

# EMANCIPATION IN TIMES OF CRISIS

## Europe's road to greater autonomy

This year's forum comes at a time of dramatic pressure challenging the European Union's cohesion. The coronavirus pandemic has put to the test the promise of solidarity amongst member-states, a test passed only with some delay, and not without shortcomings. Sustainable success is not yet assured. In addition, Europe is faced with uncertainties surrounding political and social developments in the USA, the worsening climate crisis, the perpetual dispute regarding treatment of refugees and migrants and the growing gap between the rich and the poor.

*Is the coronavirus pandemic bringing European citizens closer together or driving them further apart? Either way, one thing is clear: major crises can only be dealt with by cooperating.*

Europe's path to a successful future, traditional focus of the WDR Europaforum, is paved with an unprecedented array of serious challenges: In terms of foreign affairs, Europe must establish a renewed partnership with the United States under President Joe Biden's administration. A joint strategy needs to be found for dealing with 'systemic rivals' Russia and China. The call for greater autonomy, for more European self-reliance, is widely supported but still awaiting practical implementation.

Internally, the EU must overcome fundamental conflicts shaking it to its very core. Brexit is "done" but the economic and political effects are still to be dealt with. In many EU member-states, a shared understanding of the basic values of democracy and rule of law is being challenged by violent nationalism. Populists are gaining support by claiming that the EU is not a problem-solver but itself one of the biggest problems to be solved. Here again, the search is on for a Europe that has good reason to be self-confident and can be sure of its values and goals.

The WDR Europaforum, on Thursday, 20 May 2021, will address Europe's fundamental political questions under the motto  
**Emancipation in times of crisis – Europe's road to greater autonomy**

WDR broadcasts the Europaforum live, phoenix and tagesschau24 show the debate of the chancellor candidates from 2 to 3 pm. The event is also available online via livestream at:  
[www.wdr-europaforum.de](http://www.wdr-europaforum.de)



# PROGRAMME

Live on WDR Television | 20 May 2021

- 10.15 **Welcome** **Tom Buhrow** | Director-General of Westdeutscher Rundfunk  
**Dr. Jörg Wojahn** | Head of European Commission Representation in Germany
- 10.30 **Keynote address** **The pandemic as litmus test**  
The EU Commission as geopolitical player: ambition and reality in times of Corona  
**Dr. Ursula von der Leyen** | President of the European Commission  
*Interview: Markus Preiß, Head of ARD Europe Studio Brussels*
- 11.15 **Discussion** **In search of an equal footing**  
The European Union in a changing international power game  
**Sudha David-Wilp** | Deputy Director Berlin Office, German Marshall Fund  
**Stefan Kornelius** | Head Editor Politics Süddeutsche Zeitung, Munich  
**Dr. Hannah Neumann** | Vice-Chair Subcommittee on Human Rights, European Parliament (MEP B'90/Die Grünen)  
**Michael Roth** | Minister of State Foreign Office, Berlin (MP/SPD)  
*Moderation: Dr. Joachim Görden, Head of Trimedia News SWR*
- 12.10 **Discussion** **Crisis, nothing but crisis?**  
Shaping one and a half decades of European policy in turbulent times  
**Dr. Angela Merkel** | Federal Chancellor Germany (MP/CDU)  
*Moderation: Andreas Cichowicz, Editor-in-Chief Norddeutscher Rundfunk & Tina Hassel, Head of ARD Capital Studio Berlin*
- 12.45 **Break**
- 13.05 **Discussion** **Progressive erosion or new sense of togetherness?**  
On Europe's self-empowerment as seen by the Bundestag parties in election year 2021  
**Dr. Katarina Barley** | Vice-President European Parliament (MEP/SPD)  
**Nicola Beer** | Vice-President European Parliament (MEP/FDP)  
**Daniel Caspary** | Chairman CDU/CSU Group European Parliament (MEP/CDU)  
**Sven Giegold** | Spokesperson German Greens Group, European Parliament (MEP/B'90/Die Grünen)  
**Jörg Meuthen** | Vice-Chair Identity and Democracy Group, European Parliament (MEP/AfD)  
**Martin Schirdewan** | Co-Chair Left Group European Parliament (MEP/Die Linke)  
*Moderation: Golineh Atai, Editor WDR Television*
- 14.00 **Discussion** **Business as usual? Radical change? Muddle through the middle?**  
Germany's three candidates for chancellor and their European policy ideas  
**Annalena Baerbock** | Federal Chairperson Bündnis 90/Die Grünen, MP and candidate for chancellor B'90/Die Grünen  
**Armin Laschet** | Prime Minister NRW, Federal Chairperson CDU and candidate for chancellor CDU/CSU  
**Olaf Scholz** | Federal Minister of Finance, Vice-Chancellor and candidate for chancellor SPD  
*Moderation: Ellen Ehni, Editor-in-Chief WDR Television*
- 15.15 **Discussion** **Europe, our house?**  
Answers to questions from young people about their future in the EU community of nations  
**David Maria Sassoli** | President European Parliament  
**Dr. Wolfgang Schäuble** | President German Bundestag  
*Moderation: Fritz Frey, Editor-in-Chief Südwestrundfunk & Isabel Schayani, Head of WDR4you, Moderator „Weltspiegel“*
- 16.00 **End**

**Studio expert**  
**Presenter**  
**Concept | Realisation**

**Prof. Dr. Daniela Schwarzer** | Executive Director for Europe and Eurasia, Open Society Foundations  
**Sabine Scholt** | Head of WDR Programme Group Current Affairs, Europe and Abroad  
**Ferdos Forudastan** | Head of WDR Europaforum, Chief editorial office WDR Television  
**Heribert Roth** | Editor WDR Programme Group Current Affairs, Europe and Abroad