



# The State of Trust in the US-German Partnership: A Transatlantic Survey

# Methodology

**Methodology:** 15-minute online survey

**Markets:** US and Germany

**Fieldwork:** May 2022

## **Sample definition and size:**

- Nationally representative samples of the general population in terms of age (18+), gender and location in the US and Germany
- Total base size n=4,003 respondents (n=2,002 in the US and n=2,001 in Germany)

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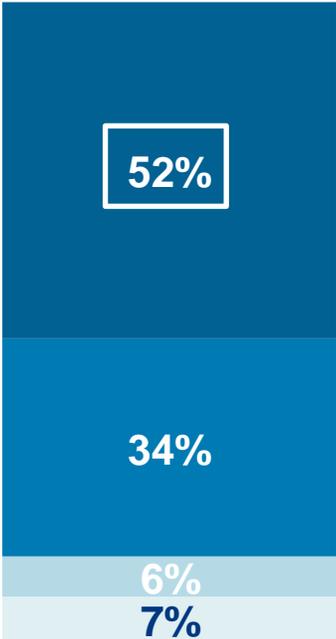
# The US and Germany's Influence on the world

# Americans are confident in their status as a global leader. Germans feel they are one of several with moderate influence.

Extent to which Americans view the US as a global leader

Extent to which Germans view Germany as a global leader

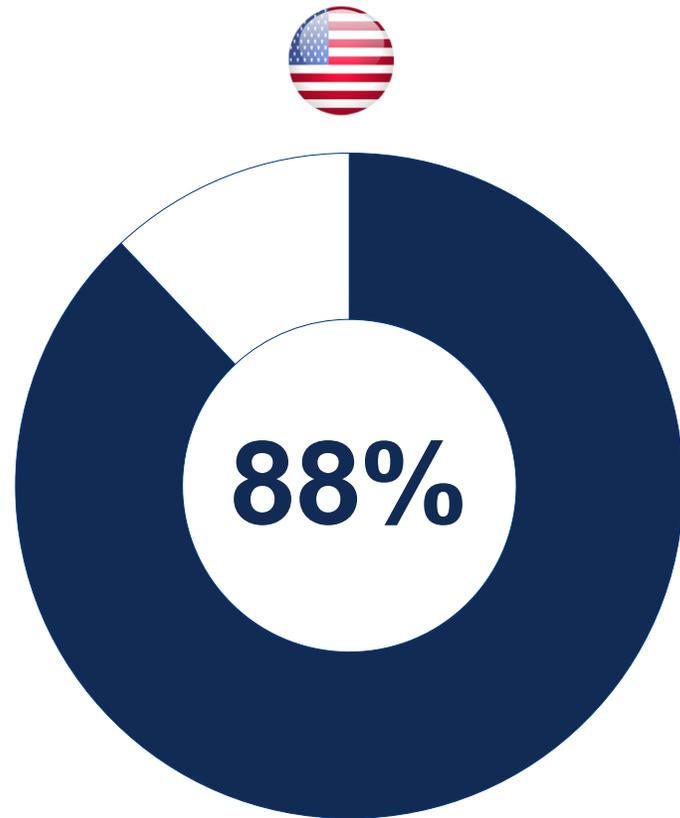
73% among high-income Americans vs. 43% low-income Americans



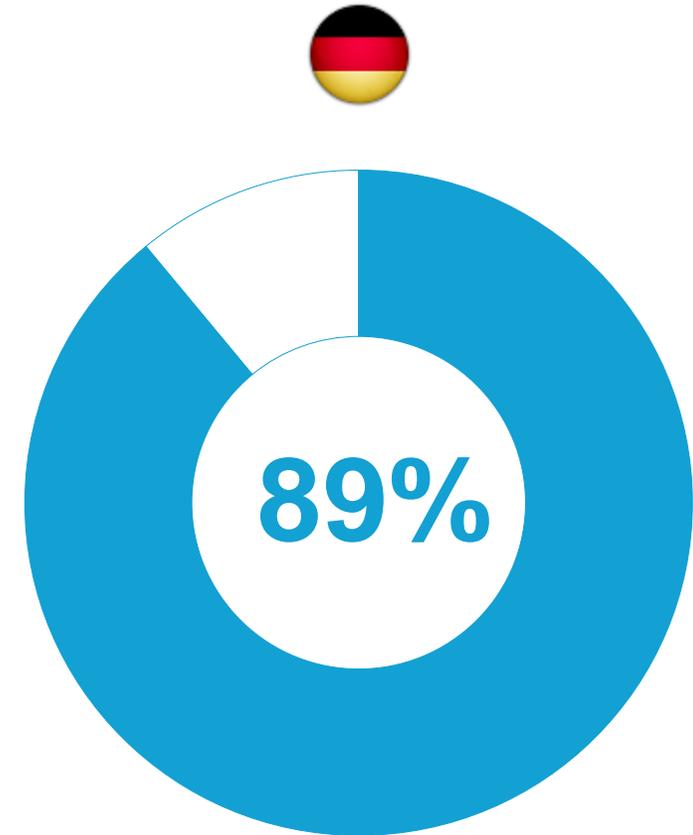
35% among German Gen Z's

- We are an **elite leader with strong influence** on the rest of the world
- We are **one of several countries with moderate influence** on the rest of the world
- We have **only slight influence** on the rest of the world
- We are **not seen as a leader** by other countries

# International cooperation is key to be seen as a global leader.



*% agree*  
**International  
cooperation is important  
to be seen as a global  
leader**

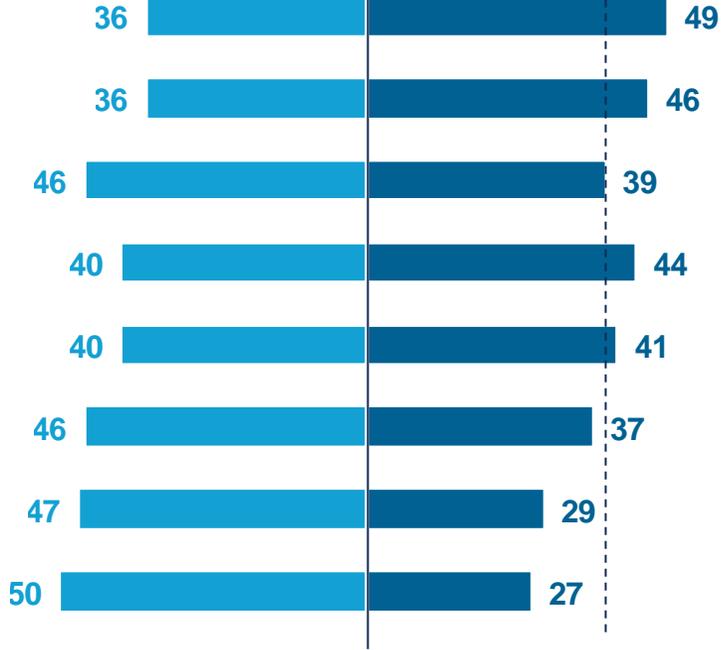


# Germans more likely to believe international cooperation is critical to address pressing issues.



% who believe each issue is better addressed by...

*State/federal governments*      *International cooperation*

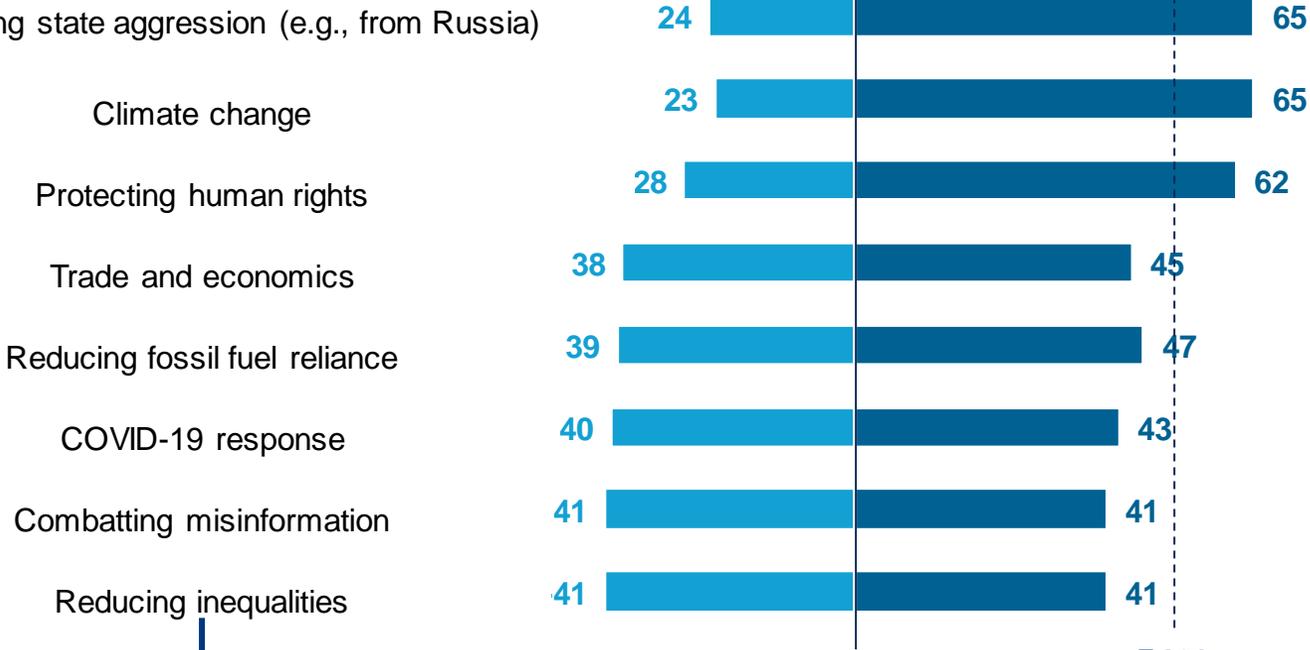


**39%**  
(average)



% who believe each issue is better addressed by...

*State/federal governments*      *International cooperation*



**51%**  
(average)

Q3. When thinking of the following issues, do you believe they are better addressed through international cooperation or your state or federal government? 7-point scale. State/federal government codes 1-3. International cooperation codes 5-7. Total respondents, US n=2002, Germany n=2,001

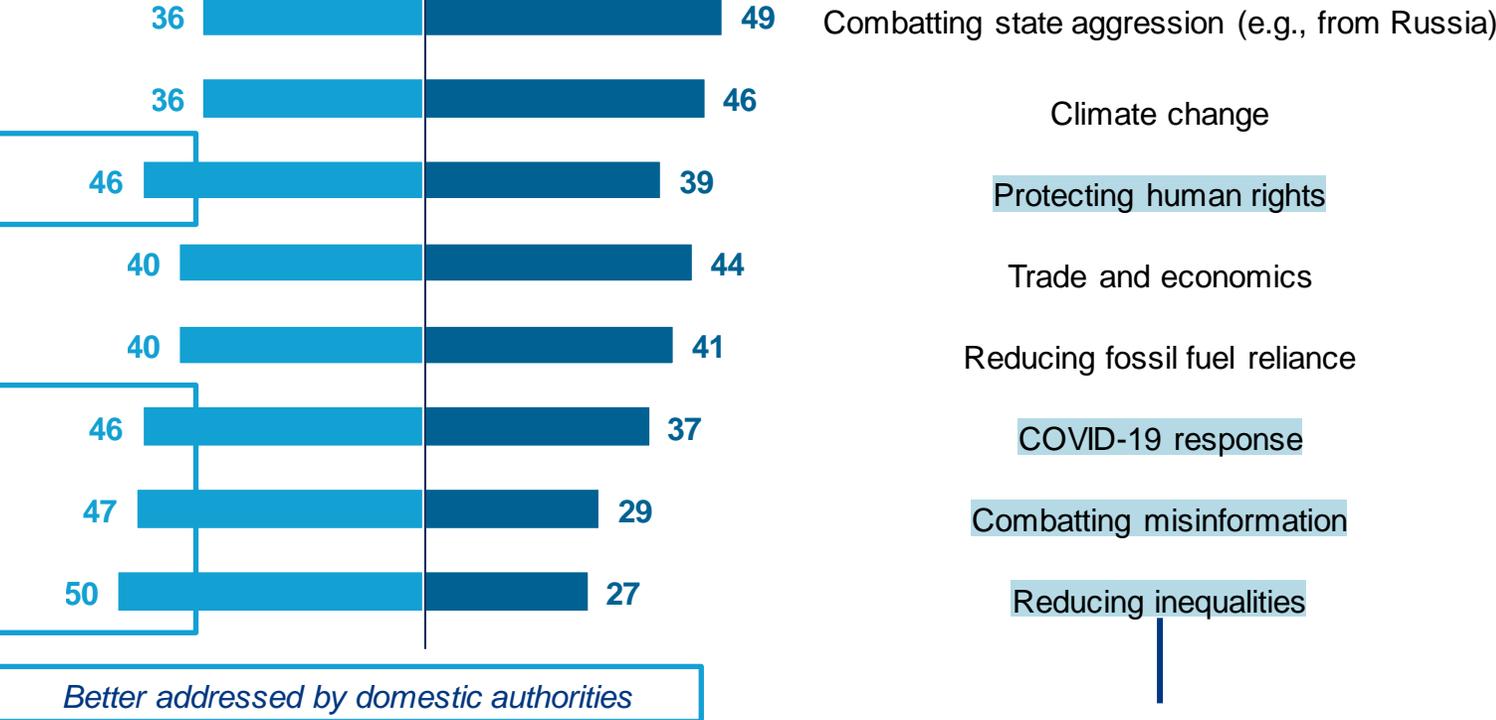
# Americans think some specific issues are better addressed by domestic authorities.



% who believe each issue is better addressed by...

*State/federal governments*

*International cooperation*



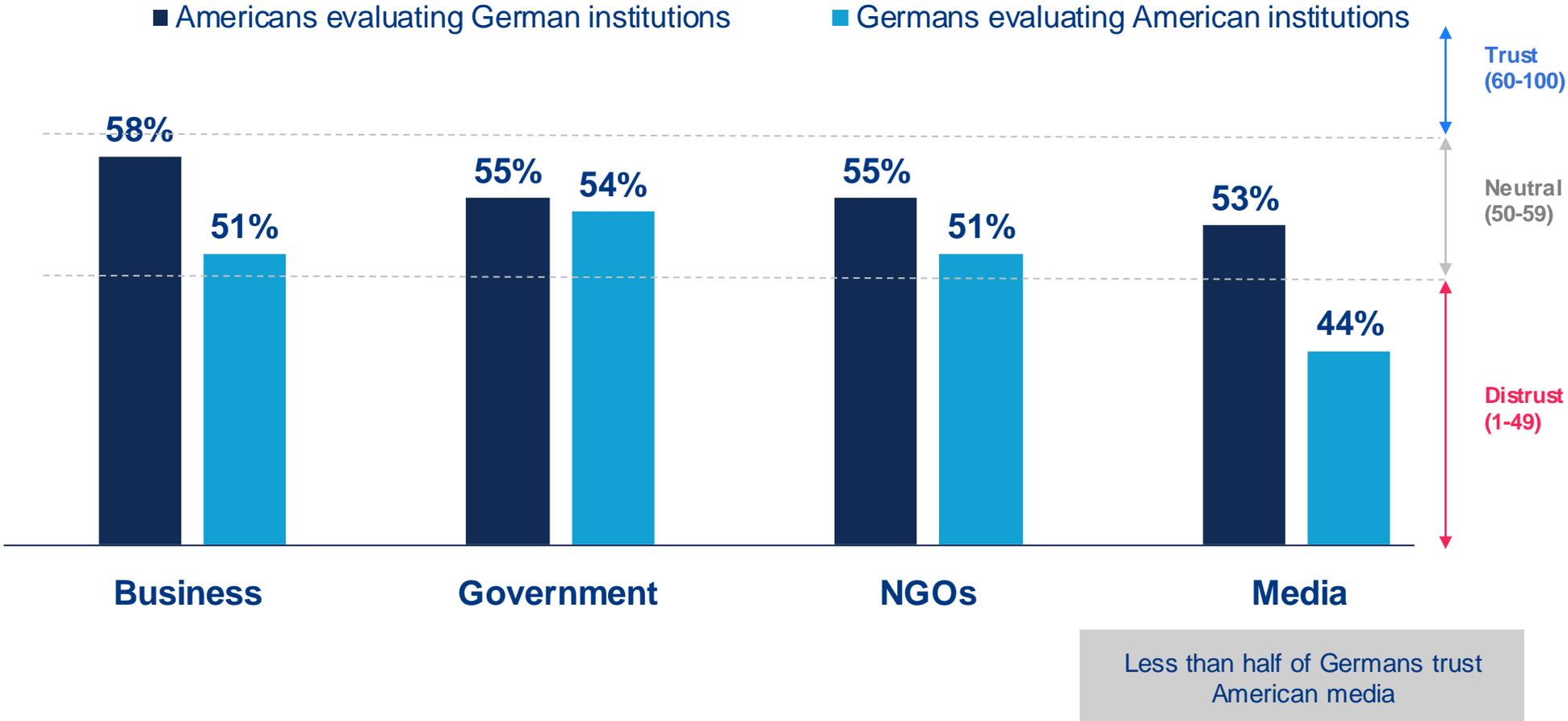
Q3. When thinking of the following issues, do you believe they are better addressed through international cooperation or your state or federal government? 7-point scale. State/federal government codes 1-3. International cooperation codes 5-7. Total respondents, US n=2002.

02

State of trust in each  
Other's institutions

# Americans are generally more trusting of German institutions, but Trust in each other's government is equal.

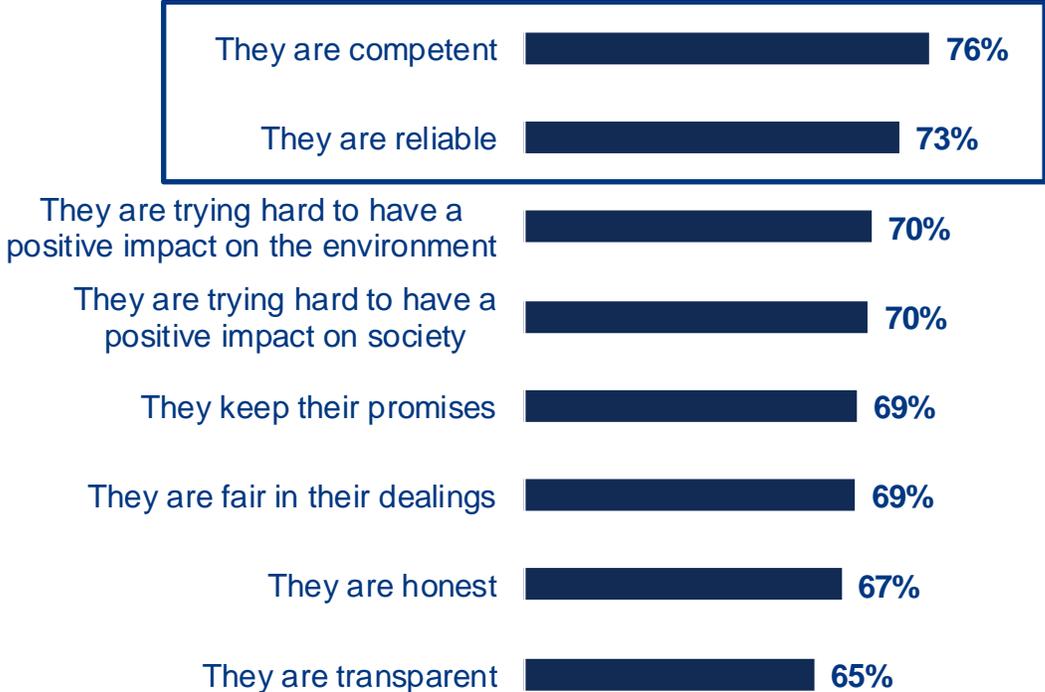
% of trust in institutions of the other country



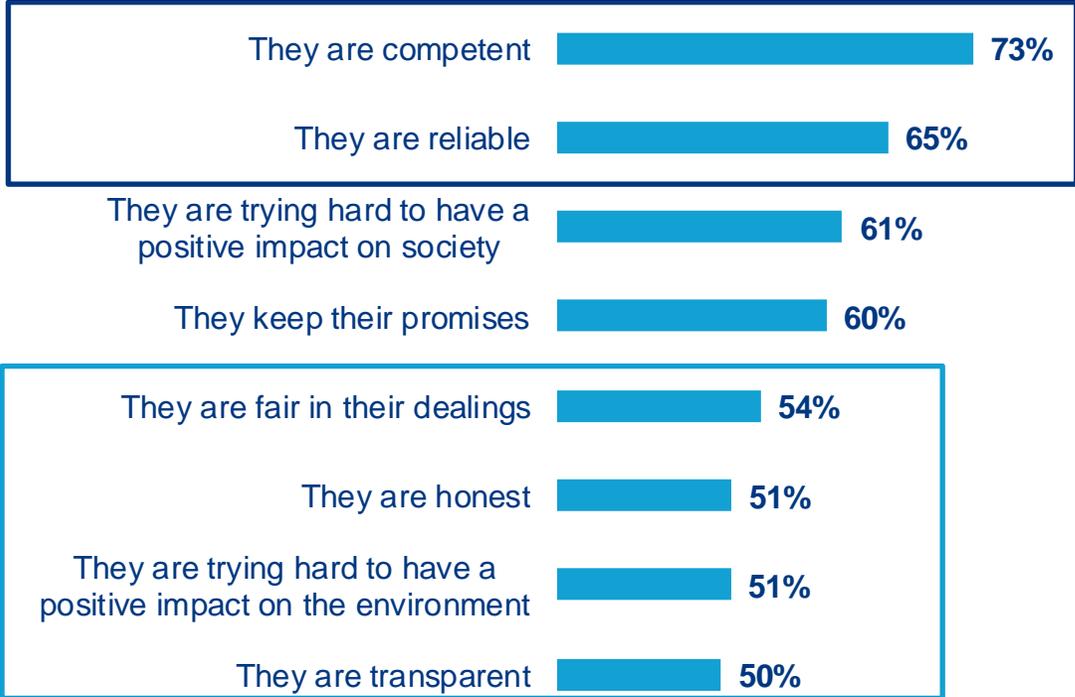
Q9:How much do you trust the following [American/German] institutions to do what is right? 7-point scale. Top 4. Total respondents, US n=2,002, Germany n=2,001

# Americans have more positive perceptions of German businesses than vice versa.

**Americans evaluate German businesses - % who agree**



**Germans evaluate American businesses - % who agree**



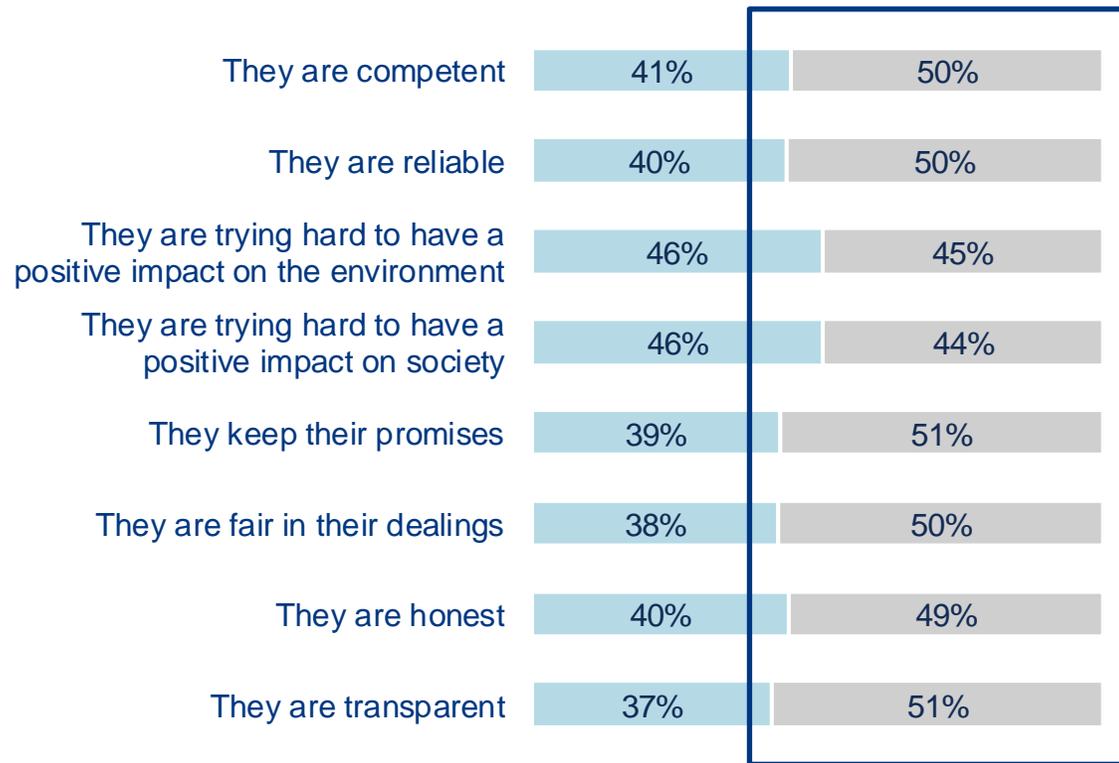
Germans acknowledge the competence and reliability of American businesses but doubt their transparency, honesty and commitment to address environmental issues

Q13. Now, thinking about [AMERICAN/GERMAN] companies in general, to what extent do you agree or disagree with the following statements? Total respondents, US n=2,002, Germany n=2,001

# Views of businesses on both sides have remained largely unchanged.

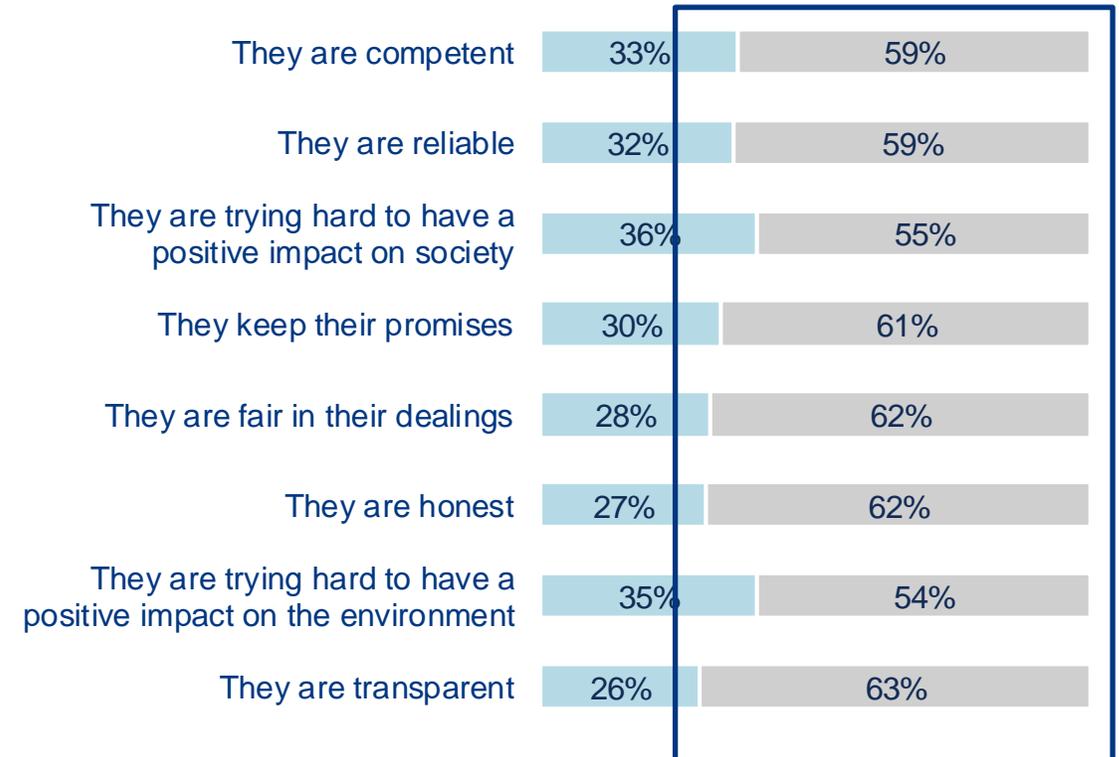
## Americans evaluate German businesses over time

% who agree



## Germans evaluate American businesses over time

% who agree



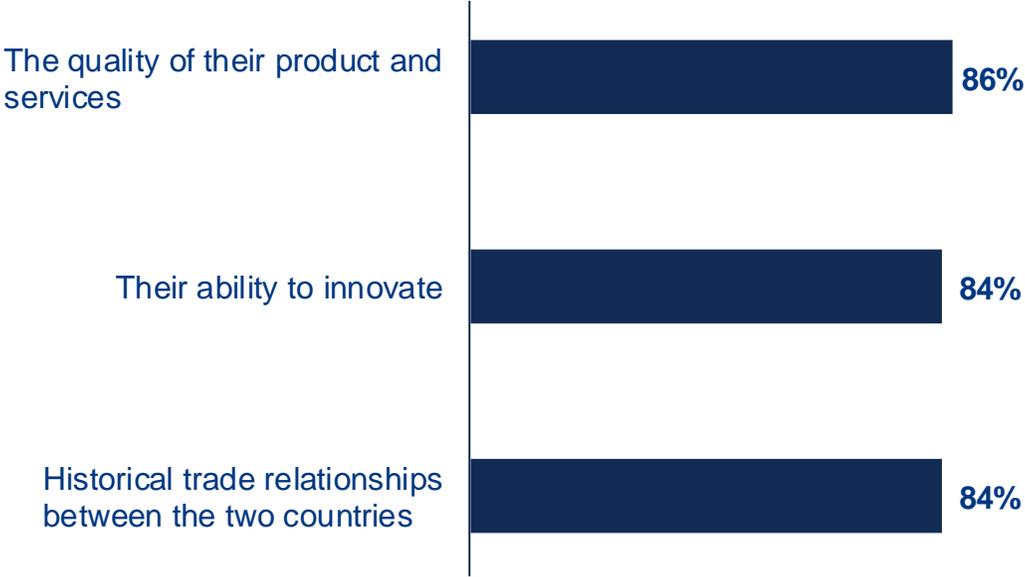
■ Has gotten better recently    ■ Has stayed the same

# Trust in business is consistently driven on both sides by quality, innovation and historical relationships.

Asked among those who **trust** the other country's businesses

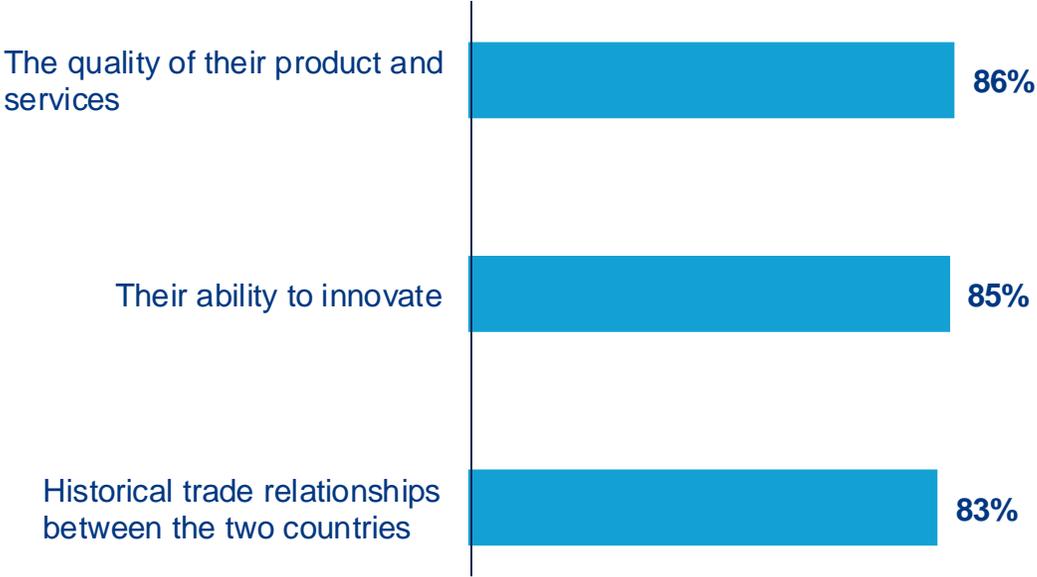
## Americans' top 3 reasons to trust German businesses

I trust them because - % who agree



## Germans' top 3 reasons to trust American businesses

I trust them because - % who agree



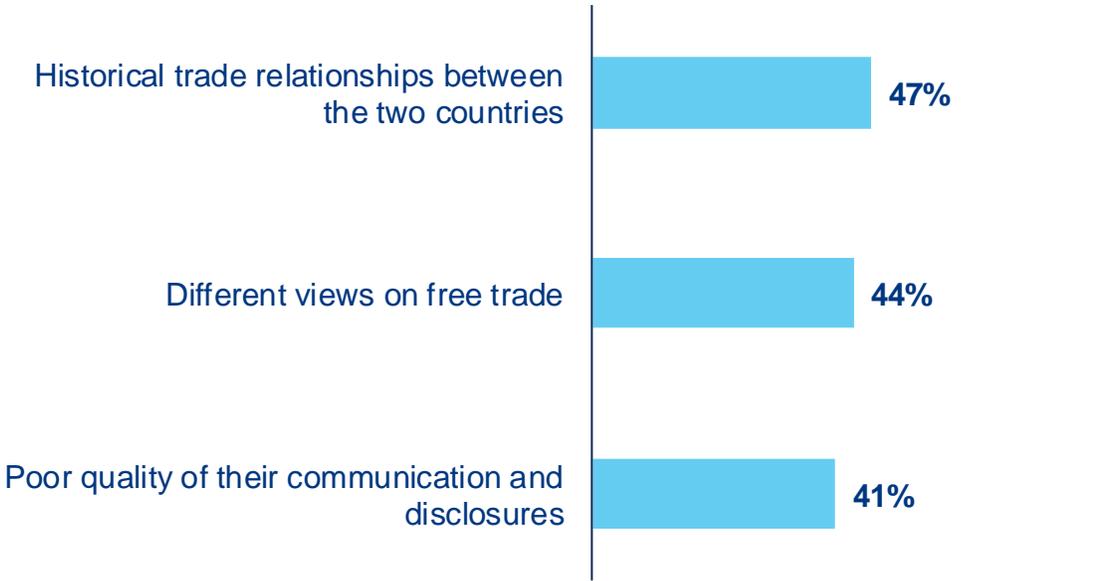
Q15a. Thinking about [AMERICAN/GERMAN] companies in general, to what extent do you agree or disagree with the following statements? 7-point scale. Top 3. percentage trusting businesses. All respondents who trust [AMERICAN/GERMAN] business.

# Distrust in business is driven by differing views of free trade and regulation.

Asked among those who **distrust** the other countries' businesses

## Americans' top 3 reasons to distrust German businesses

I don't trust them because - % who agree



## Germans' top 3 reasons to distrust American businesses

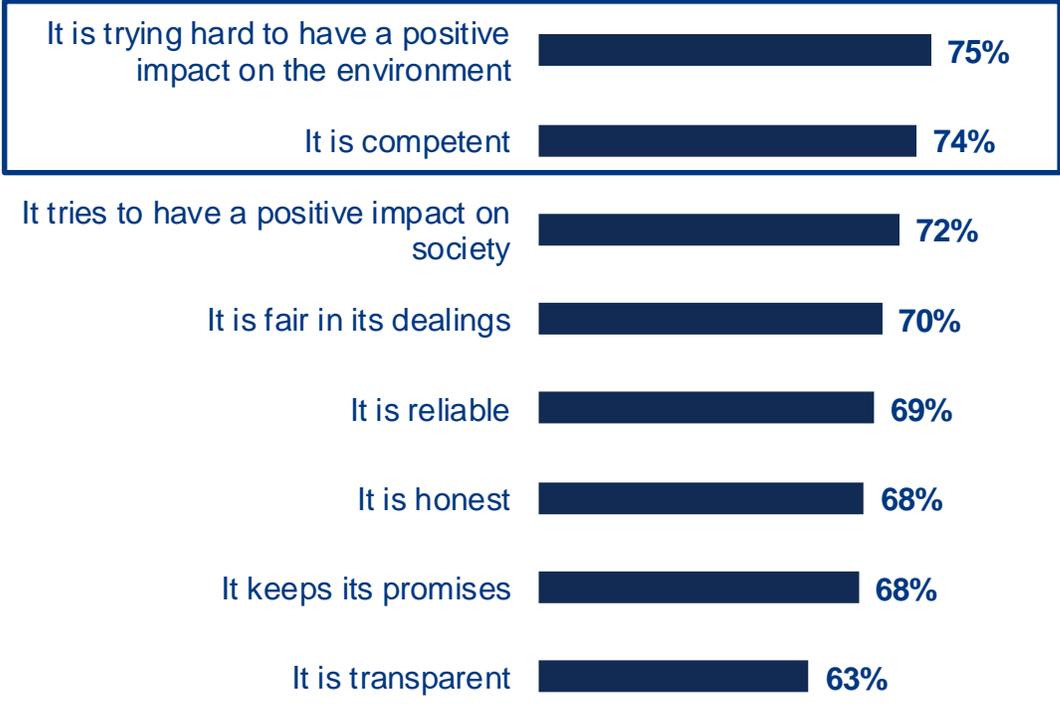
I don't trust them because - % who agree



Q15b. Thinking about [AMERICAN/GERMAN] companies in general, to what extent do you agree or disagree with the following statements? 7-point scale. Top 3. percentage distrusting businesses. All respondents who distrust [AMERICAN/GERMAN] business.

# Americans feel positive about the German government. Germans are skeptical of US honesty and transparency.

Americans evaluate German government - % who agree



Americans believe the German government is working hard to have a positive impact on the environment and society, that it is competent and fair in its dealings

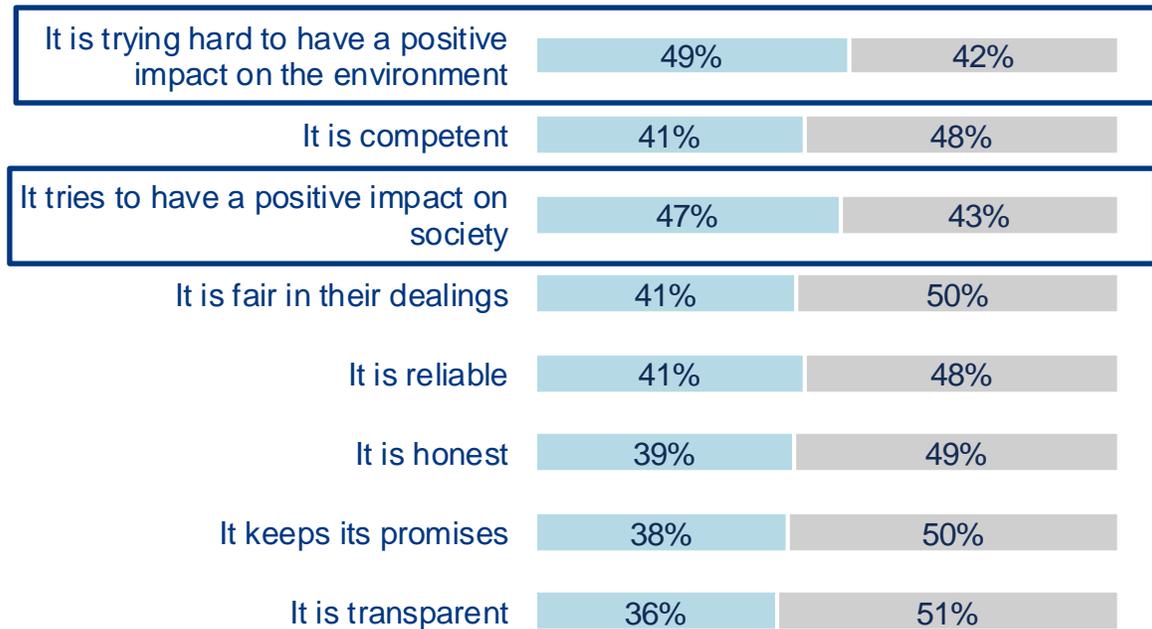
Germans evaluate American government - % who agree



Germans acknowledge the competence of the US government, but doubt its transparency, honesty and commitment when it comes to addressing environmental issues

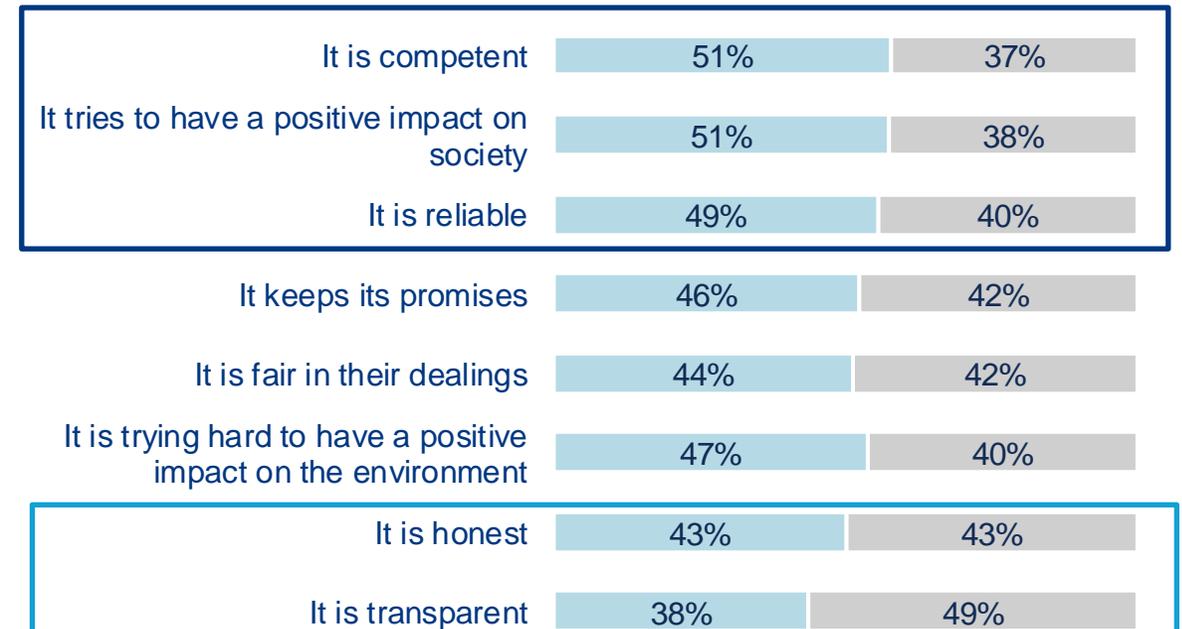
# Views of German government have remained largely unchanged. US government increasingly perceived as competent.

## Americans evaluate German government over time



Perceptions of the German government remained largely unchanged, although improvements are seen when it comes to societal and environmental impact

## Germans evaluate American government over time



Although perceptions of competence and reliability of the US government have improved for 1 in 2 Germans, transparency and honesty remained relatively unchanged

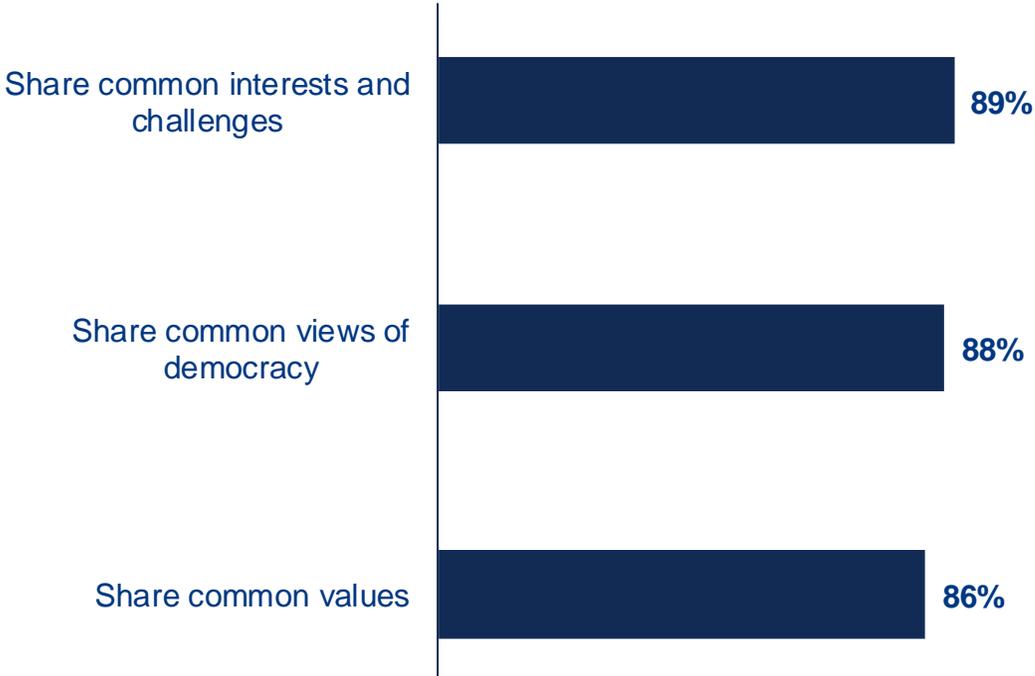
■ Has gotten better recently    ■ Has stayed the same

# Common values, interests, challenges and democratic views are top Trust factors in both US and German governments.

Asked among those who **trust** the other countries' government

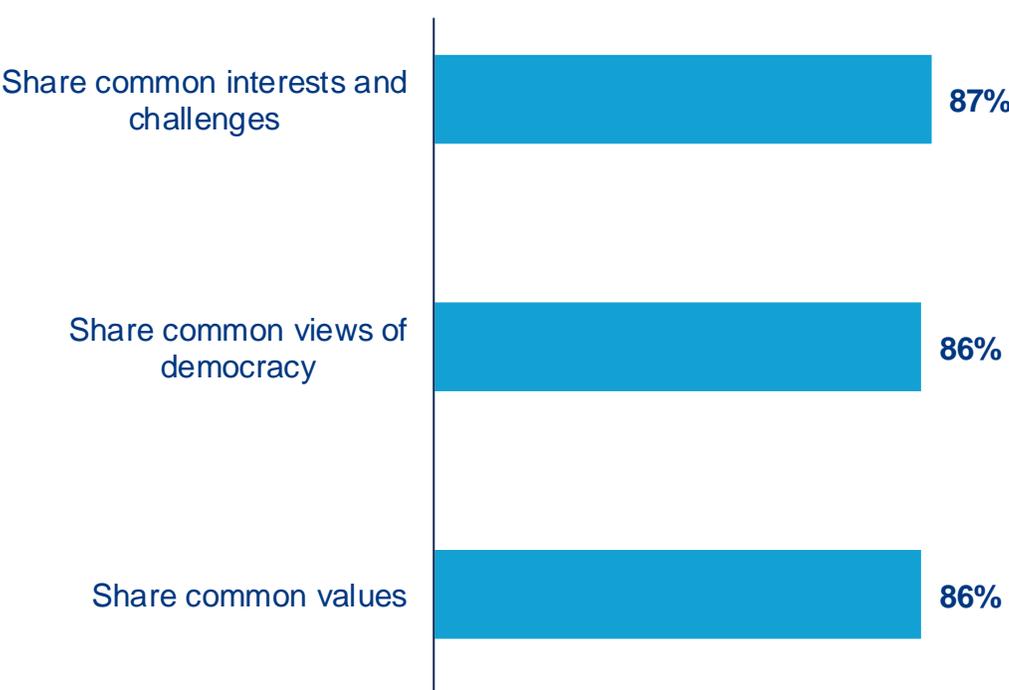
## Americans' top 3 reasons to trust the German government

I trust it because - % who agree



## Germans' top 3 reasons to trust the American government

I trust it because - % who agree



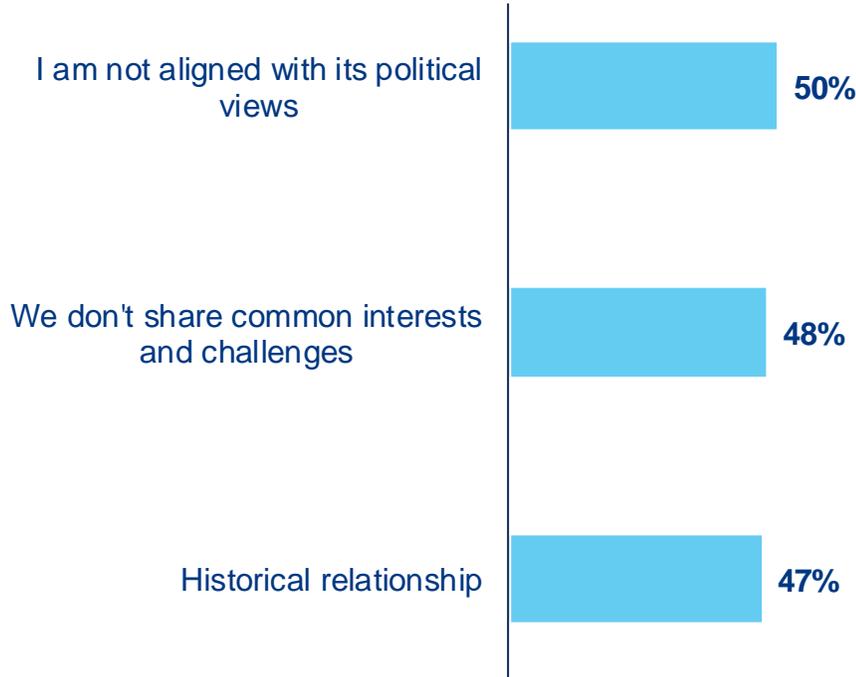
Q12a. Thinking about the [AMERICAN/GERMAN] government, to what extent do you agree or disagree with the following statements? 7-point scale. Top 3. percentage trusting government. All respondents who trust [AMERICAN/GERMAN] government.

# Distrust in governments driven by political misalignment and inability to regulate.

Asked among those who **distrust** the other countries' government

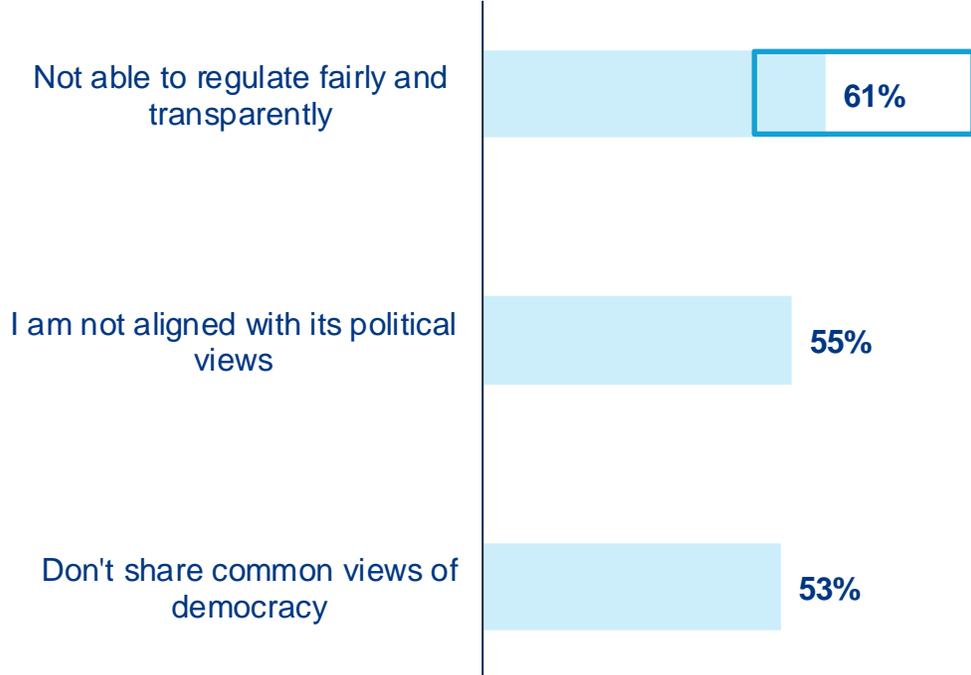
## Americans' top 3 reasons to distrust the German government

I don't trust it because - % who agree



## Germans' top 3 reasons to distrust the American government

I don't trust it because - % who agree



Q12b. Thinking about the [AMERICAN/GERMAN] government, to what extent do you agree or disagree with the following statements? 7-point scale. Top 3. percentage distrusting government. All respondents who distrust [AMERICAN/GERMAN] government.

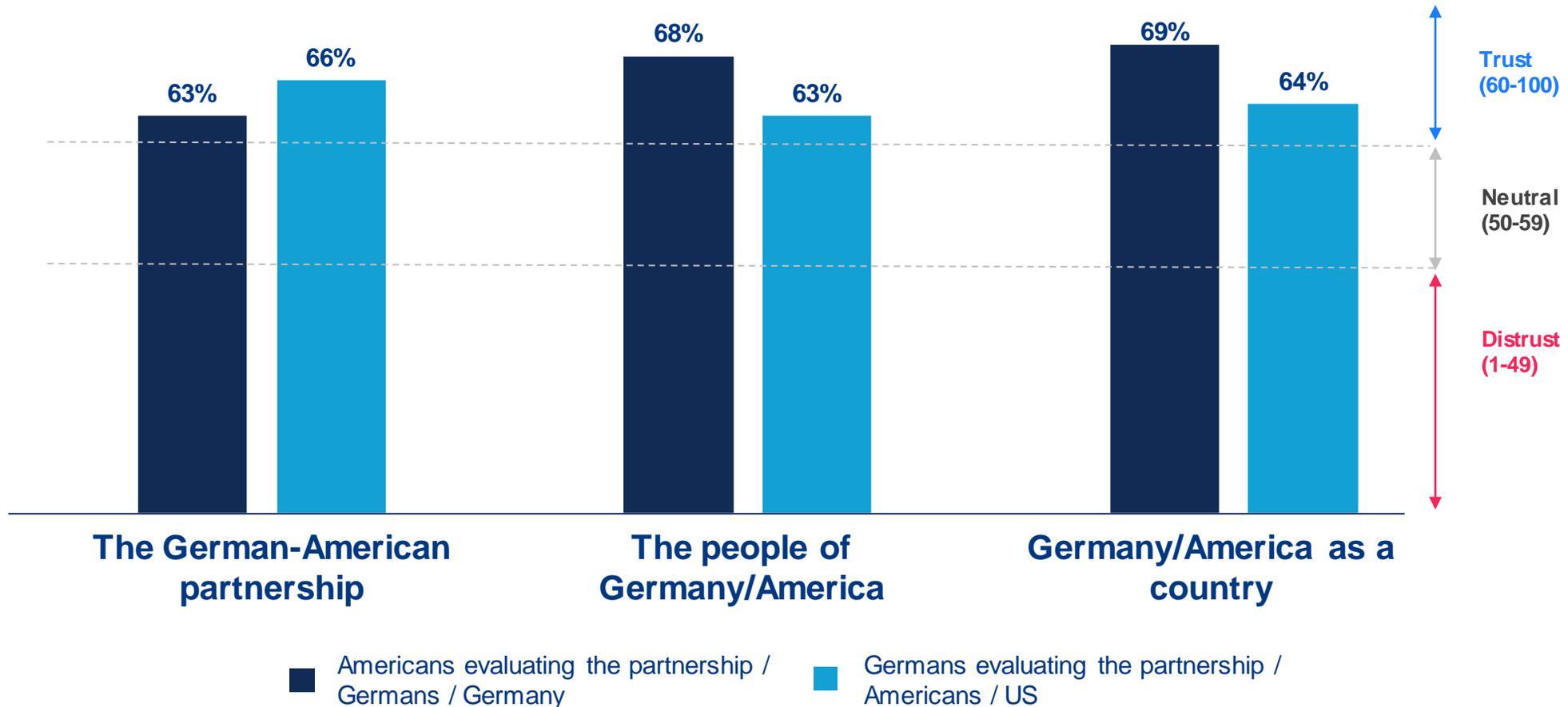
03

In partnership

We trust

# Strong Trust in the partnership and in each other's people and country.

% who trust

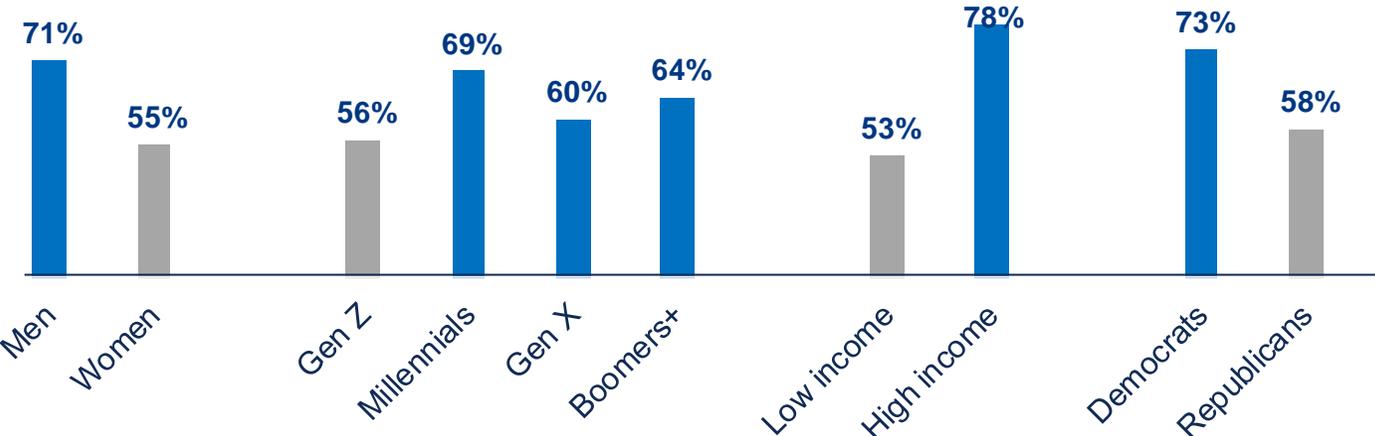


# Men, older, and more affluent groups more trusting of the partnership. No group is distrusting.

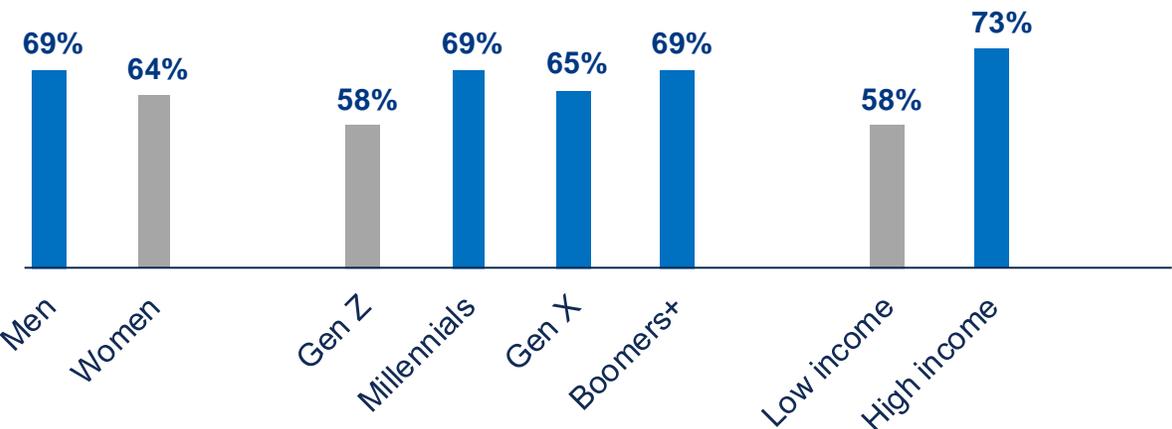
% who trust



**63%**  
of Americans trust the partnership

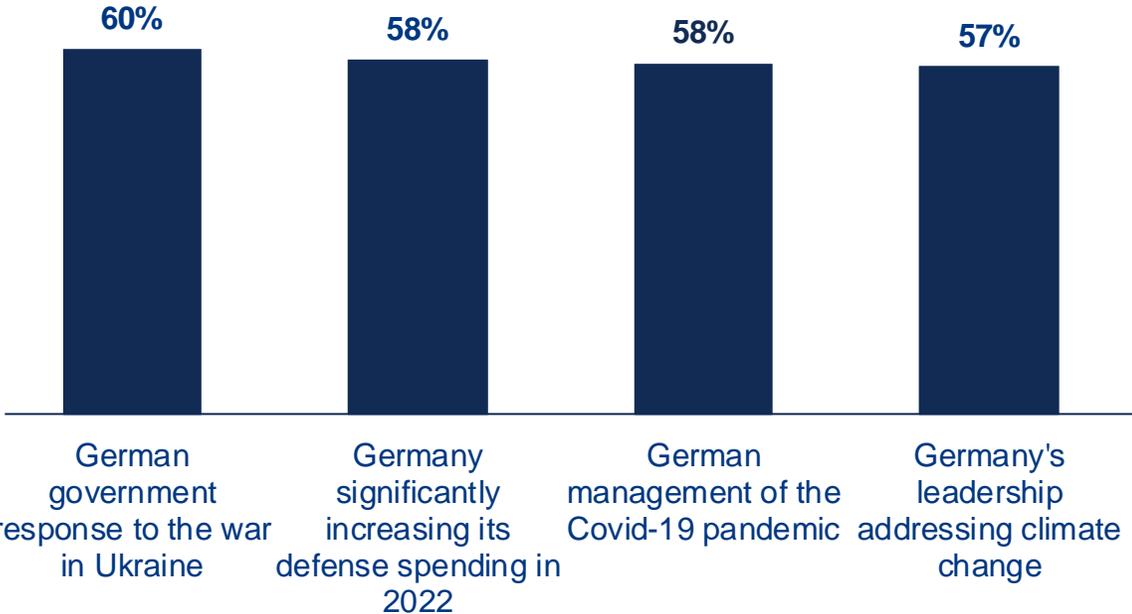


**66%**  
of Germans trust the partnership

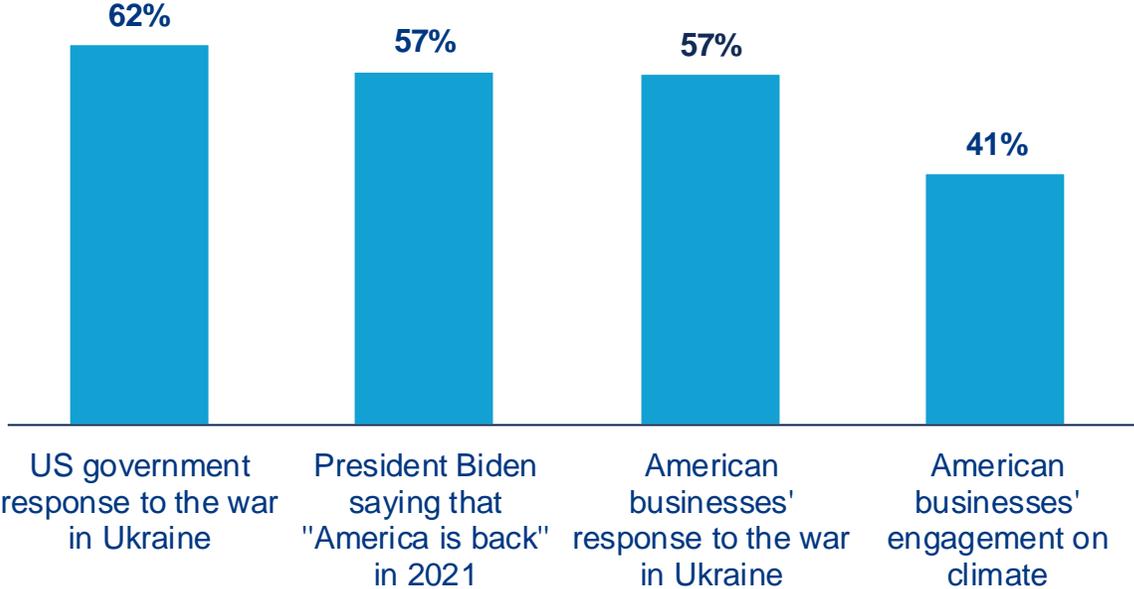


# Response to the war in Ukraine has increased trust in both the US and Germany, as countries.

% of Americans saying the specific event made them more trusting of Germany, as a country



% of Germans saying the specific event made them more trusting of the US, as a country



Q16a/b: To what extent have the following events made you more or less trusting of [GERMANY/AMERICA] as a country? 7-point scale. More trusting top 3. Total respondents, US n=2,002, Germany n=2,001

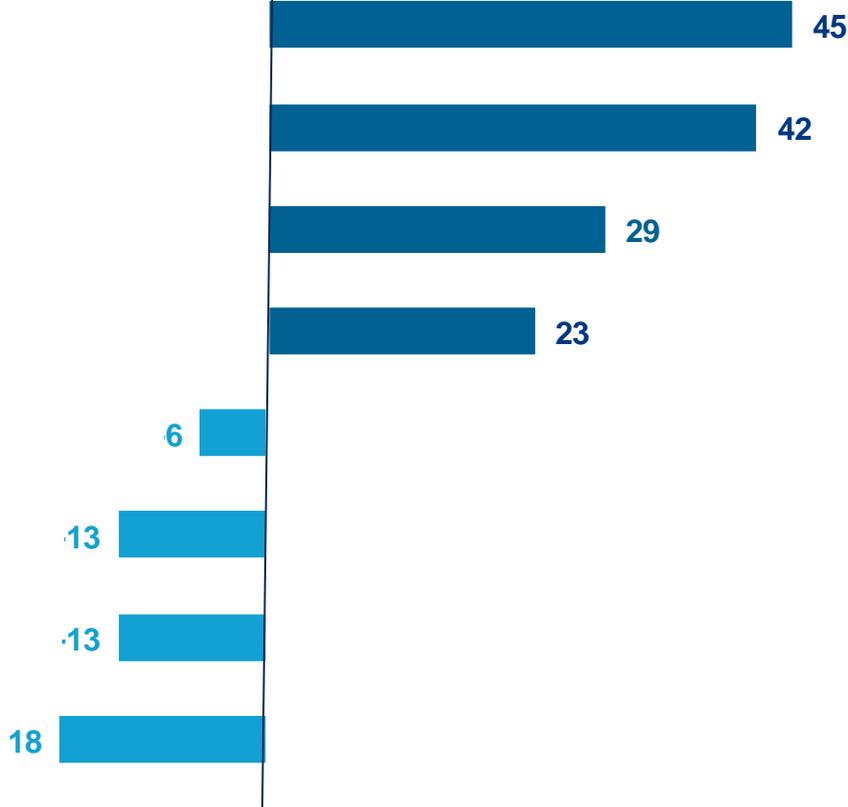
# Engagement in Ukraine and on climate has built trust in the US as a country vs. other recent events.

Difference in specific events making Germans more or less trusting in the US

- US government response to the war in Ukraine
- President Biden saying that "America is back" at the Munich Security Conference in 2021
- American businesses' engagement on climate
- American businesses' response to the war in Ukraine
- US Supreme Court may overturn Roe vs. Wade abortion law
- Attack on the US Capitol in 2021
- Media misinformation
- Wealthy elite engaging in tax avoidance

*Trust lowering events*

*Trust building events*



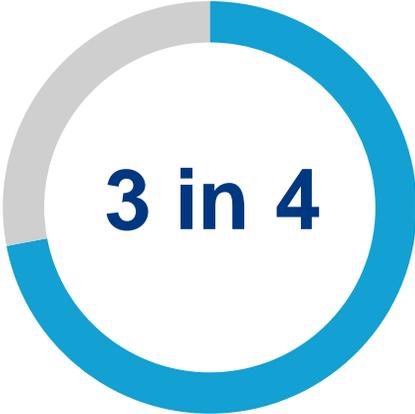
Q16a/b: To what extent have the following events made you more or less trusting of the USA as a country? 7-point scale. Difference more trusting top 3 box minus less trusting bottom 3 box. Total respondents, Germany n=2,001

# The partnership is strong and crucial to the world's stability.



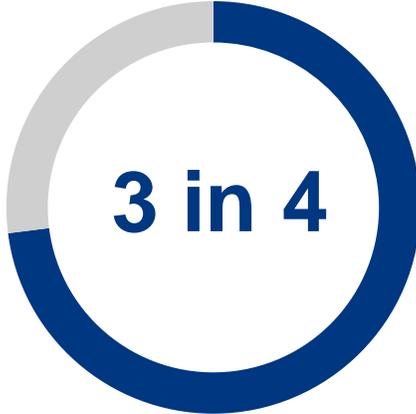
69% 72%

*Agree the US-German partnership is strong*



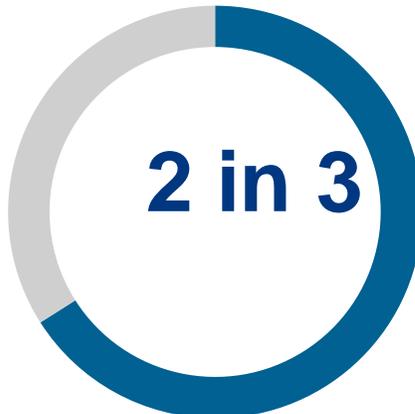
73% 72%

*Agree a strong US-German partnership is crucial for the world's stability*



70% 75%

*Agree the US-German partnership is indispensable now more than ever*



68% 64%

*Agree the US and Germany are complementary*

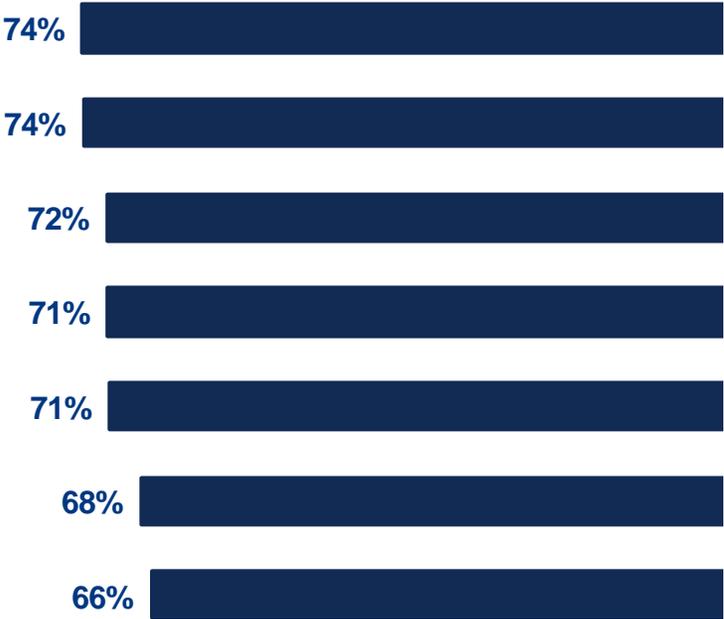
59% 65% **Agree** - New governments, led by Joseph Biden in the US and Olaf Scholz in Germany, have revitalized the strength of the US-German partnership

Q5: How much do you agree or disagree with the following statements about the partnership between the US and Germany? Total respondents, US n=2,002, Germany n=2,001

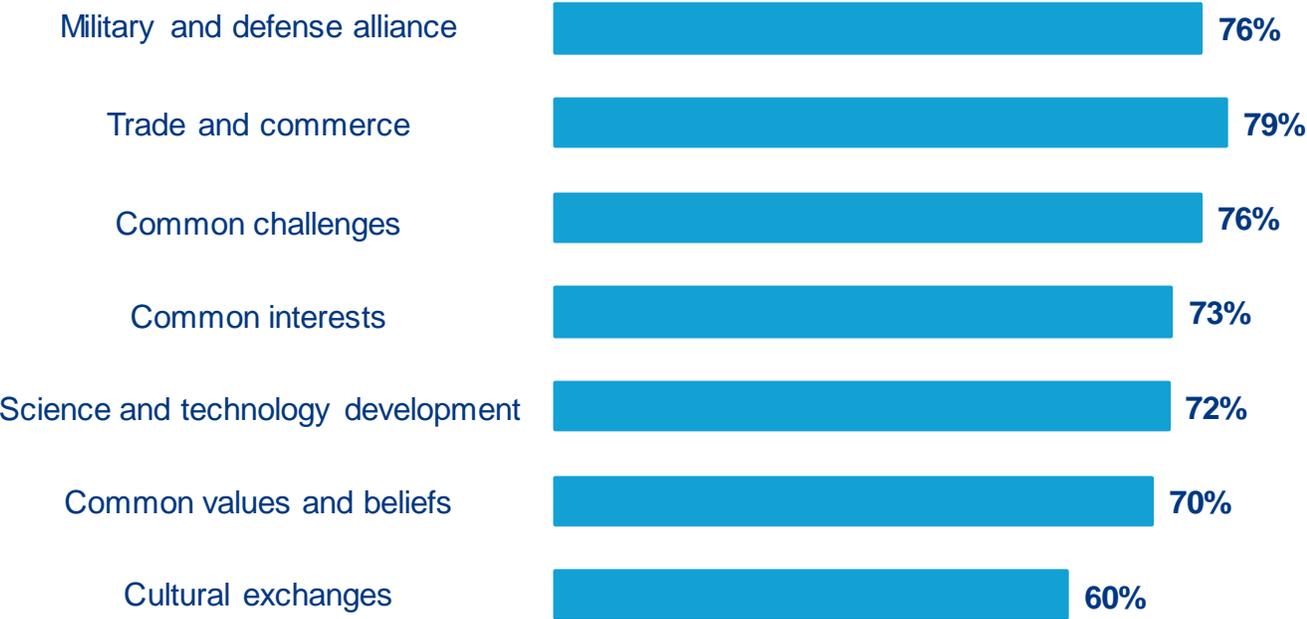
# Broad alignment that partnership foundation is rooted in military alliance and trade.



**% of Americans who agree the partnership is based on...**



**% of Germans who agree the partnership is based on...**



Opportunity to improve cultural exchanges between the two countries

Q7. Thinking about the partnership between the US and Germany, which of these do you think best describe what it is based on? 7-point scale. Top 3. Total respondents, US n=2,002, Germany n=2,001

# Majority say the partnership is equal, with shared strengths in innovation, diplomacy and economic power.



## AMERICAN STRENGTH

65% of Germans say military capabilities are an American strength and a German weakness

More than 50% think

## BOTH COUNTRIES STRONG IN:

- Innovation in science and technology
- Manufacturing infrastructure
- Diplomacy on the world stage
- Economic power

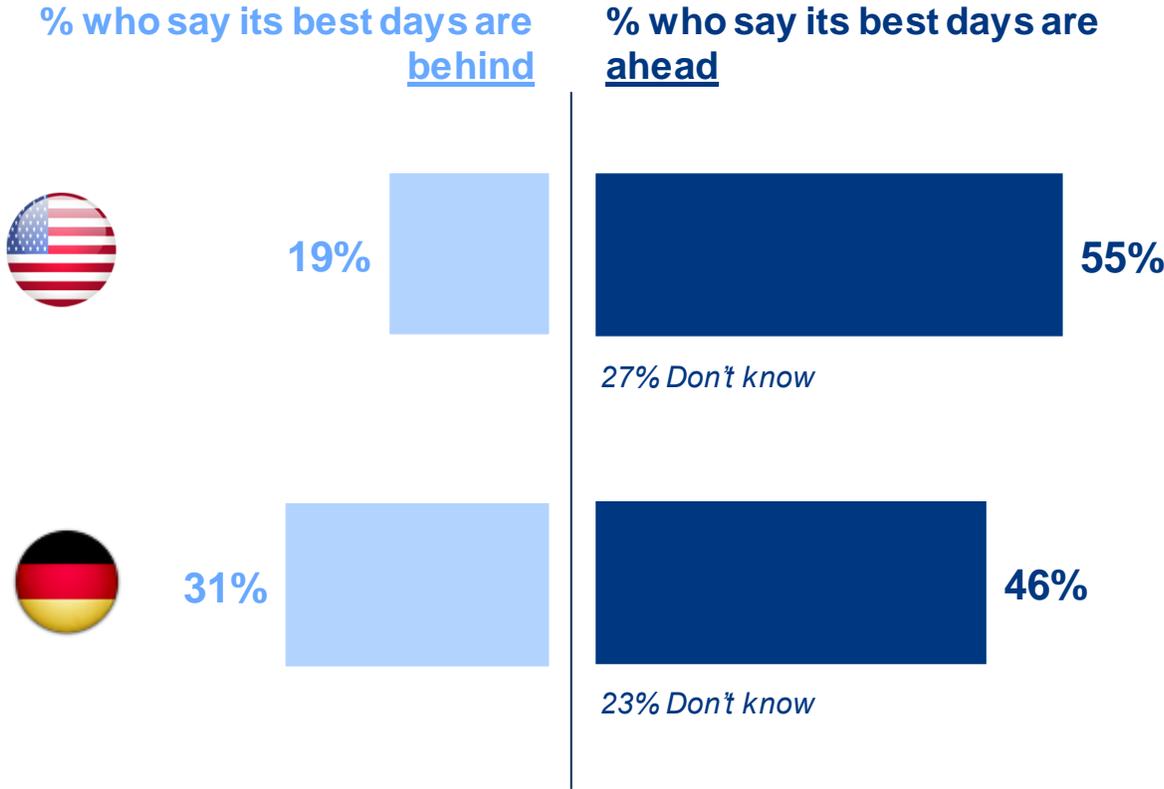


## GERMAN STRENGTH

Only 23% of Americans think actions to address climate change are an American strength and a German weakness.

36% of Germans think it is a German strength and an American weakness.

# One in two believe the best days of the partnership are ahead, younger generations are most optimistic.

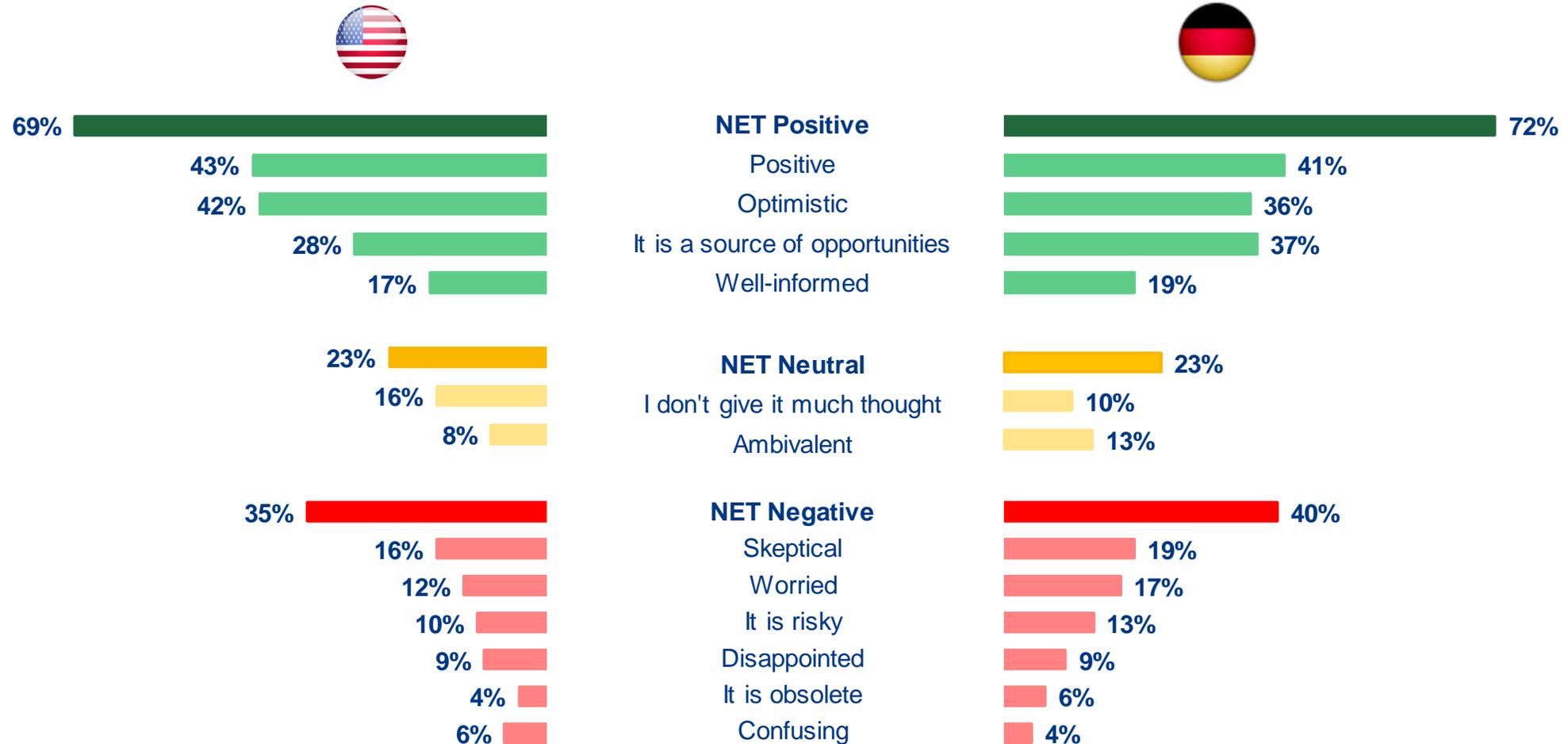


**Younger generations** are more likely to agree that the partnership's best days are ahead.

Gen Z (18-26 yo)	Millennials (27-41 yo)	Gen X (42-55 yo)	Boomers + (56+)
54%	67%	53%	46%

Gen Z (18-26 yo)	Millennials (27-41 yo)	Gen X (42-55 yo)	Boomers + (56+)
66%	51%	40%	41%

# Majority in both countries feel positively about the partnership.



04

# Paving the way For the future

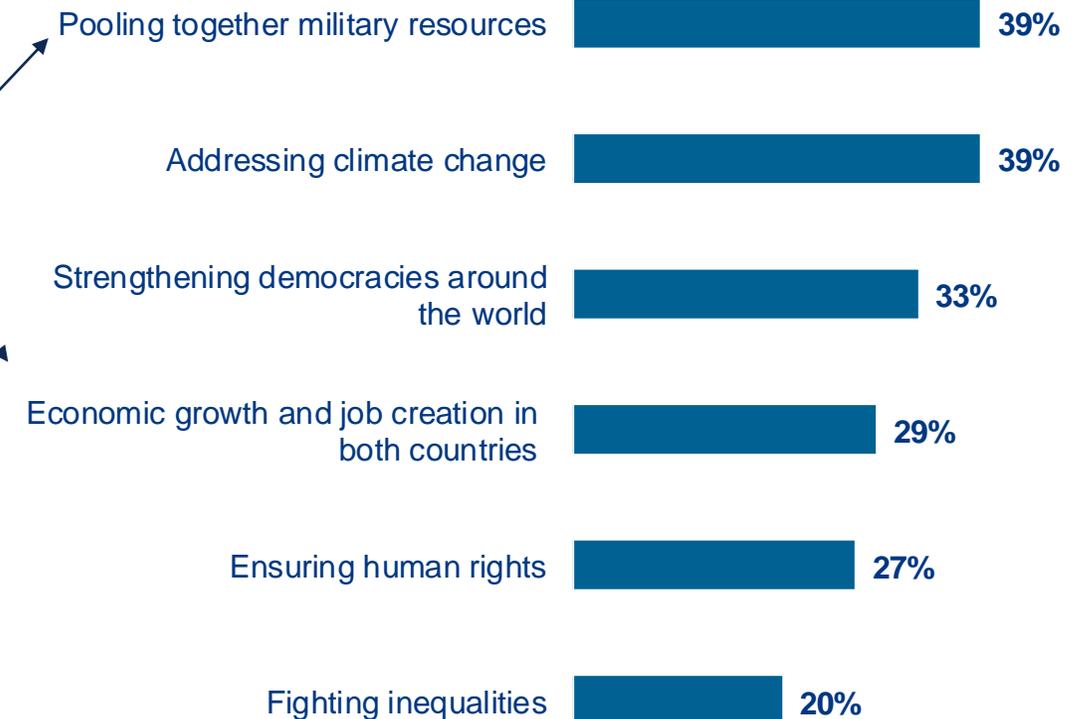
# Both countries largely aligned on current priorities. Economic growth more of a priority in the US.



## Top current priorities of the US–German partnership according to Americans



## Top current priorities of the US–German partnership according to Germans

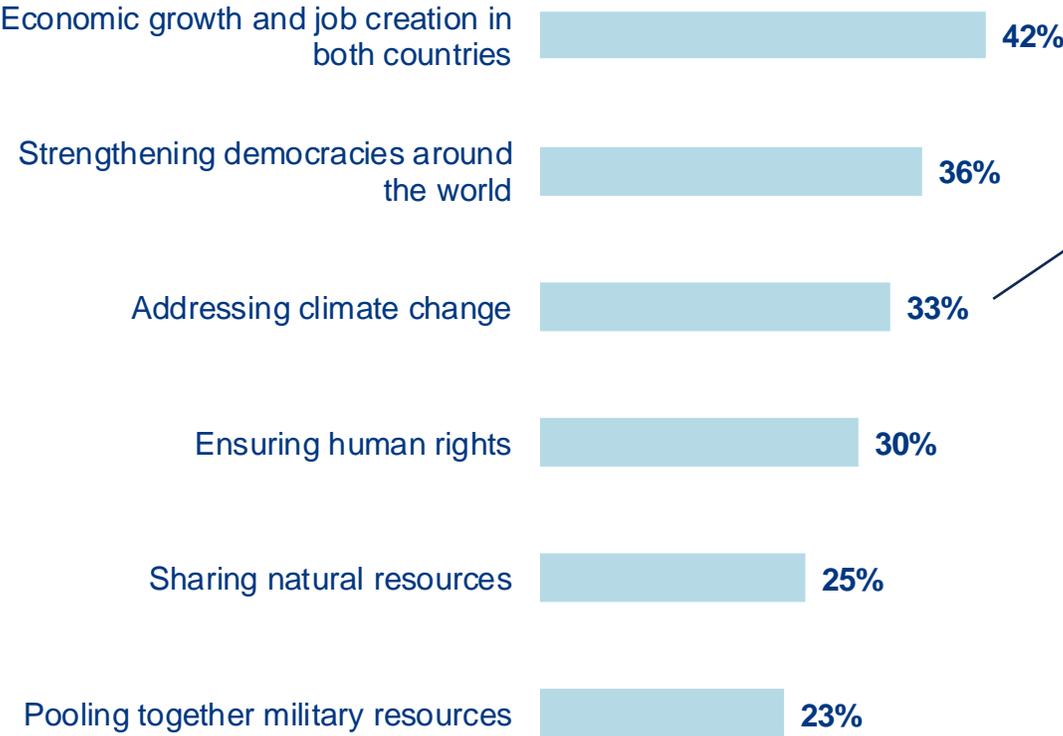


# Future priorities of the partnership are similar. Climate change becoming more urgent for Germans.



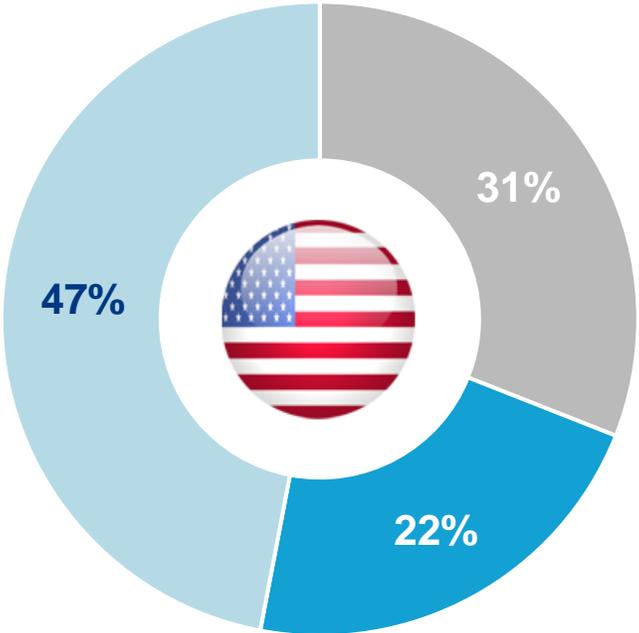
## Top future priorities of the US–German partnership according to Americans

## Top future priorities of the US–German partnership according to Germans

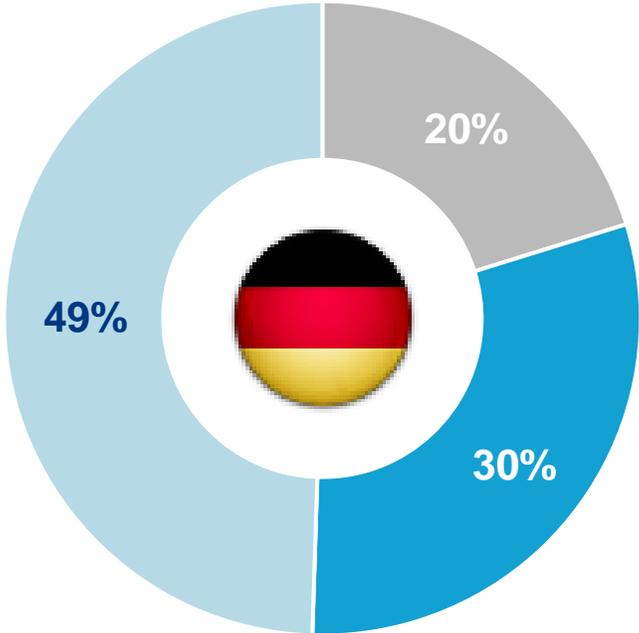


Q22: In your opinion, what should be the top 3 priorities of the transatlantic partnership between the US and Germany? Total respondents, US n=2,002, Germany n=2,001

# Three in four believe the partnership has global benefits and not only a domestic focus.



% who agree with each purpose for the German-American partnership

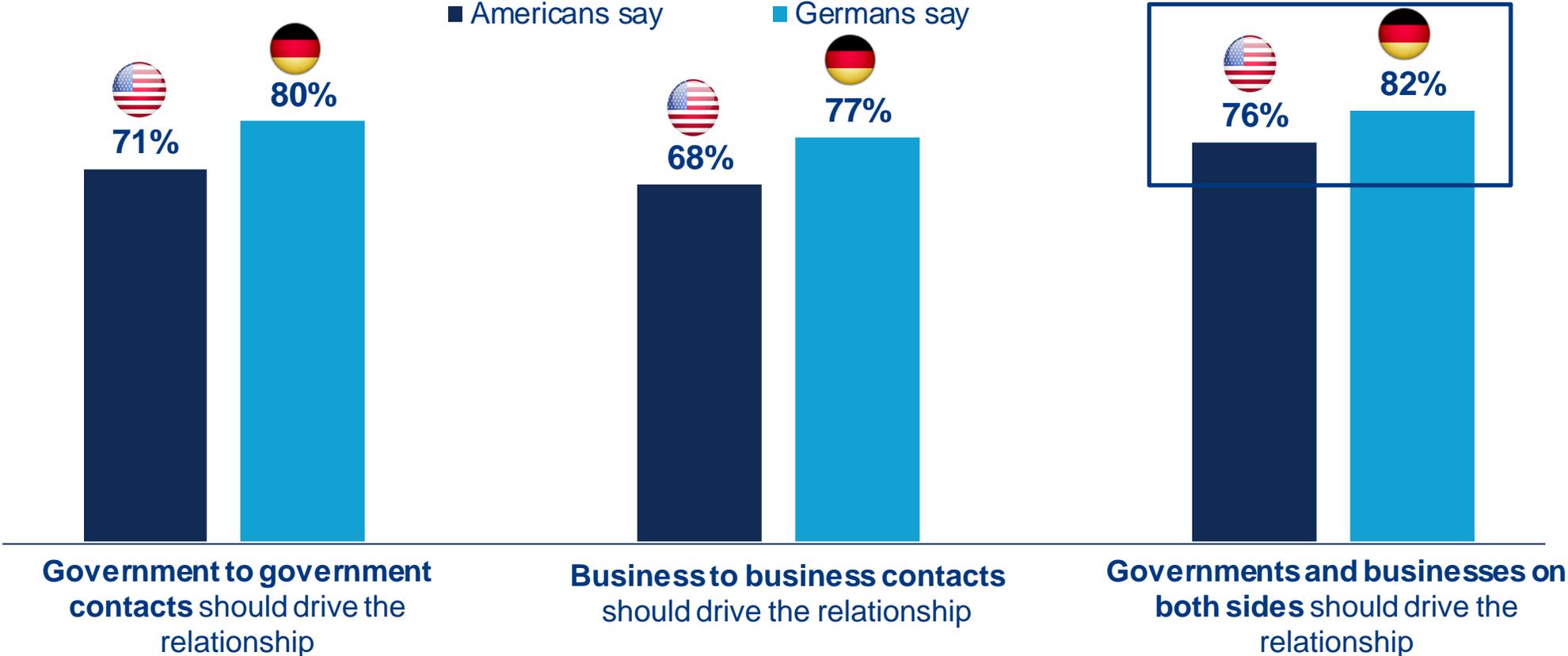


Equal focus on both domestic and global improvements

Improving the global situation

Improving both countries domestically

# Governments and businesses on both sides should drive the transatlantic partnership.



Q21. To what extent do you agree or disagree with the following statements about the transatlantic partnership between the US and Germany? Total respondents, US n=2,002. Germany n=2,001

# Transparency and long-term outlook are key to building trust.

## Top priorities for business on both sides



77% 82%

Be **more transparent** in how they deal with each other



71% 81%

Business relationships **should not be dependent on the governments in place**



72% 74%

**Align long-term goals with short-term action plans**

## Top priorities for governments on both sides



76% 83%

Be **more transparent** in how they deal with each other



76% 80%

Should work together to **strengthen military defense and economic security in democracies**



71% 81%

Relationships **should not be dependent on the governments in place**

Q24. To what extent do you agree or disagree with the following about the German and American governments? Q25. To what extent do you agree or disagree with the following about German and American businesses? 7-point scale. Top 3 agree. Total respondents, US n=2,002, Germany n=2,001

# Executive Summary

## 1 The partnership is strong

- **Trust in the partnership is high.** The vast majority in both countries think the partnership is needed now more than ever and plays a crucial role for the world's stability.
- **Responses to the war in Ukraine** and actions of relatively new administrations contributed to building trust in the partnership.
- **Half of Americans and Germans believe its best days are ahead**, particularly younger generations.

## 2 Differing views on influence on the world and trust

- **Americans** see their country as a **global leader with strong influence**, and an ability to **address some key issues domestically**.
- They largely **trust German institutions** and see government and business as **competent and reliable**. Government actions on the environment are acknowledged.
- **Germans** think they are **one of several countries with moderate influence**, heavily **relying on international partnerships to address issues**.
- American businesses and government are largely trusted, seen as competent and reliable, but **Germans are skeptical of their honesty, transparency and commitment to the environment**.

## 3 Room for improvement and alignment

- Although both countries are largely aligned on the priorities of the partnership, **economic growth and climate change need to be addressed to satisfy both parties**.
- **Business and governments are expected to lead the partnership** with transparency, mutual understanding and focus on long-term goals being key to build trust.

# Contacts

For more information about this research, please contact:

## Allianz SE

Lauren K. Day

[lauren.day@allianz.com](mailto:lauren.day@allianz.com)

## American Council on Germany

Dr. Steven E. Sokol

[sokol@acgusa.org](mailto:sokol@acgusa.org)

## Atlantik Brücke

Katharina Draheim

[k.draheim@atlantik-bruecke.org](mailto:k.draheim@atlantik-bruecke.org)

## Edelman

Discretion Winter

[discretion.winter@edelman.com](mailto:discretion.winter@edelman.com)

