

# Panel Discussion



**From the Sidelines to the  
Spotlight: Xenophobic Rhetoric  
in German Political Discourse**

**26 June 2024, 18:00 - 19:30  
Henrik Enderlein Forum, Hertie School  
(2nd floor, Friedrichstr. 180, 10117  
Berlin)**



# Programme

**Welcome and Keynote** by Prof. Dr. Cornelia Woll, President of the Hertie School

## Panel

Dr. Marcus Engler, Migration Researcher at the German Institute for Integration and Migration Research (DeZIM)

Gilda Sahebi, Freelance Journalist (ARD, taz, Der SPIEGEL) and Author of "Wie wir uns Rassismus beibringen" (2024)

Inga Matthes, Legal Advisor for Asylum and Migration Law at the German Red Cross

N.N., Political Representative

Moderator: Prof. Dr. Anke Hassel, Professor of Public Policy at Hertie School

**Questions & Answers**

**Fingerfood / Drinks**

**Register by  
scanning the  
QR code**



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# Event Description

With this event, we aim to explore the critical issue of how racialized xenophobic rhetoric, once confined to the far right, has permeated mainstream political discourse in Germany. This shift not only profoundly impacts migrants' rights and their integration into society but also raises significant concerns about the future of German democracy.

Currently, we observe a growing normalization of extremist positions, detracting from thoughtful deliberations on the vision of a "post-migrant" German society (Foroutan, 2019). The stigmatization of migration, famously referred to as "the mother of all problems" by Horst Seehofer in 2018, has transcended mere rhetoric and has become translated into tangible policy consequences. This can be seen in Chancellor Olaf Scholz's advocacy for large-scale deportations, reduced benefits for asylum-seekers, and the government's current inquiry into the externalization of asylum procedures.

Coinciding with the implementation of the new German Citizenship Act on June 26, 2024, our panel will critically examine the shift in German political discourse that has accelerated in the past months. Bringing together representatives from academia, the media, civil society, and policymaking, we will discuss the vital role that political discourse plays in fostering and protecting a truly inclusive society.

As we navigate this pivotal year for democracy, it is more urgent than ever to understand and address the mainstreaming of xenophobic rhetoric. Our event aims to foster open and nuanced conversations about the state of German political discourse and its policy implications.

We look forward to your participation in this important discussion!