

German Italian Young Leaders Dialogue – Spinelli Forum

Call for Applications – Deadline June 17, 2022

The *German Italian Young Leaders Dialogue – Spinelli Forum* is a joint initiative of the German Federal Foreign Office and the Italian Ministry of Foreign Affairs and International Cooperation in partnership with the German Council on Foreign Relations (DGAP) and the Italian Institute for International Political Studies (ISPI).

It offers a future generation of Italian and German leaders in the fields of politics, business, academia, civil society, media, and culture the opportunity to discuss the challenges faced by the German-Italian partnership as it shapes the future of the European Union (EU).

We are looking for young Italian and German candidates who would like to take part in the second edition of this dialogue format, which will consist of **two online workshops** (to be scheduled in September) and a **final in-person two-day conference** which will take place in Milan in October 2022 (the exact date will be set as soon as possible). Participants will have the unique opportunity to discuss relevant issues concerning the future of the EU and relations between the two countries in a stimulating environment, as well as to become the first members of a lasting network of German and Italian young leaders.

Thematic Focus

The EU and its member states face an increasing number of challenges that require close cooperation at the European level, as shown by the Russian aggression against Ukraine and its consequences for Europe and the world.

These challenges include fulfilling and preserving the promise of prosperity to the benefit of all European citizens, securing the global competitiveness of European economies, successfully transforming European economies to adapt to climate change and the digital revolution, and enhancing European security in the context of increasing geopolitical competition. As close partners and founding members of the EU, both Germany and Italy are key to advancing European cooperation to meet them.

In four working groups shops, participants will discuss important aspects of the EU's internal and external capacity to act from a German and Italian perspective. They will discuss differences in perception in order to reach a better understanding of the respective position and to identify synergies and priorities. Finally, they will develop policy proposals for joint European action. These four workshops are:

I. *European Foreign and Security Policy*

Russia's aggression towards Ukraine has been a watershed moment for Germany, Italy, Europe and the international rules-based order. With this war, Russia not only broke international law, shook up the European security order and directly attacked our shared values of freedom, democracy, and sovereignty but also caused Europe's most rapid wave of refugees in decades. The EU, its member states and NATO have shown remarkable unity, solidarity, and capacity to act, but managing the immediate and long-term transformations is as big a challenge as stopping the war. This workshop aims to explore ways of how the EU is to adapt its foreign and security policy to better address external challenges and unleash its foreign policy potential.

II. *New European stability and growth pact*

The reform of the European economic governance was ranking high on the EU agenda even before COVID-19: a Communication of the European Commission (February 2020) clearly listed the drawbacks of this governance in terms of complexity, consistency and lack of transparency. After Covid-19, the Stability and Growth Pact (SGP) was suspended but doubts mounted about its re-introduction or its replacement with other rules. A decision was supposed to be taken by the end of 2022 but the aggression against Ukraine and the ensuing redefinition of the EU strategic goals (and its related investments) are taking their toll on the ability to reform/re-introduce the SGP by next year. This workshop aims to explore ways to reform the current fiscal rules to tackle international challenges (also in the security/military field) and support investments for the EU green and digital transition while ensuring financial stability in a post-Covid context of high(er) public debts.

III. *Technology and Digitization in Europe*

The EU faces several challenges in the technological realm, often resulting in a call for European digital sovereignty. On the one hand, there is a strong need for fostering innovation and investment in key technologies. In addition, it is crucial to defend the EU's role as a global standard-setter within the digital world, which is increasingly shaped by major US technology companies and Chinese digital influence. On the other hand, growing issues such as cybersecurity and digital disruption require determined countermeasures. This workshop aims to explore ways to strengthen the EU's sovereignty in the highly contested digital sphere.

IV. *A European Green Deal and the challenges of the energy transition*

The Russian aggression against Ukraine and the European reaction to such move have put the spotlight on the EU's dependence on hydrocarbons from unreliable sources. In the short run, Brussels' plans to reduce the bloc's reliance on Russian gas by end-2022 increase the risk of higher greenhouse gas emissions. In the long run, however, this could spur further investment in renewable energy sources (RES) and accelerate the green transition. However, there is a considerable gap in RES investment needed to achieve the EU's 2050 climate neutrality target. This workshop aims to explore strategies to increase the EU's energy security while safeguarding the green transition.

Target Group

German and Italian young leaders and high potentials from the fields of politics, business, academia, civil society, the social sector, media, and culture with a strong interest in European cooperation.

Requirements

- Aged between 25 and 35 years
- First university degree (BA or MA) or equivalent vocational qualification
- Strong interest/expertise in European cooperation, particularly in the fields of foreign policy, economics, or social and climate policy (see the selection criteria for details)
- Excellent command of English

How to Apply

Applications will only be accepted via e-mail and should include the following information:

1. A completed [application form](#)

2. A CV (max. two pages, including information on the applicant's education and relevant work experience)
3. A short video (3 minutes max) to introduce the candidate and his/her motivation to take part in the *German-Italian Young Leaders Dialogue – Spinelli Forum*;
4. letter of motivation describing what the EU should prioritize in one of these fields and how your country could contribute to this end:
 - European Foreign and Security Policy
 - New European stability and growth pact
 - Technology and Digitization in Europe
 - A European Green Deal and the challenges of the energy transition

N.B.

The participation in the in-person conference in Milan is compulsory. The participation in the preliminary online workshops is also strongly recommended, being preparatory to the final conference.

Should a Participant be unable to attend the conference at the last moment for health or professional reasons, this must be presented to the organisers with a written justification (e.g. medical certificate).

Application Deadline

June 17, 2022

Travel expenses and accommodation will be covered by the organizers.

Contact

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Disclaimer The selection of candidates is carried out at the sole discretion of the Steering Committee consisting of representatives of all partner organizations.