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Niklas Potrafke heads the Ifo Center for Public Finance and Political Economy and has been Professor of Finance at LMU Munich since 2012. His research interests include public finance, economic policy and political economy.

After completing his undergraduate degree in economics at the Fernuniversität Hagen, Niklas Potrafke (*1980) obtained a diploma in economics at the Humboldt-Universität zu Berlin. In 2008 he received his doctorate there from Charles B. Blankart. He completed the Berlin Doctoral Program in Economics and Management Science and is a visiting scholar at the German Institute for Economic Research (DIW) in Berlin. Study and research stays take him to the University of California, Berkeley, ETH Zurich and KOF Konjunkturforschungsstelle as well as to the University of Groningen. From 2008 to 2012, Potrafke was an assistant at the Chair of Political Economy of Heinrich W. Ursprung at the University of Konstanz.

Niklas Potrafke researches current economic policy issues and transfers research findings into public discourse. He advises policymakers on fiscal policy issues in projects for the Federal Ministry of Finance and state ministries. As an expert, he is regularly invited to hearings in the German Bundestag and state parliaments.

He writes guest articles in German print media such as the Frankfurter Allgemeine Zeitung, the Süddeutsche Zeitung, the Handelsblatt or DIE WELT.

Niklas Potrafke's enthusiastic lectures are much in demand. He discusses mega trends such as globalization, demographic change, climate change and digitalization and relates to exogenous shocks such as the COVID-19 pandemic and Russia's attack on Ukraine. Understandable even for non-experts he also describes expectations of economic experts on economic growth and inflation. His lecture languages are German and English.

Topics (Selection):

- How is the German economy developing? Where does Germany stand in international comparison?
- Special funds and loosening the debt brake: Was that a good idea?
- How Donald Trump keeps the world in suspense
- Are entrepreneurs more successful politicians?

Publications (Selection):

- The economic consequences of tariffs and trade policy uncertainty (with C. Gréus, P. Heil, R. Schmid and T. Tähtinen). EconPol Policy Brief 79, 2025
- Die Wirtschaftspolitik unter Donald Trump: Eine Bewertung von US-Wirtschaftsexperten (mit P. Heil, E. Höslinger, E. Scholten and T. Tähtinen), 2025
- What do economists think about tariffs? Insights from the Economic Experts Survey (mit P. Heil, E. Höslinger and T. Tähtinen). EconPol Policy Brief, 2025
- German public opinion on defense and the Bundeswehr (mit E. Scholten, T. Tähtinen and K. Theocharopoulos). EconPol Forum 26(3), 2025