



CENTRE FOR
EUROPEAN
POLICY STUDIES

ANNUAL REPORT 2025



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Scary times for the EU, but a busy year for CEPS

2025 turned out to be a very eventful year, sometimes concerning, so we've all been hoping for a calmer, more positive 2026 for the EU, Europe and the world. Alas, it appears that once again, 2026 will be another turbulent year.

More than ever, evidence-based independent policy research is needed during a period of power politics and ideological warfare. Think tanks have a crucial role to play in these circumstances, to stay above the fray and to provide deep insights into thorny policy challenges.

Indeed, over the past year we've been highly active in some of the thorniest debates taking place in Brussels, from the Commission's ongoing deregulation exercise in the sustainability agenda, the pressures on EU digital policies, and the renewed calls for a more unified EU capital market. We've done this through an impressive number of publications, which range from short, op-ed-style expert commentaries, through to longer, deeper in-depth analysis papers, as well as several high-level events with key stakeholders, and, of course, our flagship annual event, Ideas Lab.

CEPS has also been working to provide practical insights and recommendations in another crucial EU policy challenge, namely Europe's alarming defence deficit, which is the subject of a high-level Task Force, chaired by former Finnish President Sauli Niinistö, in collaboration with three other think tanks – RUSI, Clingendael and EPI (Bocconi). The final report is due to be launched in the first half of 2026.

In 2025, we strengthened our team to become even more data driven, with our dedicated Data Science unit responding to the demands for deep analysis of complex data sets crossing sectors, countries and even continents.

And whilst preserving our decades-old expertise in many diverse policy areas, we also became much more active in the realm of health policy, expanding CEPS' expertise in this fast-evolving field. Our team has focused a lot of their work on HERA (the Health Emergency Preparedness and Response Authority, the Commission's newest DG) and individual diseases, such as HIV and malaria. We also launched HeliX, a dedicated online health portal that provides a comprehensive analysis of the EU's global health policy.

As an independent think tank, we were proud in 2025 to lead or to participate in many Horizon Europe projects and tenders for the EU and other institutions. We're continuing our long-term plan to engage with large foundations, as well as the private sector, whose support is instrumental.

We would like to thank the many CEPS members and donors that contribute to our day-to-day work, and, of course, our staff – it's worth repeating that we simply wouldn't be able to undertake our guiding mantra, to 'think ahead for Europe' without their passion and dedication.

2026 will certainly not be any easier than previous years, as the first days of January have already proven – but at CEPS, we endeavour to fully utilise our extensive inhouse expertise to positively contribute to the ongoing debates with the practical and evidence-based solutions required for solving today's pressing policy challenges.

Karel Lannoo

CEPS Chief Executive Officer

Research priorities

2025 marked a decisive rupture in the global order. Coming on top of Russia's full-scale invasion of Ukraine, escalating conflict in the Middle East, economic stagnation across much of Europe and the rise of populist, anti-EU movements, the year pushed an already strained system into open instability. The most disruptive shift was Donald Trump's return in the United States. Washington adopted an overtly transactional foreign policy, sharply degrading transatlantic relations through tariffs, conditional support for Ukraine bordering on coercion, and explicit ambitions to seize Greenland by any means necessary. The EU increasingly found itself not just sidelined but directly targeted.

A symbolic low point came in mid-August with the Anchorage meeting between Donald Trump and Vladimir Putin, presented as talks between equals. In its wake, the war in Ukraine, but also in the Middle East, Sudan and now Venezuela were reduced to arenas of strongman politics, with scant regard for international institutions or existential challenges such as climate change, biodiversity loss and sustainable development.

Throughout 2025, global governance remained hostage to the volatility of the US presidency. Persistent mistrust in science, denial of the climate and biodiversity crises, and an uncompromising 'America First' agenda translated into unprecedented defunding of international organisations, development agencies and NGOs.

At the same time, US military support for Europe and NATO was gradually scaled back, while EU Member States were pressed to increase defence spending. With the war in Ukraine posing a daily security threat, many governments began reallocating resources away from social policy, research and innovation, healthcare and international cooperation towards defence. Yet the EU's 'ReArm Europe' initiative, launched in February, failed to coalesce into a genuine common defence strategy, remaining instead a fragmented set of national commitments.

For the EU, these developments amount to an unprecedented existential challenge. Core pillars of the EU agenda such as the Green Deal and international partnerships have been subordinated to security and defence priorities. While the Draghi report triggered a renewed focus on competitiveness – leading to simplification initiatives and the launch of the Clean Industrial Deal and the Competitiveness Compass – hard security has risen to the top of Brussels' agenda and is likely to dominate EU policymaking for years to come.

This shifting landscape has fundamentally shaped CEPS' research priorities. In 2025, we moved decisively into new territory, notably through Task Forces on a stronger European pillar within NATO and on Ukraine's reconstruction. We deepened our analysis of evolving transatlantic relations across energy, financial services, science and technology and deep tech. New initiatives were launched on global health and agriculture, EU research and innovation policy, the climate transition, space policy, quantum technologies, AI and the future of work. We deepened our research efforts on the EU's cooperation and international partnerships with China, middle powers like India and Japan, and low and middle-income countries. We also began reassessing the economic logic underpinning current EU industrial policy, explored pathways to simplify EU legislation without diluting its values or effectiveness, and initiated work on how EU institutions can become more agile, legitimate and accountable in an increasingly complex 'poly-risk' world.

Crucially, CEPS also adapted its *modus operandi*. In a faster, more volatile environment, think tanks cannot operate on business-as-usual timelines. We strengthened our capacity for near-real-time analysis, leveraging data science and integrating AI into our research practices. To sustain this shift, CEPS launched an internal Academy in 2025 to share expertise and raise research quality across the organisation. We're looking forward to adapting and offering our exclusive Academy programme to our members in 2026.

When the world accelerates, policy research must keep pace. That is the challenge CEPS has taken on, so that rigorous, timely analysis can continue to inform better decisions, when they matter most.

Andrea Renda

CEPS Director of Research



CEPS in numbers



15.5K

New followers



145.5K

Total followers



10K

Shares & likes



+1470

Media mentions



1.12M

Website views



81

CEPS staff



24

Countries



16

Topics



201

Publications



105

Events



11.8K

Attendees



160

Members



Highlights of the year

A STRONG YEAR FOR CEPS PUBLICATIONS

Publications are the fundamental building blocks for almost everything we do at CEPS – it's how we showcase our research and expertise to the world, how we 'think ahead for Europe' and as a result, they inform much of what else we do, from our social media engagement and inhouse events, and how we engage with the media and our members, collaborators and other key stakeholders.

After a strong 2024, we managed to go even further: the highest number of short, op-ed-style expert commentaries since 2020 (72 in total) and a smorgasbord of in-depth analysis reports, policy briefs and explainers. On top of these, we were proud to highlight some of the excellent research that we've undertaken for the European institutions and within various EU-funded projects.

Overall, CEPS put out close to 200 publications in 2025 – here's to an even more productive 2026!



IDEAS LAB PODCAST SERIES AND CEPS TECH PODCAST

Our latest podcast allows listeners to directly explore the policy issues and challenges discussed at Ideas Lab, CEPS' flagship annual event, giving them an insight into the brand new ideas that will shape Europe's future in an increasingly complex global landscape.



The podcast offers diverse insights and discussions on how Europe can navigate geopolitical tensions, technological advances and economic change. Tune in to hear renowned policymakers and researchers discuss Europe's evolving role and current challenges – listen to it [here](#)!

Alongside this new series, the [CEPS Tech Podcast](#), which launched in June 2024, continued with brand new episodes featuring high-level speakers like Nobel laureate Daron Acemoglu and American economist David Autor. (Re)discover all the available episodes [here](#).

NEW RESEARCH ON HEALTH TOPICS AND HELIX

CEPS HELIX 

This past year, some of our researchers from the GRID unit began working much more extensively on a new topic – health. health.

Much of this research has thus far focused on HERA (the Health Emergency Preparedness and Response Authority), the European Commission's newest DG, created because of the Covid-19 pandemic. Our researchers are providing insights on a variety of global health solutions, from leadership, funding, partnerships and engagement. They are also covering specific diseases, such as HIV and malaria. To discover all our health-related publications, events and researchers, please click [here](#).

Alongside this, CEPS launched [HeliX](#) – a website entirely dedicated to providing comprehensive analyses of the EU's global health policy, combining expert insights, data analysis and foresight.

CEPS' OFFICIAL SUBSTACK – THINKING AHEAD FOR EUROPE



This year, in September, CEPS launched its official Substack channel, 'Thinking ahead for Europe'. With the policy debate evolving rapidly, today's conversations are faster, more dynamic and increasingly shaped by platforms that allow direct engagement with readers.

Having long embraced social media channels such as LinkedIn, X and Bluesky, CEPS is now extending its reach to Substack – a platform that enables us to connect with our audiences directly via their inboxes, without filters or algorithms. It also allows us to share regular, bite-sized updates on our research and findings more directly to our subscribers, bypassing the sometimes-pesky filters and algorithms. And with our statistics revealing that our (growing) list of subscribers come from 52 countries, from Argentina to Japan and many in between, we're well on our way to achieving our other ambition with Substack, namely to engage new readers beyond the traditional Brussels 'Eurobubble'.

We invite you to subscribe and to follow along [here](#).

DATASETS OF LEGAL AND POLICY INSTRUMENTS FOR THE DIGITAL WORLD

At multiple levels, there has been an explosion of policy documents, declarations, strategies, laws and regulations, and court cases that are relevant to the digital world. Even the best experts struggle to keep up with this torrent of legal and policy instruments being generated at global, European and international levels.

This is why CEPS began publishing a series of datasets to provide the necessary tools to the research community to help them make sense of this tsunami of legislative measures. This will be an ongoing series that will continue to be updated regularly in 2026. To read the datasets published so far, click [here](#).



CEPS ACADEMY

We internally relaunched our CEPS Academy in November. The new CEPS Academy core curriculum covers the main themes of the European policy landscape and research methods. It's designed to deepen our researchers' grounding in the fundamentals to complement their sector-specific expertise.

In 2026, we look forward to adapting this offer to launch with our members, alongside a series of exclusive masterclasses which will zoom in on the most recent policy developments.

LAUNCH OF THE CEPS WELLBEING CHARTER

In 2025, CEPS launched a small working group, consisting of the CEPS Human Resources Department and representatives of the Diversity, Equity and Inclusion Committee (DEIC), to draft the very first CEPS Wellbeing Charter, based on input from a staff wellbeing survey and the annual staff survey.



Implementing the Charter is one of the key actions in CEPS' new HR Excellence in Research action plan and a legal requirement. The Charter and its accompanying pillars are built on six key values: integrity, respect, inspiration, collaboration, innovation and inclusion.

In 2026, a dedicated Action Plan – consisting of a series of practical steps to implement the Charter's principles – will be rolled out across the organisation.

DIVERSITY, EQUALITY AND INCLUSION COMMITTEE

Launched in January 2023, the CEPS Diversity, Equity and Inclusion Committee (DEIC) has continued its efforts to cultivate a truly inclusive and diverse culture at CEPS. This year also marked a turning point for DEIC, as it expanded its activities and organised both its first ever session during our flagship event, Ideas Lab, and its own CEPS public event later in the year.

DEIC's session at Ideas Lab 2025 focused on the European Commission's 'Union of Equality' and brought together civil society, the Commission and MEPs. The session was well-attended and DEIC will be organising another lab session in the 2026 edition of Ideas Lab.

In May 2025, to mark the International Day Against Homophobia, Biphobia and Transphobia (IDAHOBIT), DEIC organised a public event with ILGA-Europe, where they presented their annual Rainbow Map, followed by a panel discussion of the state of LGBTI rights across Europe. Because of these successes, DEIC is committed to organising more public events and to continue engaging with external partners.

DEIC also hosted a series of well attended in-house events and activities: a staff workshop on LGBTI rights, a discussion with representatives of the European Citizen's Initiative 'My Voice, My Choice', and a series of internal training session.

CEPS in the policy debate

For think tanks, measuring impact is the holy grail. Elusive as it may be to establish a direct causal link between an idea proposed in a think tank publication and the outcome in law, policy or action, CEPS' work in the surf of the European civil service nevertheless gives it more 'voice' in ongoing debates. Since the main objective of a think tank is to provide decision-makers with high quality and objective policy research on policy-relevant subjects, it's worth offering a glimpse of the critical role CEPS plays in political and policy arenas, not only at EU level but also on a wider international scale.



JANUARY

Andrea Renda delivered a keynote lecture for DG RTD on 'quantum policymaking'. His work on this topic, combining foresight, multi-criteria policymaking and adaptive regulation, was explicitly mentioned by DG GROW in its new blueprint for industry policy released at the end of 2025.

Sergio Carrera participated in a close-doors bilateral meeting between CEPS and the Platform for International Cooperation on Undocumented Migrants (PICUM) with the European Commission's Director of the Migration and Asylum department and the Head of the Return & Readmission Unit to present and discuss the preliminary MORE project results.

FEBRUARY

Irina Kustova spoke at the International Energy Policy Summit as part of a panel on 'Decarbonisation as a driver of European integration'.

Karel Lannoo spoke at ESMA's 2025 conference on 'Shaping the future of EU capital markets'.

Sergio Carrera gave a presentation on the panel 'Implementation of the new measures and instruments' at the European Parliament's LIBE-PETI joint public hearing on 'Border checks and the future of the Schengen area'.

MARCH

Beatriz Pozo presented the 2024 EU Payment Observatory Annual Report to an European Economic and Social Committee (EESC) Members meeting.

Berta Mizsei participated in the conference 'Turn of the volume for civil society!' organised by the EESC.

Karel Lannoo spoke at Better Finance's International Conference 'Towards a Savings and Investment Union'.

Karel Lannoo organised a 'Chief Economists – Macro Group' webinar, chaired by Erik F. Nielsen, Senior Advisor at Independent Economics and former Group Chief Economic Adviser at UniCredit. The Macro Group initiative brings together chief economists and offer insights into Europe's macroeconomic landscape. Karel also participated in two subsequent webinars in this series, which were organised in April and October 2025.

APRIL

Apostolos Thomadakis spoke at the 2025 EFFAS Capital Markets Forum, on the panel 'The Capital Markets Union: is it still alive'.

Cinzia Alcidi gave a keynote speech at POLITICO's Public Affairs Forum, entitled 'As tensions increase with the Trump administration, where does the EU stand?'.

Fanny Sauvignon participated in a closed-doors meeting organised by the OECD Development Assistance Committee to discuss global development cooperation and the Global Gateway.

Karel Lannoo spoke at a high-level conference on EU capital markets organised by the Confederation of Swedish Enterprise.

Vasileios Rizos participated in the International Workshop on Applied Economics and Sustainability, giving a presentation on a new framework for environmental policy instruments.

MAY

Andrea Renda delivered a keynote speech on the creation of a network of national AI supervisors at UNESCO's expert roundtable on AI for Competent Authorities.

Apostolos Thomadakis presented the EP study 'Reporting obligations' during a JURI committee meeting at the European Parliament.

Davide Monaco spoke on a panel on AI and the future of work at the 2025 EU-US Young Leaders Seminar organised by the German Marshall Fund of the United States.

Judith Arnal participated in ACI Worldwide and The Paypers' Summit and spoke during the session 'The next frontier in fraud prevention'.

JUNE

Fanny Sauvignon spoke on the panel '(Re)thinking Mediterranean Diplomacy' at the ALForum 2025 organised by the Anna Lindh Foundation.

Louise Bengtsson participated in a roundtable at the Almedalen Democratic Festival organised by the One Campaign.

Raquel Jorge spoke at Euractiv's Tech Policy Conference.

Sergio Carrera and **Davide Colombi** participated in a workshop on 'Local realities, European ambitions: integration and transnational engagement of the Afghanistani community in Brussels', organised by CEPS and the Network of Afghanistani Diaspora Organisations in Europe.

SEPTEMBER

Andrea Renda and **Pierre-Alexandre Balland** presented their study on Sweden's competitiveness to the Royal Institute of Technology in Stockholm as well as in private closed-door meetings with key stakeholders and policymakers.

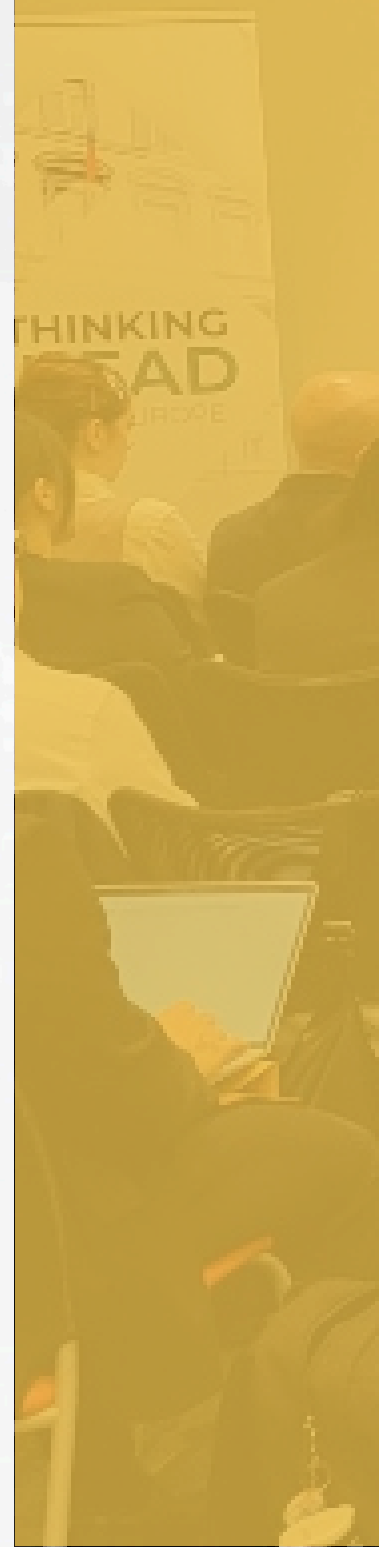
Apostolos Thomadakis spoke at the 2025 Sustainable Finance and Asset Management Conference organised by the Vlerick Sustainability Centre.

Cinzia Alcidi gave a keynote speech on the 'faltering global order in the age of geoeconomics' at the annual IPE Infrastructure & Nature Capital Conference 2025.

Laura Nurski gave a presentation on AI and the future of work to the World Employment Confederation's Economic Affairs Committee.

Patricia Urban presented CEPS' research on sufficiency policy for buildings at the World Resources Forum.

Tinatín Akhvlediani joined a panel on economic challenges and cooperation in the South Caucasus at the 108th Rose-Roth Seminar, organised by the NATO Parliamentary Assembly.



OCTOBER

Andrea Renda became a Commissioner in the NUS PRIME Lancet Commission on pandemic preparedness and spoke at the World Health Summit in Berlin.

Christian Dietz spoke on a panel organised by Sciences Po PSIA, CERU and KU Leuven, 'Ten years after Paris: lessons learned and the road to 2030'.

Cinzia Alcidi gave a keynote speech on 'Global challenges in the age of geoeconomics' at Generali Employee Benefits' Global Network Conference 2025.

Fredrik Andersson presented the CEPS In-Depth Analysis on the Swedish financial sector at the FSCI-COLC Financial Services Dialogue.

Harry Crichton-Miller gave a presentation on trade-offs between competitiveness and social priorities at the UK Mission to the European Union.

Karel Lannoo spoke at the 34th EuroFinance International Treasure Management conference on the panel 'Finance infrastructure: the evolution of regulation and banking'.

NOVEMBER

Ceren Ergenc and **J. Scott Marcus** presented CEPS' study 'The next steps for European economic security – lessons learned from Chinese Economic Coercion' to the European Parliament's ITRE committee.

Cinzia Alcidi gave a keynote speech on the EU's economic security at the Association of Independent Economic Research Institutes' Autumn 2025 meeting.

Davide Colombi spoke during a panel on implementing the EU Migration & Asylum Pact at the Cyprus Forum Brussels.

Davide Monaco gave a presentation on a 'toolkit for anticipating the future of work' to the Commission's DG EMPL.

Edoardo Righetti moderated a panel on 'Certifications and standards as enablers for sustainable critical raw materials value chains' during Raw Materials Week 2025 organised by the European Commission.

Laura Nurski spoke on the panel 'Future-proofing work: the role of job quality in supporting an engaged, adaptable, and resilient workforce' at the Foundation Forum 2025, organised by Eurofound.

Timothy Yeung presented the EPRS study 'Europe's Beating Cancer Plan: implementation findings' to the European Parliament's SANTE Committee.

DECEMBER

Apostolos Thomadakis spoke at a High-Level Conference on the 28th European company regiment organised by the Permanent Representation of France to the EU.

Sergio Carrera presented the EP study 'Assessing the impacts of the 2025 EU returns and safe countries' to the European Parliament.

Tinatin Akhvlediani took part in a field mission to Ukraine organised by the German-Ukrainian Bureau with the support of the German Federal Foreign Office. She joined a distinguished expert group to better understand the realities on the ground regarding Ukraine's EU accession prospects.

Vasileios Rizos spoke at the event 'Can a fully-fledged EU circular economy model foster resilience, competitiveness and innovation in the European economy?' organised by PubAffairs Bruxelles.

The year in publications

In 2025, CEPS' exceptionally strong in-house capacity powered forward, producing nearly 200 publications.

As always, our publications – from shorter, punchier op-ed-style Expert Commentaries to longer, comprehensive In-Depth Analysis reports – are at the heart of CEPS' drive to 'think ahead for Europe'. Here we present a carefully curated selection of some of our most prominent publications from 2025.





EU plans for AI (giga)factories: sanctuaries of innovation, or cathedrals in the desert

To address Europe's competitiveness delay in the domain of AI, the European Commission is investing heavily in building AI factories and gigafactories across Europe. They promise to create dynamic ecosystems for frontier AI development, bringing together compute, data, and talent. While acknowledging the Commission's efforts in driving infrastructure deployment, we examine whether it can meet its goals by investigating the implications of the factory locations, the type of architecture that is being built, and the type of AI that is likely to be deployed.



Towards an ambitious FP10

In a world increasingly subject to uncertainty and crisis, Europe has a responsibility to lead the way in tackling global challenges, using science and technology to benefit us all. A key instrument that allows it to do this is the Framework Programme for R&I, the world's largest R&I funding programme. This report presents a vision and possible pathways towards a truly ambitious FP10.

Making Europe's research and innovation programme an engine of global development

The EU's approach to research and innovation (R&I) is often praised by commentators and policymakers as being oriented towards rewarding excellent science, as well to tackle pressing global challenges. This report assesses the EU's capacity to position its forthcoming Tenth Framework Programme (FP10) as a global leader in addressing global challenges through research and innovation (R&I). While the EU highlights Horizon Europe's achievements and its multiplier effect on GDP, the report urges a more critical examination of the programme's limitations – particularly its fragmented governance, underfunding and lack of global alignment.

Strengthening the EU transition to a quantum-safe world

In April 2025, CEPS launched a Task Force on Strengthening the EU Transition to a Quantum-Safe World. The objective was to draw attention to the technical, market, governance and policy challenges involved in Europe's transition to quantum safe. The Task Force, designed as a multi-stakeholder platform, brought together 11 private organisations, 11 EU institutions and agencies, seven universities and think tanks, one national research agency, and one civil society organisation.



ECONOMIC AND MONETARY AFFAIRS

EU economic security: confronting the dual challenges of China and the US

Donald Trump's return to the White House has hit the EU like a tornado. Until the end of 2024, concerns about trade dependencies remained primarily focused on imports from China. However, the US' increasingly aggressive stance towards its trade partners has shifted attention to EU exports, demanding urgent and far-reaching adjustments.



Defying gravity... or not? Here are seven weaknesses to look out for in the US economy

Much of the current commentary praises America's remarkable economic resilience despite broad tariffs, erratic policies and even the current administration's overt attacks on democratic institutions. Yet on closer inspection, this awesomely positive narrative of a triumphant Trump era is based more on slogans than solid ground. Beneath the surface, seven cracks are waiting to appear.

The EU-US trade deal promises temporary relief but long-term pain

After months of uncertainty and escalating rhetoric, a new EU-US trade deal has finally been announced. Under the deal, a 15% US tariff will apply to most EU imports, including cars, pharmaceuticals and semiconductors. This is higher than the 10% rate applied to most imports from the EU since April but lower than the 30% tariff President Trump had threatened just days earlier. A 50% tariff remains on steel and aluminium, with further negotiations expected in those sectors.

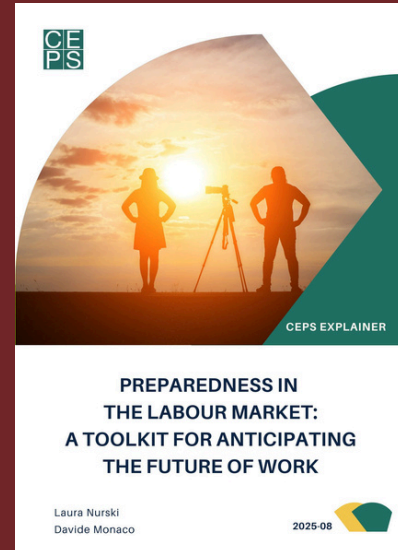




EMPLOYEMENT AND SOCIAL AFFAIRS

Preparedness in the labour market: a toolkit for anticipating the future of work

Recent shocks and disruptions – from pandemics to technological breakthroughs – have made clear that simply waiting until a crisis hits is no longer an option. Preparedness requires anticipating change and shaping it before it unfolds. In response, the European Commission published its 'Preparedness Union Strategy' earlier in 2025, calling for a 'preparedness-by-design' culture across all policies, held up by the core pillars of foresight and anticipation.



Solving Europe's AI talent equation

As Europe scales up its ambition to lead in AI, understanding the structure of AI labour markets becomes essential. This study offers a comparative mapping of AI job vacancies and AI talent across European countries, recognising that skills are not isolated units but form-nested hierarchies and that actionable workforce policy must target coherent skill bundles rather than individual skills.

Stop 'techwashing' layoffs – and start co-designing the future of work

In recent weeks, headlines have taken a sharp turn, with Anthropic's CEO warning that AI could eliminate half of all entry-level white-collar jobs within five years. Business media echo the same worry: is AI replacing – or going to replace – new graduates? The narrative is clear, AI is coming for entry-level jobs and there's nothing we can do about it. But this deterministic view ignores the simple truth: that machines don't make history. People do.

The EU's competitiveness drive could turn quality jobs into a mirage

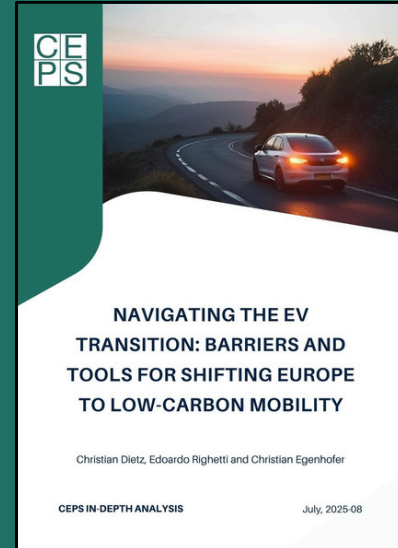
In the wake of the Draghi report and the EU Competitiveness Compass, 'competitiveness' is again dominating debates about the present and future of EU economies and societies, despite being long criticised as an elusive concept or a dangerous (and wrong) obsession.



ENERGY, CLIMATE CHANGE AND THE ENVIRONMENT

Navigating the EV transition: barriers and tools for shifting Europe to low-carbon mobility

The European automotive industry stands at a critical juncture. The transition to electric vehicles is crucial to the EU's climate targets in the transport sector. This transition requires a significant transformation of existing supply and value chains, which will also impact the types of labour and skills needed in the industry. The shifting revenues and cost structures as well as the competitiveness of the EU automotive industry will determine whether EV sales can offset the anticipated decline in internal combustion engine vehicle revenues.



From partnership to leadership: energising EU-Korea cooperation on the road to net zero

Like-minded partners have never been more needed than they are today. During a time of turbulent change, the EU and South Korea have laid solid foundations to cooperate more closely on climate, the energy transition and industrial decarbonisation, both sharing the vision of green growth and ambitions to accelerate cleantech deployment and innovation.

Beyond high winds: hard truths about 'made in the EU' offshore wind in lower wind regions

Improving the currently limited prospects for offshore wind in Europe's lower wind speed regions, such as the Black Sea and Eastern Mediterranean, involves addressing several challenges. Chief among them are the noticeable lack of developer interest and an overall weak business case.

The EU is on thin ice in Greenland. It really needs to get its key messages across

Greenland, remote and mysterious, rarely made global headlines. Now, it's a hotspot in the Arctic's growing geopolitical rivalry, with top European and American officials routinely visiting Greenland, direct flights opened to New York and US-Denmark tensions heating up. And of course, there's Donald Trump's outlandish desire to 'buy' Greenland.



EU INSTITUTIONS AND POLICYMAKING

Why 2025's Q1 shocks could be the last opportunity to forge an EU master plan

Europe has been profoundly shaken by the first months of Donald Trump's second administration. And because of this, the EU must urgently embrace a much wider and more ambitious strategic master plan, something it has thus far failed to do.



Undermining trust, not toppling the Commission – the European Parliament's fringes have rediscovered the censure motion

On 10 July 2025, the European Parliament rejected a censure motion against the European Commission. Only three months later, on Thursday 9 October, another two motions were voted on – one from the far-right PEF group and one from The Left group. Both target the Commission's recent trade actions, while The Left is also criticising the Commission's lack of action over Gaza.

The European council: truly the law-maker-in-chief?

We know that the European Council is a powerful and visible strategic agenda-setter, crisis manager and impasse-breaker. Yet we are less familiar with the role of national heads of state or government in everyday law-making. This CEPS Explainer asks whether and – if so – how and how often the European Council refers to these specific laws in its summit conclusions.





Towards a European digital services tax: renewing the momentum for a fair contribution

The EU must reassess its digital taxation strategy. A renewed push for an EU-wide DST could provide an immediate solution, but long-term reforms are necessary. With OECD negotiations stalled, the EU must strike a balance between fiscal autonomy and global tax cooperation to ensure digital firms pay their fair share without distorting markets.



The EU retail payment compass – let's lead the way

Outlining the current state of retail payments, this Task Force report discusses how to further develop a competitive and fair market that benefits both the European industry and consumers. It also highlights the need for regulators and market players to collaborate to support continued innovation in the payments landscape that meets the expectations of consumers and merchants.

The EU is walking the fine line between simplification and deregulation

The EU has entered its simplification moment. After a decade of head-spinning rulemaking, the European Commission is now applying simplification more directly to financial regulation, all in the name of competitiveness. However, the real question isn't whether simplification is needed – it is. The real question is whether what's being flown under that banner is actually deregulation by stealth.

Learning from Sweden: a blueprint for building resilient European capital markets

Sweden's capital market stands out in the EU for its depth, inclusiveness and long-term orientation, shaped by decades of pragmatic reforms. Key drivers of its development include pension restructuring, tax simplification and the introduction of accessible savings vehicles – all fostered within a broader culture of trust and openness to financial innovation.

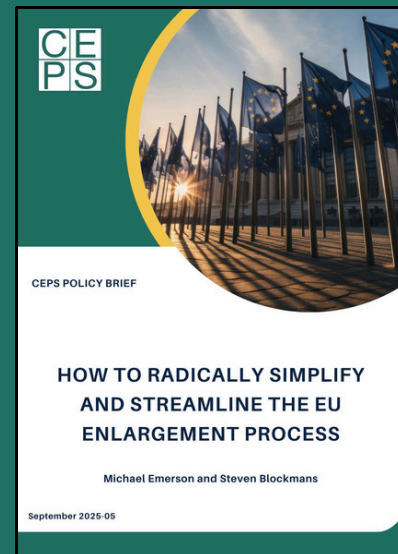
Beyond disclosure – or why the EU's green strategy is coming apart

By all appearances, Europe is doubling down on its green ambitions. But scratch the surface, and a different picture emerges: a continent obsessed with process over outcomes, clinging to disclosure frameworks while sidestepping the harder structural reforms that would reduce emissions or improve competitiveness.



How to radically simplify and streamline the EU enlargement process

Over the last year the EU's enlargement process has seen the implementation of a new 'gradual integration' concept, allowing for some modest elements of single market access and additional funding before full accession, but conditional on a complex set of policy reforms. Intended to re-dynamise the enlargement process, this concept adds a fresh layer of bureaucratic complexity to the system, without directly advancing the formal accession process.



From free-riders to front-loaders. Why the EU's defence awakening must be matched by economic coherence

The 'White Paper on European Defence Readiness 2030' charts a geostrategic course for rearming Europe and, at the same time, offers realistic suggestions on how to achieve this by working through the EU institutions and with like-minded partners. For the EU's plans to stick, however, economic coherence and coordination will have to be the glue that binds it all together.

Caught between China and the US, the EU must play to its regulatory strength

Mario Draghi declared that the EU shouldn't just rely on being an economic regulator if it doesn't want to be sidelined by the US and China, the world's foremost superpowers. Indeed, the EU's summer of summits and new trade deals with China and the US yielded far less than expected. But the EU's regulations aren't to blame.

Disentangling Global Gateway: from Team Europe to the world

With the second von der Leyen Commission prioritising European competitiveness and security in an era of geostrategic rivalries, the EU has shifted its focus from a donor-recipient model to strategic investments that increases its competitiveness through supply chain resilience.

The EU's strategic compromises are blinding it to the ongoing fight for democracy in Serbia

Since November 2024, Serbia has experienced a huge wave of anti-government protests. As students and citizens continue to pump up the situation by doubling down on their demands, the government's intimidation attempts continues. Brussels' response? In short – not good enough.



RUSSIA, UKRAINE AND EUROPEAN SECURITY

For when the war ends: prospects and policy options for Ukrainian refugees

Ceasefire and peace negotiations between Russia and Ukraine opened on 15-16 May 2025 in Istanbul. While there was no breakthrough and the prospects of a summit-level meeting of Presidents Putin, Zelenskyy and Trump appear to be receding, the start of a formal negotiation process will nonetheless lead the millions of Ukrainian refugees in Europe to ponder their futures.



Why the EU-Ukraine DCFTA review matters

The EU and Ukraine have recently agreed to review the Deep and Comprehensive Free Trade Agreement (DCFTA), the core trade pillar of Ukraine's Association Agreement with the EU. While the agreement stops short of full trade liberalisation, it offers more predictability and helps contain political tensions contributing to Ukraine's deeper integration with the EU.

Much more than minerals: the US-Ukraine minerals agreement and its geopolitical implications

After months of tense negotiations, the US and Ukraine signed a minerals agreement in Washington D.C. on 30 April 2025. While centred on natural resources, it's much more than a business deal on mining natural resources. This CEPS Explainer breaks down the Agreement's core provisions, its implications for all the parties involved and the necessary conditions needed for it to succeed.





HUMAN RIGHTS AND JUSTICE

The Italy v ICC row exposes deep-rooted hypocrisy in EU migration policy.

The Italian government's refusal to comply with an International Criminal Court arrest warrant exposes deep-rooted hypocrisy in EU migration policy. While claiming to fight 'human trafficking', the Italian government has shielded a high-ranking Libyan official accused of crimes against humanity and war crimes.

In the plutocratic age of 'broligarchy', democracy is in deep trouble – but there's still hope

The democratic rule of law is badly deteriorating in many parts of the world and those responsible are hiding in plain sight. In fact, they're not hiding at all, but they do pretend that their conduct supposedly benefits the public good instead of seriously harming it.

Discourses about irregularised migrants at the EU level

How is irregularised migration framed at the EU level by the European Commission, the European Parliament, and EU civil society? Through a comparative analysis, this report examines the narratives shaping discourse on border control, migration status, rights, and employment, revealing how different actors interpret these themes through distinct lenses.

EU integration policies are broken – the case of Aghanistani immigrants (especially women) proves this

Kabul's fall in August 2021 was a slow-motion tragedy. EU Member States opened their doors, then bureaucracy slammed them shut. Across the EU, highly-skilled Afghanistans – especially many Afghanistani women – are unable to work or practice their profession. These aren't just individual tragedies. They're symptoms of a systemic failure that's quietly sabotaging people's lives – and Europe's future.





INTERNAL MARKET, INDUSTRY, ENTREPRENEURSHIP AND SMEs

A new strategy to empower the single market

Following the publication of the European Commission's new Single Market Strategy in May 2025, this CEPS Explainer looks at the finer details to answer one of the eternal EU questions: will this be the strategy that finally empowers the single market to reach its full potential?



The EU must stay on course and be much more assertive, both at home and abroad

The EU should stick to its course, pursue the Green Deal and complete the single market. It needs to demonstrate its resolve and act united as a new – potentially hostile – US administration rolls in and shakes up the foundations of transatlantic cooperation and the world order. But it must also stand firm if China makes its own attempts to split an EU united front.





From preparedness to action: HERA's role in the EU's public and global health security architecture

The EU has reinforced its leadership in global health security by adopting a more proactive and cooperative approach to preparedness and response. Its health security framework seeks to enhance the EU's capacity to respond to cross-border health threats, strengthening both readiness and resilience.



Minding the gender gap – a critical omission in the EU's AMR response

Gender is largely absent from the EU's antimicrobial resistance policies and strategies. Yet AMR is a major global health threat. It happens when microbes stop responding to medication, making infections harder to treat, and increasing the risk of severe illness and death. Misuse and the overuse of antibiotics accelerate resistance, turning once-treatable infections into serious health risks.

Scoping paper on HERA's engagement with low- and middle-income countries

The Health Emergency Preparedness and Response Authority (HERA), established in 2021, aims to strengthen the EU's response to Covid-19 and potential future health crises. Global health security is one of HERA's core mandates to support the EU's leadership in global health.

Why the EU needs a Special Representative for Global Health

When the Council conclusions on the Global Health Strategy – and disclaimer, one of us helped draft those conclusions – were adopted by ministers in January 2024, it marked a moment of real ambition. For the first time in over a decade, EU Member States endorsed a comprehensive vision for Europe's role in strengthening global health, rooted in equity, resilience and multilateral cooperation.





The year in events

Throughout 2025, CEPS organised 105 events (a mixture of open to the public and closed door). We were honoured to provide a platform for high-level speakers that included Heads of State, European Commissioners, Members of the European Parliament, ambassadors, and industry and civil society experts from around the world. Please see below for a curated list of our most prominent events of the year.

Opportunities for EU-US relations in the Trump 2.0 era

With early decisions from the Trump 2.0 White House suggesting major shifts in US foreign policy, many anticipate a cooling in the EU-US partnership. The EU's current priorities in its dealings with the United States – defence, trade and China – now require, more than ever, a strong advocate to promote the bloc's interests.

In the first year of her mandate, the Ambassador of the EU to the United States visited 17 US states to outline the EU's strategy. What is this strategy when it comes to the EU's top priorities? How does she engage with members of Congress to underscore the EU's importance? How important are individual US states to the EU? And how is the voice of European industry being amplified?

Speakers:

HE Ms Jovita Neliupšienė, Ambassador of the European Union to the United States

Karel Lannoo, CEPS' CEO (moderator)



**HE Ms Jovita
Neliupšienė**

Ambassador of the European
Union to the United States

Kosovo's path to the EU: advancing democracy, security, and economic growth

As Kosovo progresses on its path toward European integration, it faces both challenges and opportunities in strengthening democracy, ensuring security, and fostering sustainable economic growth.

This discussion with Prime Minister Albin Kurti examined how Kosovo can advance its EU aspirations amid shifting geopolitical dynamics, what the latest developments and obstacles are in the accession process, the reforms required to align with EU standards, the impact of regional security challenges, and strategies to enhance economic resilience.

Speakers:

Albin Kurti, Primer Minister of Kosovo

Tinatin Akhvlediani, Research Fellow (moderator)



Albin Kurti

Primer Minister of Kosovo

Rising to the challenge: Europe's path to growth and resilience

The deteriorating global order is adding further complications to Europe's already challenging economic situation. New tariffs come at a time when economies are grappling with structural transformations in demographics and energy, and amidst increasing security spending needs. Export markets are shrinking, uncertainty is undermining firms' willingness to innovate, and public expenditure needs are rising. Without a turnaround in growth, Europe's ability to deliver on its social welfare promises is in jeopardy. If European policymakers were to seize the moment, the region's growth potential and resilience to shocks could rise substantially.

Speakers:

Alfred Kammer, Director, European Department, IMF

Maarten Verwey, Director-General, DG Economic and Financial Affairs, European Commission

Cinzia Alcidi, Senior Research Fellow, Head of the Economic and Jobs & Skills units at CEPS

Karel Lannoo, CEPS' CEO (moderator)

Realising the Savings and Investments Union: inclusion as a vector of integration for EU capital markets

In her September 2024 mission statement for the Commissioner for Financial Services, the President of the EU Commission made it clear that realising the Savings and Investments Union (SIU) is a priority. Europeans are facing a significant pension savings gap and capital markets must play a role in mitigating it. The Commission's strategy for the SIU is to incentives retail participation in capital markets through efficient products and policies, aimed at fostering investor protection rules. This approach is clearly geared towards resolving the dilemma of how to channel private savings into productive investments which will finance the future of the EU economy, whilst providing safe pensions for all. Still to be established, though, is whether EU investment firms are equipped to develop those savings and investments products, and what they need to do to utilise this inclusion opportunity.

Jointly organised by CEPS, ECMI and CFA Institute, this high-level seminar explored the role that financial services and investment management should play in providing individuals with the products they need; investigate the impact of inclusive policies on financial stability, market performance and investor confidence; and offer industry solutions such as CFA Institute Diversity, Equity, and Inclusion Code Europe.

Speakers:

Maria Luís Albuquerque, Commissioner for Financial Services and the Savings and Investment Union, European Commission

Marg Franklin, President and CEO, CFA Institute

Petra Hielkema, Chair, EIOPA

Bernard Delbecque, Senior Director, Economics & Research, EFAMA

Marg Franklin, President and CEO, CFA Institute

Karel Lannoo, CEPS' CEO (moderator)

Rainbow resilience: standing firm against the LGBTIQ+ rights crackdown in Europe

On the eve of the International Day Against Homophobia, Biphobia and Transphobia (IDAHOBIT) and Brussels Pride, CEPS brought experts together to discuss the backlash against the LGBTIQ+ community across Europe. This event, organised by CEPS' Diversity, Equity and Inclusion Committee (DEIC), started with a presentation of ILGA Europe's annual Rainbow Map, followed by a panel discussing EU-level and national policies, attacks on fundamental rights and the rule of law, as well as actionable ways to respond to the backlash.

Speakers:

Alessandro Marcia, Lecturer, Department of European Law, Maastricht University

Esther Martinez, Co-founder and Director, RECLAIM

Cianán Russell, PhD, Senior Policy Officer, ILGA

Júlia Pócze, CEPS Researcher (moderator)

EuroStack: a concrete pathway to European digital sovereignty and strategic autonomy

Over the past few months, the need to secure Europe's digital sovereignty and strategic autonomy has transformed from a 'nice to have' to a 'must have' – an imperative for political leaders, businesses and citizens. The need to reduce Europe's dependencies on non-European countries and companies, already evident during the Covid-19 pandemic, has now taken a different twist as EU leaders discover vulnerabilities throughout the digital domain, from semiconductors to satellites, cloud and AI. Calls for building a 'EuroStack' have proliferated in academia, think tanks, businesses and now politics, at the EU and national level.

A resolution on the EuroStack was adopted by the European Parliament's ITRE Committee, with similar calls featuring in the political agendas of large Member States such as Germany, France and Spain. Bertelsmann Stiftung and CEPS, after jointly drafting a comprehensive report on the topic with Stiftung Mercator and UCL (Institute for Innovation and Public Purpose), convened this important event that was opened by European Commission Executive Vice President Henna Virkkunen.

The event brought together a critical mass of key stakeholders to prepare implementation, as well as a European Network that will seek to orchestrate all stakeholder voices that advocate swift action for EU competitiveness and security.

Speakers:

Henna Virkkunen, Executive Vice-President for Tech Sovereignty, Security and Democracy, European Commission

Francesca Bria, Senior Fellow, Stiftung Mercator, Honorary Professor IIPP, UCL London

Paul Timmers, Research Associate, Oxford University, Partner at WeltWert

Alexandra Geese, Member of European Parliament

Martin Hullin, Director, Digitalization and the Common Good at Bertelsmann Stiftung

Sebastiano Toffaletti, Secretary General (CEO), European DIGITAL SME Alliance

Andrea Renda, CEPS Director of Research



Henna Virkkunen

Executive Vice-President for
Tech Sovereignty, Security and
Democracy, European
Commission

The European Open Source Security Forum

The European Open Source Security Forum brings together leaders from the open source software (OSS) community, European governments, institutions and agencies and the private sector to advance impactful security initiatives, policy efforts, and cross-collaboration.

This year's programme featured keynotes from European policymakers, panels on regulation and emerging technologies such as open source and quantum security, targeted discussions on lessons learned from legislation like the Cyber Resilience Act (CRA), and forward-looking conversations on how to ensure open source is well-represented in future policy frameworks, along with presentations, fireside chats, and opportunities for networking.

Speakers:

For a full list of speakers, please click [here](#).

What's next for Moldova and Ukraine's fast-track accession? In conversation with the Deputy Prime Ministers of Moldova and Ukraine and the Director-General of DG ENEST

Held the day after the European Commission published its 2025 Enlargement Package, this event offered a forward-looking discussion on the next steps in Moldova's and Ukraine's EU integration. It explored both countries' reform trajectories, the key takeaways from the 2025 Enlargement Package and the role of EU institutions in sustaining reform momentum and public support for accession.

Gert Jan Koopman, Director-General of DG ENEST, Cristina Gherasimov, Deputy Prime Minister for European Integration of the Republic of Moldova, and Taras Kachka, Deputy Prime Minister for European and Euro-Atlantic Integration of Ukraine shared their perspectives from Brussels, Chişinău, and Kyiv on the 2025 Enlargement Package's findings, the reform and negotiation agendas ahead, and the strategic direction of the two countries' EU membership paths.

Speakers:

Gert Jan Koopman, Director-General of DG ENEST, European Commission

Cristina Gherasimov, Deputy Prime Minister for European Integration of the Republic of Moldova

Taras Kachka, Deputy Prime Minister for European and Euro-Atlantic Integration of Ukraine

Tinatin Akhvlediani, Research Fellow at CEPS (moderator)

From 883 to the fair labour mobility package: what prospects for balanced worker mobility within the EU?

The Commission's next Fair Labour Mobility Package, expected to be released before the end of 2026, is likely to introduce measures ranging from revising the European Labour Authority's (ELA) mandate, to a major push for digitalising social security systems, facilitating faster and more reliable exchanges between national authorities.

The coordination of social security systems, balancing the rights and obligations of mobile workers, employers and Member States, has long been a key enabler for labour mobility in the EU. Despite significant progress, negotiations on revising the regulations coordinating social security systems have remain unresolved.

This event explored the remaining obstacles to fair worker mobility in the EU, with a particular focus on the role of social security systems coordination. It brought together key stakeholders in the ongoing negotiations, including high-level representatives from the European Parliament, the European Commission, social partners and Member States representatives. The discussion aimed to identify the essential steps needed to advance toward fair, robust and effective labour mobility across the EU, and to shape an ambitious and workable labour mobility package for the years ahead.

Speakers:

Roxana Mînzatu, Executive Vice-President of the European Commission

Cyril Piquemal, Deputy Permanent Representative, Permanent Representation of France to the EU

Yiannis Panayiotou, Minister of Labour and Social Insurance of Cyprus

Gabriele Bischoff, Member of the European Parliament

Frederic De Wispelaere, Research Expert, HIVA-KU Leuven

Esther Lynch, General Secretary of the European Trade Union Confederation

Cosmin Boiangiu, Executive Director, European Labour Authority

Maxime Cerutti, Director Social Affairs department, BusinessEurope

Cinzia Alcidi, Senior Research Fellow, Head of the Economic and Jobs & Skills units at CEPS

CEPS in the media

In 2025, our research received attention from prestigious outlets such as The Financial Times, Euronews, Politico, The Guardian, The Washington Post and more. These media mentions not only underscore our work's significance but also amplify our global influence. Below, you will find a curated selection of some of our most important media mentions from 2025.

Politico

USAID freeze opens door to Russian influence in Eastern Europe

[READ MORE](#)

The Washington Post

Meta will pay \$25 million to settle Trump lawsuit alleging censorship

[READ MORE](#)

Politico

Ursula von der Leyen tightens her grip on power

[READ MORE](#)

Forbes

Forging A Global Path to Responsible AI To Achieve a Beneficial AI Future

[READ MORE](#)

Politico

EU conservative chief will be back — because no one can be bothered to force him out

[READ MORE](#)

Euractiv

Transparency essential for developing trustworthy AI, says Gürtler

[READ MORE](#)

Euobserver

EU arms firms' shares skyrocket, sovereign bonds rise — here's why

[READ MORE](#)

Financial Times

US listings often fail to boost European companies' valuations

[READ MORE](#)

Deutsche Welle

Dutch populist leader Geert Wilders makes PM gamble

[READ MORE](#)

Euronews

Brussels, my love? War in Gaza - what's Netanyahu's endgame?

[READ MORE](#)
Euractiv

It's the end of the EU budget as we know it (and Brussels doesn't feel fine)

[READ MORE](#)
El Mundo

Spain: growth with both positive and negative aspects

[READ MORE](#)
Politico

China's got the world in a rare earth choke hold

[READ MORE](#)
FDI Intelligence

Mind games | Nations are cherry picking top foreign talent

[READ MORE](#)
Euronews

Brussels, my love? US continues arms deliveries to Ukraine - for how long?

[READ MORE](#)
The Guardian

Von der Leyen survives censure vote but faces calls to reverse EU's rightward drift

[READ MORE](#)
Deutsche Welle

Poland's border checks: Beginning of the end of Schengen?

[READ MORE](#)
The Parliament Magazine

EU-Israel relations strained as Frederiksen singles out Netanyahu

[READ MORE](#)
Le Monde

The EU stunned by Donald Trump's assault on its digital regulations

[READ MORE](#)
The Economist

China's planned Turkish EV factories have yet to power up

[READ MORE](#)
Bloomberg

EU Watchdog Pushes Multi-Issuance Crypto Ban on Crash Fears

[READ MORE](#)

The year in projects and Task Forces

We worked on 126 projects over the course of 2025 – encompassing initiatives that finished during the year, as well as those that are currently ongoing or scheduled to only formally begin later. As in previous years, CEPS is also participating in several Horizon Europe projects, the EU's largest Research and Innovation programme to date. We've also been actively expanding our 'horizons' to work on a slew of new initiatives – please see below an overview of some of our prominent project activities in 2025.

This year, we wrapped up three Task Forces: 'Strengthening the EU transition to a quantum safe world', 'Disentangling Global Gateway: from Team Europe to the world' and 'The future of retail payments in the EU'.

You can find the links to the reports of these three Task Forces in the 'Year in Publications' section on page 15.



GRACE

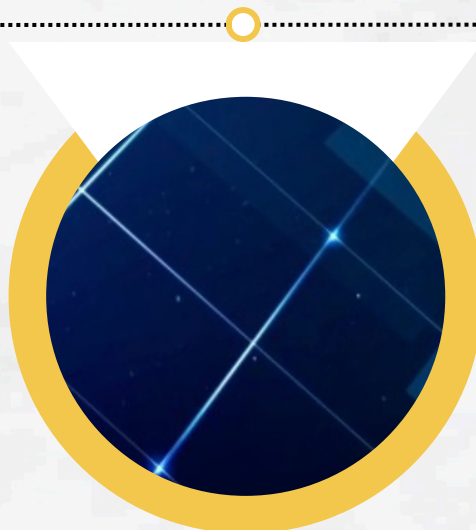
Guaranteeing Rights and Charter Enforcement



The GRACE project is designed to level up the implementation of the EU Charter of Fundamental Rights in Member States which have been vulnerable to a deterioration in fundamental rights and the rule of law in recent years, namely Bulgaria, Romania and Greece. The project aims to foster cooperation among civil society organisations, national and local authorities and the public, ensuring that fundamental rights are not only protected and respected but also actively promoted, leading to more inclusive, transparent and effective policymaking in the selected EU Member States.

SOPHIA

Implementation of Advanced Digital Solutions to increase the circularity of PV panels throughout the full value chain



SOPHIA addresses the problem of photovoltaic panels' end of life, their management and society's awareness on electronic waste management. The project will implement several Advanced Digital Solutions, involving all actors in the value chain, to increase these products' reuse and repair rates. To evaluate the State-of-Health and dismantling of PV panels, a robotic prototype based on an AI model will be created.

In cases where it is not possible to repair and reuse the PV panels, they will be recycled by shredding sorting and specific upcycling processes for each byproduct. Because of their traceability and information available through the Digital Product Passport, the panels will be easily identifiable. This means the PV panels will be recycled by type and composition, increasing the quality of the obtained secondary raw materials and reducing waste generation.

AIOLIA

Next generation AI and Human Behaviour: promoting an ethical approach



2023-24 were marked by the arrival of AI regulation around the world. This high-level guidance is phrased in the language of values and principles but requires further operationalisation to have a real impact on how AI systems are designed. At the same time, frontier AI models, especially generative AI, increasingly influence human cognition and behaviour. The transformer revolution and the ensuing rapid increase in the quality of AI systems go hand in hand with the important role played by the study of human behaviour and cognition. This mutual influence between human cognition and AI systems underscores the urgent need for practical ethics guidance and adjusted ethics-by-design measures. Against this background, AIOLIA provides a robust response to the complex challenges posed by the need to operationally interpret the EU AI Act and global AI regulation.

A more agile and dynamic FP10



This project's objective is to (i) define in detail how a well-designed FP10 oriented towards excellent research and impactful innovation could operate in practice and how to get from the status quo to the proposed arrangements over the next two years; (ii) boost the global impact of R&I funded through FP10, as a stand-alone programme or as part of broader multistakeholder R&I partnerships. (iii) improve non-EU countries R&I collaborations with EU FPs by highlighting the added value and positive sum of non-EU countries' participation and presenting a toolkit of possible mechanisms for improving their levels of involvement.

The challenges and impacts to a social and inclusive Europe in the next decade

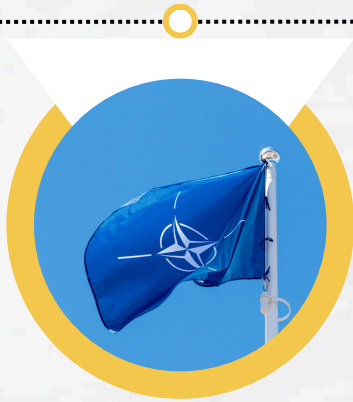


This project aims to synthesise and analyse existing research on socio-economic changes affecting the European Social Fund Plus (ESF+) and the European Pillar of Social Rights (EPSR). Rather than generating new data, the project focuses on creating a coherent framework to understand available research from academic, institutional, and private sector sources. The analysis primarily examines labour market transformations, considering both job demand and workforce supply, as employment is fundamental to social inclusion and skills development.

The project will evaluate four key areas: future skill requirements, skill availability, equality of opportunity factors, and challenges to developing inclusive societies. Through a comprehensive literature review, analysis of quantitative projections and expert consultations, the project will develop an analytical framework to assess both the immediate and long-term impacts of these challenges on EU societies. This structured approach will help optimise ESF+ financial support and enhance our understanding of complex socio-economic trends affecting European social inclusion.

Ongoing CEPS Task Forces

A European pillar within NATO



Europe stands at a critical juncture in its security and defence trajectory. The geopolitical environment has grown significantly more volatile, with an array of complex, interlinked threats. Russia's invasion of Ukraine, propped up by China, continues unabated. At the same time, the US President has questioned the interpretation of NATO's Article 5 and signalled an intention to withdraw military assets from Europe. Many European politicians casually refer to a 'European pillar within NATO' – but few can say what this means in practice or even whether it would be possible without Washington's full consent.

Against this backdrop, CEPS has convened a Task Force in close collaboration with Clingendael, the Institute for European Policymaking of Bocconi University and RUSI that aims to plug a major gap left by official initiatives and the literature on what form a future European pillar within NATO could take: one that acts through the Alliance if it can but autonomously if it must.

Ukraine's agricultural recovery



Ukraine's agricultural sector has long been a cornerstone of its economy and a key player in both European and global markets, where Ukrainian grain and other agricultural products are essential. However, the war has severely disrupted its ability to produce, process, and export agricultural goods. Restoring and modernizing the sector is not only vital for Ukraine's economic recovery but also crucial for stabilizing global food markets, particularly in Europe, and ensuring food security worldwide. Rebuilding Ukraine's agricultural sector is not just a national priority but a global imperative. Safe access to farmland, financial and technological support, infrastructure restoration, and the reinforcement of Ukraine's role in global food security are all critical to a successful recovery.

This Task Force is focusing on five key areas essential to Ukraine's agricultural reconstruction: securing safe and fertile land for production, improving access to finance, unlocking access to technology, rebuilding critical infrastructure and strengthening Ukraine's role in global food security.

Fostering European leadership for the new space race



Europe used to be a significant force in the club of global space powers but has seen its influence wane in recent years. In the early 2000s, the European Space Agency (ESA) was a major player in satellite launches and space exploration. By 2023, Europe accounted for only 5 % of global space investments, compared to the US which had over 70 %.

Meanwhile, emerging space powers like China and India have rapidly expanded their space capabilities, leaving Europe struggling to keep up with the pace. Technological developments have opened the door for new commercial opportunities in space. However, structural challenges and the lack of a clear vision risks undermining Europe's position in this evolving space landscape.

This CEPS Task Force has launched an inquiry into Europe's pain points in the space domain as well as its strengths, and how the EU could break out of the dilemma of being left one step behind.

Adjusting the EU's Regulatory Process and Supervisory Structures



A comprehensive review of the EU's financial rulemaking process is urgently needed. The framework, originally designed under the Lamfalussy procedure, has expanded beyond its intended scope, raising concerns about regulatory complexity and efficiency. At the same time, the role of the European Supervisory Authorities (ESAs) requires further clarification. Despite their mandate to foster market integration, integration levels are declining, regulatory burdens are increasing and enforcement cases are on the rise. Some degree of streamlining is now essential.

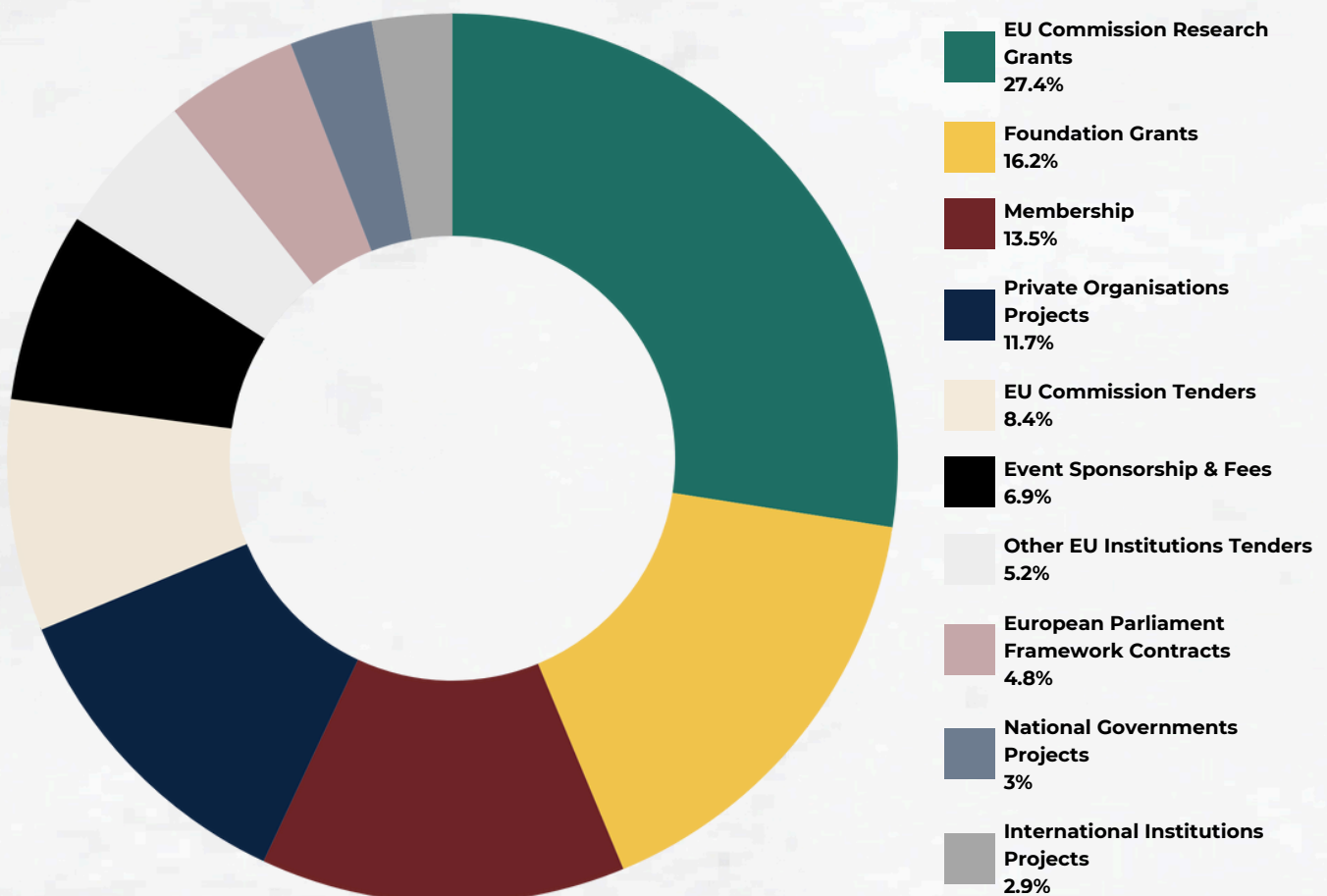
Through its task force, CEPS, ECMI and ECRI aim to contribute to this critical review process and support a more coherent regulatory approach for the future.

Financial overview

CEPS' revenues come from a wide variety of sources, which is fundamental to ensuring our independence. Just over 40% of our net income originates from calls for tenders and grants from the EU institutions. This figures includes activities from six H2020 projects, 17 Horizon Europe projects, and various DGs & Committees within the European Commission and Parliament, and other EU agencies.

In line with our strategic agenda we have increased the income coming from foundation funded projects to 16%. We received a further 14% from membership fees that include a diverse group of corporations and institutions.

The remaining income was generated through projects with private organisations (10%), international institutions (3%), national governments (3%) as well as through the organisation of events, such as the Ideas Lab. This breakdown does not include revenue earmarked for CEPS' various project partners.



Membership programme

Our membership network comprises approximately 160 members from industry, institutions and associations across diverse sectors and location. At CEPS, we greatly value this broad membership base as it serves multiple vital purposes. Not only does it bolster our mission to 'think ahead for Europe' and helps to uphold our independence, but it also enables us to stay attuned to Europe's ever-evolving landscape. Additionally, our members act as invaluable sounding boards, essential for testing the feasibility of our policy recommendations.

It's imperative to note that CEPS steadfastly declines any donation that might compromise our commitment to absolute independence in setting our research priorities. Moreover, we ensure that no member can contribute more than 2.5 % of CEPS' annual income, further safeguarding our impartiality.

By joining CEPS, members lend their support to our pursuit of independent and high-quality research that significantly contributes to shaping policy dialogues at both the European and global levels. In return, our members gain exclusive opportunities. These include direct interaction with EU decision-makers in a multitude of settings, both formal and informal. Members participate in well-informed and balanced discussions concerning European affairs, enabling them to access expert insights into political issues and legislative proposals.

If you would like to find out more about CEPS membership, visit our [Membership page](#) or email CEPS' Membership Coordinator at laura.nicolas@ceps.eu.



Main membership benefits



KNOWLEDGE

Deepen your insights of current and future policy implications by accessing briefings from CEPS researchers. You will also have access to our members-only insights exclusive summaries outlining the main context, takeaways and other relevant information from our latest publications.

RESOURCES

Learn and exchange views on the most important EU policy developments by being part of CEPS Task Forces and CEPS' main annual event, Ideas Lab.



NETWORK

Expand the visibility of your organisation by engaging with the CEPS network. CEPS hosts regular gatherings of its corporate and institutional members representing industry, regulators, institutions, associations, and academia.

EVENTS

Engage in thought-provoking discussions with diverse stakeholders while taking advantage of complimentary access to CEPS Ideas Lab, exclusive thematic roundtable sessions, high-profile speaker events, expert briefings, and members-only webinars.



NEWS

Receive a weekly member newsletter for important updates on research and publications. Be among the first to learn about the latest policy developments.

PLATFORM

Use a neutral platform to co-host special events with CEPS, ensuring a well-informed and balanced discussion. You also can commission independent research on a topic of joint interest.



Benefit packages

| | | PREMIUM CORPORATE | CORPORATE | ASSOCIATION | PREMIUM INSTITUTIONAL | INSTITUTIONAL | INDIVIDUAL |
|------------------|--|---|---|---|--|---|---|
| | FEE | €30,000 | €15,000 | €10,000 | €7,000 | FROM €1,000 TO €2,500* | €300 |
| RESEARCH | BRIEFINGS PER YEAR | 4 | 2 | 1 | 2 | 1 |  |
| | MEMBERS-ONLY INSIGHTS |  |  |  |  |  |  |
| | TASK FORCES | FREE ACCESS | 50% DISCOUNT | 50% DISCOUNT | 50% DISCOUNT | 25% DISCOUNT |  |
| EVENTS | IDEAS LAB | PRIORITY SAVE THE DATE 10 GUESTS 1 SPEAKER | 5 GUESTS | 5 GUESTS | PRIORITY SAVE THE DATE 5 GUESTS | 3 GUESTS | 1 GUEST |
| | HIGH-LEVEL PUBLIC EVENTS | PRIORITY ACCESS AND RESERVED SEATS | PRIORITY ACCESS | PRIORITY ACCESS | PRIORITY ACCESS AND RESERVED SEATS | PRIORITY ACCESS | PRIORITY ACCESS |
| | CLOSED-DOOR THEMATIC ROUNDTABLES |  |  |  |  |  |  |
| | MEMBERS-ONLY EVENTS |  |  |  |  |  |  |
| | EVENT COLLABORATION OPPORTUNITIES | FREE | 30% DISCOUNT | 30% DISCOUNT | 30% DISCOUNT | 25% DISCOUNT |  |
| | ANNUAL DINNER WITH CEO |  |  |  |  |  |  |
| COMMS & OUTREACH | WEEKLY NEWSLETTER |  |  |  |  |  |  |
| | INPUT ON CEPS RESEARCH PRIORITIES AND MEMBERSHIP |  |  |  |  |  |  |
| | VISIBILITY ON CEPS WEBSITE | LOGO | LOGO | LIST | LIST | LIST |  |
| OTHER | ECMI/ECRI MEMBERSHIP | DISCOUNTED ACCESS | DISCOUNTED ACCESS | DISCOUNTED ACCESS | DISCOUNTED ACCESS | DISCOUNTED ACCESS |  |

*Depending on size. €500 for civil society organisations.

LIST OF MEMBERS 2025

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| Anglo American | FTI Consulting |
| Apple | Google |
| Barclays | Hitachi Europe |
| BBVA | ING |
| BME | Intesa Sanpaolo |
| Burson | ITOCHU Europe PLC |
| BusinessEurope | J.P. Morgan |
| CDP | KPMG |
| Coca-Cola Services Europe | Meta |
| Confederation of Netherlands Industry & Employers (VNO-NCW) | Microsoft |
| Confederation of Swedish Enterprise | Mitsubishi Corporation International PLC |
| Covington & Burling LLP | Mitsubishi Research Institute (MRI) |
| Deloitte | Nasdaq Stock Market |
| Depository Trust & Clearing Corporation (DTCC) | NLI-Research Institute |
| Deutsche Telekom AG | PricewaterhouseCoopers LLP |
| Deutsches Aktieninstitut (DAI) | Raiffeisen Bank International AG |
| Edelman | S&P Global |
| EFTA Surveillance Authority | Santander |
| Ernst & Young (EY) | Shell International |
| Erste Group Bank AG | Siemens AG |
| European Association for Investors in Non-Listed Real Estate Vehicles (INREV) | Sumitomo Benelux s.a./n.v. |
| European Free Trade Association (EFTA) | Teneo Brussels SPRL |
| European Investment Bank (EIB) | TikTok Technologies Belgium |
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| Djøf (DJØEF) | International Monetary Fund (IMF) - Europe Office (Paris & Brussels) |
| EcoPeace Middle East Environmental NGO Forum | International Rescue Committee Belgium (IRC Belgium) |
| Embassy of Iceland in Belgium | Isle of Man Government |
| Embassy of the Republic of Kosovo | Japan External Trade Organization (JETRO) |
| Embassy of the Republic of Singapore in Belgium | King's College London |
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 National Bank of Austria - Oesterreichische Nationalbank
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