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Responsible shaping of the future

A plea for peace and survival

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Abstract

This document analyses the global challenges of 2025 and advocates for a responsible approach to shaping the future in the interests of peace and survival. It begins with a historical review of the Club of Rome's criticism of the ideology of growth and describes the resulting ecological, social and political crises: resource consumption, environmental destruction, climate change, overpopulation, migration and international conflicts. The analysis covers current risk situations such as armed conflicts, environmental risks, disinformation, humanitarian crises, economic uncertainty and technological transformation.

The document discusses various explanatory approaches (systems theory, critical theory, realism, liberalism, governance) and highlights the role of political and economic power elites, populism, media corporations and the super-rich. It points out the shortcomings of international institutions (UN, EU) and the need for reform, particularly with regard to democracy, efficiency, the rule of law and crisis resilience.

The focus is on the concepts of "Responsibility to Protect" (R2P) and the 17 Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) of Agenda 2030 as beacons of hope for a global survival policy. The document develops concrete recommendations for reform to link prevention, governance and sustainable development.

The "uprising of the reasonable" is described as a collective, peaceful and solidarity-based way to expose destructive actors, strengthen social engagement, promote political participation and establish responsible leadership. Practical examples and steps for action are presented to overcome the existential challenges of our time and secure a future worth living.

Key terms: sustainability, peace, SDGs, R2P, democracy, reform, community, future policy, media literacy, political participation.

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It's twelve o'clock!

As early as 1972, the Club of Rome criticised the unreflective ideology of growth propagated by the economic and political representatives of the industrialised nations, which had different effects on industrialised and developing countries. With increasing globalisation, this led on the one hand to more employment and prosperity in industrialised countries and on the other hand to devastating effects on the environment, population development, working and living conditions in most developing countries.

Major challenges, the Big Challenges, have been identified that threaten planetary life in several ways:

- the consumption of finite resources, environmental destruction and harmful emissions
- climate change
- overpopulation and hunger
- migration
- the threat of civil wars and international conflicts.

At the time, the authors advocated global regulation of these problems in order to restore ecological balance and thereby secure the living conditions of humanity (Meadows et al. 1972). To date, the Club of Rome has published 53 publications confirming and expanding on its findings at the time (Meadows et al. 2016). Four of the nine tipping points have now been reached (John and Kressek 2025).

At the same time, the consumption of non-renewable resources, environmental destruction, pollution and marine littering have increased. In many places, nuclear power plants are dilapidated and pose a danger (e.g. Chernobyl, Fukushima).

The problem of nuclear waste disposal has remained unsolved for decades. The threat of biological and nuclear military conflicts and terrorist attacks (Islamic State, etc.) has been growing in recent years. In addition, against the backdrop of climate change, tribal and civil wars, and economic hardship, the flow of migrants has increased. Currently, more than 66 million people worldwide are fleeing their homes and seeking survival in Western industrialised countries.

In light of this, how can it be that the "caravans of the blind" continue to move forward (Gruhl 1990, 227 ff.)? Why is it still possible for irresponsible and reckless "predators" to continue the now seemingly irreversible destruction of planet Earth (Empoli 2025)?

After spotlighting the current world situation, this reader aims to provide an overview, analyse prevailing politics and offer suggestions for political action. Through literature studies, AI-supported internet research and against the backdrop of personal experience, it attempts to provide answers that convey hope.

Global developments and challenges

Current global developments in 2025 reveal a multitude of complex challenges that affect almost all areas of international coexistence. Below is an overview of the most important challenges and the resulting need for action based on current reports, international analyses and our own content.

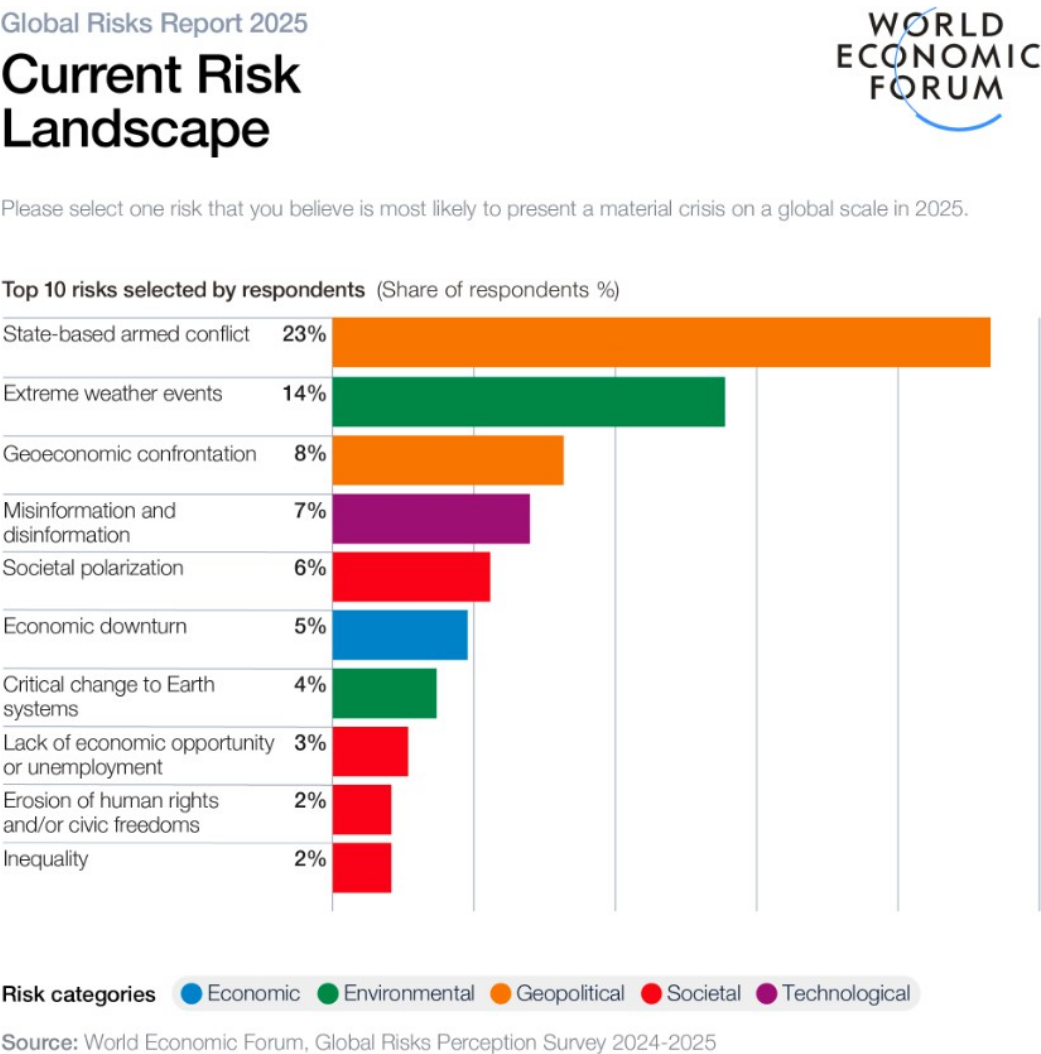


Figure 1: Current risk situation according to the World Economic Forum

1. Armed conflicts and geopolitical tensions

- Hotspots: Ukraine, the Middle East, Sudan, Myanmar, Syria, Somalia, Gaza and other regions are experiencing ongoing or escalating conflicts.
- Multipolarity: Rivalry between the US, China, Russia and emerging powers such as India and Brazil is shaping the world order. The danger of proxy wars and the formation of blocs is growing.
- Need for action: Strengthening international diplomacy, reforming multilateral institutions (e.g. UN, Security Council), expanding crisis prevention and conflict mediation.

2. Environmental risks and climate change

- Extreme weather events: Increase in hurricanes, droughts, floods and forest fires.
- Loss of biodiversity and ecosystem collapse: Critical changes to Earth's systems and resource scarcity threaten livelihoods.
- Need for action: Strengthening global climate policy, reducing emissions, promoting adaptation strategies, consistently implementing international climate agreements.

3. Disinformation and social polarisation

- Misinformation and disinformation: Digital misinformation undermines trust in governments and institutions, promotes instability and hinders international cooperation.
- Polarisation: Social divisions are increasing, weakening the ability of democracies to act.
- Need for action: Strengthen media literacy, regulate platforms, and promote international cooperation against cyberattacks and disinformation campaigns.

4. Humanitarian crises and migration

- Humanitarian emergencies: Over 300 million people worldwide are dependent on aid, especially in conflict regions.
- Migration: Refugee movements are increasing, triggered by war, poverty and climate change.
- Need for action: Expansion of humanitarian aid, fair burden sharing, development of long-term solutions for the causes of flight and integration.

5. Economic uncertainty and inequality

Geo-economic conflicts: Trade wars, sanctions and supply chain problems are weighing on the global economy.

Inequality: Growing gap between rich and poor, both within countries and globally.

Need for action: Reform of the international economic order, promotion of sustainable development, strengthening of social security systems.

6. Technological transformation

Artificial intelligence (AI): Opportunities and risks posed by automation, ethical and legal issues, threat to jobs.

Cybersecurity: Increasing threat from cyberattacks and digital extortion. Need for action:

Development international standards for AI and digitalisation, investment in education and research, protection of critical infrastructure.

7. Need for reform of international institutions

UN: Financial constraints, political deadlock (e.g. veto power in the Security Council), lack of representation and efficiency problems.

Need for action: Expansion and reform of the Security Council, increased efficiency, strengthening of human rights, new financing models.

Conclusion:

In 2025, the world will face a multitude of interrelated crises. The necessary actions range from strengthening multilateral cooperation and reforming international organisations to decisive climate protection, regulating new technologies and combating disinformation. Without coordinated, courageous and innovative policies, there is a risk of further instability and setbacks in peace, prosperity and sustainability.

Source: WEF_Global_Risks_Report_Press_Release_2025_GER.pdf ; accessed on 05.11.2025

Just collective failure? Combined explanatory approaches

Planetary developments can best be explained by a combination of different approaches:

- The systemic interdependence of economics, politics, society and ecology (systems theory).
- The role of power, domination and capitalism (Critical Theory/Neo-Marxism).
- The structural constraints and rivalries in the international system (realism).
- The significance of international institutions and standards (liberalism/cosmopolitanism).
- The growing importance of civil society actors and new forms of governance.

1. Systems theory and global governance approach

- Systems theory (e.g. Niklas Luhmann): Global society is a complex, multi-networked system in which ecological, economic, political and social subsystems interact with one another. Crises arise when the ability of politicians to control global challenges such as climate change or migration reaches its limits.
- Global governance: Planetary problems transcend national borders and can no longer be solved by individual states. International cooperation, multilateral institutions (such as the UN, EU, World Bank) and new forms of governance are needed to manage global risks. The document emphasises the need for reforms of international institutions and multilateral cooperation.

2. Critical theory and neo-Marxism

- Critical theory (Frankfurt School, Habermas): The current crises are understood as a consequence of power relations, concentration of power and

capitalist mode of production. The "ideology of growth" and neoliberalism lead to the exploitation of people and nature, social division and a crisis of democracy.

- Neo-Marxist approaches: The document refers to authors such as Woods/Grant, who argue that capitalism systematically produces ecological and social crises and that a socialist transformation is necessary in order to use the productive forces in the interests of humanity and nature.

3. Realism and neorealism (international relations)

- Realism: States act primarily in their own interests and to maximise their power. Global conflicts, arms races and geopolitical tensions (e.g. USA vs. China/Russia) are understood as expressions of an anarchic international system.
- Neorealism (Waltz): The structure of the international system (multipolarity, bloc formation) explains the instability and inability to solve global problems collectively. The document describes the rivalry between major powers and the danger of proxy wars.

4. Liberal and cosmopolitan approaches

- Liberalism: Emphasis on international institutions, law and cooperation. Progress is possible through democracy, trade and international agreements (e.g. SDGs, Paris Climate Agreement).
- Cosmopolitanism (e.g. David Held): Focus on global justice and human rights. Agenda 2030 and the SDGs are seen as normative guidelines for sustainable development.

5. Actor-centred and governance approaches

- Actor-centred approaches: The role of elites, populists, media corporations and the super-rich is emphasised. Political and economic concentration of power hinders sustainable solutions and promotes disinformation, polarisation and lobbying.
- Governance: New forms of governance (e.g. multi-stakeholder partnerships, NGOs, social movements such as Fridays for Future) are gaining importance in enabling social change.

In this context, attention is focused on the powerful constellations of actors in contemporary politics, on the ruling heads of state. Following Hauser, a distinction is made between political and spiritual leaders in democracies and dictatorships (Hauser and Hauser 1971). These leaders have a decisive influence on political processes in the international and national political arenas. Their courses of action and their deeds or omissions explain the aforementioned developments and diverse problems.

A closer look reveals that elections have recently been held in several countries, particularly in the democracies of the Western world¹ elections have been held in which individuals (so-called populists) have been elected as supreme leaders who, despite their professed commitment to the common good, are primarily concerned with satisfying their own need for power, personal enrichment and promoting the profit interests of the super-rich and corporations (e.g. Trump, Musk and others in the USA). Many are in fact striving for a shift to an authoritarian form of government (dismantling democracy, restricting workers' rights, taking over the media and the judiciary, and manipulating culture). Critics classify this as a move towards ideocracy (rule of the stupid over the intelligent)⁽²⁾ or totalitarianism⁽³⁾. To put it bluntly, nothing less than the continued existence of Western democracies, indeed of democracies as a whole, is at stake.

In authoritarian one-party systems (dictatorships in Russia, China, North Korea), there is indeed a right to vote, and the respective populations elected their rulers as presidents: Putin in Russia, Xi Jinping in China, Kim Jong-un in North Korea, and others not listed here. These elections are often referred to as sham elections, which serve to legitimise the dictator's rule and the

¹ See [Western world – Wikipedia](#) ; accessed 26 December 2024

⁽²⁾ Ideocracy (a portmanteau word combining "ideology" and kratos, Greek for "power"); is "government according to the principles of a particular (political) ideology; a state or country governed in this way".
de.knowledgr.com/19083095/Ideocracy; accessed 26 December 2024

³ For more information, see Hannah Arendt Institute for Totalitarianism Research 2018.

Maintaining the appearance of democracy. These elections are usually rigged and opposition candidates are excluded or suppressed.

In Islamist nations, general elections are not usually held and political leaders are appointed by councils of experts. Ayatollah Ali Khamenei, for example, was appointed Supreme Leader of Iran in 1989 by the Council of Experts, a body of 88 Islamic scholars. The Council of Experts is responsible for electing and supervising the Supreme Leader.

Some Islamist groups, such as the Islamic State (IS), have attempted to achieve their goals through violence and terrorism⁴. Others, such as the Muslim Brotherhood, pursue more legalistic and political avenues to gain influence. The global political classification of these nations and groups depends heavily on their specific ideologies, goals and methods. While some are considered a threat to international security, there are also movements that work within existing political systems and attempt to realise their visions through political processes. Their religious leaders and rulers generally strive to shape their political and social structures on the basis of Islamic principles and laws. This can range from moderate to extremist approaches.

According to Sandel, democratic ideals are currently faltering in various countries and in the United States. He asked, "Have we lost them at home?" Public life is characterised by dissatisfaction. Americans do not believe that they have much say in the way they are governed. They do not trust the government "to do the right thing. Trust in our fellow citizens is declining at an ever-increasing rate.

Sandel takes the pulse of democracy, which is weakening in the present day. We are faced with the fundamental question of whether capitalism and democracy are compatible. Two factors play a decisive role here: on the one hand, our societies are as divided as

⁴ See [Ideology, Groups and Movements | Islamism | bpb.de](#) , and [WD-2-005-16-pdf.pdf](#), accessed on 11 January 2025;

⁵ See [Islamism – Wikipedia](#) , accessed on 11 January 2025

Never before. Fuelled by social media, racist riots, populism, social inequality and the effects of the coronavirus pandemic are driving us into isolation. On the other hand, a globally oriented economy that can no longer be regulated at national level has overtaken politics. For 40 years, neoliberalism has turned citizens into winners or losers of global capitalism – with devastating consequences for our democracy. The loss of self-determination and the erosion of community are the defining fears of our age. These fears are not being addressed by the current agenda – at least not yet”^(C)

Meanwhile, political parties are incapable of making sense of our circumstances." (Sandel 2023, p. 27). "Times of fear require a certain clarity. They inevitably bring fundamental principles to the surface and offer an opportunity for critical reflection." A (elusive) philosophy of the public sphere forms "the often unconsidered backdrop to our political discourse and our purposes." (Sandel 2023, p. 28)

These developments are also taking place in Europe. They have different effects on the nation states. In some of them, Eurosceptic and anti-democratic groups have emerged within political parties (e.g. the Conservative Party in the UK, the Front National in France, the Party for Freedom in the Netherlands, the Lega Nord in Italy) and new political parties (e.g. Alternative for Germany in Germany, the Five Star Movement in Italy).

In some EU member states, authoritarian forms of government and power structures have developed under the leadership of right-wing conservative politicians⁷(e.g.

⁶ See [Michael Sandel \(2023\): The Discontent of Democracy](#) ; accessed on 02.03.2025

⁷ These can be described, following Hauser/Hauser, as paternalistic or dictatorial paternalists. Hauser/Hauser used the concept of paternalism to distinguish between two types of power structures: authoritarian and dictatorial paternalism.

In authoritarian paternalism, the leaders grant certain subjects powers, even allowing them to express differences of opinion, as long as it is clear that the leaders wield the real power and make the final decisions, and no one else. Power of this kind often goes to the heads of the leaders of dictatorial and authoritarian groups. A tyrant who is reasonable or well-meaning at first can end up becoming so power-mad that he kills his own children (or his most trusted associates – a royal disease throughout history – Stalin, Caligula, Nero)." (Hauser and Hauser 1971, 2Cf).

In dictatorial paternalism, "all power emanates from one man at the top". Hitler and Mussolini were dictatorial paternalists who allowed no one to "challenge their power in

the Netherlands). As "false leaders", they manipulate the masses and implement partly authoritarian regimes (currently, for example, Orban in Hungary). They succeeded in being elected to parliaments with populist communication strategies and, to some extent, in implementing their backward-looking, divisive and manipulative policies.

The Hausers speak of "socially underdeveloped people who blindly pursue their own advantage at the expense of the group" (Hauser and Hauser 1971, 50ff). They continue their destructive actions out of selfish and financial motives and for reasons of maintaining power if they are not stopped accordingly. In doing so, the "authorities (...) have always understood it to be in their interest to keep the masses in a state of minimal knowledge and minimal organisation" (Hauser and Hauser 1971, p. 25).

Insights into the current political landscape and political leadership make it clear that there is a lack of personalities with a sense of responsibility commensurate with the challenges. Business leaders and politicians with vision, concrete utopian ideas and pragmatic policy-making skills are in the minority. In political practice – here in Germany – those who are capable find it difficult to communicate their fundamental values, convictions and concrete ideas convincingly in political terms and to incorporate them into the policy-making process⁽⁸⁾.

Ask questions or participate in them. Every decision depended on her mood at the time and had to be carried out with the utmost precision." (Ibid.: 2C).

⁸ See, for example, German Minister for Economic Affairs Robert Habeck. He is approachable and praised for his transparency, as he often speaks colloquially and metaphorically, which makes complex political issues more accessible to many people. However, his open style of communication also leads to misunderstandings and increases the risk of mistakes. One example of this is his criticism of the debate surrounding his unspecific proposal on social security contributions on capital income, which led to confusion and detailed criticism. These discussions often prevent the big political issues from getting on the agenda.

Added to this, against the backdrop of digitalisation and the rise of several media conglomerates, is the influence on public opinion and politics. This has long been a topic of research and politics. In activism and propaganda research, various authors have contributed to the topic of contemporary

"digital" propaganda and criticise the "concern about manipulation of fragmented Internet 'masses' and the media-democratic fundamental possibility of trusting exchange on the Internet" (Sachs-Hombach and Zywiets 2018).

In light of this, what about the dominance and political control of the media corporations (GAFA)⁹, the "big four"?

Internet giants such as Google, Facebook and Amazon are omnipresent in everyday life and in the headlines. They are seen as drivers of far-reaching technological developments (game changers). At the same time, they are accused of being BAAD (big, anti-competitive, addictive and destructive to democracy), i.e. bad because they are large, anti-competitive, addictive and destructive to democracy. What regulation is needed to ensure that the promised benefits for all really materialise? (...) The debate is increasingly focusing on fundamental problems of the market economy, ranging from forms of inequality, income and wealth to the emerging reduction in economic mobility and opportunities to the rise and resurgence of concentrated private power in the form of too-big-to-fail financial corporations and quasi-monopolies in the internet economy. (...) Analogous to the market criticism of the Progressive Era, it is helpful to understand market problems not as efficiency or allocation problems, but as problems of power concentration and domination. If, in the context of the market (or platform), we no longer assume a natural law or neutral technology, but rather a social and political construct based on property and contract law, it becomes clear that the problem of private power concentration is not one that is limited to monopolies alone. The antitrust approach to the current control of private power, which is often based on the exploitation of such a market-dominating position, is therefore too narrow and must be expanded to include strategies for data protection, media diversity and a public infrastructure concept" ⁽¹⁰⁾

Short link: <https://www.labournet.de/?p=136527> accessed: 30 March 2020

How Google, Facebook and Co. control us was illustrated by Precht (2018a), among others. Super-rich players own or control major media companies. Examples include Jeff Bezos, who owns the Washington Post, and Elon Musk, who controls Platform X (formerly Twitter). These give them the

⁹ GAFA stands for Google, Amazon, Facebook and Apple.

¹⁰ [Contribution by Fridolin Herkommer and Christa Schlager on 21 August 2018 on the ACW Blog](#)

The ability to promote their own interests and influence politics and public opinion. The big tech companies pursue political goals aimed at maintaining power, exerting influence and shaping social and economic conditions. Their influence ranges from lobbying and media power to geopolitical intervention. The aim is to establish market dominance and avoid regulation. They dominate global markets and threaten competition, democracy and social diversity.

At the same time, super-rich corporate leaders engage in philanthropic activities to expand their influence and realise their visions for the world. Bill Gates and his foundation are a prominent example of how wealth can be used to promote global health and education initiatives | List of the Top 1,000]¹¹.

These aspects show how a significant number of the world's richest people and their corporations use their power and influence to pursue their own interests and try to shape the world according to their ideas. Since they are often not set timely limits by the ruling political establishment, in some cases they develop megalomania and ideas of world domination. They contribute to the initiation of ethnic, social, cultural and military conflicts, polarise and cause chaos and impoverishment (example: Elon Musk).

It is now abundantly clear how socially and politically problematic these developments are. Autocratic and media leaders who use the media for their own goals and purposes play a special role in this (cyber war, privatisation, social media, Platform X with the political interference of Elon Musk, etc.). The falsification of information (e.g. Trump's alternative facts) and the associated manipulation have fatal effects because they lead to disinformation, irritation, social divisions and increasing political tensions

¹¹ Source: (<https://www.vermoegenmagazin.de/reichste-menschen-der-welt/>).

They require considerable political containment and regulation at international, European and national level (Machill 2005; Emmer and Strippel 2015; Prinzing et al. 2024). The debate on regulation, break-up and democratic control is more topical than ever.

Oxfam, one of the world's largest emergency aid and development organisations¹², stated in its latest report:

"According to the data, there are now 2.7 billion billionaires worldwide – 204 new ones were added last year alone. At the same time, the number of people living below the World Bank's extended poverty line is stagnating and the number of people suffering from hunger is rising."

How much good could the super-rich and the richest nations on earth achieve as donor communities in terms of climate change, health, peace, further development of useful infrastructure, the social economy, reducing unemployment and poverty, and social inequality?

A large number of millionaires called for higher taxes on the super-rich at the traditional meeting in Davos¹³. It is to be hoped that this will not remain mere lip service, but will be taken up and implemented in the respective nation states. May this be emphatically demanded by society and politicians and implemented by them in conjunction with the UN and the individual nation states.

¹² See [Limit billionaire power, protect democracy | Oxfam Germany](#) ; accessed on 1 October 2025

¹³ ([Davos: Hundreds of millionaires call for higher taxes on the super-rich | tagesschau.de](#) ; accessed on 1 October 2025)

On the global political situation

Since its founding in 1945, the United Nations (UN) has been the central forum for international cooperation and peacekeeping. In view of numerous global crises – from armed conflicts and natural disasters to challenges such as climate change and migration – the UN is now more than ever the focus of global public attention. However, the organisation is increasingly reaching its limits: financial constraints, political deadlocks and structural weaknesses are hampering the effective resolution of many problems. Comprehensive reforms are urgently needed to ensure the UN's ability to act and its future viability.

Current situation of the United Nations

Crises and challenges: The UN currently faces enormous challenges, including severe humanitarian crises such as in Sudan, natural disasters (e.g. Hurricane Melissa in the Caribbean), ongoing conflicts (Middle East, Ukraine, Sudan) and global problems such as hunger, climate change and migration. The organisation is often present in crisis regions, but is increasingly reaching its limits, for example due to underfunding and political blockades.

Financial and structural problems: The UN is suffering from a massive financial shortfall caused by payment arrears from key member states (USA, China) and cuts in voluntary contributions. This is forcing the organisation to implement drastic austerity measures and fundamentally reform its structures.

Political blockades: The Security Council in particular is often unable to act because the veto power of the five permanent members (USA, Russia, China, France, Great Britain) blocks important decisions. This leads to criticism of the UN's effectiveness in current conflicts.

Points of criticism

- Dysfunctional decision-making structures: The veto power in the Security Council in particular often prevents effective action.
- Fragmentation and complexity: The large number of sub-organisations and programmes makes coordination and control difficult.
- Underfunding: Many programmes are chronically underfunded, which limits their ability to act.
- Lack of representation: Many states feel they are not adequately represented in the Security Council and other bodies.

Need for reform and reform proposals

1. Enlargement and reform of the Security Council

- The Security Council is considered outdated and does not adequately represent the geopolitical reality. An increase in the number of members and a reform of the veto right have been discussed for years, but are politically difficult to implement.

2. Increasing efficiency and structural reform

- The UN should become more efficient and flexible. This includes merging organisations, reducing administrative costs and decentralising decision-making processes. Thousands of jobs could be relocated or eliminated.

3. Strengthening human rights

- The creation of a new Human Rights Council with expanded powers is intended to improve the monitoring and enforcement of human rights.

4. More powers for the Secretary-General

- The Secretary-General is to be given more decision-making powers in personnel and budgetary matters in order to manage the organisation more efficiently.

5. Adapting to global challenges

- The UN must adapt to new global realities such as terrorism, environmental pollution, digitalisation and globalisation. This requires modernisation of its organs and stronger global governance.

6. Financing and solvency

- Ensuring solvency is a key issue. A revolving credit fund and new financing models are being discussed.

Conclusion

Despite all the criticism and structural problems, the United Nations remains indispensable for international cooperation and peacekeeping. However, the debate on reform is more urgent than ever in order to make the organisation fit for the future and ensure its ability to act.

Source: Query in MSN Copilot; accessed on 5 November 2025

Role of the European Union

The European Union is a supranational actor that sets the framework for environmental protection, climate policy, economic development and social justice. Many political decisions are now taken at European level and have an impact right down to the local level in the member states.

Important tasks of the EU:

- Coordination of climate protection measures (e.g. Green Deal, emissions trading)
- Promotion of sustainable innovations and technologies
- Ensuring common standards for the environment, social issues and the economy
- Crisis management (pandemics, migration, conflicts)
- Strengthening democracy and the rule of law

Current situation in the EU

The EU faces considerable challenges:

- Climate change: implementing ambitious climate targets, adapting to extreme weather and protecting biodiversity.
- Migration: Coping with refugee movements and integration.
- Economy: ensuring competitiveness and social cohesion.
- Democracy: rise of populism and autocracy in Europe, threat to democratic values.
- Crisis management: dealing with global crises such as the coronavirus pandemic and the war in Ukraine.

The EU is often capable of acting, but is hampered by national interests, political deadlock and complex decision-making structures. Current research sees a considerable need for reform:

a) Democratic legitimacy and participation

- Strengthening citizen participation and transparency
- Combating democratic deficits and populism

b) Efficiency and decision-making structures

- Simplification and acceleration of decision-making processes
- Reducing bureaucracy and fragmentation

c) Social and ecological transformation

- Promoting sustainable and fair economic models
- Integration of environmental, social and innovation policy

d) Crisis resistance and resilience

- Expansion of joint crisis mechanisms (health, security, migration)
- Strengthening resilience to global shocks

e) Reform of institutions

- Adjustment of competences between the EU and Member States
- Further development of the European Parliament and the Commission
- Revision of veto rights and majority decisions

Interim conclusion

The EU remains an indispensable player in shaping the future of Europe. However, its ability to act depends on far-reaching reforms that strengthen democratic legitimacy, efficiency, sustainability and crisis resilience. Social and ecological transformation and the safeguarding of common values are at the heart of a sustainable EU policy¹⁴.

¹⁴ Source: <https://copilot.microsoft.com/shares/y9Kt15SiWPj614LGdZMEz> ; accessed on 2025 11 06

Situation in Europe

Europe is currently facing a complex situation: geopolitical tensions, economic uncertainties and security challenges dominate the agenda. Particular focus is on the war in Ukraine, EU enlargement and the strategic realignment of transatlantic relations.

Security situation

- Russian provocations are on the rise: violations of NATO airspace by Russian drones and jets in Poland, Estonia, Romania and Scandinavia have increased the alert level [taz.de](https://www.taz.de).
- NATO responds with Article 4 consultations: Two meetings in quick succession demonstrate growing concern about the territorial integrity of member states [taz.de](https://www.taz.de).
- EU plans drone defence measures: The Eastern Flank Watch initiative aims to establish a drone wall along the EU's eastern borders austria.representation.ec.europa.eu.
- FES Security Radar 2025: The population in Europe sees new wars as a realistic threat. Trust in multilateral institutions is divided [Friedrich-Ebert-Stiftung](https://www.friedrich-ebert-stiftung.org).

Geopolitics and EU enlargement

- Focus on Ukraine and Moldova: President Zelensky emphasises EU integration as Ukraine's strategic goal at Euronews summit [Euronews German](https://www.euronews.com/de).
- EU enlargement package 2025: Montenegro is considered the best prepared for accession. Serbia and Georgia, on the other hand, are stagnating due to authoritarian tendencies [DW](https://www.dw.com).
- Political symbolism: The withdrawal of a US brigade from Romania is seen as a sign of a strategic realignment by the US [Yahoo News DE](https://www.yahoo.com/news).

Economic developments

- Domestic economic stabilisation: Germany expects slight growth of 0.2% in 2025, driven by consumption and investment [bundeswirtschaftsministerium.de](https://www.bundeswirtschaftsministerium.de).
- Global uncertainties weigh on foreign trade: US tariffs and geopolitical tensions are dampening export momentum, especially in industry [FERI](https://www.feri.de).

- ECB cuts interest rates: Inflation is under control, which creates room for manoeuvre in monetary policy. Nevertheless, Europe's growth potential remains limited [FERI](#).

X War in Ukraine and energy crisis

- Russia intensifies attacks: The main targets are Ukraine's energy infrastructure. Power outages and civilian casualties are on the rise [Notizie.it](#).
- International support remains high: NATO and the EU reaffirm their assistance to Ukraine, also with regard to winter and energy supplies [Notizie.it](#).

EU reform needs

In 2025, the EU will face comprehensive reform needs in the areas of the rule of law, digitalisation, budget structure and enlargement policy. Institutional adjustments to accommodate new members are particularly urgent.

Here is a structured overview of the most important reforms needed:

1. Institutional reforms and enlargement capacity

- EU enlargement (Ukraine, Moldova, Western Balkans) requires adjustments to decision-making processes, e.g. the unanimity principle [Berliner Zeitung Euronews Deutsch](#).
- Democratic setbacks in candidate countries are to be prevented in future by contractually enshrined protective mechanisms [Berliner Zeitung](#).
- Reform of the Commission structure: discussion on downsizing or restructuring as the number of members grows.

2. Rule of law and fight against corruption

- Ukraine and other candidate countries must make progress in terms of judicial independence, the fight against corruption and media freedom [Berliner Zeitung WELT](#).
- Internal EU mechanisms for monitoring the rule of law (e.g. against Poland and Hungary) are to be strengthened and standardised.

3. Digitalisation and technological convergence

- Introduction of EU-compliant digital identities ("wallets") and online administrative services planned in accession countries by 2026 [Euronews Deutsch](#).
- Cybersecurity strategies and implementation of NIS directives are prerequisites for EU standards [Euronews Deutsch](#).

4. Budgetary and financial reforms

- Multiannual Financial Framework (MFF) 2028–2034: Focus on public goods with European added value such as research and defence [German Bundestag](#).

- Criticism of new own resources (e.g. tobacco tax, electronic waste levy) and a planned crisis response mechanism that raises constitutional issues [German Bundestag](#).
- Call for simplified budgetary instruments and flexible use of funds.

5. Foreign policy and strategic autonomy

- Eastern Flank Watch and new defence initiatives to secure the EU's external borders [European Commission](#).
- Strategic partnerships with India and the Mediterranean region for geopolitical stabilisation [European Commission](#).

6. Internal market and competitiveness

- Reducing fragmentation in the single market, promoting venture capital and innovation in AI and cloud technologies [European Commission IMF](#).
- Industrial Accelerator Act and new legislation to strengthen European networks and infrastructure [European Commission](#).

The reports by the European Parliament (2025) and the IW Cologne (2024) propose concrete institutional reforms to prepare the EU for enlargement to over 30 members. The focus is on treaty changes, new decision-making mechanisms and a reform of the Commission structure.

Here is an overview of the most important proposals:

1. Decision-making: Abolition of unanimity

Passerelle clauses should be used systematically to move from the principle of unanimity to qualified majority voting – for example in tax, social and foreign policy europarl.europa.eu.

Introduction of a "super-qualified majority" for particularly sensitive decisions (e.g. 80% of the population and 80% of the states) German Economic Institute (IW).

2. Commission structure: increasing efficiency

Proposal to reduce the size of the Commission: not every state would appoint a commissioner.

Alternative: rotating commissioners or clustering, with several states sharing one commissioner.
Institute of German Economy (IW).

3. Budget reform and new own resources

Introduction of new EU own resources such as CO₂ border adjustment levies, digital taxes or plastic levies to finance enlargement europarl.europa.eu.

Reform of the Multiannual Financial Framework (MFF) with a focus on European public goods and crisis resilience europarl.europa.eu.

4. Rule of law: conditionality and monitoring

Establishment of an EU Commissioner for the Rule of Law with clear sanction mechanisms for violations.

Automatic suspension of EU funds in the event of systematic violations of the rule of law. German Institute for International and Security Affairs.

5. Parliamentary reforms

Introduction of transnational lists in European elections to strengthen European public opinion.

Reform of the distribution of seats in Parliament: more proportional to population, but with minimum guarantees for smaller states europarl.europa.eu.

Here is a structured overview of key reform proposals for institutional adjustment of the EU in the course of enlargement to over 30 members – including an assessment of feasibility and political support (as of 2025):

Table 1: Reform proposals for EU enlargement

Reform proposal	Content/objective	Feasibility (1–5)	Political support (1–5)
Abolition of unanimity in key areas	Transition to qualified majority voting in fiscal, social and foreign policy	3 – Treaty amendment necessary	3 – Resistance from small states
Introduction "Super-qualified majority"	80% of the population + 80% of states for sensitive decisions	2 – Complex implementation	2 – little consensus so far
Reduction of European Commission	Not every country appoints a commissioner	4 – politically feasible	3 – smaller states sceptical
Rotating commissioners / cluster formation	Several states share portfolios	3 – Organisational feasibility	3 Conflicts of representation
New EU own resources	CO ₂ tariffs, digital taxes, plastic levies for financing	4 – Technically feasible	4 – Broad support
Reform of the Multiannual Financial Framework (MFF)	Focus on European public goods, crisis resilience	5 – regularly adjusted	4 – growing consensus
EU Commissioner for the Rule of Law	Monitoring and sanctions for violations	4 – legally possible	3 – resistance from some states
Transnational lists in European elections	Strengthening European public opinion	3 – Change in electoral law necessary	4 – Approval in Parliament
Reform of the distribution of seats in Parliament	More proportional to the population with minimum guarantees	4 – technically possible	3 – smaller states sceptical
Convening of an EU Convention	Treaty amendments pursuant to Article 48 TEU	2 – lengthy process	2 – politically risky
Differentiated integration ("core Europe")	Enhanced cooperation between individual groups	5 – already practised	4 – pragmatic solution

Key:

- *Feasibility*: 1 = very difficult, 5 = easy to implement
- *Political support*: 1 = hardly any, 5 = broad consensus

Current EU policy

In November 2025, the EU is heavily involved in climate, financial and enlargement policy. Key issues are the new emissions target for 2040, the reform of energy taxation and the negotiations on the EU budget for 2026.

Climate policy and the environment

Environment Council (4 November 2025):

Objective: Agreement on the new EU emission reduction target for 2040 under the EU Climate Law.

Preparation of the new EU NDC (nationally contribution) contribution) for the UN Climate Change Conference COP 30 in Belém, Brazil Consilium.

Economy and Finance

Economic and Financial Affairs Council (13 November 2025):

Negotiations on the reform of the Energy Taxation Directive.

Plans to abolish duty-free limits for small consignments from third countries Consilium. Budget Council (14 November 2025):

Preparation of agreement with the European Parliament on the EU budget for 2026 in the Conciliation Committee Consilium.

Digitalisation and consumer protection

Gigabit Infrastructure Regulation:

Enters into force on 12 November 2025.

Objective: Faster and more cost-effective expansion of digital networks through shared use of existing infrastructure and simplified approvals The Federal Government.

New EU regulation on political advertising:

In force since 10 October 2025.

Strengthens transparency and labelling requirements for paid political content. The Federal Government.

Consumer Credit Directive:

From 20 November 2025, stricter rules will apply to small loans and "buy now, pay later" models.

Objective: Protection against over-indebtedness, especially for short-term consumer loans Finanzleser.de.

International relations

EU-CELAC Summit (9–10 November 2025):

Meeting with Latin American countries to strengthen the strategic partnership Consilium.

COP 30 (6–7 November 2025):

EU wants to position itself as a global leader in climate protection Consilium.

Current situation in Germany

In November 2025, Germany is in a phase of cautious economic recovery, accompanied by extensive investment in infrastructure, digitalisation and climate neutrality. The federal government is focusing on domestic economic stimulus, while external economic risks remain.

#/ Economic situation

- Slight growth expected: After two years of recession, the German government is forecasting *real GDP growth of 0.2%* for 2025, driven primarily by *private consumption and public investment* [bundeswirtschaftsministerium.de](https://www.bundeswirtschaftsministerium.de).
- Domestic economy as a driver: Unlike usual, the stimulus is not coming from exports, but from *real wage increases, tax relief and targeted investment incentives* (e.g. investment boosters, corporation tax reform) [bundeswirtschaftsministerium.de](https://www.bundeswirtschaftsministerium.de).
- Trend reversal expected on the labour market: An *improvement in the employment situation* is expected at the turn of 2025/26, which should further strengthen consumer sentiment [bundeswirtschaftsministerium.de](https://www.bundeswirtschaftsministerium.de).

— Political measures and legislative reforms

- Federal budget 2025: Comes into force retroactively on 1 January and provides for *record investments in infrastructure and climate neutrality* [The Federal Government](https://www.bundesregierung.de).
- Special Infrastructure Fund C Climate Neutrality: Financing of *schools, daycare centres, railway lines, digitisation and research* by the federal government, states and municipalities [The Federal Government](https://www.bundesregierung.de).
- Gigabit Infrastructure Regulation: From 12 November 2025, new EU rules will apply for the *faster expansion of digital networks*. [The Federal Government](https://www.bundesregierung.de).

- Consumer protection for loans: New rules for "buy now, pay later" models will come into force on 20 November to *prevent over-indebtedness*. [The Federal Government](#).
- Nationality law reformed: Naturalisation will *only* be possible *after five years* and will be linked to *sustainable integration*. [The Federal Government](#).

#🇪🇺 / 🇩🇪 Economic indicators

- Ifo Business Climate Index: Shows a *fragile but positive development* in business expectations, especially among small and medium-sized enterprises [Statista](#).
- GfK consumer climate index: Forecast for November 2025 points to a *slight recovery in consumer sentiment* [Statista](#).
- ZEW economic expectations: Sentiment indicators are improving but remain below the long-term average [Statista](#).

Sources:

[bundeswirtschaftsministerium.de](#) BMWK Autumn Projection 2025

[The Federal Government](#) Federal Government – New Regulations November 2025

[Statista](#) Statista – Economic Indicators Germany

In 2025, Germany will face a considerable need for reform in the areas of bureaucracy reduction, investment acceleration, tax structure and digitalisation. Initial measures have been introduced, but key structural reforms remain challenging to implement.

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According to the autumn 2025 projection, the Federal Government identifies the following key areas for reform [bundeswirtschaftsministerium.de](#):

- Accelerating planning and approval processes: Slow procedures are slowing down investment in infrastructure, energy and digitalisation.
- Reducing bureaucracy: High reporting requirements and complex regulations place a burden on companies and administration.

- Tax and social security burden: Germany is one of the high-tax countries – there is a need for reform in corporate taxes and non-wage labour costs.
- Promotion of innovation: Start-ups and SMEs need better conditions for research, scaling and market access.
- Energy costs: Competitiveness suffers from high electricity and gas prices – reform of the tax structure in the energy sector is needed.

In Germany, too, socio-political forces face a particular challenge in responding to the challenges of digitalisation and shaping them comprehensively in policy terms (Greve 2012; Degenhart 2014; Oberender 2022).

Regulating social media requires a variety of approaches and measures. Many countries have already enacted laws to control the spread of hate speech, misinformation and other harmful content. One example is the German Network Enforcement Act (NetzDG), which obliges social networks to delete criminal content quickly.¹⁵ Secondly, there is self-regulation by the platforms: social media platforms such as Facebook, Twitter and Instagram have their own community standards and moderation guidelines for removing inappropriate content. However, these standards often need to be adapted to national and international laws¹⁶.

Platforms should provide transparent information about their moderation practices and algorithms. This could be achieved through regular reports and independent reviews.

¹⁵ See [Regulation of social media | Reporters Without Borders for Freedom of Information](#) , accessed on 16 January 2025

¹⁶ See [Regulation of social media | Reporters Without Borders for Freedom of Information](#) , accessed on 16 January 2025

The promotion of alternative platforms is extremely relevant: it is important to promote alternative digital spaces that are committed to democratic discourse and the common good. These could serve as a counterweight to the large commercial platforms. Finally, users should be educated about the risks and challenges of social media. This could be achieved through educational programmes and media literacy campaigns.

Combining these measures can help minimise the negative effects of social media while protecting freedom of expression and freedom of the press¹⁷.

Table 2: Measures implemented (as of November 2025) in Germany

Reform area	Measure	Implementation status
Reducing bureaucracy	Bureaucratic costs are to be reduced by 25% by 2030 bmds.bund.de	Legislative package adopted (Nov 2025)
	Procurement Acceleration Act: higher direct award thresholds	In force
	Banking Directive Implementation and Bureaucracy Relief Act	In force
Housing	Section 246e of the German Building Code (BauGB): temporary deviations from planning law until 2030	In force
Digital	Gigabit Infrastructure Regulation (EU)	Applicable from 12 November 2025 The Federal Government
Consumer protection	New rules for small loans and "buy now, pay later" models	Applicable from 20 November 2025 The Federal Government
State modernisation	Modernisation agenda for State and Administration	Cabinet decision of 1 October 2025 bmds.bund.de
Citizenship	Reform: Naturalisation after 5 years at the earliest, integration mandatory	In force The Federal Government

¹⁷ MSN Copilot, accessed on 16 January 2025

🌱 Assessment and outlook

- Positive: Initial relief effects for administration and the economy are measurable. Housing construction is receiving new impetus.
- Challenge: Implementation depends heavily on the *efficiency of administration and coordination with the federal states and local authorities*.
- Open: Major structural reforms in tax law, energy costs and innovation promotion are still pending or in preparation.

Sources:

[1: Federal Government – New Regulations November 2025](#)

[2: BMDS – Reduction of Bureaucracy](#)

[3: BMWK – Autumn projection 2025](#)

Future-oriented orientations

There are various responses and associated alternatives to man-made environmental destruction, greed, wars, forced migration, mass unemployment and impoverishment and destitution. Hopeful orientations and courses of action include the Responsibility to Protect (R2P) and the 17 Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) formulated by the United Nations as political objectives that are intended to ensure sustainable development at the economic, social and ecological levels worldwide.

Overview Responsibility to Protect (R2P)

The Responsibility to Protect (R2P) is a concept in international law that describes the duty of states and the international community to prevent, protect against and end mass crimes (genocide, war crimes, ethnic cleansing, crimes against humanity).

Core principles

- Sovereignty as responsibility: State sovereignty means the responsibility to protect one's own population.
- Three pillars:
 1. Prevention: Prevention of violence through diplomacy, development and the rule of law.
 2. Response: Rapid collective action (diplomatic, humanitarian, sanctions, military as a last resort) in the event of imminent or ongoing mass crimes.
 3. Reconstruction: Support protection, accountability and reconciliation after conflicts.
- Last resort and proportional: Coercive measures are a last resort; every measure must be proportionate.

Origin and status

- Politically adopted at the 2005 UN World Summit; not a new binding human rights instrument, but a set of political norms and an interpretative framework for UN actors and states.

Implementation instruments

- Early warning and prevention: Information and monitoring mechanisms; support for democratic institutions.
- Diplomacy and sanctions: political pressure, targeted sanctions, international prosecution.
- Collective action: Mandates from the UN Security Council; coalitions and regional organisations.

Challenges and criticism

- Political deadlock: veto power in the Security Council often prevents consistent action.
- Selective application: accusations of double standards and instrumentalised use, depending on geopolitical interests.
- Military interventions: Risk of mission creep, civilian casualties and lack of exit strategy.
- Implementation capacities: Lack of resources for effective prevention and reconstruction.

Practical examples

- Positive aspects in cases with comprehensive preventive measures; controversial debates, for example on Libya in 2011 (protection justification vs. regime change) and hesitant or lack of protection in Syria, Rwanda (historically) or Myanmar.

Overview of Agenda 2030 and Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs)

Agenda 2030 is a universal development programme launched by the United Nations in 2015, comprising 17 Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) and 169 targets, which aims to end poverty, protect the planet and promote prosperity for all by 2030.

Purpose and characteristics

- Universal: Applies to all countries, not just developing countries.
- Integrated: Economic, social and environmental dimensions are interlinked.
- Leave No One Behind: Focus on particularly marginalised groups.

The 17 SDGs Brief overview

1. No poverty
2. Zero Hunger
3. Good health and well-being
4. Quality education
5. Gender equality
6. Clean water and sanitation
7. Affordable and clean energy
8. Decent work and economic growth
9. Industry, innovation and infrastructure
10. Reduced inequalities
11. Sustainable cities and communities
12. Sustainable consumption and production
13. Climate action
14. Life below water
15. Life on land
16. Peace, justice and strong institutions
17. Partnerships for the goals

Implementation mechanisms

- National strategies: Integration of SDGs into national development plans.
- Voluntary National Reviews (VNRs): Regular reports by countries on implementation at the UN High-Level Political Forum.
- Indicator framework: Global set of indicators for measuring progress (several hundred indicators).
- Financing: Mix of national budgets, private investment, development cooperation and innovative financial instruments.

Challenges and criticism

- Financing gap: There is a significant financing gap, particularly for poorer countries.
- Data gaps: Many countries have incomplete data, especially on marginalised groups.
- Coordination problems: Silo thinking in administrations makes integrated policy difficult.
- Uneven progress: Some goals (e.g. poverty reduction, education) are showing better progress than others (e.g. biodiversity, climate).

Overlaps and reform recommendations for strengthening R2P and Agenda 2030

Overlaps between R2P and Agenda 2030

- SDG 16 (peace, justice and strong institutions) is directly linked to the prevention component of R2P.
- Long-term prevention of mass atrocities requires progress on poverty, inequality, governance, education and the environment — key SDGs.
- Both frameworks emphasise prevention, institutional strengthening and international cooperation; successful implementation of the SDGs reduces structural risk factors for mass atrocities.

This deck provides six concrete, politically feasible reform packages that link the prevention of mass atrocities with the operational implementation of the SDGs. Each recommendation includes: objective, concrete measures, responsible actors, expected benefits, key risks and measurable indicators.

Recommendation 1: Integrate early warning and prevention platforms

- Objective: Early detection and coherent response to risks of mass atrocities by linking R2P and SDG indicators.
- Concrete measures:
 - Establish a UN-hosted platform that combines R2P risk indicators with relevant SDG indicators (e.g. SDG 16, 1, 10, 4, 5).
 - Standardised data protocols, reporting timelines and interoperable dashboards for UN agencies, regional organisations and donors.
 - Establishment of a permanent expert panel (politics, human rights, development, conflict analysis).
- Responsible parties: UN Secretary-General/Office; UNDP; OHCHR; regional organisations.
- Expected benefits: Faster, evidence-based prevention interventions; fewer escalations; better coordination between development and protection.
- Key risks: Data quality; political sensitivity; misuse for political purposes.

- Measuring indicators: Number of crises identified at an early stage; response time to coordinated intervention plan; proportion of SDG indicators with confidential data deliveries.

Recommendation 2: Security Council + General Assembly Mechanism for capacity to act

- Objective: Mitigate political deadlock in the Security Council while ensuring legitimate, collective options for action.
- Concrete measures:
 - Introduction of a binding "consultation and escalation" procedure: if the Security Council fails to act due to a veto, a temporary referral to the General Assembly is activated (purely political mandate, graduated range of measures).
 - Standardised criteria that define R2P thresholds more clearly (evidence, civil society reports, VNR signals).
- Responsible parties: Member states; UNGA; Working Group on International Law.
- Expected benefits: Reduction of obstacles to action; greater political legitimacy; clearer path to non-military sanctions and humanitarian measures.
- Key risks: Political backlash from permanent members; risk of institutional polarisation.
- Measuring indicators: Applications of the mechanism; cases in which the GA was able to issue binding recommendations; time span until response began.

Recommendation 3: Linked financing for prevention and reconstruction

- Objective: To ensure long-term, flexible funding that links prevention (including SDG measures) and post-conflict reconstruction.
- Concrete measures:
 - Establishment of a Prevention and Recovery Facility (PRF) under the auspices of the UN, with contributions from Member States, multilateral development banks and the private sector.
- Key risks: confidentiality requirements in security matters; additional administrative burden.

- Measuring indicators: number and quality of independent evaluation reports; proportion of participatory consultations; revision rate of policy measures following evaluation.
 - Financing conditions linked to inclusive governance reforms and SDG progress (e.g. education, health and gender equality indicators).
- Responsible parties: UN Economic Cluster; World Bank; donor coalitions; national governments.
- Expected benefits: Reduced relapse rates into violence; coherent projects with a longer time horizon; better use of national capacities.
- Key risks: Political instrumentalisation of financial resources; difficulty in measuring governance reforms.
- Measuring indicators: Volume of funds mobilised; proportion of funding linking prevention and SDG targets; relapse rate into violence after disbursement.

Recommendation 4: Capacity building at national level – governance + society

- Objective: Strengthening state protection functions and civil society resilience in line with the SDGs.
- Concrete measures:
 - Programmes for the rule of law, independent judiciary, police reform, decentralisation and administrative modernisation.
 - Promotion of inclusive social programmes (education, social security, women's participation) as violence prevention.
 - Technical assistance packages with unconditional know-how transfer, peer learning and monitoring by UN agencies.
- Responsible parties: UNDP; UNESCO; national governments; NGOs.
- Expected benefits: Reduction of structural drivers of violence; increased social participation; more sustainable SDG progress.
- Key risks: Local resistance to reforms; corruption risks; limited implementation capacity.
- Measuring indicators: Improvements in governance indices; participation rates of women/minorities in decision-making processes; SDG progress rates.

Recommendation 5: Regional partnerships and graduated response options

- Objective: Use regional ownership and graduated tools for prevention and stabilisation of the environment.
- Concrete measures:
 - Formalised cooperation protocols between the UN and regional organisations (e.g. AU, EU, ASEAN) with clear lines of responsibility.
 - Establishment of regional intervention forces and civilian crisis response teams with defined mandates for non-military measures.
 - Financing of regional mediation and dialogue initiatives.
- Responsible parties: UNDESA; regional organisations; donors.
- Expected benefits: Faster, culturally appropriate responses; relief for the UN system; greater legitimacy on the ground.
- Key risks: Regional power politics; low standardisation; limited resources.
- Measuring indicators: Number of regional mechanisms activated; time to deployment; local acceptance measurements.

Recommendation 6: Strengthen accountability, transparency and participatory legitimacy

- Objective: Increase the credibility of R2P measures and SDG programmes through clear accountability and participation of those affected.
- Concrete measures:
 - Introduction of an independent review and evaluation mechanism for R2P interventions with mandatory PRE-, DURING- and POST-EVALs.
 - Systematic involvement of civil society actors, victim representatives and local institutions in mandate formulation and MCE.
 - Transparent publication of decision-making bases, risk analyses and monitoring reports.
- Responsible parties: UN oversight bodies; IOB; national parliaments; NGOs.
- Expected benefits: Greater legitimacy; learning capacity; reduction of misallocations and abuse.

Revolt of the reasonable

The revolt of the reasonable requires a large number of committed environmentalists, peace activists and "woke" people. It is a call for active, peaceful and united shaping of the future. It relies on collective engagement, political participation, critical thinking and the strengthening of communities to overcome the existential challenges of our time.

1. Social engagement and networking

- Organisation in survival projects: People join forces in initiatives, future workshops and social movements to develop concrete solutions to environmental, social and economic problems.
- **Solidarity and countervailing power:** Through global networking and cooperation, the "caravan of the blind" can be stopped and a countervailing power based on solidarity can be built up, conveying hope for future survival.

2. Political participation and control

- Interference in politics: Citizens are called upon to actively participate in political processes, to expose destructive actors and to vote them out of office or have them removed.
- Shaping survival policies: It is long overdue to work together to shape survival policies in individual policy areas – for climate, environmental and species protection, humane working and living conditions, and new forms of economy.

3. Responsible leadership and institutions

- Promoting leaders: We need politicians and business leaders who are responsible, committed to the SDGs, curb lobbying and are not corrupt.

- Strengthening civil society: The power of the community is a significant factor – social movements such as Fridays for Future show how collective action can bring about change.

4. Education, media literacy and critical thinking

- Promoting media literacy: Educating people about disinformation, manipulation and the risks of social media is key to protecting freedom of expression and democratic discourse.
- Independent thinking and changing values: Authors such as Precht and Welzer emphasise the importance of self-reflection, critical thinking and a shift in social values as the basis for sustainable change.

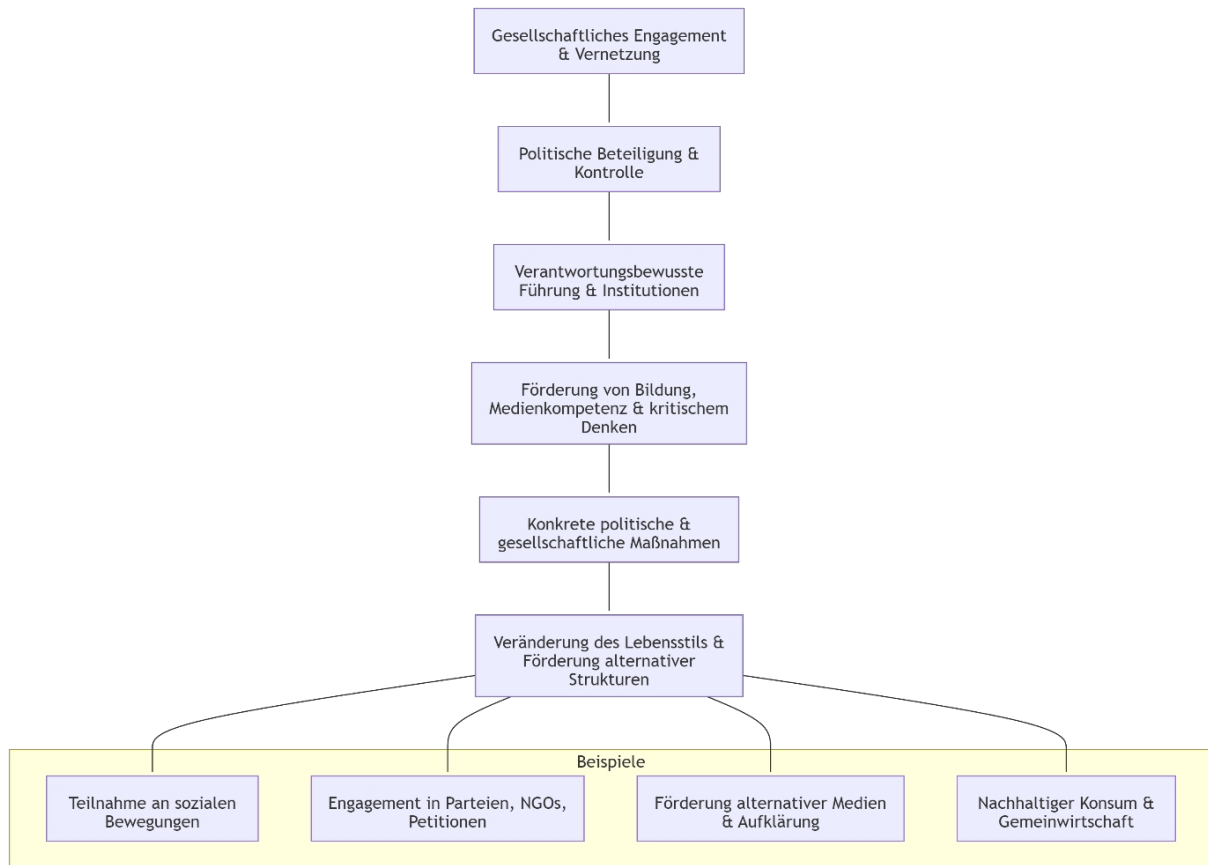
5. Concrete political and social measures

- Responsible future policy: Implementation of the SDGs, promotion of sustainable development, reform of international institutions and strengthening of democracy.
- Action and analysis: The right mix of thinking and doing, of study and fieldwork, of analysis and action is crucial. "Business as usual" is no longer an option.

Practical examples of the rebellion of the reasonable

- Participation in social movements: Fridays for Future, citizens' initiatives, local sustainability projects.
- Political participation: Engagement in political parties, NGOs, future workshops, petitions, voter turnout.
- Critical public: promotion of alternative media, awareness campaigns, digital communities for the common good and sustainability.
- Change Lifestyle lifestyle: Sustainable consumption, support of the public sector, commitment to social and ecological projects.

Figure 2: Steps for political engagement



Step-by-step explanation:

1. Social engagement C Networking:\ Joining forces in initiatives, future workshops and movements to develop solutions.
2. Political participation C Control:\ Active involvement in political processes, exposing and voting out destructive actors.
3. Responsible leadership C Institutions:\ Promoting leaders with a sense of responsibility and integrity.
4. Promotion of education, media literacy C critical thinking:\ Raising awareness about disinformation, promoting self-reflection and changing values.
5. Concrete political and social measures: Implementing the SDGs, sustainable development, reforms and strengthening democracy.

6. Lifestyle change C Promotion of alternative structures:\ Sustainable consumption, support for the social economy, commitment to social and ecological projects.

Examples of concrete actions:

- Participation in social movements (e.g. Fridays for Future)
- Involvement in political parties, NGOs, petitions
- Promotion of alternative media and awareness campaigns
- Sustainable consumption and support for projects oriented towards the common good

Responsible future policy

The German federal governments have also committed themselves to this (so far). The current German (black-red) federal government is pursuing the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) of Agenda 2030 and the German Sustainability Strategy (DNS) with a structured but also challenging approach. Agenda 2030 was established as a guiding political principle and the SDGs were officially recognised as a guideline for German policy. The German Sustainability Strategy (DNS) serves as a national implementation instrument. In March 2021, the DNS 2021 was adopted, further developing the German Sustainability Strategy. It systematically integrates the SDGs and defines key areas of transformation such as energy, the circular economy, transport, food and agriculture (bmz.de).

The German government structures its sustainability policy along the five "Ps" of Agenda 2030 as implementation priorities:

Table 3: Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) in the Federal Republic of Germany

Guiding principle	Relevant SDGs	Examples of measures
People	SDG 1, 3, 4, 5, 8, 10	Human rights action plan, Education campaign, Social security
Planet (environment)	SDG 6, 13, 14, 15	Climate Protection Act, Biodiversity Strategy, One Health approach
Prosperity	SDG 7, 9, 12	Energy transition, promotion of innovation, sustainable production
Peace	SDG 16	Promotion of inclusive institutions, access to justice
Partnership	SDG 17	Global Cooperation, development cooperation, multilateral initiatives

A monitoring system and reporting mechanism have been established as part of political control: the DNS contains over 75 national indicators that are regularly reviewed by the Federal Statistical Office. In addition, Germany has submitted a voluntary national report to the UN High-Level Political Forum (HLPF), which

documents progress and challenges in detail [bmz.de](https://www.bmz.de) (Federal Government 2021). Germany is well ahead in international comparisons, but shows deficits in climate protection, biodiversity and sustainable consumption.

However, the challenges continue to intensify and, despite progress in implementation, there is considerable criticism: according to the German government and civil society, the actions taken so far are not sufficient to achieve the SDGs by 2030 (criticism of ambition). There is criticism of the lack of coordination between departments and inconsistent policies, for example with regard to subsidies for fossil fuels (coherence problems). The international dimension of the SDGs is emphasised, but not always consistently implemented – for example, in supply chains or climate financing (lack of global shared responsibility). Critics emphasise that cooperative institutions are necessary to free humanity from its "prisoner's dilemma".

In the face of increasing ecological and social disasters, manifest challenges and contrary to all reason, irresponsible, powerful "predators" (Empoli 2025) continue to operate and the respective instruments of power (elections, judiciary, media, education, culture and public opinion) are being transformed in a destructive manner (examples: US President Trump, President Erdogan).

Woods and Grant dealt with reason and unreason, alienation and the future of humanity. As a result, they advocate changing the economic system and support socialism because it is capable of further developing productive forces and using their results in the interests of nature and humanity (Woods and Grant 2002).

"Live differently, survive – use the limits of growth as an opportunity for liberation" was the title of theologian Hans-Eckhard Bahr's work following the Club of Rome report (Bahr 1979).

Robert Jungk is also at the forefront when resistance to the planned deployment of new nuclear "medium-range missiles" throughout Western Europe becomes widespread.

¹⁸ Source: <https://copilot.microsoft.com/shares/fmWyFKXarBu13Cdd9bn1J> ; accessed on 26 October 2025

mass movement. He placed great hopes in this "survival movement," which manifested itself in demonstrations by hundreds of thousands of people in many European cities as well as in non-violent blockades at deployment sites such as Mutlangen, Greenham Common and Comiso. Menschenbeben (Human Earthquake) is the title of the book in which Jungk movingly documents this resistance as a participant and committed observer. In the introduction to Menschenbeben, Jungk points to the gradual shaking of the old fortresses of military technocracies and places particular hope in those who jump ship, change course and rethink their positions.

(Jungk 1984).

Is there such a thing as the power of community? "Everyone can be a leader," Hausers were convinced (Hauser and Hauser 1971, 55f.). Precht and Welzer point the way: know thyself (Precht 2017), be thyself (Precht 2018b) and think for thyself (Welzer 2017).

In my experience, uncertainty, existential fears, concern and curiosity trigger engagement in people. So here we have motivations arising from fear of war and survival, experiences of injustice and false promises of happiness (e.g. material happiness) as well as weariness of abundance (Loske and Vogel 2017), to name but a few. It was against this backdrop that the social movements emerged in the wake of the 1968 protests, which brought about social change and promoted democracy (Gilcher-Holtey 2017). Currently, the Fridays for Future movement led by Greta Thunberg is giving people hope (Rucht and Sommer 2019). The power of community is a significant factor in many areas of life. Communities can bring about major changes through collective action and cooperation. Communities can initiate social movements that drive political and social change. Examples include the civil rights movement in the USA and the Fridays for Future movement.

Communities can launch projects that serve the common good, such as community gardens, neighbourhood assistance programmes or local initiatives to promote sustainability. Through joint engagement and lobbying, communities can exert political influence and bring about changes in legislation. Communities offer their members support and solidarity, whether in the form of emotional support, financial assistance or practical support in

Everyday life. The power of community is also evident in the digital world, where online communities and social networks play an important role in disseminating information and mobilising people. (MSN Copilot, accessed 16 January 2025)

"In short: given the shift in social values, the starting conditions for climate policy in Germany, Europe and large parts of the world to take a truly forward-looking path this time around are probably better than they have been at any point in the last thirty years. However, whether this actually happens depends not least on whether political leaders are willing to take a big leap and risk something in the process. 'Business as usual' is no longer an option. Or, to put it in the words of 'Fridays for Future': 'There is no Planet B'."

(Loske 2019).

Conclusion

The above remarks and questions highlight the continuing life-threatening and anarchic actions of powerful commercial enterprises and politicians and the resulting problems. Man-made global destruction of nature and wars have disrupted the ecological balance and pose an existential threat to nature and humanity.

The increased complexity and intricacy of the problems pose extraordinary challenges for politicians, economists and societies. We need leaders and organisations who are willing to take on their enormous responsibility and tackle the challenges head-on. Leaders and organisations who are committed to the SDGs, who curb lobbying and who are not corrupt. Leaders and organisations who are committed to a future worth living in harmony with nature and for future generations.

Through global networking and cooperation, the "caravan of the blind" could be stopped, countervailing power developed and solidarity practised, conveying hope for future survival.

Recommendations

All social and political actors who bear (joint) responsibility in the policy areas are called upon to get involved and take action. Organise yourselves into survival projects, participate in future workshops (Stange 2000) and get involved in politics. For the preservation of natural resources, for climate, environmental and species protection, for new forms of economy and enterprise with humane working and living conditions, and for lifestyle changes.

It is long overdue to work together to shape survival policies in the individual policy areas.

It is exactly 12 o'clock and it is high time that people rise up against the destroyers of the environment and autocrats, expose the actors causing problems in their destructive actions and vote them out or remove them from office.

I conclude with Loske, who recommends "the right mix of thinking and acting, of study and fieldwork, of analysis and action." "Perhaps it is not too late." (Loske 2015, p. 258).

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