



Commentary

## “German Angst”

**Berlin, 13 January 2020** - Nearly three out of four Germans say that they are better off than ever before – and yet most Germans are worried about the future. The “*German Angst*” – as it is referred to in the English-speaking world – always shows itself when we are doing well. We have risen through the years of the “*Wirtschaftswunder*” (economic miracle) from being a shattered, disillusioned nation of bad guys to become admired for our high-tech engineering know-how, and after hosting the football World Cup in 2006 we even emerged as popular friends.

But attempts to safeguard a status built up over decades are paralysing our attitude, because we are no longer open-minded: “The mind is like a parachute, it only works when it’s wide open.”

We are making two mistakes which are leading us to throw away our know-how edge and our friendships.

1. Progress can only be made on the basis of open-handedness; we can only seize new opportunities if we are able to act freely. The innovations that we create will safeguard our future existence, not endanger it. Clinging obstinately to outdated energy sources (they’re not called “fossil fuels” without reason!) is slowing down progress in an area that would allow us to literally renew ourselves and our environment, through the use of renewable energy. So if we cling on too long to an unsustainable way of living, we will become extinct. Fear turns people into fossils; they no longer think strategically, no longer plan for an unknown future using their cerebral cortex, but instead cling desperately to what they know – characteristically, this also happens in the reptilian brain, instinctively seeking to safeguard the established past and constantly roaring against the future.
2. When money costs nothing, and is devalued by inflation, it makes sense to take on debt. That is even more true in relation to a national economy. According to Keynes and other economists, every euro invested boosts the economy and is multiplied as a result. If it is also invested sensibly, such as in infrastructure, it greatly strengthens the community as a whole. A black zero or a red zero – both are zeros. We don’t need zeros, we need courageous decisions, and courageous go-getters. We really should support the 500 billion euros of investment proposed by various interested

parties. Used in the right channels, it will promote the interests of climate activists, of sociologists and economists, and so of us all.

Even though 2019 was a year of declining turnover in the electronics industry, with modest bookings, every expert knows that we have grown by an average of 5% a year over the past 15 years, and that the same growth trend is forecast for the next 15 years.

In the coming decades, electronics in particular will provide the essential backbone for the transition to sustainable living and economic activity. Looking to the expansion of renewable energy sources, e-mobility, smart solutions, and much more, I am not worried about how the electronics world will achieve growth. It's going to happen.

It will happen where the infrastructure is right: From 5G, to education, to mobility – to say that Germany has room for improvement would be something of an understatement. Capital investment is vitally needed.

It will happen where people approach the future with motivation, strong will and a sense of purpose. And it will happen where people see not just the status quo, but the opportunities and potential outcomes.

We just have to look forward, and target the right goals, because where we are looking is where we are heading.

Author: Andreas Falke, Executive Director FBDi e.V.

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**About FBDi e. V. ([www.fbdi.de](http://www.fbdi.de)):**

The FBDi e.V. – Fachverband der Bauelemente Distribution e.V. (Professional Association of Component Distribution), founded in 2003, is well-established in the German association community and represents a large portion of distributors of electronic components with operations in Germany. In addition to the preparation and advancement of numerical data and statistics concerning the German distribution market for electronic components, work group engagement and reporting on important industry themes (amongst others, education, liability and rights, traceability, and environmental themes) form essential pillars of the association's work. The FBDi is a member of the International Distribution of Electronics Association (IDEA).

**Member companies (as per January 2020):**

**Regular members:** Acal BFi Germany; Arrow Europe; Avnet EMG EMEA; Beck Elektronische Bauelemente; Blume Elektronik Distribution; Bürklin Elektronik; CODICO; Conrad Electronic; Distrelec; Ecomal Europe; Endrich Bauelemente; EVE; Future Electronics Deutschland; Glyn; Gudeco Elektronik; Haug Components Holding; Hy-Line Holding; JIT electronic; Kruse Electronic Components; MB Electronic; MEDI Kabel; Memphis Electronic; Menges Electronic; MEV Elektronik Service; mewa electronic; Mouser Electronics; Neumüller Elektronik GmbH; pk components; Püplichhuisen; RS Components; Rutronik Elektronische Bauelemente; Ryosan Europe; Schukat electronic; TTI Europe.

**Supporting members:** TDK Europe.

**Information about FBDi:**

Andreas Falke, CEO, Nassauische Str. 65 A, 10717 Berlin; [a.falke@fbdi.de](mailto:a.falke@fbdi.de)

**Media contact:**

Agentur Lorenzoni GmbH, Public Relations, Landshuter Str. 29, 85435 Erding;  
ph: +49 8122 55917-0, [www.lorenzoni.de](http://www.lorenzoni.de); Beate Lorenzoni-Felber, [beate@lorenzoni.de](mailto:beate@lorenzoni.de)