

„It's Time to Tax Billionaires!“

Book presentation and panel discussion with Gabriel Zucman

Date and Venue

27 January 2026 from 5:30 p.m. to 7:00 p.m.

Friedrich-Ebert-Stiftung, Hiroshimastr. 17, Conference Hall 1, 10785 Berlin

Content

French economist Gabriel Zucman is considered the inventor of the billionaire tax. In 2024, he presented a proposal on behalf of the Brazilian G20 presidency for a globally coordinated minimum tax for high-net-worth individuals. The goal is to ensure that the super-rich pay taxes and contributions at rates that are proportionately similar to those of the middle class, and that wealth accumulation through capital income is taxed similarly to the creation of wealth through work. In his research, Zucman shows that, unlike the general population, the richest of the rich pay hardly any income tax on their vast fortunes.

When public austerity measures were announced in France in autumn 2025, he called on the government to impose a tax on billionaires. The so-called “Zucman tax” has been the subject of much discussion since then. Zucman’s estimates suggest that a minimum tax of two per cent on the net assets of private households with fortunes exceeding €100 million could increase government revenues by an estimated €20 billion, thereby reducing the existing budget deficit.

He has summarized his proposals on how billionaires could be involved in financing the common good in a new book, which is due to appear in German in early 2026. In Germany, too, wealth is now distributed more unevenly than in most other countries. The leveled middle-class society of the postwar period has become a society of heirs. It is estimated that the suspension of the wealth tax has cost the public treasury around €400 billion since 1997. The resulting funding gap was offset by tax increases for the many.

In conversation with **Gabriel Zucman**, Associate Professor at the University of California, Berkeley, and Director of the EU Tax Observatory, **Julia Friedrichs**, Journalist, Author and Filmmaker, **Julia Jirmann**, Tax Law and Tax Policy Advisor at the Tax Justice Network, and **Tim Klüssendorf**, Member of the German Parliament and Secretary General of the SPD, we will discuss the causes and effects of wealth concentration and explore what can be done politically to counteract it internationally and in Germany.

Programme

5:00 p.m.

Admission

5:30 p.m.

Welcome address

- Sabine Fandrych, Secretary General of the Friedrich-Ebert-Stiftung (FES)
- Stefan Körzell, Member of the Executive Board of the German Trade Union Confederation (DGB)

5:40 p.m.

Keynote

- Gabriel Zucman, Associate Professor at the University of California, Berkeley, and Director of the EU Tax Observatory

6:00 p.m.

Panel discussion with

- Julia Friedrichs, Journalist, Author and Filmmaker
- Julia Jirrmann, Tax Law and Tax Policy Advisor at the Tax Justice Network
- Tim Klüssendorf, Member of the German Parliament, Secretary General of the SPD
- Gabriel Zucman, Associate Professor at the University of California, Berkeley, and Director of the EU Tax Observatory

Moderation: Sarah Ganter, Global Policy Forum Europe

7:00 p.m.

Reception with refreshments

Simultaneous interpretation will be provided in German-English/English-German.