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Japanisch-Deutsches Zentrum Berlin
ベルリン日独センター
Japanese-German Center Berlin

Industrial Leadership through Middle-Power Cooperation

What are the Winning Strategies for Germany and Japan?

Date: Monday, December 7, 2026, 4:00 PM – 9:00 PM (JST)
Location: German Institute for Japanese Studies (DIJ) Tokyo

By invitation only

Abstract

As the global economy shifts toward a multi-polar order, Germany and Japan face a shared strategic challenge: how to sustain industrial leadership in an era defined by geopolitical fragmentation, accelerated AI investment, and intensifying competition between major powers.

Against this backdrop, so-called “middle powers” risk being squeezed - unless they convert industrial depth, technology competence, and evolving AI ecosystems into comparative advantages. New strategies beyond general technology cooperation at the ministerial level, as in the G7 Hiroshima AI Process are desperately needed.

This symposium explores how Germany and Japan can turn middle-power realities into strategic advantages for shared innovation. It focuses on ideas and responses for cooperation on secure and sustainable supply chain standards, data sharing, as well as the development and deployment of industrial and physical AI.

Program

As of November 10, 2026
Language: English, Chatham House Rule

15:45 – 16:00 Registration

16:00 – 16:10 **Welcome**

Prof. Dr. Verena Blechinger-Talcott; Director, German Institute for Japanese Studies (DIJ)

Ambassador Takeshi Yagi; President, Japanese-German Center Berlin (JDZB) (tbc)

16:10 – 16:35 **Reviving Leadership through Cooperation**

Keynote Impulse: Prof. Dr. Daniela Schwarzer; President, Hertie School Berlin

German Perspective: H.E. Ambassador Petra Sigmund; Ambassador Extraordinary and Plenipotentiary of Germany to Japan

Japanese Perspective: H.E. Ambassador Mitsuko Shino; Ambassador Extraordinary and Plenipotentiary of Japan to Germany (tbc)

16:35 – 17:45 **Industrial Leadership – Rebuilding Comparative Advantage**

Prof. Dr. Hubertus Bardt; Senior Advisor, German Economic Institute (IW), Cologne (Impulse & Moderation)

Karl Deppen; President and CEO, ARCHION Corporation

Peter Löffelhardt; Head of Economic and Scientific Affairs, German Embassy in Japan

Dr. Hitoshi Suzuki; Senior Research Fellow, Institute of Geoeconomics

Q&A

17:45 – 18:55 **Digital Leadership – Cooperation on Trusted AI Innovation**

Dr. Martin Schulz; Chief Economist, Fujitsu Ltd. (Impulse & Moderation)

Ayaji Furukawa; Chief Specialist, Cyber Security Center, TOSHIBA Corp.

Celso Guiotoko; Chief Information Officer, JERA Co.

Yuji Ikai; Director for International Affairs, Information Policy Bureau, Ministry of Economy, Trade and Industry

Soichiro Saito; Head of CEO Office, NTT Security Holdings

Q&A

18:55 – 19:00 **Closing Remarks – From Middle Power Challenges to Joint Innovation**

Dr. Laura Blecken; Head of Programs, German Centre for Research and Innovation Tokyo (DWIH)

19:00 – 21:00 Reception

MC: Dr. Phoebe Stella Holdgrün; Head of Team Project Management, JDZB

In cooperation with

Dr. Martin Schulz; Chief Economist, Fujitsu Ltd.
Prof. Dr. Hubertus Bardt; Senior Advisor, German Economic Institute (IW), Cologne

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With kind support by

German Centre for Research and Innovation Tokyo (DWIH Tokyo)
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German Institute for Japanese Studies (DIJ) Tokyo
Japanese-German Business Association (DJW)

DWIH Tokyo Land der Ideen

AHK German Chamber of Commerce and Industry in Japan 在日ドイツ商工会議所

DIJ Deutsches Institut für Japanstudien

DJW 日独産業協会 Deutsch-Japanischer Wirtschaftskreis