



### IFAIR 2020

## A Year in Between Challenges And New Perspectives

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**Young Initiative on  
Foreign Affairs and  
International Relations  
(IFAIR) e.V.**

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**Dear IFAIR members, supporters, partners and friends,**

It is almost always impossible to summarize a year that has just passed using only a single label. The year 2020, however, is different. Many people from different parts of the world would certainly agree that it carries the title 'COVID-19 pandemic'. Events such as the assassination of Iranian military commander Soleimani, the explosion in the port of Beirut, the terrorist attacks of Vienna, or the poisoning of Alexej Nawalny in Russia fade in light of a year amid lockdowns, COVID-19 relief packages, the hope for an effective vaccine and above all: sickness and death, fears, standstill, and social distancing. The pandemic has further unveiled global inequalities and made them even worse. Social divide, as well as polarization, have increased around the globe. In connection to the pandemic, conspiracy theories and disinformation have reached an extent to which constructive discussions and dialogue between different perspectives have become difficult, if not impossible. And yet the year has also initiated positive developments. The most significant among them is the Black Lives Matter movement. Provoked by the death of George Floyd, the movement shifted the topic of racism back into the focus of a broader public – also beyond US borders. We may hope for 2021 that there will not only be a continuation of the discourse on racism but also some noticeable changes and improvements.

Due to the COVID-19 pandemic, IFAIR also needed to find new levels of creativity and flexibility, and in some instances had to put things to a halt. Some of our projects as well as our annual meeting had to be canceled or shifted online. Still, we look at 2021 with optimism and hope that we can continue our projects. At this point, we also want to mention that all of our activities and success stories would not have been possible without the support of many different institutions and individuals. Therefore, we want to seize this opportunity to thank everyone who has supported us on our journey so far.



### Our highlights in 2020

- We are happy to report that for the third year in a row, more of our new members are internationals rather than German nationals .
- We have welcomed eight new members to [IFAIR's core team](#).
- During the COVID-19 pandemic, we started our "IFAIR Series in Times of Corona", a series of short stories from around the world, including comments, perspectives and analyses on the pandemic, that we published in our [Think Tank](#).
- Happy Birthday, IFAIR! As part of the ten-year anniversary of IFAIR's foundation, we celebrated by traveling back in time and publishing a series of articles and short interviews with IFAIR alumni. Not only did we illustrate IFAIR's development as an organization over the past ten years, we also provided future perspectives for the coming year
- In August 2020, our "Latin America Weeks" took place in the course of which our Think Tank published all analyses and publications written as part of the successful Impact Group LACALYTICS II.
- We started our own Podcast series called "IFAIR Hot Seat". The concept of the podcast is that young people interview and debate with policymakers, academics and journalists about current hot topics in world politics and what it means to work in the field of international affairs.
- IFAIR founded the Impact Group 'Future of the International Monetary System' and started recruiting members for its project team. By the developing an online tool, the project aims at raising awareness about the structures of the international monetary system and make knowledge available to a broader population.



### Looking back on 2020

#### *Global Affairs*

Unfortunately, we had to cancel our idea competition “Glass Doors into the Backroom” due to the COVID-19 pandemic shortly before publishing the call for participants for our first round. After securing financial support from the program “Kreativität im Studium” by the AKB foundation and the “Humboldt-Universitäts-Gesellschaft”, we were able to organize a competitive search for innovative ideas for more transparency in diplomacy. The competition was structured into regional pre-rounds at the Università LUMSA in Rome, the Georg-August-Universität in Göttingen and the Humboldt-Universität in Berlin. Our plan was to select two finalists at each of those universities and then bring them together for a second round of the competition in Berlin. It was important to us to allow for a dialogue beyond the competition in a week-long workshop during this final stage. We hope to carry out the project in the near future with all our partner organizations.

#### *EU & Europe*

Shortly after their appointment as new regional directors for EU & Europe in early 2020, Robert Demendi and Julien Strandt settled into their new positions and set out to work on a call for articles, titled “The European Institutions Today - Still A Vessel For Unity?”. After going through the editorial process, the resulting seven articles were published over the course of September 2020. Overall, IFAIR’s regional area EU & Europe published 17 articles over the course of the year. In the summer, the idea of creating an IFAIR podcast sparked when Louis Mourier, then external to IFAIR, contacted the organization and started working on the project with the regional area EU & Europe. In late August, the first episode of the IFAIR podcast, named “IFAIR Hot Seat” was recorded, starring IFAIR co-founder Prof. Dr. Hanna Pfeifer. It explored topics around the German EU Council Presidency, the European involvement in the MENA region, as well as a background interview on how IFAIR was founded and what it meant for Prof. Pfeifer personally, as part of the organization’s 10th anniversary celebration. More generally, the concept of the podcast is that young people interview and debate with policymakers, academics and journalists about current hot topics in world politics and what it means to work in the field of international affairs. Feel free to check out the podcast. You can find “IFAIR Hot Seat” on all popular streaming platforms (Spotify, Apple Music, Google Podcasts etc.).



### *Latin America & Caribbean*

The Latin America and Caribbean region has made great progress in recent years. Economies in many regions are growing, democracy has been strengthened and poverty has been reduced. Emerging economies such as Mexico and Brazil have become increasingly important global players. The region is very heterogeneous and dynamic. Looking ahead to 2021, the realignment of Latin American and Caribbean relations with the United States will also be an interesting topic. In March 2020, Lena Apke and Carlotta Schilling joined IFAIR as new regional directors for Latin America & the Caribbean. In 2020, the think tank has provided a platform for young people to voice their opinions and analyze current issues through numerous articles on the Latin America & Caribbean region. In 2021, we would like to continue to contribute to promoting bilateral exchanges between young people from both regions through a call for articles, policy talks and setting up new collaborations. In August, as part of the Latin America Weeks on the Think Tank, we published all the analyses and publications that were written as part of the Impact Group LACALYTICS II. We looked back at our experiences at IFAIR and are currently collecting ideas and formulating plans for upcoming projects. Stay tuned!

### *Middle East & North Africa*

We were happy to receive several contributions from first-time authors with diverse backgrounds for the Think Tank. Some reports from the MENA region were featured in the Corona-Series. Further contributions are of course always welcome. While the global COVID-19 pandemic forced us to reconsider our original ideas we had for an impact group, we are hopeful that in 2021 we can carry out an event either online or in person. Stay tuned!

### *North America*

The year 2020 created some turbulence in transatlantic relations. The COVID-19 pandemic cost hundreds of thousands of lives on both sides of the Atlantic. The death of George Floyd sparked protests against police brutality across the US and inspired Europeans to join the cause. Lastly, the US elected a new President and lived through an unprecedented attack on its democracy by the former President who refused to concede. IFAIR's North America team was happy to receive numerous think tank contributions – articles as well as book reviews – that discussed these events and will continue to provide a platform for the exchange of different perspectives. Plans to organize a transatlantic conference for students and young



professionals with visits to Berlin and Washington, D.C. had to be put on hold due to the COVID-19 pandemic. We look forward to resuming our plans as soon as travel is safe again. We have many more ideas to be implemented in 2021. Stay tuned!

### *South & East Asia*

The year 2020 has put trends towards internationalization on hold all around the world. Notwithstanding difficulties resulting from the outbreak of COVID-19, many Asian countries successfully battled the virus with some of the world's most restrictive policies. Even during these times of a global pandemic, Asia still continuously experiences rapid and dynamic changes. Together with contributors from around the world, IFAIR will continue observing and covering challenges and opportunities South and East Asian nations face in the coming years. In summer 2020, IFAIR welcomed two new regional directors for the South and East Asia region. This brought in new perspectives to the organization. The highest priority for the South and East Asia regional directors in 2021 is to engage with young scholars and students with interests in Asian affairs through new communication formats to promote and encourage the sharing of knowledge through IFAIR's network channels. The regional directors also work closely with the coordinator of IFAIR's Impact Group "EU-ASEAN Perspectives" to plan the fourth edition of the project in 2021-2022.

### *Sub-Saharan Africa*

*Cooperation Partner: Youth Organization for the European & African Union (OJUEA), France*

After a successfully distributed call for articles at the end of 2019, various articles were published on IFAIR's Sub-Saharan African Think Tank division. The topics ranged from conflict and foreign relations between Sub-Saharan Africa and the world, particularly China's engagement on the subcontinent, to democracy and human rights, security issues, and the COVID-19 pandemic within Sub-Saharan Africa. In October, IFAIR took part in the Europe Africa Meeting, organized by the Youth Organization for the European and African Union (OJUEA). Here, Katharina Lange, IFAIR's Regional Director Sub-Saharan Africa, co-moderated the introductory session "Europe-Africa relationship: Close to the eyes, far from the heart" in collaboration with Thomas Castelli Taourel, Director General of Communications of the OJUEA. We would like to thank the OJUEA once again for the successful and inspiring partnership and look forward to further common projects in the future.



## Finances

### *Annual Financial Statement 2020*

Last year, IFAIR had to initially cancel some projects and their funding due to the COVID-19 pandemic. Nevertheless, IFAIR was again able to continue its steady development as a non-profit organization with a financially healthy balance. In particular, we would like to thank our members for actively supporting us in our work through their membership fees. We hope all the more to be able to (re)start these and even more projects this year.

Earnings in Euro		Expenses in Euro	
Members' Contributions	1 355.36	Administration (including team, IT, bank and other charges)	789.76
Donations	0.00	Project Expense "LACalytics"	1 628.18
Project Funding	0.00		
<b>Total</b>	<b>1 355.36</b>	<b>Total</b>	<b>2 417.94</b>

## Members

2020 saw a steady increase in regular members. IFAIR now has 238 regular and 20 honorary members. We are especially proud that we continue the trend of 2019 by having accepted more international new members (20) than German nationals (10).



### Our core team

Eight new faces joined IFAIR's core team in 2020, five of them in the first half of the year:

We are happy to welcome Carlotta Schilling as new Co-Regional Director for Latin America and the Caribbean. Carlotta currently studies International Relations and Economics in her bachelor's degree at the University of Erfurt and during an exchange semester at the Université Catholique de Lille, France. She works as a student assistant at the Chair for Institutional Economics and Economic Policy and is involved in the student council of her faculty where she is responsible for public relations. Carlotta interned at the German Foreign Ministry in the Crisis Prevention, Stabilization and Post-Conflict Reconstruction unit with a focus on the MENA region, and at the Körber foundation where she gained experience in project management related to her work for the EUSTORY network. Before Carlotta started studying, she worked as a "weltwärts" volunteer in a day-care center and with a mobile school for street children in Nicaragua, where she also taught German classes at a language academy. Carlotta speaks German, English, French and Spanish.



Additionally, Lena Apke joined IFAIR as Co-Regional Director for Latin America and the Caribbean. Lena is currently working as an intern at the department of sales and foreign trade for the region Latin America for a German automobile company. Prior to this, she graduated with a Bachelor's degree in International Cultural and Business Studies from the University Passau and studied as an exchange student for one semester in Guadalajara, Mexico. Lena gained practical experience as a volunteer of the German Red Cross in Bolivia and as an intern at the Konrad-Adenauer-Foundation Peru, the German Mexican Chamber of Commerce and Industry in Mexico-City and Germany Trade and Invest in Bonn. Lena speaks German, English, Spanish and is learning Portuguese.





Additionally, two new Co-Regional Directors for EU & Europe joined us:

Julien Strandt is currently enrolled in a triple master programme, studying International and European Governance as well as International Affairs. He distributes his time between the University of Münster in Germany, Sciences Po Lille in France, and the European campus of the Johns Hopkins University in Italy. During his bachelor, also in Lille and Münster, he specialised in international security and defence matters, writing his thesis about the future of European defence. Julien has gained practical knowledge through internships with the Economic Council in Germany, the Centre for International Crisis and Conflict Studies in Belgium, and at the French Parliament. He speaks German, French, English, Italian, and is learning Russian.



Robert Demendi is currently pursuing a Masters in “International Relations – European Studies” at the Andrassy University Budapest. His thematic focus is on EU policies, Public Diplomacy and EU foreign and security policy. Robert’s other research interests include the mechanisms of cooperation and power relations between EU institutions and the influence of lobby groups on the European legislative process. In the course of his Master’s studies he was a trainee at the German Federal Foreign Office, in the Economic Department of the “Permanent Representation of the Federal Republic of Germany to the European Union” in Brussels. Prior to this, Robert completed a bachelor’s degree in “Energy and Resource Management” and specialized in European and German energy and climate policy. After completing his bachelor’s degree, he completed two internships in Brussels in the field of public affairs. Robert speaks German, English and has basic knowledge of Spanish. Additionally, Charlotte Freihse joined IFAIR in April 2020 and is responsible for all activities related to press and public relations.







Charlotte is currently in the second year of the master's programme Peace and Conflict Studies at Otto-von-Guericke University with a focus on Digital Technologies in Conflict Resolution and Peacebuilding. She holds a bachelor's degree in Latin American Studies and Economics from University of Cologne and studied one semester at Universidad de Cartagena in Colombia. In parallel to her studies, Charlotte has gained practical experience through working for the magazines Handelsblatt and Wirtschaftswoche, the department of communications at the German Chamber of Commerce in Madrid and the German public service broadcasters NDR and ARD. She has been a student consultant for international mobility at University of Magdeburg before she started working as a freelancer for the radio station NDR Info and NDR Kultur at Norddeutscher Rundfunk (NDR) in Hamburg. Charlotte speaks German, English, Spanish and Italian.



In the second half of 2020, three more faces joined IFAIR's core team:

Sari-Luisa Jung is programme leader of the Impact Group EU-ASEAN Perspectives. She holds a Double Master's Degree (2019) in Chinese Law and Comparative Law at Nanjing University and the University of Göttingen. Her thematic focus lies on international law and policy research, especially in the areas of human rights and migration policies as well as security policy and development policy issues in general. Sari-Luisa has gained practical experiences through several working positions within the UN in New York, the Delegation of the European Union to the OECD and UNESCO in Paris, the German Corporation for International Cooperation GmbH (GIZ), the Permanent Mission of Germany and the International Labour Organization in Geneva and various international law firms for example in Shanghai. Sari-Luisa speaks German, English, French, Finnish, Chinese and is learning Spanish.





The South & East Asia region also received two new Co-Regional Directors:

Thai Linh recently received her graduate degree in Development Economics from the Friedrich-Alexander-University of Erlangen-Nürnberg. Her focus on international economics and political economy inspired her to write her master thesis on financial markets and the US-Chinese trade war. Prior to her graduate studies, she gained a wide range of working experiences through internships in both public and private sectors. Thai Linh holds an undergraduate degree in international relations with a focus on the rise of China and Asia's middle powers. She spent an exchange year at Yonsei University in Seoul as part of her studies and hosted her own talk show in the form of internet radio broadcasts on campus. Growing up in Hanoi, Seoul, and Berlin, Thai Linh speaks Vietnamese, English, German, and Korean.



Nikita Goch studies Political Science and Law at the University of Munich. He gained practical experience as a volunteer of the German Red Cross at the Vietnamese-German University in Ho Chi Minh City, Vietnam, where he was mostly engaged in cultural education, as well as in simulation games of the Academy for Foreign Service and the Academy for Military Administration. Nikita speaks English, Spanish, French, Vietnamese, Russian and currently is learning Chinese.





### **Outlook for 2021**

#### *Impact Group 'Future of the International Monetary System'*

The project will continue the development of an online tool in 2021 and plans to organize public relations activities via a number of online and offline events.

#### *Impact Group 'EU–ASEAN Perspectives'*

The year 2021 will mark the re-launch of the IFAIR Impact Group EU-ASEAN Perspectives. The EU-ASEAN Impact Group applies an innovative approach to help young people to initiate discussions about the future EU-ASEAN relationship. Our Impact Group focus will likely address the rising economic power of China and how it will shape the nature of the relationship between the EU and ASEAN.

#### *Call for Articles*

Our Think Tank is one of the main pillars of IFAIR's work and presents a platform for students and young professionals to express their thoughts and increase their impact on policymakers. We are currently searching for contributions for all regional areas. More information can be found [here](#).

We wish you all a successful 2021 and hope to see you again soon!

IFAIR's executive board

**Katharina Lange, Florian Schöler, Dr. Steffen Murau,**

**Jessica Kininger and Anne Laible**



### **A special thanks to our donors and partners**

Our work has only been possible in cooperation with our project partners and through the support of our donors and members. Our partners are mentioned in detail on the project pages on our website. On this occasion, IFAIR would like to particularly thank the following individuals and organizations that – among several others – made our work in 2020 possible:

- German Federal Foreign Office
- Diplomatic Magazine
- Hertie School, Berlin
- IFAIR Advisory Board (Dr. Wolf-Ruthart Born, Prof. Dr. Tanja A. Börzel, Dr. Thomas Gambke, Prof. Dr. h.c. Wolfgang Ischinger, Michael Knoll, Helga Maria Schmidt, Dr. Rainald Steck, Agnieszka Walter-Drop)
- Humboldt-Universitäts Gesellschaft
- AKB-Stiftung
- Osservatorio Germania – Italia - Europe
- Prof. Dr. Philipp Dann, Humboldt-University Berlin
- Gregor Christiansmeyer, Humboldt-University Berlin
- David Antoni, Youth Organization for the European and African Union (OJUEA)
- Thomas Castelli Taourel, Youth Organization for the European and African Union (OJUEA)
- Benjamin Junior Gnan-Kouassi, Youth Organization for the European and African Union (OJUEA)
- Prof. Dr. Hanna Pfeifer, Goethe-University Frankfurt am Main
- Louis Mourier, IFAIR Member
- Mathis Richtmann, Berlin
- Ludwig Schulze, Paris