



PROFESSOR ACHIM WAMBACH, PHD

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is president of ZEW and professor of economics at the University of Mannheim since April 2016. He is a member of the Scientific Advisory Board of the German Federal Ministry for Economic Affairs and Climate Action, which he chaired 2012–2015. From 2014 to 2022 he was member of the German Monopolies Commission and served as its chairman from 2016 to 2020.

Achim Wambach obtained a PhD in physics at the University of Oxford and a Master of Science in economics at the London School of Economics. He completed his habilitation thesis in economics at the University of Munich. Before joining ZEW he served as Director of the Institute for Economic Policy (iwp) at the University of Cologne. In 2017–2018, he was president of the German Economic Association (Verein für Socialpolitik).

RESEARCH INTERESTS

- climate policy
- competition policy
- digitization
- health markets
- industrial policy
- market design

POPULAR SCIENCE BOOKS



“We need to rethink climate protection: Less moral appeals to individuals, and instead better political frameworks and more trust in markets that will make climate protection economically viable.”

published 2022



“Data instead of prices, monopolies instead of competition, sharing instead of ownership, crowdworking instead of social partnership: The digital revolution is turning the way of doing business upside down.”

published 2018

“A RESILIENT EUROPEAN ECONOMY”

The Russian war in Ukraine has shaken the European Economy. The German Chancellor has proclaimed a “Zeitenwende” and has authorized a massive rise of the defense budget. The run-down of Russian energy deliveries has shown the vulnerability of the European economies, which were already under pressure due to supply chain interruptions during COVID-times. In a time when geopolitical tensions rise, when China is forcefully pursuing its “Made in China” strategy, and when the USA with its “inflation reduction act” is shifting production to America – how should Europe position itself? How can the European economy become more resilient and what can Europe contribute to the global balance of power? The talk will report on the steps taken by European policy makers for the “strategic autonomy” of the European economy and will discuss its economic merits and pitfalls.

(The presenter was chairing the German Monopolies Commission when it issued its report on “Chinese State Capitalism: A Challenge for the European Market Economy” in 2020; he is member of the working group of the scientific advisory board at the Federal Ministry for Economic Affairs and Climate Action on the report on “Geostrategic Trade Policy” which was published in autumn 2023.)

“THE STATE OF COMPETITION IN EUROPE”

In the digital economy European competition authorities have been leading in going against misuse of dominant positions by the “digital giants”. The Digital Markets Act, which came into force in May 2023 is a new European regulation for dominant platforms. It provides rules for data provision and self-preferential treatment. New developments are to make competition law more open for sustainability goals. At the same time, profit margins of European firms are increasing, and common ownership is on the rise. So what is the state of competition in Europe? The talk will provide an overview of the recent developments in Europe and the reasons for these. Recommendations for promoting fair competition and a level playing field are explored.

(The presenter co-chaired the German federal commission on “Competition Law 4.0” in 2019. He contributed to numerous reports of the German Monopolies Commission (which he chaired in 2016–2020) on the digital economy, the most recent one in 2021: “Recommendations for an Effective and Efficient Digital Markets Act”.)

“EUROPE’S PATH TOWARDS CLIMATE NEUTRALITY”

The EU commission has proposed its European Green Deal. The goal is to reduce net greenhouse gas emissions by at least 55% by 2030 and to achieve carbon neutrality by 2050. Key building blocks of European climate policy are two emission trading schemes, one for industry and energy, the other for buildings and transport, and a social climate fund. To prevent carbon leakage, a carbon border adjustment mechanism was established, entering into force on 1st October 2023. The talk describes the situation and reports on the progress of European climate policy. Will it work, what is contentious, and what else is required?

(The presenter is member of the scientific advisory board at the Federal Ministry for Economic Affairs and Climate Action which wrote several reports on climate and energy policy, most recently on “Transformation to a Climate Neutral Industry: Green Lead Markets and Climate Protection Contracts“ in 2023. He is author of a popular science book on climate policy, published in 2022.)

ZEW is one of the leading European economic research institutes and enjoys a strong reputation throughout Europe. Leitmotif is the analysis and design of well-performing markets and institutions in Europe.

ZEW'S ACTIVITIES FOLLOW TWO PRIMARY OBJECTIVES

- policy-relevant economic research
- evidence-based policy advice

ZEW investigates how the institutional framework and the rules of markets should be designed in order to enable the sustainable and efficient development of the European economy. The shared focus of our 130 researchers across the institute is on the question of which institutions and economic policies are needed in order to reach socially desirable outcomes.

ZEW'S RESEARCH UNITS

- Corporate Taxation and Public Finance
- Digital Economy
- Economics of Innovation and Industrial Dynamics
- Environmental and Climate Economics
- Health Care Markets and Health Policy
- Inequality and Public Policy
- Labour Markets and Social Insurance
- Market Design
- Pensions and Sustainable Financial Markets

Theory-based empirical economic research shapes the profile of ZEW. One of the institute's expertises lies in the field of applied microeconometrics based on high-quality (often proprietary) data in combination with innovative causal identification designs. A ZEW speciality is the use of market design methods, which combine elements of auctions and matching theory, as well as laboratory and field experiments, across different fields. Currently, ZEW employs 200 people, of which two thirds are scientists.

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