



KEY RESULTS OF THE ROUND TABLE

“KIWI POLICY TALK: TRANSATLANTIC SCIENCE RELATIONS & THE US ELECTION”

Panelists: Ralf Beste (Federal Foreign Office, DE), Annette Gray (New York University, US), Young-Kee Kim (University of Chicago, US), Joybrato Mukherjee (German Academic Exchange Service, DE), Sandra Pfister (Moderation) (Deutschlandfunk, DE)

Transatlantic partnerships in higher education and research are crucial for tackling global challenges, driving innovation and fostering mutual understanding. To ensure that existing networks and exchanges can continue to thrive, these collaborations must be resilient in the face of political shifts. Despite uncertainties in the global political landscape, the shared values and deep-rooted connections between European and US institutions provide a strong foundation for ongoing cooperation.

However, sustaining these collaborations requires stakeholders to address key challenges. For universities and research institutions in the US, as well as their transatlantic partners, a crucial step is reducing reliance on US government funding. Transatlantic exchange organisations have demonstrated the value of cultivating stable relationships with private industry in the US, as well as with state and municipal government partners, to shield initiatives from potential policy changes at the federal level. To help protect the longevity of joint education and research initiatives, US universities and research institutions can diversify their funding streams by forming partnerships with private industry, philanthropic organisations, and state and municipal governments.

Beyond funding challenges, institutions on both sides of the Atlantic must address the growing divide between academia and society. Building trust and countering polarisation are crucial to maintaining public support for research initiatives. At the same time, transatlantic partnerships must adapt to broader global trends, including China's rise as a hub for education and research, and address pressing concerns around research security. By tackling these challenges, transatlantic collaborations can continue to drive progress and innovation in an evolving global landscape.

THE EXPERT PANEL ARTICULATES THE FOLLOWING CALLS TO ACTION:

Build public trust in academia.

1 — Foster stronger connections with the public by clearly communicating the benefits of higher education and research. Transparent outreach can help counter polarisation and maintain public support for collaborative research initiatives.

Promote the value of higher education and research among decision-makers.

2 — Actively engage policymakers with clear messaging that highlights the benefits of education and research, particularly in the context of transatlantic exchanges.

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Strengthen local partnerships.

- 3 — European partners should build relationships with state and municipal governments in the US, as well as other local stakeholders, to establish resilient academic partnerships and exchanges that can withstand federal policy changes.

Diversify funding sources for academic exchange programmes.

- 4 — US universities and research institutions should explore alternative funding streams, such as philanthropic contributions and private-sector collaborations, to reduce their dependence on federal funding and ensure the sustainability of exchange programmes amid potential federal policy shifts.

Prepare for changes to US immigration and visa policies.

- 5 — Institutions on both sides of the Atlantic should ensure that students planning to study or conduct research in the US have the necessary resources and guidance to navigate potential policy-related challenges under the new US administration.

This event is supported by German Academic Exchange Service (DAAD), DAAD KIWi, and was assembled in the framework of the Falling Walls Science Summit 2024 in Berlin. The Falling Walls Science Summit is a leading international, interdisciplinary, and intersectoral forum for scientific breakthroughs. It commemorates the fall of the Berlin Wall and aims to promote dialogue between science and society.

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