

B20 Press Release

B20: The German business community passes the torch to Argentina

- **G20 must not allow itself to be divided**
- **Daniel Funes de Rioja, successor of Jürgen Heraeus as B20 Chair**
- **Trade, energy and climate, digitalization, infrastructure, education and training important B20 issues**

German business passes on the presidency of the official G20 business dialogue, the Business20 (B20), to Argentina. The hand-over ceremony will be held in Buenos Argentina on Wednesday. “We can be proud of what we have accomplished as B20 Germany,” said B20 Chair Jürgen Heraeus on Sunday in Berlin. The handover will take place one month before Argentina will officially assume the chairmanship of the G20 and the 11th Ministerial Conference of the World Trade Organization in Buenos Aires.

“The B20 is crucial for an effective G20 that shapes globalization,” emphasized Heraeus. Under the German Presidency, more than 700 leading business representatives from all economic sectors developed joint policy recommendations addressing the major challenges of our time. For the first time, the B20 focused on the topics of digitalization, climate change, and energy efficiency.

“The G20 Summit in Hamburg was a partial success, given the difficult negotiating climate. We are nonetheless disappointed that the G20 did little more than secure the status quo in many areas such as international trade,” continued Heraeus. The G20 must now fulfill the obligations of Hamburg. “The G20 must not allow itself to be divided.” It must create a global environment that promotes sustainable growth and development around the world. This includes open markets and climate protection.

“We stand with B20 Germany for open and rules-based markets. At the same time, we agree that we must ensure that the benefits from globalization are widespread in our societies. For example, we need to invest more in education and lifelong learning”, Funes de Rioja added. B20 Argentina will be led by Funes de Rioja as Chair, designated by the Argentine government. Daniel Funes de Rioja is the former President of the International Organisation of Employers (IOE) and also participated in the B20 Germany process as Co-Chair of the Employment and Education Taskforce. He will be assisted by six business chambers – ADEBA, BCBA, CACS, CAMARCO, SRA and UIA – as Co-Chair. B20 Sherpas Carolina Castro (Executive Sherpa) and Fernando Landa (Policy Sherpa) are tasked with bringing the B20 to life. “This is a great opportunity for our region and our country, taking into account the transformation process Argentina is going through and the structural reforms the government is putting in place to face the challenges of open market economy, the globalization process, and smart integration”, said Funes de Rioja.

Regarding the handover, the presidents of the Federation of German Industries (BDI), the Confederation of German Employers’ Associations (BDA), and the Association of German Chambers of Commerce and Industry (DIHK) stated:

BDI President Dieter Kempf:

“The German G20 Presidency succeeded in countering the rising protectionist trend. This is a success. Economic challenges cannot be solved by go-it-alone nationalist approaches.” The G20, however, missed the opportunity to agree on a future-oriented trade agenda. In the Hamburg Declaration, there is little to be found on the current questions of digital trade and investment. “The multitude of crises occurring at the same time is poison for the global economy. Uncertainty is paralyzing innovation.” Instead of protectionism, a global framework was needed that promoted growth and jobs. These are also the objectives of the Argentinean Presidency, for which the German industry wishes the B20 Argentina leadership all the best.

BDA President Ingo Kramer:

“Free trade and open markets are the source of global prosperity. We are very pleased that B20 has made it clear that protectionism and a national silo mentality lead to deadlock. We welcome the fact that the G20 have placed many of our demands regarding work and education on the political agenda. Now the G20 members have to deliver. Digitization and demographic change are transforming the world of work profoundly. It is good that the G20 thus agreed to invest more in education and training, and in particular in strengthen vocational training. More competitiveness, growth, and prosperity can only be secured if everyone had the chance to receive a good education and employment. We therefore welcome the G20’s plans to improve the chances of women and girls’ career opportunities through better access to education, especially in MINT subjects.”

DIHK President Eric Schweitzer:

“Many German SMEs have been very involved in the B20 process. The topics directly affect their business. An example for this are trade rules which have a great impact on German exports. The B20 therefore committed itself to providing SMEs with even better access to global trade as well as financial and digital infrastructure. The G20 Hamburg Declaration recognizes the important role of a dual education system for companies, but unfortunately falls behind our expectations and is not very concrete. The Argentine Presidency has the power to place SMEs and vocational training on the agenda for the G20. For the G20 members, the promised reforms are to be implemented quickly. “

Voices of B20



Emma Marcegaglia, Chair of the B20 Trade and Investment Taskforce, President of BusinessEurope and Chairwoman of the Board of Eni

The President of BusinessEurope and Chairwoman of the Board of Eni, Emma Marcegaglia, led the B20 Trade and Investment Taskforce. “The B20 welcomes the G20’s commitment to open markets, the willingness of its members to fight protectionism, and their announcement to work together towards a successful WTO ministerial conference in Argentina later this year”, emphasized Marcegaglia. However, the language of Hamburg often remains painfully vague and open to interpretation. “Protectionism and mercantilist policies can in no way propose a solution to concerns about inclusiveness. Quite the contrary, they hurt the poorest the most,” Marcegaglia stated. “There is also too little on digital trade and investment in the Declaration”.



Kurt Bock, Chair of the B20 Energy, Climate and Resource Efficiency Taskforce and Chief Executive Officer BASF

“Effective climate protection needs consistent global action. B20 welcomes the fact that 19 of the G20 governments reaffirmed their strong commitment to the Paris Agreement at the Summit in Hamburg. We regret, however, that the Climate and Energy Action Plan for Growth does not include a path to develop mechanisms for global carbon pricing,” said Kurt Bock, Chair of the B20 Energy, Climate and Resource Efficiency Taskforce and CEO of BASF. According to Bock, the B20 is providing the innovations required to combat climate change. “I am also pleased that the G20 members have agreed to launch a G20 dialogue on resource efficiency. This is an important step in the right direction”, explained Bock.



Oliver Bäte, Chair of the B20 Financing Growth and Infrastructure Taskforce and CEO of Allianz

“I applaud the G20’s commitment to international economic and financial cooperation, as this will ultimately create opportunities and wealth for more people across the globe,” said Oliver Bäte, Chair of the B20 Financing Growth and Infrastructure Taskforce and CEO of Allianz. The G20 Declaration supports the relevant B20 recommendations to enhance the role of Multilateral Development Banks to act as catalysts to crowd-in private investment in infrastructure. Oliver Bäte: “If we achieve the targeted 25 to 35 percent increase of private infrastructure investments over the next three years, large communities will greatly benefit. This is why implementing the Hamburg decisions to create transparency on investible infrastructure projects for potential investors is crucial.”



Klaus Helmrich, Chair of the B20 Digitalization Taskforce and Member of the Executive Board of Siemens

“I am pleased that the G20 members want to close the digital divide, promote digital literacy in all educational paths, and invest more in infrastructure”, emphasized Klaus Helmrich, Chair of the B20 Digitalization Taskforce and Member of the Executive Board of Siemens. The G20 recognizes the digital transformation as a driving force for global, innovative, inclusive and sustainable growth. By 2025, all citizens are to be digitally connected. “However, as business we hope for more regarding global standards, IT security, Industry4.0 and the potential of artificial intelligence”, Helmrich stated.



Gerhard F. Braun, Chair of the B20 Employment and Education Taskforce and Vice President of the Confederation of German Employers' Associations (BDA)

“The G20 leaders recognize the effect of digitization on employment and the need to educate and train people with the necessary skills for the future of work”, said Gerhard F. Braun, Vice President of the Confederation of German Employers' Associations (BDA) and Chair of the B20 Employment and Education Taskforce. However, there is no mention of planned efforts to promote more diverse forms of work or creating more inclusive labor markets in general. “The G20 members need to rework this. We need to remove labor market barriers in order to allow better access for women and young people and to foster the transition from informal to formal employment in emerging economies”, Braun added.



Klaus Moosmayer, Chair of the B20 Responsible Business Conduct and Anti-Corruption cross-thematic group and Chief Compliance Officer at Siemens

The cross-thematic group on Responsible Business Conduct and Anti-Corruption was led by Klaus Moosmayer, Chief Compliance Officer at Siemens. “The endorsement in the Hamburg Leaders’ Declaration of four sets of High Level Principles aimed at fostering integrity in the public and private sector reflects the importance of the issue and is strongly welcomed by the B20”, Moosmayer underlined. The B20 specifically welcomes the G20 Leaders’ recognition that effectively preventing and combating corruption in customs is essential to an enabling business environment and investment climate. “That Beneficial Ownership Transparency as an important tool to fight corruption found its way into the G20 Leaders’ Declaration as well as the Hamburg Action Plan, is a significant signal”, Moosmayer added.



Rudolf Staudigl, Chair of the B20 SMEs cross-thematic group and Chief Executive Officer of Wacker Chemie

Small and Medium Enterprises are another B20 focus. The cross-thematic group was led by Rudolf Staudigl, Chief Executive Officer of Wacker Chemie. Staudigl stressed that in all regions of the world, SMEs are drivers of economic growth, employment and innovation. Regarding G20 actions he said: “Specifically, in my view, free trade is an important lever for giving SMEs better access to global supply chains and access to financing and digitalization.” That is why, according to Staudigl, it is disappointing that the role of SMEs as backbone of many countries’ societies is not paid nearly enough attention in the Hamburg Leaders’ Declaration.

You can find the B20 Recommendations [here](#).

About the B20

The Business 20 (B20) is the official G20 dialogue with the global business community. The mission of the B20 is to support the G20 through consolidated representation of interests, expertise, and concrete policy proposals. Furthermore, the B20 promotes dialogue among policy-makers, civil society, and business at the international level.

The German B20 is organized by the Federation of German Industries (BDI), the Confederation of German Employers’ Associations (BDA), and the Association of German Chambers of Commerce and Industry (DIHK). The B20 is headed by B20 Chair Jürgen Heraeus (Heraeus Holding). He is assisted by the three members of the Executive Committee Dieter Kempf, President of BDI, Eric Schweitzer, President of DIHK, and Ingo Kramer, President of BDA, as well as B20 Sherpa Stormy-Annika Mildner. B20 Germany has more than 700 members from all sectors and all G20 members, representing the entire G20 business community.