



EDITORIAL

Dear Readers,

It is with good reason that the middle class is increasingly attracting attention, both in Germany and internationally. It is not only in this country that questions are being asked about its self-image and its outlook. The members of this section of society, which is so important for growth and development, appear to be unsettled, both economically and politically. What unifies them is the worry of social decline. Many members of the middle class can no longer unequivocally answer yes to the typical question as to whether their children will be better off than themselves.

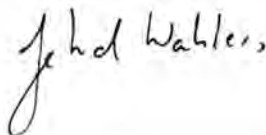
Developments within the global economy are making upward social mobility possible, but are also bringing instability in their wake. Correspondingly, we are experiencing two developments moving in opposite directions. It is middle class people in particular who strive to make provisions for their own children and their old age and who are intensifying their efforts to save. At the same time, state debt is continuing on a massive scale – with possibly devastating effects in Europe and in the United States. The middle class encompasses the broad mass of contributors to the economy who will most likely have to absorb the fallout from these developments.

However, it is not in the industrialised countries, currently engaged in a battle with their debt crises, in which the middle class is experiencing its largest increase. Instead it is in the emerging economies, where the populations and the rate of growth are rising rapidly, that the middle class is also increasing most strongly. The positive development in the emerging economies is welcome since it indicates strong economic and social dynamics. The middle classes in the emerging economies are exerting great influence on global economic developments. Whether this influence is driving forward the consolidation or introduction of democracy, of the rule of law and of a Social Market Economy is, however,

not at all certain. In some emerging economies, the middle classes can actually put the brake on social progress, out of worry about upward social mobility of lower classes, out of fear of chaos induced by upheavals or simply because a great number of their members are state employees and afraid of losing their jobs. You will find numerous examples on this in the articles of the current issue.

For the international work of the Konrad-Adenauer-Stiftung, the members of the middle classes represent an important target group. This is where we find people in positions of responsibility and multipliers for our political advisory work. They become involved in the parties that we cooperate with at an international level. Through their civil society involvement, but first and foremost also through their entrepreneurial activities, they can form the foundation of a socially responsible economic system, as is the case in Germany. To us, the Social Market Economy is such a system. We thus promote it in our dialogue on regulatory policy throughout the world. In our efforts in this area, we are able to rely time and time again on the support from people in positions of responsibility in associations, trade unions and parties in the respective countries.

The significance of the middle class for democracy and development should not be overestimated. But we should still view its current growth and the tendencies towards an increasing striving for participation, which is apparent everywhere, as a positive product of globalisation, which needs to be further supported and strengthened in its broad impact.

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Gerhard Wahlers". The signature is written in a cursive style with a large, looped initial 'G'.

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Deputy Secretary General

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