

APA Positions: Partnership with Asia

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Asia has played a major part in the global economic recovery. Asia's role, in particular China's, has become considerably more important. Asian countries are crucial dialogue partners when it comes to shaping international cooperation. They have to live up to this increasing responsibility. Despite its dynamic growth the Asia-Pacific region is still dependent on cooperation with its partners. The APA supports Asian countries' greater involvement in shaping international concepts and in international organisations.

Growth requires cooperation and competition.

German business calls for efforts to deter protectionist tendencies in world trade as well as national measures to protect domestic industries. We want to ensure an international level playing field for market access. Fair rules for technology transfer, the management of surplus capacities and fair access to resources are prerequisites for sustainable growth and competition among partners. Only trust and cooperation provide a sustainable basis for international business ties. Going it alone and closing off domestic markets are the wrong solutions. Multilateral trade liberalisation is the best solution. To complement this, the development of bilateral free trade agreements between the EU and Asia should be continued.

Asia's rise should be seen as an opportunity and not as a threat.

Asian markets have helped considerably to stabilise many German companies' turnover and profits. The German economy also benefits from the development of Asian markets through production on the ground.

Germany and Europe are crucial markets for Asian countries and key partners as regards long-term economic growth. Asia will benefit from German and European know-how and technologies.

German business assumes responsibility for sustainable development.

A sustainable supply of resources, water and food, efficient use of energy as well as climate and environmental protection are joint responsibilities. It is crucial for Asia to be integrated into the multilateral dialogue on this issue. Development policy concepts will also have to help meet this responsibility.

With innovative technologies German business both can and wants to help master the joint economic, ecological and social challenges. It supports Asia in developing a

sustainable growth concept to replace the quantitative model aimed at developing capacities. Through innovation and joint efforts in research and development we will find new solutions for efficient resource- and environment-friendly production. German business provides key technologies to combat climate change, for example for renewable energies and other areas relevant to the environment. Providing integrated environmental protection for the entire range of business is one of its strengths.

German business gladly uses these technologies in Asia to help boost sustainable growth. Technology transfer should be voluntary. We oppose conditions and obligations for technology transfers for joint ventures and obligatory technology transfer in public procurement. They undermine the joint goals of partnership cooperation. What applies to all areas of technology also holds true for environmental protection, that is, the state should provide beneficial framework conditions and incentive systems, for example through market-friendly prices for such resources as energy and water, and thus boost growth. Open markets are a key prerequisite.

Human rights and social policy development concern everyone

Several Asian states still have deficits as regards human rights and political participation. During periods of economic restructuring, aspects of internal stability become even more important. Public debate is focusing on China in particular. The Chinese government has achieved much: millions of people have been freed from poverty and the standard of living raised. Ensuring an appropriate economic and ecological standard of living for the population and social balance are crucial to achieving human rights and developing civil society. The process of social opening has to be continued. As for the continuing deficits Europe can refer to its own success story: Free societies and the right to participate are a precondition for stability and peaceful social cooperation in phases of reorientation. In a constructive dialogue we have to openly discuss deficits and acknowledge any progress made.

Instruments such as the Rule of Law Dialogue conducted between the German and the Chinese governments provide an excellent opportunity to strengthen mutual understanding of the respective traditions and cultures. Providing support to boost social and ecologically friendly economic growth is also an important task. German development cooperation can continue to play an important role, for instance, as regards the qualification of judges or providing advice for enhanced product safety.

Companies' economic interests are not incompatible with the observation of human rights – on the contrary: Stable societies based on the promotion of human rights are a precondition for sustainable economic success. Over the medium and long term positive living conditions, human rights and economic development will mutually strengthen each other. German business also has an interest in maintaining independent courts whose decisions are based on legal requirements.

German companies contribute to Asia's social development.

German companies can most effectively influence political and social developments in other countries by strictly complying with their standards and values at their

various business locations, thus acting as a role model. German companies document respect for the individual in their daily work. They care for their staff by providing safety training and establishing health standards. In their corporate culture they focus on staff participation. German companies set an example by implementing social and environmental standards. They thus act as a model for local companies and a partner for government bodies in developing rules and guidelines.

The APA believes in dialogue with Asia.

As a result of the global economic crisis and Asia's increasing political and economic importance, the international dialogue has become both more important and more ambitious. Europe, with a strong Germany, remains a central player in shaping the dialogue and is a key partner for Asian countries. We must make a stand for constructive but consistent representation of German interests against the growing self-confidence and increasing demands of China, above all on the international stage. We have to consider both sides' concerns and present our opinions confidently and openly.