

**Invitation to the RIFS Conference:
The International Politics of Just Food System Transformations**

**30 June 2026 | 9:00 AM – 4:30 PM
Berlin, Germany**

You are warmly invited to the RIFS Conference on *The International Politics of Just Food System Transformations*, bringing together researchers and practitioners.

The conference will explore pathways toward a just transformation of food systems in today's changing geopolitical context. While industrialised food systems have improved food availability, they are also key drivers of environmental degradation, inequality, and human rights challenges. Addressing these issues requires systemic change to ensure healthy diets for all, sustainability within planetary boundaries, and socially just livelihoods.

Discussions will focus on:

- Pathways to transformation, including planetary health, diversification and the role of smaller scale producers
- Social foundations of just food system transformations, such as human rights, justice, and inclusive governance
- International dynamics, including trade, digitalisation, finance and EU–Global South relations

Overall, the conference aims to identify how collaboration between researchers and practitioners can be strengthened in the context of current geopolitical tensions and political backlash against sustainability. It aims to initiate a dialogue between these different stakeholders and discuss which questions we need to ask in research and societal debates.

Location:

Helmholtz Gemeinschaft Deutscher Forschungszentren e.V.
Anna-Louisa-Karsch-Straße 2
10178 Berlin

Please register to take part:

<https://eveeno.com/justfoodsystemtransformations>

The conference will be held in English. Lunch and coffee will be provided throughout the day.

We look forward to your participation.

Programme

9-9.30am: Registration and coffee

9.30-9.45am: Welcome and presentation of workshop programme (Karen Siegel, RIFS)

9.45-11.15am: **Short talks: Why do we need a just food systems transformation?**

- Hermann Lotze-Campen (Potsdam Institute for Climate Impact Research, PIK)
- Mireille Remesch (Essen mit Zukunft e.V.)
- Sarah Hackfort (Technopolis Group and Humboldt-Universität zu Berlin)

11.15-11.45am: **coffee break**

11.45am-1pm: **debate in House of Commons format**

1-2pm: **lunch break**

2-3.30pm: **Panel debate**

How can we improve collaboration between researchers and practitioners? What is required in the current geopolitical context, given the increasing backlash against sustainability efforts?

Panellists:

- Doris Fuchs (RIFS)
- Bettina Rudloff (German Institute for International and Security Affairs, SWP)
- Merle Kampeter (Romero Initiative)
- Lukas Drees (Institute for Social-Ecological Research (ISOE))
- Nicole Paganini (WEAVE Strategies)
- Anke Kähler (Atelier Ernährungswende)

Moderation: Karen Siegel (RIFS)

3.30-4.00pm: **coffee break**

4.00-4.30 pm **Closing remarks and farewell** by the organizers

The conference is organised in collaboration with the Potsdam Institute for Climate Impact Research (PIK), Essen mit Zukunft e.V. and Romero Initiative (CIR).



POTSDAM INSTITUTE FOR
CLIMATE IMPACT RESEARCH



About the speakers

Karen M. Siegel holds a PhD in Politics from the University of Glasgow, UK and is a Senior Fellow at the Research Institute for Sustainability (RIFS) | at GFZ in Potsdam. She is interested in the international politics of sustainable development and sustainability transitions and is currently developing a new research agenda on just food system transformations with a particular focus on science-policy interactions and the role of smaller-scale producers. Always curious to see the perspectives of different parts of the world, she has previously studied, taught and researched in the UK, France, Hong Kong and Ecuador and held visiting appointments at FLACSO Argentina, Amsterdam University, the National University of Córdoba, Argentina and Stockholm Environment Institute as well as spending two years working with the European institutions in Brussels.

Prof. Hermann Lotze-Campen studied Agricultural Sciences and Agricultural Economics in Kiel (Germany), Reading (UK) and Minnesota (USA). He holds a Ph.D. in Agricultural Economics from Humboldt University Berlin. He is co-chair of Research Department Climate Resilience at the Potsdam Institute for Climate Impact Research (PIK) and a Professor of Sustainable Land Use and Climate Change at HU Berlin. He is working on global land use modelling, climate impacts and adaptation in agriculture, land-based mitigation, and food system transformation pathways. He is a member of the Executive Committee of the Agricultural Model Intercomparison and Improvement Project (AgMIP, www.agmip.org) and Chair of the Climate Advisory Board of the Federal State of Brandenburg (WKB).

Mireille Remesch holds a Master's degree in Agricultural Sciences, Food Security, and Natural Resource Management, as well as a degree in journalism from FU Berlin. She works as an advisor on global agricultural policy at Essen mit Zukunft e.V., where she currently leads a project focused on advancing the global transformation of food systems, with an emphasis on agroecology and food and agricultural policies in the EU and beyond.

Sarah Hackfort is a Principal Policy Consultant at Technopolis Group and an associated researcher at the Department of Agricultural Economics at Humboldt University of Berlin. Her work focuses on the political economy of food systems, the bioeconomy, the green economy and climate policy, as well as the social implications of technologies. She has led several research projects in these areas and, as a consultant, advises public institutions, including German ministries and European institutions.

Doris Fuchs is Director of the Research Institute for Sustainability (RIFS) | at GFZ in Potsdam, and Professor of Sustainable Development at the University of Münster, in Germany. Her research focuses on the democracy-sustainability nexus, with a particular emphasis on sustainable consumption and the role of power and participation in the societal pursuit of social and environmental wellbeing and justice. Relevant publications include *Consumption Corridors: Living Well within Sustainable Limits* (Routledge 2021).

Bettina Rudloff holds a PhD in Agricultural Economics and is Senior Associate at the German Institute for International and Security Affairs (SWP) in Berlin advising policy actors on EU's trade, agricultural and food policy. She is member of the strategic advisory board of the special initiative »Transformation of Agricultural and Food Systems« of the Federal Ministry for Economic Cooperation and Development (BMZ), the International Agricultural Trade Research Consortium (IATRC) and the UK's Trade and Public Policy Network (TaPP). She contributed to several studies e.g. for the European Parliament on the EU-Mercosur-Agreement and on Ruling standards on agricultural production in Trade Agreements.

Merle Kampeter (CIR) has a background in Political Sciences and Human Rights and works as an officer for sustainable food systems and public procurement at human rights organisation Romero Initiative

(CIR). In this role, she has contributed to a range of transnational collaborative projects aimed at advancing agroecological food system transformation through strategic advocacy and campaigning.

Lukas Drees has been a research scientist at the Institute for Social-Ecological Research (ISOE) since 2016. His work focuses on topics such as land use, biodiversity, planetary boundaries and planetary health. In his PhD, he developed an integrated model that describes changes in the livelihood strategies and movement patterns of Mongolian nomads in the context of social transformations.

Dr Nicole Paganini (WEAVE Strategies) is a food systems researcher and facilitator specialising in feminist approaches to food security, care and social justice. Her work explores how communities respond to intersecting crises, including hunger, gender-based violence and climate change. Through participatory and action research, she collaborates with community organisations, policymakers and international partners. She is particularly interested in fostering collective learning processes that enable civil society actors to respond to backlashes and build alliances through research.

Anke Kähler serves as a representative of the shareholder of Atelier Ernährungswende gUG and is Chairwoman of Die Freien Bäcker e.V., as well as a master baker. For more than 35 years, she has been personally committed to the ideas and goals of Atelier Ernährungswende across multiple levels. Based on her experience, she is convinced that we must act swiftly and with persistence to transform our food systems—ranging from seed breeding and farming to milling, baking, purchasing, research, as well as structural and political frameworks. The development of diversified agroecological systems is, in her view, fundamentally essential.