we refer to the objectives, programmes, and activities that aim at advancing Germany's standing in the world through cultural and artistic exchanges, schools abroad, university cooperation, science and research cooperation, and communication and the media.

We will also use the concept of smart power in the concluding part of this report when we address policy recommendations. Smart power refers to effective and efficient combinations of the other three forms of power in the context of international relations.³ As we will argue, in terms of improvements in the governance capacities of its foreign policy, we see a great need for Germany to advance its smart power potential, the skilful diplomatic combining of hard, sharp, and soft power approaches, in close cooperation with the EU.

¹ Nye, 1991

² See, for example, the External Cultural Policy Monitor at <https://culturalrelations.ifa.de/en/research/#c12125>

³ Nye, 2009

2. Background: Germany's Soft Power Policy, 1960s-2022

In approaching the question at the core of this foresight exercise, we first distinguish three phases of Germany's soft power approaches. The first consists of a long period of continuity from the late 1960s to the 2021 federal elections, with a considerable expansion in terms of scale and scope since unification in 1990. The second period, by contrast, is very brief, characterized by greater ambition and assertiveness and exemplified by the 2021 governing coalition agreement. That phase ended abruptly on 22 February 2022, when Russian forces invaded Ukraine, triggering, in the words of Chancellor Olaf Scholz,⁴ a *Zeitenwende* (epochal change) in German foreign policy and ushering in a period of uncertainty regarding the future of Germany's role in Europe and the world. This shift suggests changes to Germany's use of soft power strategies are needed. This sentiment was reinforced by German President Frank-Walter Steinmeier on 28 October 2022, who, in addressing the nation, spoke of strong and uncertain headwinds facing the country and a need to adapt its foreign policy approach to a changing, riskier world.⁵

2.1. German soft power policy until 2021

Soft power diplomacy has long served as the 'third pillar' of German foreign policy, posited on equal footing with political and security and economic and commercial external relations. The notion of a third pillar was coined by Willy Brandt in his role as Foreign Minister in the late 1960s and remains part of the strategic self-understanding of German foreign policy.⁶ The core concern of Germany's soft power policy is to 'improve access to culture and education worldwide and thus create pre-political freedom for dialogue and discourse, for creativity and understanding' as well as 'to open up new professional perspectives and educational opportunities for people worldwide, to promote global partnerships and to strengthen the spirit of international cooperation'.⁷ Former Foreign Minister and current Federal President Steinmeier also emphasized that 'culture prepares the ground in the pre-political area where political understanding, and therefore crisis prevention and crisis management, are possible'.⁸

During the last grand coalition (2017-21), then Foreign Minister Heiko Maas recalled in January 2019 that the significance of soft power 'as an instrument of peace policy has been growing for years'.⁹ The federal government's 2018 report on external cultural policy emphasized its decidedly normative stance, stating that 'in view of the worldwide phenomenon of shrinking spaces and the threats to which artists, scientists and opinion makers are exposed, the ECP's commitment to the freedom of art, science and opinion is a central goal worldwide'.¹⁰

⁴ <https://www.bundesregierung.de/breg-en/news/policy-statement-by-olaf-scholz-chancellor-of-the-federal-republic-of-germany-and-member-of-the-german-bundestag-27-february-2022-in-berlin-2008378>

⁵ Frank-Walter Steinmeier, 'Strengthening everything that connects us', Schloss Bellevue, 28 October 2022

https://www.bundespraesident.de/SharedDocs/Downloads/DE/Reden/2022/10/221028-Aller-staerken-was-uns-verbindet-Englisch.pdf?__blob=publicationFile

⁶ Krath, 2017, p. 19

⁷ Bundestag, 2017, p. 5

⁸ Steinmeier, 2016

⁹ <https://www.auswaertiges-amt.de/de/newsroom/maas-akbp/2177792>

¹⁰ Auswärtiges Amt, 2018, p. 9

The Federal Foreign Office is responsible for the ‘conceptual steering and coordination of foreign cultural and educational policy’.¹¹ It drafts the policy guidelines intermediary organizations and other actors are to follow. Other ministries are also relevant and include the Federal Government Commissioner for Culture and the Media (BKM), the Federal Ministry of Education and Research (BMBF), the Federal Ministry for Economic Cooperation and Development (BMZ), the Federal Ministry for Family Affairs, Senior Citizens, Women and Youth (BMFSFJ) and the Federal Ministry of the Interior (BMI).¹² In this context, the Ministry of Defence and the Ministry of Economic Affairs are less relevant than the other ministries.

The federal government funds ‘arm’s-length’ organizations that serve as intermediaries in implementing Germany’s soft power approaches. These include prominently the Goethe Institute and the Institut für Auslandsbeziehungen (ifa) in the fields of culture and language; the German Academic Exchange Service (DAAD), Alexander von Humboldt (AvH) Foundation, and the PASCH (‘Schulen: Partner der Zukunft’) network in education and science; and Deutsche Welle and DW Akademie in communication and media. In 2020, there were over 3,000 offices of German soft power institutions worldwide, upwards of 9,000 staff, and total government support of €2.02 billion (see below).

While these intermediaries enjoy a relative degree of autonomy within the general policy guidelines expressed by the government in power, their resource dependency on state funding frequently leads to tensions. What is more, the relatively large number of ministries and agencies involved requires significant coordination.

In addition, there are other organizations relevant to soft power, so-called track-two actors, among them in particular the political party foundations (Friedrich Ebert, Konrad Adenauer, Heinrich Böll, and Rosa Luxemburg), which rely on significant public funds, along with endowed foundations such as Bertelsmann, Mercator and Bosch. It is worth noting that these actors do not necessarily support the agendas and objectives of the government in power. As a result, German soft power approaches rarely come across as those of a government speaking with one voice.

As the largest economy in Europe and the fourth largest in the world (€3.45 trillion in 2019), Germany has a strong financial basis for the conduct of external cultural policy. Post-Cold War Germany’s hard power has never matched its economic might, with a 2019 global military ranking of tenth. The country does slightly better in terms of diplomacy, placing seventh. In soft power, however, it ranks third. Germany is active throughout the world in external cultural policy, with activities in most of the world’s countries.¹³

During this first phase, German soft power approaches were characterized by a remarkable continuity in terms of principles and policy as they have significantly expanded over the years. Germany’s soft power has also shown an ability to adapt to dramatic events and developments, such as German reunification, the eastward expansion of the EU, and the consequences of the terrorist attacks in the early 2000s and 2010s. The geopolitical situation that had already begun to change in the 2010s presented soft power policies with new challenges: be they refugee flows and civil wars or questions of freedom of science and media influence in internal affairs.

¹¹ Auswärtiges Amt, 2011, p. 14

¹² Bundestag, 2017, p. 7

¹³ Knudsen and Markovic, 2021

Added to the complexity were the rise of nationalism in German allies like the US and the resurgence of illiberal parties in Europe.

As the second decade of the 21st century ended, Germany found itself in intensifying global economic and cultural competition. Until the end of the Cold War, relatively few countries had strategically oriented their cultural policy towards the outside world to position themselves advantageously in international competition. Once the Cold War ended, countries such as Russia and China began to use soft power approaches specifically in the sense of a political-economic positioning and invested massively in the expansion of their cultural institutes and foreign media.

Increasingly, soft power became more and more a competitive tool for influencing the political agendas of other countries, gaining access to important stakeholders, constituencies, diasporas, and migrant populations with divided loyalties. Often, soft power approaches sometimes overtly, and mostly covertly, were combined with hard and sharp power activities. Meanwhile, middle powers like Turkey and resource-rich autocracies like Qatar used soft power approaches to boost their clout and amplify their regional and global status.

2.2. Coalition agreement of December 2021

Without a doubt, the field of global soft power competition has become more complex and competitive since the turn of the century. It was against this background that, in its coalition agreement,¹⁴ the new German federal government formulated an approach that, while maintaining continuity, added profound changes, amounting to an altogether more ambitious and assertive policy stance:

1. The agreement reaffirms that ECP activities remain the ‘third pillar’ of foreign policy and promises ‘to strengthen them, make them more flexible, coordinate them across departmental boundaries and closely coordinate them at the European level’.
2. ECP is to be put in a wider context by adopting ‘comprehensive sustainability, climate, diversity and digital strategies’, implying a significant improvement in terms of coordination among the various ministries involved. What is more, the term science diplomacy is emphasized and seen as ‘an integral part of the EU’s foreign climate policy and Green New Deal’.
3. There is to be a greater engagement in education: ‘We want to further develop our network of schools abroad and the PASCH network through a master plan, set up a school development fund, and strengthen early childhood education, inclusion, and school management.’

¹⁴ Koalitionsvertrag 2021 – 2025 zwischen der Sozialdemokratischen Partei Deutschlands (SPD), BÜNDNIS 90 / DIE GRÜNEN und den Freien Demokraten (FDP) Berlin 2021, pages 128-9. The coalition agreement sets forth the rationales for policy steps to be taken during the upcoming legislative period.

4. The agreement promises a strategic review of communications and media as a growing part of ECP: 'We want to modernize strategic communication in the European network, particularly in the area of analysis and social media monitoring, and align it with new target groups in cooperation with Deutsche Welle and set regional priorities.'

5. In addition to improving and expanding federal-level ECP activities, the agreement also seeks to devolve cultural relationships to local and regional levels by expanding urban diplomacy and strengthening programmes in European border regions.

6. The agreement promises action in several areas or issues that for various reasons have become politically sensitive and more salient: international sports policy (e.g., numerous scandals involving international sports federations; the Olympic movement), religion and foreign policy (e.g., financing of religious institutions, role of missionary societies), museum cooperation (e.g., repatriation of artefacts), and Germany's colonial past ('Reconciliation with Namibia remains an indispensable task for us, arising from our historical and moral responsibility.'). It also promises to set up a programme 'for journalists and defenders of freedom of expression' and to 'support threatened scientists, lawyers, artists and students'.

To these ends, the parties agree to:

- strengthen intermediary institutions, in particular the Goethe Institute, the German Academic Exchange Service (DAAD), the Alexander von Humboldt Foundation, the German Archaeological Institute and the ifa;
- support new formats establishing links between cultural education in Germany itself and ECP activities abroad to overcome the chasm between internal and external cultural policies;
- establish joint cultural institutes between the European partners in third countries;
- create a digital European culture platform; and
- strengthen cooperation in multilateral forums such as UNESCO, the G7 and G20 'and expand our own measures such as KulturGutRetter¹⁵, also against the background of the climate crisis'.

In summary, while maintaining its basic normative foundation and narrative, the coalition agreement foresees major new investments in ECP, expanding into new fields, broadening the scope of actors, bringing internal and external cultural policy closer together, creating new institutions, embedding ECP in other policy fields, and enhancing government coordination.

Although the link to security concerns as well as trade and resource dependencies is not explicit, this more ambitious policy stance must be seen in the context of the coalition agreement's overall external policy approach: 'Our goal is a sovereign EU as a strong player in a world characterized by uncertainty and systemic competition. We are committed to a genuine Common Foreign, Security and Defense Policy in Europe.'¹⁶ Under the heading of 'Foreign

¹⁵ KulturGutRetter is a programme to protect cultural artefacts in times of crisis: <https://www.kulturgutretter.org/en/home-2/>

¹⁶ Koalitionsvertrag, p. 135

Affairs, Security, Defense, Development, Human Rights', the agreement states: 'We will make our foreign, security and development policy more value-based and more European. German foreign policy should act as a unified whole and develop joint inter-ministerial strategies to enhance the coherence of our international action. Together with our partners, including those from civil society, we will work to preserve our liberal way of life in Europe and to protect peace and human rights worldwide. In doing so, we will be guided by our values and interests.'¹⁷

2.3. The *Zeitenwende* of February 2022 and its geopolitical consequences

The Russian invasion of Ukraine and the weaponization of natural resources such as natural gas came as a shock to Germany and the then-new coalition government. Both hit the country unprepared. Its longstanding principles seemed shattered, and its foreign policy narrative strangely at odds with prevailing realities. Recall that after the fall of the Berlin Wall, the newly reunited Germany positioned itself as a champion and leading exponent of the liberal international order. Germany saw itself, and presented itself to the world, as a rule-based, economically open democracy with a 'welcoming culture' (*Willkommenskultur*) and a commitment to human rights. It tried to project its values by setting an example, rather than employing military force abroad to impose its political system on others.

Before Russia launched war on Ukraine, Germany's foreign policy narrative rested on the principles of an ever-deeper European Union; fully integrated transatlantic relations; a belief in the soothing power of trade ('*Wandel durch Handel*', or 'change through trade'); restraint in all military matters; and, in terms of soft power, international dialogue, opening political and pre-political space, and promotion of democracy and human rights.

While this approach placed the country near the top of many international rankings of soft power, and while its economic might gave it potentially considerable sharp power, decades of under-investment in the *Bundeswehr* (armed forces) meant that it willingly punched far below its weight in terms of hard power, preferring to hide under the larger NATO shield and leaving military action to others whenever possible. Indeed, US presidents since George W. Bush have complained about Germany's low defence spending, and both the US and EU member states have regarded Germany's approach to military conflicts as a combination of fence-sitting and free-riding.

Moreover, Germany turned itself into one of Russia's and China's biggest trading partners. It did business with autocrats around the world and willingly ignored its growing energy dependency on Russia and its supply chain dependency on China in critical industries. A chasm existed between the value-based foundation of Germany's foreign policy, which the coalition agreement proudly re-emphasized, and the realities of actual behaviour that tended to free-ride in terms of hard power and turn a blind eye when it came to trade.

For a long time, Germany let this gap expand and sought to benefit from a profound ambiguity: from Chancellor Helmut Kohl in the 1990s to Chancellor Olaf Scholz today, German leaders have consistently believed that commerce (trade policy) and dialogue (ECP) will

¹⁷ Koalitionsvertrag, p. 142

ultimately bring countries closer together, alleviating the need for the potential exercise of hard and even sharp power. As a result, it allowed dependencies to evolve that could be turned against the country, as we are witnessing in winter 2022-23 with the challenge of reduced Russian natural gas flows. In other words, German policy allowed the country to become vulnerable to the risk of having resource dependencies weaponized against it.

The now seemingly naive illusion of *Wandel durch Handel* was shattered by Russia within a few weeks in early 2022, amounting to one of the greatest failures of German diplomacy since World War II. Years of German-Russian joint ventures and deepening commercial, cultural, and academic relations did nothing to discourage Putin from starting a new war on European soil.

Within days of the Russian invasion, Scholz proclaimed a dramatic policy re-orientation.¹⁸ If implemented, it would usher in an epochal shift, making Germany one of the world's top military spenders and arms exporters. Germany's economic interests would become much more bound up with security concerns, and its approach to foreign affairs would become more assertive. In short, Germany would become not just Europe's largest economic power, but also its largest military power.

In a commentary published in July in the *Frankfurter Allgemeine Zeitung*, Scholz outlined his vision of a future EU that has become a geopolitical power, with Germany as an integral part, and signalled his willingness to trade sovereignty for that purpose.¹⁹ Addressing an audience at Charles University in Prague on 29 August 2022,²⁰ he re-confirmed his commitment to EU reforms, prominently advocating for more majority voting in the European Council, greater security cooperation, a reform of the EU's Stability and Growth Pact, and an EU expansion to include the Western Balkans, Ukraine, Moldova and Georgia.

Since then, however, the coalition government has been struggling on more than one foreign policy front, and a now characteristic chasm between stated aspirations and actions remained: proclaiming to assist Ukraine in its fight against the Russian invasion, it remained rather cautious and slow in granting military and logistical support; the promised build-up of its armed forces is way behind schedule; with unilateral decisions in response to reducing its energy dependence on Russia, Germany has become increasingly isolated in the EU; Franco-German frictions have increased due to lack of consultation and have become a matter of concern; other countries such as Poland, Hungary, and Italy are more vocal in criticizing Germany for domestic reasons; Foreign Minister Annalena Baerbock's vision of a 'feminist foreign policy'²¹ seemed to fail its first test when the Foreign Office remained silent on the large demonstrations taking place in Iran protesting against women's oppression; Chancellor Scholz's visit to China, accompanied by a plane-full of business executives of major German corporations, was seen by many as the wrong move at the wrong time; and, referring back to the promises in the coalition agreement, many puzzled over proposed budget cuts to organizations like the Goethe Institute and the DAAD.

¹⁸ <https://www.bundesregierung.de/breg-en/news/policy-statement-by-olaf-scholz-chancellor-of-the-federal-republic-of-germany-and-member-of-the-german-bundestag-27-february-2022-in-berlin-2008378>

¹⁹ Scholz, 2022

²⁰ <https://www.bundesregierung.de/breg-en/news/scholz-speech-prague-charles-university-2080752>

²¹ <https://www.auswaertiges-amt.de/en/newsroom/news/feminist-foreign-policy/2551610>

What, given all these developments, are the implications for Germany's soft power approaches? What has happened to the proposals in the coalition agreement? Which ones were launched or followed up on, and which ones put on hold? Are more fundamental concerns and options being raised and explored? Will narratives change? What assumptions are made? Are soft power approaches and the strategies, goals, programmes, and activities they imply being reviewed and revised? What is the broader foreign policy context in which these issues are being discussed? To explore these and other questions is the focus of this foresight project. Yet before doing so, we offer a profile of Germany's soft power approaches by first summarizing the positions of political parties, and then presenting a profile of ECP activities and taking a closer look at specific fields.

3. Views Across the Political Spectrum

In June 2022, the magazine *Kultur & Politik* asked leading representatives of all political parties in the *Bundestag* for statements addressing the question 'What's in store for external cultural and educational policies?' Box 1 offers translated excerpts of the responses from each party, listed in order of current vote share in the *Bundestag*. We should recall that at the time the statements were published, Russia's invasion of Ukraine was four months old, as was Chancellor Scholz's proclamation of a *Zeitenwende*. While some of the differences in opinion and emphasis are expected, e.g., between Die Linke (the Left) and the AfD (far-right Alternative for Germany), there are two main outcomes worth noting: first, there is a broad consensus among CDU (Christian Democrats), SPD (Social Democrats), Greens, and FDP (Liberals)—a consensus that is basically a commitment to the status quo of German soft power approaches; second, the *Zeitenwende* does not seem to have made an impact on their policy stance. Only parties on the far-left and far-right side of the political spectrum seemed to anticipate and advocate major changes. This shows a certain level of inertia in the political thinking of the leading political parties when it comes to anticipating the fuller implications of the changed geopolitical situation.

Box 1. Statements by Political Party Representatives

'Was steht an in der auswärtigen Kultur- und Bildungspolitik?'

'What's in store for external cultural and educational policy?'

'We are in an increasing competition for competing values, models of society, and narratives. In many countries, the freedom for art, culture and science is increasingly restricted. This makes it all the more important that we expand access to culture and education worldwide and promote cross-border cooperation in science and research. We want to build bridges and strengthen freedom. At the same time, it is important to protect people who are threatened in the arts, culture, media, science or even as human rights activists. We are therefore working on initiatives and programmes to support these people. With our international cultural policy, we are consciously focusing on education and information and are expanding our strategic communications. In this way, we prevent influence by means of disinformation and convey our democratic values.' (**Michael Müller, Member of the Bundestag, SPD**).

'Cultural policy must promote both loyalty and openness to the world: awareness of our own identity – clarity about what makes us Europeans, but also Germans. For only those who know and value their own culture can also give space to the foreign idea without feeling threatened by it, and only those who can justifiably set themselves apart are able to defend their own values. With a dynamic cultural exchange, we not only introduce our country to others, but in confronting the "other", we also confront our own identity. The focus of our foreign cultural and educational policy therefore becomes an important component of domestic integration policy, which is often carried out by intellectuals, artists and writers.' (**Monika Grütters, Member of the Bundestag, CDU/CSU**)

'In fact, it is often the underestimated soft skills - conversational culture, cultural exchange, learning together, language acquisition, access to information - that create rapprochement and understanding. The major themes of our time are also reflected in foreign cultural policy. This also includes gender and diversity issues. The Russian war against Ukraine has destroyed much that was long taken for granted. This makes the foreign cultural and educational policy all the more important today for the resilience of democratic societies and their community. It strengthens those who stand up for democracy and freedom. At this time, they need all the strength, all the courage, and they deserve all the support they can get.' **(Erhard Grundl, Member of the Bundestag, Bündnis 90/Die Grünen)**

'As a coalition, we want to strengthen foreign cultural policy, supplement it with comprehensive sustainability, diversity, and digital strategies, and at the same time make it more flexible. This must always be closely coordinated at the European level. To help shape the global transformation processes and position Germany as a reliable partner, we will of course stand by the side of media representatives, scientists, artists, lawyers, and students who are under threat, as well as supporting scientific excellence through networking, cooperation, and funding.' **(Thomas Hacker, Member of the Bundestag, FDP)**

'The model of our coexistence, law, democracy, social solidarity, was also often exemplary. What we communicate, however, paradoxically has more to do with guilt and self-denial - even to the point of abandoning our own constitutionality in favour of a questionable model of Europe. In the entirely sensible reappraisal of our colonial heritage, we must not fail to recognize that many civilizational landmarks still provide orientation today. Cooperation is much more sustainable than one-time symbolic acts of moral reparation. We need to get back to normal politics that are pragmatic and respectful towards other life models than the Western one. The homeland is where you don't have to explain yourself. This is where our strength comes from. We want to preserve this world.' **(Matthias Moosdorf, Member of the Bundestag, AfD)**

'Especially in these times, the task of ECP should be to contribute to international understanding, reconciliation, and peacekeeping as a means of peace policy. The cut in funding for the foreign cultural and educational policy and the stagnation in humanitarian aid and crisis prevention in the 2022 budget, while at the same time adopting the 100-billion-euro arms build-up, therefore go in the completely wrong direction. [...] Instead of misusing international cultural exchange as an instrument in the "competition of systems", the fraction Die Linke advocates exchange on an equal footing. This requires first and foremost a critical reflection and decolonization of the public culture of remembrance in Germany.' **(Sevim Dagdelen, Member of the Bundestag, Die Linke)**

Source: *Politik & Kultur – Zeitung des Deutschen Kulturrats*. June 2022, pages 7-8. Own translations.

4. Germany's Soft Power Approaches: A Profile

Germany's soft power approaches span the globe, with activities in most of the world's countries.²² In 2019, there were over 3,000 offices of German soft power institutions worldwide, upwards of 9,000 staff, and total government support of €2.02 billion (see Table 1). The main regional focus points of these efforts are Europe, North Africa, and North America. The rest of this section outlines the main institutions and relevant statistics.

Table 1. Key statistics for German ECP, 2019

Number of countries with ECP activities	at least 150
Total number of institutions abroad	about 3,000
Total number of FTE staff engaged in ECP activities	about 9,000
Freelance and local ECP staff	about 2,000
Government financial support (€ billion)	2.024

Source: ECP Monitor

²² Data in this section are drawn from the ifa ECP profile of Germany, which contains further links to all primary sources.

4.1. Arts and culture²³

With 157 institutes in 98 countries, including twelve regional institutes, the Goethe Institute is Germany's largest ECP intermediary organization, hosting cultural events and offering language courses throughout the world. Over 3500 people work for the Goethe Institute: 2,800 abroad and about 700 at headquarters and the institutes in Germany (Goethe-Institut, 2019). The Institute's income consists primarily of the revenue from its language courses and institutional and project funding from the Federal Foreign Office. In the field of culture, the Institute's nearly 20,000 events per year reached around 11 million visitors (Goethe-Institut, 2019).

In addition to the Goethe Institute, the Institut für Auslandsbeziehungen (ifa) supports artistic and cultural exchange in exhibition, dialogue and conference programmes and is the oldest cultural intermediary organization in Germany, celebrating its centenary in 2017. It also acts as a centre of excellence for international cultural relations. ifa is financed by grants from the Federal Foreign Office, the state of Baden-Württemberg and its state capital of Stuttgart. Additionally, third-party funds are available for some projects. The annual budget for 2019 was €30.96 million. ifa has about 150 employees between its headquarters in Stuttgart and its Berlin office (ifa, 2020).

Table 2. Goethe Institute's culture and arts programmes

	2019	2015
Number of countries present	98	98
Number of cultural agreements	104	
Number of institutes	157	159
Number of FTE staff	3,820	3,500
Number of artists in exchange programmes	207	297 ⁽²⁰¹⁴⁾
Budget (€ million)	439.09	308.97 ⁽²⁰¹⁴⁾
Government financial support (€ million)	German Foreign Office: 1,000	German Foreign Office: 817.2

Source: ECP Monitor

4.2. Language²⁴

In the field of language, the Goethe Institute is again highly relevant. In addition to its 157 locations in 98 countries, the organization includes a dense network of other forms of local presence, such as Goethe Centres, cultural societies, reading rooms as well as examination and language learning centres. In 2018/19, more than 300,000 people took part in the Goethe Institute's German courses, with over 700,000 taking exams.²⁵ The foreign broadcaster Deutsche Welle also has extensive German-language offerings, with an online reach of nearly 190,000.²⁶

²³ Knudsen, 2021a

²⁴ Knudsen, 2021b

²⁵ Goethe-Institut, 2019

²⁶ Deutsche Welle, 2020

Table 3. Goethe Institute's language promotion

	2019	2015
Number of countries where courses are offered	98	98
In-class	308,676 ^(2019/20)	228,528
Online reach	'Deutsch für dich' portal: 600,000	'Deutsch für dich' portal: 90,000
Number of candidates for German language qualifications	700,000 ^(2019/20)	387,095 ⁽²⁰¹⁴⁾
Government financial support (€ million)	363	-

Source: ECP Monitor

4.3. Education and science

Germany is recognized as a leader in primary and secondary education abroad, especially through the PASCH network of German schools abroad. Overseas, the Federal Foreign Office coordinates and advises German schools.²⁷ In 2018, the federal government provided DAS schools (schools that follow the German school curriculum) with €205.88 million. In 2019/20, DAS schools enrolled around 85,300 pupils, 20,000 of whom were of German origin. On behalf of the Federal Foreign Office, the Central Office for Schools Abroad (Zentralstelle für das Auslandsschulwesen, or ZfA), a department of the Federal Administration Office in Bonn, supervises school work abroad with a team of around 100 employees and 50 specialist advisers.²⁸ ZfA supports a total of 140 German schools in 72 countries.²⁹

The German schools abroad are private–public partnerships. Private sponsors, in particular parents' associations, establish and operate the schools in accordance with the law of the host country and earn on average 70% to 80% of their school budgets through tuition fees and donations. In 2018, around 390,000 pupils took part in German lessons in these schools and around 83,000 of these took the *Deutsches Sprachdiplom* (DSD) examinations, up from 377,000 and 74,000, respectively, in 2015.³⁰ Overall, the number of language diploma schools has more than doubled since 1999, especially in Central and Eastern Europe.³¹

Table 4. German education abroad

	2019	2015
Number of countries	120	120
Number of schools	2,311 thereof 140 German Schools Abroad (DAS)	about 1,800 thereof 140 German Schools Abroad (DAS)
Number of students	about 600,000 (of which 85,300 DAS pupils)	about 600,000 (of which 82,000 DAS pupils)
Number of staff / teachers	1,900	2,000
Government financial support (€ million)	276.8	225.75

Source: ECP Monitor

²⁷ Kiper, 2015, p. 150²⁸ ZfA, 2019²⁹ Auswärtiges Amt, 2019³⁰ Auswärtiges Amt, 2016; 2018³¹ Kuchler, 2016, p. 270

In addition to its headquarters in Bonn and its Berlin office with an associated artists' programme, in 2020 the DAAD has a global network of 18 regional offices, 5 German Centres for Research and Innovation (DWIH), 40 Information Centres (IC), 11 Information Points, and 426 lectureships.³² The DAAD budget of €594 million (2019) comes primarily from the funds of various ministries, with the Federal Foreign Office providing over a third of the budget. In 2018 alone, 145,000 students, graduates and scientists received funding, more than 60,000 of them foreigners from about 180 countries, with about 1,000 staff involved in the process.³³

The Alexander von Humboldt Foundation is an important player in German science diplomacy, with over 2,600 total partnerships. It has an annual budget of over €120 million and roughly 240 employees. In total, around 900 fellowships and prizes are awarded each year, of which around 100 go to German scientists.³⁴ As of 2019, the Humboldt Network is made up of over 30,000 scientists from more than 140 countries (although AvH has no offices abroad) and scientific partners in Germany.³⁵

The German Archaeological Institute (DAI) constitutes another important aspect of Germany's foreign scientific partnerships, fostering archaeological cooperation in key locations. Founded in 1832, it maintains offices primarily throughout Europe and the Middle East, including in Madrid, Rome, Istanbul, Athens, Cairo, Damascus, Baghdad, Tehran, and Sana'a with more than 300 projects worldwide. It is operated under the Foreign Office, which provided €38 million in funding in 2019.³⁶

Table 5. DAAD activities worldwide

	2019	2015
Number of countries	DAAD offices in ~60, higher education cooperation with 159	DAAD 60, higher education cooperation with 150
Number of universities/colleges abroad	10 binational universities	-
Number of foreign students	311,738 ⁽²⁰¹⁸⁾	228,756
Number of students at transnational higher education (TNE)	33,000	28,000
Number of government scholarships awarded	145,659 thereof 60,581 from abroad AvH: 989	127,039 thereof 51,627 from abroad AvH: 899
Budget (€ million)	594.41	471.45
Government financial support (€ million)	417	340

Source: ECP Monitor

³² DAAD, 2020

³³ DAAD, 2019; Knudsen, 2021c; Knudsen, 2022d

³⁴ AvH, 2017, p. 5

³⁵ AvH, 2019

³⁶ Bundestag, 2020b

4.4. Foreign media and social media³⁷

Deutsche Welle (DW) works to promote the German language and cultural and social exchange at ‘eye level’. DW is financed via the German government and had a weekly TV viewership of nearly 100 million in 2019 out of a total audience of 197 million.³⁸ The channel also receives project funding from the Federal Foreign Office and the Federal Ministry for Economic Cooperation and Development.³⁹ Around 1,500 permanent employees and 1,600 freelancers from 60 nations work at the DW head office in Bonn and at the Berlin location.⁴⁰ Additionally, DW cooperates with over 5,000 partner stations. The radio programmes, which are broadcast in nine languages, attract an especially large listenership in Africa. Its budget totalled €413 million in 2019.⁴¹ As a reaction to developments in Eastern Europe—including democratic backsliding in EU states and Russian incursions into Ukraine—DW has expanded its offerings accordingly. For example, the services in Russian and Ukrainian were extended and, in addition to the studio in Moscow, a further correspondent office was set up in Kyiv.⁴²

DW Akademie, founded in 1965, is part of Deutsche Welle. It is the centre for education and knowledge transfer at Germany’s international broadcaster. Its activities include international media development, a traineeship for future DW journalists, the International Media Studies (IMS) Master’s programme, media training for specialized professionals and a broad range of multimedia courses for learning German. Together with its partners, DW Akademie works to make free and transparent media possible in over 50 developing and emerging democracies.⁴³

Table 6. Deutsche Welle activities

	2019	2015
Number of languages	30	30
Number of channels	4 TV channels 30 digital services	-
Audience / weekly (million)	197	118
Budget (€ million)	412.77	348.08 ⁽²⁰¹⁶⁾
Government financial support (€ million)	350	338 ⁽²⁰¹⁶⁾

Source: ECP Monitor

In summary, Germany maintains one of the largest networks of cultural exchanges worldwide with relatively well-funded intermediary arm’s-length institutions. German language education ranks fourth in the number of language learners worldwide, with increased interest in recent years. The PASCH network is a successful instrument offering German curricula abroad and a way to attract talent. Germany ranks among the top in science diplomacy internationally. Deutsche Welle is one of the largest media institutions of its kind worldwide, increasingly reaching out via social media. The purpose of the relatively large infrastructure of institutions, programmes and activities is, as stated above, to improve access to culture and education, create pre-political space for dialogue and understanding, and advance global partnerships and international cooperation.

³⁷ Knudsen, 2021e

³⁸ Deutsche Welle, 2020

³⁹ Bundestag, 2017, p. 35

⁴⁰ Deutsche Welle, 2019

⁴¹ Deutsche Welle, 2019

⁴² Deutsche Welle, 2016, p. 2

⁴³ Deutsche Welle, 2019