



IFAIR 2021

Tackle Ongoing Challenges Together

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

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www.IFAIR.eu
[Wikipedia-Artikel](#)

Dear IFAIR members, partners and friends,

After a challenging year 2020, the year 2021 continued to have highs and lows in stock. New waves of the COVID-19 pandemic shaped its start, alongside broad demands for political participation and inclusion of citizens all over the world. As in previous years, the threat of climate change persists as a key driver for political mobilization and diplomatic efforts.

In January, the attack on the US Capitol to overturn President Trump's electoral defeat exemplified the fragility of democracy worldwide. On the flip side, the inauguration of US President Joe Biden marked a significant shift in US foreign policy with ramifications for politics across the globe.

On the other side of the Atlantic, Belarussian people continued to be on the streets in response to a rigged presidential election in 2020 resulting in a massive government crackdown of peaceful protest. Myanmar's military coup in February was another example of democracy's fragility. Similarly, several West African countries including Mali and Guinea witnessed military takeovers, thus bolstering the claim that there is a series of "contagious coups".

In late summer, the US military completed its withdrawal from Afghanistan facilitating the political takeover by the Taliban. Scenes from thousands of Afghans desperately trying to leave and seek safe haven abroad stick to our minds and re-invigorated a debate about refugees and forced displacement.

In Germany, the federal elections in September reshuffled the domestic political landscape with the departure of chancellor Angela Merkel after 16 years in power. This end of an era will surely restructure Germany's and the EU's foreign policy.



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Despite the difficulties of the past year, IFAIR was able to maintain a high level of activity and produced diverse output from think tank articles by young authors to events and podcast episodes. The pandemic has certainly posed difficulties with its lockdowns and tolls on personal well-being. However, we were happy to have launched multiple calls of articles which welcomed submissions by university students and young professionals. Our successful work has been made possible through the support of various institutions and individuals. Thus, we would like everyone here who has supported IFAIR in 2021. IFAIR's team is looking forward to more exciting endeavours in the coming months!



Our highlights in 2021

- We were happy to have lots of activity in our think tank with 18 articles published.
- Three articles were published in the Diplomatic Magazine covering land reform in Ukraine, White Saviorism and the donation industry, and on the concept of gross national happiness.
- We produced two new episodes of the podcast “IFAIR Hot Seat” on the freedom of press in Estonia and the link between sovereign wealth funds and pan-Africanism.
- IFAIR joined a meeting hosted by the Gesellschaft für Europabildung who brought a delegation of Georgian students and discussed questions of youth participation in democratic processes.
- We hosted an interview with Kristina Lunz, the director of the Center for Feminist Foreign Policy, on the definition, history, and implementation of feminist foreign policy and its interconnection with the climate crisis.
- IFAIR organized three online roundtables on the impact of the COVID-19 pandemic on global power structure, the impact of global supply chain legislation on human rights, and the political power of tech companies.
- We have welcomed four new team members: Lance Bradley, Lea Siebel, Gelila Enbaye and Vanessa Böttger.





Looking back on 2021

Global Affairs

We had a lot of fun last year with our new format—the IFAIR-roundtable. While our fireside chats are by design offline as they are conducted under Chatham House rules, we started with this new format. Instead of bringing diplomats and IFAIR members together, we focus on specific topics and invite anyone of our members to present on recent events for our roundtables. After a short introduction, we exchange our views on the matter in an informal and open style. Last year, we had roundtables on topics such as global supply chains, development of global human rights and shifting power structures during the COVID-19 pandemic. Next year, we are planning to discuss even more topics such as the global monetary system, Russian disinformation campaigns and Turkey's role in NATO. If you would like to present, please do get in contact with us!

We were also very happy to publish an interview with Christina Lunz, founder of the Centre for Feminist Foreign Policy and an accompanying article on feminist foreign policy in our think-tank.

For next year, we look forward to reviving our offline fireside-chats. We intend to organise talks with Eastern European countries to discuss European security policy in light of recent events. We also want to talk about the topic with US-diplomats together with politicians of the new German government.

In short, we are very much looking forward to returning to our usual formats after the pandemic and are optimistic that we have an exciting year ahead!

EU & Europe

In 2021, the regional area “EU & Europe” published one article, “Aid, Policy and Conflict: Shifting the EU Impact in Israel/Palestine”. Mainly, the regional area focused its attention on the production of the episodes for “IFAIR Hot Seat”, our podcast format. For the EU & Europe region, the team produced an episode with



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the Estonian journalist Mihkel Märtens on “Press Freedom, Estonia's Recent Government Crisis & How to Think like a Journalist”, which provided valuable insights into the contemporary Estonian political system. Furthermore, we produced another, yet to be released episode with an officer at the European Space Agency. 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, a concept which was broadened from the EU & Europe directorate to the whole of IFAIR with the production of episodes no longer focusing exclusively on Europe. Feel free to check out the podcast. You can find “IFAIR Hot Seat” on all popular streaming platforms (Spotify, Apple Music, Google Podcasts etc.).

Eastern Europe to Central Asia

Slowly but surely this regional area is coming back to life. Lea Siebel and Lance Bradley both came to IFAIR in 2021 and have been working to combine their expertise and interests to revitalize their regional office. Their first step was a name change. The overlap with other regional offices at IFAIR was one issue, but Lea and Lance also noticed new trends in research in their region that brought them to change the name. They essentially cover the post-Soviet space, but that term is becoming outdated; the best fitting solution was ‘Eastern Europe to Central Asia’.

With his connection in Estonia, Lance helped organized IFAIR's second podcast episode with an Estonian journalist. In the Autumn Lea and Lance started a Call for Articles with little success, and now they are working on new ways to attract more authors to IFAIR. In December Lance represented IFAIR while giving a workshop to Georgian and Armenian youth. He talked about the possibilities and difficulties of activism and political engagement in cooperation with the German “Gesellschaft für Europabildung e.V.” in Berlin.

For this upcoming year, Lance and Lea are planning an impact group and will be keeping a close eye on the developments in Ukraine.



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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 at 2021, however, this progress was massively weakened by the global Corona pandemic. On average, economic power in the region fell by 7.7 percent and poverty is rising again. In addition to existing economic and structural hurdles, the potential for social and ecological conflict in Latin America and the Caribbean will come increasingly into focus in 2022. Illegal deforestation in Amazonia to expand agricultural land poses an additional threat that will exacerbate the negative impacts of climate change.

Carlotta Schilling and Lena Apke continue as Regional Directors for Latin America & the Caribbean at IFAIR. In 2021, the Think Tank provided a platform for young people to voice their opinions and analyze current issues through numerous articles on the Latin America & Caribbean region. Also in 2022, we would like to contribute to promoting bilateral exchanges between young people from both regions through Call of Articles, Policy Talks and the expansion of collaborations.



In the past year we started a call for articles under the title “Picturing the International Relations of the LAC region” in order to depict the different aspects of the region's position in world politics and international affairs. The respective articles will be published soon on our Think Tank. We have looked back on our experiences at IFAIR and are currently collecting ideas and formulating plans for upcoming projects. Stay tuned!

North America

In 2021, the pandemic continued to keep the world busy. Although sufficient vaccines were available, vaccinating people on both sides of the Atlantic was more complicated than expected. Vaccination rates are now at a high level and infection rates are declining slightly. Nevertheless, society was shaken again with the advent of the Omicron variant, as the U.S. government took a shifting course between lockdown and openness. In addition, the new U.S. President, Joe Biden, was appointed to office in the spring of 2021. For many Americans, this meant turning away from Donald Trump's policies, which were characterized by protectionism, racism, and populism. Particularly at the beginning, Biden therefore used his newfound authority as president of the United States to re-join treaties and re-establish closer contact with trade partners and European states.

Due to changes in the regional division and the training of the new director, work could only be resumed gradually. Numerous think tank articles are planned for the future. Among them are articles dealing with these events from the pandemic and Joe Biden's crisis management. We will continue to provide a platform for sharing different perspectives and look forward to resuming planning once travel is safe again. There are many new ideas that IFAIR would like to implement in the North America division in 2022. Stay tuned!



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Asia Pacific

The year 2021 saw several challenges arising not only from the outbreak of the COVID-19 pandemic, but also from different dynamics in international politics. With contributors from around the world, we intend to monitor, analyse, and discuss the challenges, opportunities, and risks of Asian countries in the upcoming year.

The top priority of the Asia-Pacific regional area in 2022 remains unchanged: to increase outreach to young authors with an interest in policy issues in the Asian region to promote and support knowledge sharing through IFAIR's network channels. In addition, internationalization remains an important component in the regional area. In this regard, regional managers internally work closely together with other regional leaders as well as externally with other think tanks and NGOs to produce good content as well as to facilitate and encourage collaborations in the form of article exchanges, competition, and partnerships.

Sub-Saharan Africa

Africa's 2021 started ambitiously with the African Continental Free Trade Agreement which came into effect in January. It set a hopeful tone for economic cooperation across Africa. Furthermore, the past year saw a wave of restitutions of cultural objects from Africa, sparking public debate on looted heritage and stolen objects in Western museums. However, recent military coups in Mali, Chad, Guinea, and Sudan have also clouded the spirit of optimism on the continent.

IFAIR's regional division sought to engage in alternative debates on narratives about the continent with its call for articles in Spring 2021. A series of articles including on art and gender roles in conflict and insurgency in Mozambique were published on our website. Furthermore, regional director Gelila Enbeye joined the podcast "IFAIR Hot Seat" for an episode on sovereign wealth funds in Africa and the project of Pan-Africanism interviewing Thierry Dongala, managing director at Accountable Africa. The regional division looks forward to further revisiting narratives on Africa with articles and events in 2022!



Finances

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Last year, IFAIR had to again cancel and postpone some of its projects and their funding due to the ongoing global COVID-19 pandemic. Nevertheless, IFAIR was 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 to be able to implement the project ideas we have thought of next year.

Earnings in Euro		Expenses in Euro	
Members' Contributions	1 220.92	Administration (including team, IT, bank and other charges)	712.92
Donations	0.00	Project Expenses	0.00
Project Funding	0.00		
Total	1 220.92	Total	712.92

Members

2021 saw a steady increase in regular members, while several people also left IFAIR, due to finishing their studies. IFAIR now has 241 regular and 20 honorary members. We are especially proud that we continue the trend of the previous years by having accepted as many international new members (10) as German nationals (10).



Our core team

Four new faces joined IFAIR's core team in 2021.

We are happy to welcome Vanessa Böttger as IFAIR's new Regional Manager for North America. Vanessa is currently pursuing her Master's degree in North American Studies at the Free University of Berlin, the University of Copenhagen and the Chinese University of Hong Kong. Through her specialization in political science and economics, she is gaining



extensive knowledge of the United States of America and Canada. Her academic interests also include global trade and the future of Sino-American and transatlantic relations. Previously, Vanessa completed her Bachelor's degree in Economics and Politics at the University of Applied Sciences in Berlin. In addition, she gained practical experience as an intern in international institutions. She worked at the Representation of German Industry and Trade (RGIT) in Washington, D.C., at the International Chamber of Commerce (ICC) in Berlin and in the Trade Promotion Department at the Singapore German-Singapore Chamber of Commerce and Industry (SGC) in Singapore. Vanessa speaks German, English and French and has basic knowledge of Russian, Italian, Danish and Chinese.

We were also happy to welcome Gelila Enbaye as Regional Director Sub-Saharan Africa in January 2021. Gelila is a dual master's student at the London School of Economics and Sciences Po Paris studying International Relations/International Security. Before, she pursued her undergraduate degree at



the University of Mannheim in Political Science and Sociology and spent a



semester abroad at Sciences Po Paris in Reims. As an undergraduate student, she gained practical experience as a research assistant at the Chair of Political Science IV (University of Mannheim) and as an intern at the U.S. House of Representatives in Washington D.C.. In a gap year, Gelila spent time interning at the Konrad-Adenauer-Foundation in Abidjan/Côte d'Ivoire and at the German Federal Foreign Office in Berlin. Later, she gained practical experience with the business consulting company africon GmbH and in risk consulting with Control Risks. Gelila speaks German, English, Tigrinya, French and is learning Arabic.

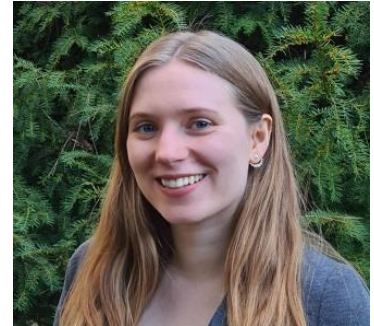
Furthermore, Lance Bradley joined IFAIR as Regional Co-Director for Eastern Europe to Central Asia in January 2021. Lance is a student of International Relations at the University of Tartu in Estonia. In Tartu, he has a Russian regional specialization and works alongside Professors and PhD candidates in the De Facto States Research Unit. Before moving to



Estonia, Lance studied economics and development at the University of Bayreuth in Germany. In his Bachelor's, he completed two semesters abroad: in Yekaterinburg, Russia and Iași, Romania. In his Master's he also studied in Odesa, Ukraine. He wrote his Bachelor's thesis on conflict resolution between Moldova and Transnistria, and now for his Master's thesis his focus is on the Donbas. He is especially interested in topics in civil society and geopolitics. Lance speaks English, German, Russian and is learning Romanian.



Finally, IFAIR welcomed Lea Siebel as Co-Regional Director for Eastern Europe to Central Asia in January 2021. Lea is currently studying an Erasmus Mundus Double Master in European Politics and Society in Prague, Krakow and Leiden. She previously studied European Ethnology at the University of Frankfurt and spent one semester as a Hessen-Wisconsin scholar at the University of



Wisconsin in the North of the USA. After internships at the U.S. Consulate General in Frankfurt and various NGOs, she supported UNICEF as a student consultant. Aside from her work at IFAIR, Lea also helps organizing EU simulations across Europe and advocates for meaningful youth engagement. Her interests lie in strengthening democracy and human rights, amplifying the voices of young people in politics and society as well as fostering international knowledge exchange. Lea speaks German, English, Spanish and a bit of Czech. She is also currently learning French and Russian.



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Outlook for 2022

Impact Group 'Future of the International Monetary System'

The project will continue its work in 2022 and expand the team. Our goal is to develop an interactive online tool that portrays the international monetary system as a web of interlocking balance sheets and to publish a paper that shows major steps in the system's transformation from 1999 to the COVID-19 pandemic. We also plan to organize public relations activities.

Impact Group 'Eastern Europe'

Our Impact Group will consist of sessions that offer participants the exciting opportunity to learn from experienced professionals while also having the chance to practice their newly learned skills in hands-on workshops and network with other motivated students and young professionals. The specifics of it will be announced soon, so stay tuned!

Impact Group 'Fire Side Chat'

We plan to organize a new series of fireside chats with representatives from the diplomatic community in Berlin. We hope that the pandemic situation will allow us to host in-person events under Chatham House rules.

IFAIR roundtables

We intend to host online sessions for IFAIR members and other IFAIR stakeholders to have informal discussions about current political topics such as misinformation in Russia, the role of Turkey in NATO, and the international monetary system.

Team

We will publish a call for new team members to join our vibrant community in spring 2022, and we will have executive board elections in autumn 2022.



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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 2022 and hope to see you again soon!

IFAIR's Executive Board

Katharina Lange, Florian Schöler, Dr. Steffen Murau,

Jessica Kininger and Anne Laible



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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 2021 possible:

- Diplomatic Magazine,
- German Federal Foreign Office,
- Gesellschaft für Europabildung,
- Global Climate Forum,
- Hertie School,
- IFAIR Advisory Board (Dr. Wolf-Ruthart Born, Prof. Dr. Tanja A. Börzel, Dr. Thomas Gambke, Michael Knoll, Helga Maria Schmidt, Dr. Rainald Steck, Agnieszka Walter-Drop),
- Janina Röttgerkamp,
- Kristina Lunz, Centre for Feminist Foreign Policy,
- Louis Mourier, IFAIR Member,
- Ludwig Schulze,
- Mihkel Märtens, freelance journalist,
- Thierry Dongala, Managing Director of Accountable Africa.