Rede von Bundeskanzler Merz anlässlich des Berlin Global Dialogues am 21. Oktober 2026 in Berlin

Mittwoch, 21. Oktober 2026 in Berlin

Dear Lars-Hendrik Röller,

Excellencies, distinguished Heads of State and Government,

Esteemed members of the business community,

Ladies and gentlemen,

Many thanks for your warm welcome in this building and in front of thirty meters real existing socialism. This is a great place to be here.

So thank you for your welcome, thank you very much for inviting me to this Berlin Global Dialogue. Many of you have been attending yesterday and the day before our first Investment Germany Summit here in this very place. Thank you for your contributions and your attendance. I think it was a great event and gives us reason for more optimism, even in Germany.

So many thanks to all of you who attended.

Now, where do we stand today?

Germany benefited for decades from a world in which the markets became increasingly open, trade barriers were removed and international rules were strengthened.

Thanks to this liberal economic order, our country grew into one of the world's largest economies. And under this liberal economic order, global wealth increased. Decades of prosperity lie behind us.

And today we face an uncomfortable truth: this world and the economic order have changed fundamentally: markets are being closed off, supply chains are being disrupted, and international institutions and rules have come under severe pressure.

Ladies and gentlemen, I want to find answers to change, to meet these changes.

And to shape the new economic order in a way that generates prosperity again for Germany and for Europe, this is the question we have to give an answer to.

My first answer:

We won't secure our prosperity by shutting ourselves off. We need reliable partners. Partners who will join us in pursuing shared interests, defending common values and shaping our future together. We have to become stronger and more sovereign collectively in order to remain open.

Because after all, it's been evident for some time now that some states are deliberately weaponising economic dependencies to serve their own supremacy at least in a certain region of the world and to weaken us.

Russia for example has been waging a brutal war of aggression against Ukraine for almost five years now and is not only endangering the territorial integrity of this country. Russia is endangering the freedom and security of our entire continent. The attempt to blackmail us by cutting off energy supplies failed. However, hybrid attacks – through sabotage, cyber attacks, drones and disinformation – continue to pose a threat to our security and our prosperity. They continue to fuel division within our societies.

And the conflict in the Middle East also has far-reaching economic consequences.

The ongoing blockade of the Straits of Hormuz and Bab al-Mandab has sent shockwaves through global energy markets and disrupted supply chains.

At the same time, China and the United States are locked in fierce competition for economic and military power and technological supremacy – especially when it comes to artificial intelligence.

A new wave of protectionism is throwing a wrench in the works of global free trade.

These deep geoeconomic changes are having a particular impact on our country. But there is reason to be nevertheless optimistic: the global economy is proving to be more resilient than expected in the face of these multiple crises – and that also applies to Germany. Our economy is growing again and is expected to expand by 1.3 percent, which is far more than was forecast in the spring. This is also a first sign that our reform policies are working.

But we know that our growth stands on shaky grounds. There's still much work to do, to achieve self-sustaining economic growth.

And the risks are immense. The truth is that we politicians and you, the business community, have only limited influence over these risks. However, we've stepped up to the plate and are tackling them as effectively as possible.

The Federal Government is therefore continuing to work towards new economic strength. We're working towards new economic resilience. We're seeking and forging new partnerships – for growth and prosperity in Germany and in Europe; for the growth and prosperity of old and new partners.

One response to our changed world has to lie in renewing our own strength. That starts with our competitiveness. Here we have the levers of change in our own hands.

One of the key levers is higher private investment. After all, lasting, self-sustaining growth isn't possible without it. That's why we've introduced new incentives to encourage investment in our country, namely the investment booster, the Germany Fund and the Growth and Innovation Capital for Germany initiative.

And we're improving the overall conditions for business and thus also for investment: we're cutting red tape and speeding up planning and approval procedures. We're modernising the labour market so that people can join the workforce and so that productivity rises. We're ensuring that social insurance contributions don't place an excessive burden on anyone. And we're working to bring down energy prices on a sustainable and long-term basis. There's still a lot to do – but we're on it.

Yesterday's Summit "Invest in Germany" with key international investors – which was held right here, you know – demonstrated that this approach is paying off: foreign investment in Germany is rising significantly. This shows that Germany remains an attractive location for investment. And we are continuing to work on this.

Innovations are another key lever for greater competitiveness. Germany is among world leaders when it comes to research.

We carry out cutting-edge research in nuclear fusion and quantum technologies, biotechnology and microelectronics, new energy and mobility technologies, as well as industrial AI. But we have to aim higher: we want to turn research findings into marketable products – and successful start-ups into the global market leaders of tomorrow.

This is the idea behind the Federal Government's High-Tech Agenda Germany. It promotes key technologies and accelerates the industrial commercialisation of innovations.

In Europe, too, competitiveness is right at the top of the agenda – as we saw at last week's European Council in Brussels: we're scaling back EU bureaucracy, easing the burden on companies and deepening the single market.

Now Ladies and gentlemen,

German companies have shown that they can compete successfully at global level. Our task as the Federal Government is to create the best possible conditions for them. So that business success can translate into new economic strength for our country as a whole.

And let me in this place paraphrase this in German:

Die Bundesregierung arbeitet an neuer wirtschaftlicher Stärke und Resilienz – für Wachstum und Wohlstand in Deutschland ,nicht nur in Deutschland, sondern in ganz Europa, für uns und für unsere alten und neuen Partner.

Eine Antwort auf die veränderte Welt muss sein, die eigene Stärke zu erneuern. Das beginnt mit unserer Wettbewerbsfähigkeit. Einer der wichtigsten Hebel für mehr Wettbewerbsfähgigkeit sind eben private Investitionen.

Deshalb haben wir mit dem Investitionsbooster, dem Deutschlandfonds und der Initiative „Wachstums- und Innovationskapital für Deutschland“ neue Investitions- und Innovationsanreize gesetzt.

Und wir verbessern die Standortbedingungen durch unseren Reformkurs: von Bürokratierückbau über die Modernisierung des Arbeitsmarktes und die Stabilisierung der Sozialabgaben bis hin zu bezahlbarer Energie. Das sind große Aufgaben, die lange liegen geblieben sind – aber wir arbeiten daran.

Meine Damen und Herren, deutsche Unternehmen beweisen, dass sie im internationalen Wettbewerb bestehen können. Unsere Aufgabe als Bundesregierung ist es, ihnen dafür die bestmöglichen Bedingungen zu schaffen: Damit aus unternehmerischem Erfolg neue wirtschaftliche Stärke für unser ganzes Land wird.

Ladies and gentlemen,

We can’t achieve growth, economic security and strength without new partnerships. More and more, new partnerships are becoming the economic infrastructure for our growth and prosperity. That’s another response to our world in crisis.

And I give you examples:

Along with its partners, Germany needs to shape this crisis-ridden world in a much more strategic way. One absolutely key element here is an ambitious trade policy.

Open markets and free trade are the foundations of our prosperity. That’s why we are expanding our trade relations.

Doing so will create new German strength, new European strength. I support the European Commission, which is negotiating and concluding new trade agreements all over the world.

Much has already been done – for example the signing of the EU-Mercosur Partnership Agreement with Latin America, as well as free trade agreements with Indo-Pacific states, and lots more. I firmly believe that all those who champion open, rules-based trade – and there are many who do – must band closer together.

This coming week, I will be travelling to our closest partners in Asia: Singapore, Japan and South Korea. All these countries are crucial for new alliances.

With the global situation as it is, however, economic openness alone is no longer enough. We also need to protect our markets and defend ourselves against those who don't play by the rules.

Anyone who disrupts the functioning of the markets – through unfair subsidies, overcapacities or aggressive pricing or an artificially undervalued currency – must expect a response. At the European Council meeting just a few days ago, we invited the Commission to urgently enhance the EU's toolbox with new instruments in order to address global macroeconomic imbalance more effectively than in the past.

President Macron and myself, we jointly presented detailed proposals which received, to my surprise by the way, unanimous support from the other EU Heads of State and Government at the European Council. A key element is a new, country-agnostic and reactive trade defence instrument. It will enable us to respond swiftly and vigorously to targeted attacks on our industry and supply chains, with the idea being that, in the best case, we will not have to use it.

We are not looking for a trade conflict.

That's why we support the dialogues on market distortions and excessive imbalances being conducted by the European Commission with trade partners. These – I repeat, excessive – imbalances are hurting our industry. We welcome the fact that dialogues have yielded the first results and we will continue theses dialogues. But we will also protect our industry with a new set of EU trade defence instruments because in sustainable trade relations, one side shouldn't profit at the expense of the other. That goes for all countries.

Another example:

Raw materials policy provides a good illustration of what modern partnerships need to do. The availability of rare earths and permanent magnets on the global market is heavily constrained. It's in our interest to rapidly reduce dangerous dependencies.

In the G7 we made resource security the priority it ought to be. At the most recent G7 Summit in Évian, we agreed for the first time in very concrete terms on how to join forces.

With a new Critical Minerals Alliance, we are kickstarting an investment campaign and together supporting projects along the entire value chain – from the extraction of raw materials to their processing and use in industry. The G7 could become a kind of "buyers' club" for joint purchasing of strategic raw materials.

Because the G7 as an ensemble has more weight on the global markets. And together we can reduce our dependencies.

The same by the way is true of the European Union. We want to set up a new agency for critical raw materials. It would ensure better coordination and condition of the purchasing and stockpiling of these raw materials for the 27 member states.

At national level, too, we're working to secure the raw materials supplies that German industry needs. As a strategic matchmaker, we are opening doors, bringing partners together and facilitating investment in the raw materials sector through financing instruments such as the raw materials fund.

Now, ladies and gentlemen, to the end, we are also expanding our raw materials partnerships – with countries like Australia and Brazil, Canada and Chile, India and Kazakhstan, Ghana and Argentina. We are gearing these partnerships even more to our industry's actual needs – so that shared interests turn into real projects.

Europe's "Promote, Protect, Partner" strategy, like we call it, takes a somewhat broader approach to building economic security. We will continue along this path with our National Economic Security Strategy.

All this serves one goal: eliminating strategic dependencies. By doing so, we want to make sure that, in future too, our companies can still get the raw materials they need for their production processes.

We can only do so if we work together. The state cannot mitigate all economic risks. And companies cannot ensure economic security on their own. We therefore have to cooperate more closely – in the shared interest of ensuring that Germany, that Europe, is a competitive location for business.

And one last example, ladies and gentlemen.

No one who wants to strengthen the global economic order can bypass the G20. It remains the key format for economic cooperation, for global prosperity. So let me say a few words about the G20 meeting in Miami in December.

I'm going to the Summit with three priorities.

Firstly: We want to use the G20 to work together to create the conditions for new growth. Because, today more than ever, economic stability and prosperity depend on the international environment.

To this end, we have proposed the "Miami Growth Agenda" to the US. We want to cut joint red tape, drive necessary structural reform and facilitate investment. Those are the preconditions for new growth and prosperity – not only here in Germany, but worldwide.

Secondly: In the G20, we need to talk about issues vital to the future of the global economy. For example: the opportunities and risks that artificial intelligence brings for innovation and prosperity; a secure, affordable and sustainable energy supply; how to deal with unfair trade practices; and the increasing public debt worldwide.

Thirdly, lastly, anyone talking about the future of the global economy must involve all major partners. Obviously, Africa belongs at the table. The African Union is a member of the G20, and so is South Africa. That's why I urge that South Africa be represented at the G20 Summit.

And Europe must have a say. I thank Donald Trump for inviting Spain, the Netherlands and Poland to take part in the discussions alongside the regular members. I will work to ensure that they remain part of the G20 loop in future.

But let´s be realistic: This dialogue is becoming ever more challenging: there is a huge disparity between the interests of China, India, the United States and not to mention Russia. But that is exactly why we need a forum where we can talk to each other and look for joint solutions to joint challenges.

Ladies and gentlemen,

With every optimism and with every confidence in our country, in our industry, in Europe and in our European partners, I say this: we are not helpless in the face of the international challenges, the challenges of transformation and transition. We are more than up to dealing with them.

In times of geopolitical tension and economic fragmentation, Germany and Europe can and will assert themselves if we play to our strengths.

Our greatest strength is and will remain our ability to forge partnerships and alliances of equals. Through old and new alliances, we are stabilising the foundations of our liberal economic order, what is: open markets, free trade and sound international rules. This is the blueprint for a resilient global economy and for our prosperity, for global prosperity. This is the blueprint for years of prosperity to come.

This Federal Government is working to that end at national, European and international level. Looking around here today, I see many political partners, many business representatives. Let us work together on that behalf. Together, and only together, can we make new growth and the next era of prosperity a reality.

So let me assure you, that Germany, that the Federal Government, will assume special responsibility in this process.

Many thanks for being in Berlin, many thanks for your attention.

Thank you all.