



VISION SIENA CONFERENCE

On the Europe of the Future

2025

19–21st June



UNIVERSITÀ
DI SIENA
1240



SIENA CONFERENCE ON THE EUROPE OF THE FUTURE

19-21 JUNE 2025 | SIXTH EDITION

TIME TO BE BOLD



CERTOSA DI PONTIGNANO – SIENA

✱ *Each session of the agenda is introduced by the correspondent session of the concept paper*

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THE CONVERSATION



The Conference



"I believe we Europeans feel too secure. And yet, our time of global leadership is over. Will we still be able to influence the world through our values? I don't think so—unless we manage to adapt to a new world. After all, history teaches us that civilizations are not eternal."

German Chancellor Konrad Adenauer

Overview

The European Union has been navigating uncharted waters for years. As for its historical characteristics, it has been doing so without a clear idea of who the skipper is. The Union managed to survive to few mortal crises, proving that it was more "resilient" than most critics would have expected.

Yet, old structural problems have so far prevented the "old continent" from fully joining some of the (digital, military, strategic) battles which are defining the 21st century. The instability seems to be recently spiraling out of control as old certainties are crumbling: the Atlantic has become much larger not just because of different opinions on Ukraine, digital platforms and trade, but because of different visions of what societies should be about.

The convergence of three crises (security, energy and trade) questions even the survival and the very nature of the institution conceived by Europe's fathers eighty years ago. Yet, it is the challenge that creates a demand for more strategies. The crisis requires a new approach to designing policies and engaging public opinions, which appear fragmented into polarizations.

This will be the overarching theme of the conference, and we will find possible answers by looking at some of the most essential trade-offs that Europe will need to solve:

- How can we turn the problem of how to protect ourselves in the opportunity to fill technological gaps?
- Can the common defense have the chance to change the shape of the Union?
- How can we leverage rules on digital markets/services to create a competitive advantage?
- How should we change the Green Deal to make the climate agenda popular again amongst those segments of the public opinion - householders, farmers, manufacturers - which grew skeptical?
- How can we ensure that our Union enters into a development path where competitiveness and convergence bring value for all?
- How can we use democracy to make further integrations politically feasible?

In the following pages, you find a preliminary structure of a project meant to be a platform for problem-solving. This multipartisan, interdisciplinary endeavor will generate some of the pragmatic, visionary ideas Europe needs more than ever [1].



[1] Participants are to be considered a still preliminary indication so to give structure to the program. An (*) shows participants still to be confirmed.

KEY PARTICIPANTS – SCIENTIFIC PARTNERS, CORPORATE AND MEDIA

Vision - the think tank that is convening the "Siena conference on the Europe of the future" together with the **European University Institute** and the **University of Siena** and with the collaboration of researchers at the **Warsaw Institute**, **Bruegel**, **Institute of European Policy Making at the Bocconi University** and the **School of Government at LUISS** - is convinced that radical challenges require radical choices. The Siena Conference, which will celebrate its sixth edition, is trying to consolidate a platform for new ideas in a multipartisan environment: five main European political parties have joined the previous editions of the conference. They will continue collaborating to bring ideas and sharp analyses to the gathering. This makes the Siena conference a pragmatic, multipartisan platform where bold proposals can emerge.

All five political foundations of the five largest European political parties have joined the previous editions of the conference. The political foundations which will partner with Vision in the fifth edition are: **the Foundation for European Progressive Studies; the Konrad Adenauer Stiftung; the Green European Foundation; the Institute of European Democrats.**

About 80 people will be at the conference. They come from all EU countries and our most relevant neighborhood (UK, Turkey, USA, Africa, Middle East, Ukraine); the gender mix is a point of strength, and not less than one-third of the participants are less than thirty.

The Media partners will be **The Conversation**, the global media agency that acts as a link between best universities and the

general public; **the Monrif group**, one of the major Italian publishers (Quotidiano Nazionale network with La Nazione, Il Resto del Carlino, Il Giorno); and **RAI**, Italy's TV public broadcaster.

Vision thanks a group of friends who have followed the endeavor with their wise suggestions and support. Amongst them: **Maria Joao Rodrigues** (President of FEPS and Former Portugal's Minister), **Bill Emmott** (Chairman of the International Institute for Strategic Studies, Former Editor-in-Chief of the Economist), **Alexandra Borchardt** (Lead Author at European Broadcasting Union and Senior Research Associate at Reuters Institute), **Barbara Kolm** (Member of Austria's National Council with the Freedom Party and former Vice president of the Austrian Central Bank, President of the F.A. von Hayek Institut and director of the Austrian Economics Center), **Sandro Gozi** (MP and Italy's Former Minister for European Affaire), **Erik Jones** (Director of the Robert Schumann Center at the European University Institute). We also thank **Sara Monti Rifesser** (Board of Director of Monrif SpA) and **Stephen Kahn** (Editor in-Chief at the Conversation): they share the vision that media are part of the problem-solving exercise that Europe needs. And **John Hooper** (Correspondent for Italy and Vatican for the Economist) and **Jan Piotrowski** (Schumpeter columnist at the Economist): they are part of the inner circle of a great community.

Some of the sessions and activities of this year's conference are co-organized with the Foundation for European Studies (FEPS) and produced with the financial support of the European Parliament. The European Commission has also supported the realization of the conference. Its concept paper and the ideas that the project has hosted, do not represent the view of the European Parliament and the European Commission. European institutions, however, endorse the dialogue that the conference encourages.



Siena Conference fourth Edition 2023.

THE OBJECTIVES AND THE 2025 OUTPUTS

The Pontignano Paper will have the bold objective to provide input on seven key issues. Those will leverage the input of different institutions (universities, political foundations, think tanks), and the conference participants will act as important sounding boards plus contributors of further ideas. The seven questions to be answered are:

- How can Europe smartly defend itself (avoiding being trapped into difficult choices between defense and welfare)?
- How can we transform green policies so that they can become a strategy for building competitive advantages?
- How can Europe have its own AI/ digital champions and use – at the same time – technologies to create value for everybody?
- What kind of next EU budget is necessary to live up to the challenges (both in terms of policy mix and reforming those policies)?

- How can Europe transform chaotic trade wars into an opportunity to lead the long-awaited process of reforming the world trade order together with other macroregions (China, India, South America, Africa and, of course, US)?
- What are the positive actions to reform EU democracy and citizenship to make further integrations politically feasible?
- What decision-making processes are necessary for Europe to decide better and more quickly (with and without treaties)?

We expect that for each of above six, the PONTIGNANO conclusions will produce a set of specific ideas (actions/ proposals) to be promoted/ experimented with/ debated. The media will be key into the entire process.

THE PREVIOUS CONFERENCES

The conference's objective is to become the platform from which new ideas may emerge and be advocated for, and new approaches to studying Europe may be experimented and nurtured. Some of the proposals that previous conferences have advanced are [2]:

a) The paradigm of the "clusters of integrations": here, the notion of "flexible geometries" is scaled up and systematized where the European Union is proposed to transform itself into an umbrella of new (like for defense) or more advanced (like for free movements of people with a fully common border) per policy integrations. These integrations are meant to be voluntary, backed by people (referenda may be an option), and flexible (with pre-defined opt-out and kick-out clauses) [3];

b) A "measure less, measure better" approach to EGS-based audit of the sustainability of corporations and specific proposals to amend the CSRD to minimize the cost of compliance to the red tape and greenwashing [4].

c) A review of digital regulations to simplify them and promote innovation, and reform of Horizon Europe to launch contests among companies/universities to create and then scale up use cases of AI used to solve concrete problems.

d) An assessment of Next Generation EU to correct some of its pitfalls and use some of its characteristics to reform cohesion policies [5];
e) A proposal for a free and compulsory Erasmus (or civil service) and a proposal to reform the European Parliament's electoral law are positive actions to create a European demos and European political sphere, which are preconditions to further integrations [6].

The way forward is to further integrate think tanks and universities in a platform meant to produce knowledge common to anyone who wants to study how institutions can renew themselves vis-à-vis radical disruptions.



[2] Details can be found into the 2024 Pontignano Paper accessible at https://www.thinktank.vision/images/CONCEPT_PAPER.pdf

[3] See also <https://theconversation.com/the-eu-was-built-for-another-age-heres-how-it-must-adapt-to-survive-248811>

[4] See also <https://www.thinktank.vision/en/media-en/articles/a-bolder-push-for-green-deal>

[5] See also <https://www.thinktank.vision/en/media-en/articles/nex>

[6] For more info <https://liberalforum.eu/publication/policy-paper-11-flexible-transnational-electoralconstituencies/>

THE VISION ENDEAVOUR

The conference is one of three flagship initiatives spearheaded by Think Tank Vision. Alongside it are **The Dolomite/ Venice Conference on “Global Governance of Climate Change”**, whose previous editions have been organized in collaboration with Bocconi University, Politecnico Milan, Institute for New Economic Thinking (New York), CEBRI (RIO), TERI (New Delhi), Blavatnik School of Government at Oxford University [7], and an upcoming conference on **“Skills for the AI world”**, co-hosted with the University of Southern California and The Conversation in Los Angeles. This series of events aims to establish a sort of “new Davos,” offering concrete solutions to some of the most pressing, complex questions which we need to handle while navigating into uncharted waters.



[7] <https://www.thinktank.vision/en/media-en/events/third-dolomite-conference-on-the-governance-ofclimate-change-and-sustainability>

The Programme



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✦ The University of Siena

The University of Siena, located in Siena, Tuscany, holds the distinction of being Italy's first publicly funded university as well as one of the oldest, originally established as Studium Senese in 1240.

THURSDAY 19th JUNE

✱ **Registration Process to the Conference**

We are waiting for you at the Vision Desk to collect your badges and to help!

✱ **The Conference will take place at the Certosa di Pontignano.**

✱ **The Conference will then move to the city of Siena and Palazzo Pubblico the Siena's heart for the final day (Saturday)**

✱ The coffee station will be available for all the duration of the conference



14:45-15:00

Registration of participants

15:00-15:15

Introduction to the conference program:

Silvia Scarafoni (Vision associate); **Donata Medaglini** (Deputy Vice-Rector at UNISI), **Gregorio De Felice** (Chief Economist Intesa San Paolo)

Opening Session

15:15-16:15

Perfect storms as opportunities to reimagine Europe beyond ideological gridlocks – main ideas from the 2024 edition and feedback to the conference concept paper for 2025

Introducer: **Francesco Grillo** (Vision Think Tank Director, Professor at Bocconi and Senior Fellow at EUI)

Discussants: **Maria Joao Rodrigues** (President of FEPS), **Daniel Gros** (Director IEP Bocconi), **Barbara Kolm** (Member of Austria's National Council with the Freedom Party and former Vice president of the Austrian Central Bank, President of the F.A. von Hayek Institut and director of the Austrian Economics Center), **Liliana Śmiech** (Chairwoman of the Foundation Council at Warsaw Institute and Director General for International Affairs at Ludovika University of Public Services), **Turi Munthe** (Media Entrepreneur and Gedi Board Member), **Kalypso Nicolaïdis** (Professor at St Antony's College, University of Oxford and Professor at the School of Transnational Governance, EUI), **Jurgen Hardt** (Foreign Policy Spokesperson of the CDU and former Spokesperson for Transatlantic Relations of the CDU Parliamentary Group in the Bundestag), **Giovanni Orsina** (Professor of Contemporary History at LUISS and Director of Master in European Studies)

Chair: **Laura Hood** (The Conversation)

Our landmark



The Venue: Certosa di Pontignano

Certosa di Pontignano, the official congress centre for The University of Siena is the ideal location for stays in Tuscany. It dates back to 1343 and presents the traditional appearance of Carthusian monasteries.

16:45-17:00

Introduction to the 4 problem

Setting/solving groups (pssg) (4 minutes each)

The problem-setting groups are one of the most creative aspects of the Conference. They will have been prepared by four groups of students and professors/ tutors interacting with some of the participants/ opinion leaders joining the conference in the months before the event. Each group will distribute a paper before the event.

All 80 participants will be asked to choose one the four groups to join. The format in SIENA will be of a problem-setting/ solving debate with each participant briefly commenting or elaborating further on the paper.

The four groups will report the work done in SIENA at the plenary on Saturday and will directly feed the PONTIGNANO PAPER. The paper is meant to influence the agenda setting and the debate with fresh ideas and new methods. The groups will be framed around four trade-off/puzzles that the EU needs to solve so to navigate in uncharted waters and renovate its own founding values.

A creative collaborative *vision*

Thematic 4 Problem Setting/Solving Groups

- ✴ Each participant of the conference will be invited to join a PSSG and contribute to our creative collaborative vision.

Democracy

Presented by the professor: Luca Verzichelli (UNISI)

Reinvent Globalization

Presented by the professor: Maarten Smeets (Senior Associate at
Clingendael Academy)

Next EU Budget

Presented by the professor: Marco Buti (EUI)

An European Way to AI

Presented by the professor: Daniel Gros (Bocconi)

17:00-18:30

Group 1 - How can we use democracy as a lever for integration? Design the instruments to use citizens' energy to empower decision-making (pssg framed by tutor and students unisi)

"No taxation without representation": few people seem to remember this basic law^[1] of liberal democracies. One may even argue that it is also equally true that you cannot have a "state without citizenship". Yet, Europe has gone a long way along even deeper integrations without ever changing the electoral law through which the European Parliament is elected. More recently, we are talking about increasingly sharing defence, which is again a defining feature of what we call the State without even thinking about whether this means changing the boundaries of the community we feel be citizen of. What kind of positive actions/ reforms can we recommend making further integrations politically feasible?

Introduction: **Luca Verzichelli** (Professor of Political Science at UNISI and tutor of the group)

Amongst the discussants of the PSSG paper: **Kalypto Nicolaïdis** (Professor at St Antony's College, University of Oxford and Professor at the School of Transnational Governance, EUI), **Jean-Yves Dormagen** (President and Founder of Cluster17), **Koert Debeuf** (Professor of Middle East Studies at the Brussels School of Governance and Research Fellow at Oxford University), **Liliana Śmiech** (Chairwoman of the Foundation Council at Warsaw Institute and Director General for International Affairs at Ludovika University of Public Services), **Giovanni Orsina** (Professor of Contemporary History at LUISS and Director of Master in European Studies), **Mark Speich** (General Secretary, KAS Berlin)

Chair: **Megan Clement** (Editor in Chief, Impact newsletter at Les Glorieuses, Co-Founder of The Gender Beat and Sessionary lecturer at Université Sorbonne Nouvelle)

Rapporteurs: **Anoa Olivier** (Public and Cultural Diplomacy Student at UNISI), **Ilaria Menchetti** (Public and Cultural Diplomacy Student at UNISI), **Virginia Frigerio** (Student at UNISI), **Héloïse Mathilde Marie Douek** (Public and Cultural Diplomacy Student at UNISI)

[8] Interestingly the quote may belong to William Pitt, prime minister of Great Britain for ten years before the American Revolution of 1777. Lord Pitt was, indeed, the first to acknowledge that for a free people to be taxed, they should have seats in Westminster

17:00-18:30

Group 2 - Reinvent globalization: can an export-led model still sustain Europe's prosperity in an increasingly fragmented world?

As the first months of the US-led trade wars show, trade and specialized global value chains are still key to the "wealth of nations": global GDP tends to decrease, and import duties go up. Yet – as the COVID-19 pandemic showed- not regulated globalization can create monopolies along those value chains, which can make the entire system fragile. Is there a way to create dynamic regulation where efficiency in the short term and resilience vis-à-vis crises are maximized? How can we do that when even the WTO is paralyzed?

PSSG will aim to design a framework that preserves openness while minimizing vulnerabilities, especially as multilateral institutions like the WTO face gridlock.

Introduction by: **Maarten Smeets** (Senior Associate at Clingendael Academy, Non -Resident Fellow at the World Trade Institute)

Amongst the discussants of the PSSG paper: **Ignacio Garcia Bercero** (Non-Resident Fellow at Bruegel), **Yan Dong** (Senior Research Fellow, Institute of World Economics and Politics, Chinese Academy of Social Sciences), **Desiree Van Gorp** (Neyenrode, Business University, Amsterdam), **Mina Mashayekhi** (Former Director Trade Division UNCTAD, Senior Advisor RockCreek)

Chair: **Denis Kataev** (DOJD)

Rapporteurs: **Julius Niewisch** (Law Student at University of Potsdam), **Kristina Botsianovska*** (Cultural Diplomacy Student at UNISI)

17:00-18:30

Group 3 - The next EU budget and beyond: what is a politically acceptable change for the eu budget so to respond to new needs? What politically sustainable space is there for joint EU debt/ other EU's own resources? (in collaboration with feps, and with the support of tutors and students from pssg at the EUI and/or UNISI)

Where should EU money be spent to build the Europe of the future? The EU budget has gradually evolved over the decades; however, cohesion and common agricultural policies still absorb 60% of it. The overall budget remains just a little over one per cent of the total GDP of the 27 member states. Own resources are limited, and the joint debt of the Next Generation EU will not be repeated. Programs like Horizon appear resistant to reform. This framework is not what the EU needs to navigate the 21st century. What are the political margins for a bold modernization? How to ensure that resources are available for the different objectives and challenges the Union is facing?

Introduction by: **Marco Buti** (Padoa Schioppa Chair at EUI)

Amongst the discussants of the PSSG paper: **Gregorio De Felice** (Chief Economist at Intesa Sanpaolo), **Andrea Maffezzoni** (CFO at Banca Monte dei Paschi di Siena), **Francesca Canali** (Policy and Project coordinator at Mira Network), **Lenny Benbara** (Associate Expert at Cluster17), **Sabrina Cavatorto** (Professor of Political Science at UNISI and tutor of the group), **Anna Marucci** (Head of Debt and Funds Listing Italy at Euronext)

Chair: **Victor Mallet** (Senior Editor at the Financial Times)

Rapporteurs: **Alice Bubici** (International Sciences and European Institutions Student at University of Milan), **Mattia Gusmini** (International and Diplomatic Affairs Student at University of Bologna), **Odysseas Konstantinakos** (PhD candidate, Department of Political and Social Sciences at EUI)

17:00-18:30

Group 4 - An European way to AI: which are the possible competitive advantages upon which Europe can develop its own ai champions? Can regulation be redesigned so to become a lever for competitiveness? (pssg with tutor and students of IEP)

According to Stanford University, over the last ten years, private investment in Artificial Intelligence has totaled approximately 350 billion USD in the USA, 100 billion in China, and 30 billion in the EU's 27 member states. This alone should be enough to conclude that the EU has missed the train that will likely determine success across most industries. Yet, despite massive investments, AI still seems like a "solution looking for a problem"—a technology that is not only excessively expensive but also capable of disrupting any existing energy balance.

THURSDAY 19th JUNE

CERTOSA DI PONTIGNANO

Tech giants may still have a point of weakness when it comes to monetizing their innovations in the most crucial sectors, as demonstrated by Alphabet's struggles in healthcare and Meta's in education. Could this be the foundation for a European "third way" in AI?

Introduction by: **Daniel Gros** (Director at IEP Bocconi)

Amongst the discussants of the PSSG paper: **Sophie Bloemen** (Co-founder and director Commons Network), **Mario Mariniello** (Non-resident Fellow at Bruegel and Visiting Professor at College of Europe), **Ettore Carneade** (Head of Compliance at Banca Monte dei Paschi di Siena), **Matteo Bassi** (Head of Economic Policy & Regulation at Amazon), **Francesco Lapenta** (Director of Institute of Future and Innovation Studies at John Cabot University)

Chair: **Turi Munthe** (Media Entrepreneur and Gedi Board Member)

Rapporteurs: **Students at JCU**

18:30-19:30

Fireside chat – “Le grandi ipocrisie sul clima”

The fight to climate change is to be accelerated. With a profound change in the attitude of states, public opinions and companies.

Introduction: **Roger Abravanel** (Director Emeritus at McKinsey and author of “Le grandi ipocrisie sul clima”) with **Luca D’Agnese** (Head of Policy, Evaluation and Advisory at CDP), Anna Marucci (Head of Debt and Funds Listing Italy at Euronext)

Discussants: **Bill Emmott** (Chairman of the International Institute for Strategic Studies, Former Editor-in-Chief of the Economist)

20:00-21:30

Dinner at Certosa di Pontignano hosted by FEPS & Vision Think Tank

20:30-21:00

Certosa on Rai Radio 1 - Zapping

FRIDAY 20th JUNE

CERTOSA DI PONTIGNANO

7:00-9:00

Breakfast

9:00-9:20

Introduction to the 2nd day program:

Silvia Scarafoni (Vision Associate at Vision), **Alexandra Borchardt** (Lead Author at European Broadcasting Union and Senior Research Associate at Reuters Institute)

Opening Session

9:30-10:30

Plenary 1. The challenge of industrial policies. Clean technology and quality jobs as a competitive advantage. Reflections for the automotive sector. (in partnership with FEPS)

The automotive sector stands at the heart of Europe's industrial future, where competitiveness, sustainability, and social equity must converge. As the EU charts its path toward climate neutrality and strategic autonomy, industrial policies must accelerate the twin transition—green and digital—while safeguarding high-quality jobs and global leadership. How can regulation, investment, and collaboration unlock a resilient automotive value chain? What policies will ensure that the shift to electrification and AI-driven manufacturing strengthens, rather than fractures, Europe's industrial base?

Introduction: **Maria Joao Rodrigues** (President of FEPS)

Discussants: **Roger Abravanel** (Director Emeritus at McKinsey and author of "Le grandi ipocrisie sul clima"), **Matt Steinglass** (Deputy Europe editor at The Economist), **Benjamin Denis** (Head of Industrial Policy Coordination at IndustriAll), **Giorgia Azzarelli** (Economic and Financial Affairs Policy Assistant, Party of European Socialists (PES))

Chair: **Anna Kolesnichenko** (Economic Policy Analyst at FEPS),

10:30-10:45

Coffee Break

10:45-11:45

Plenary 2. A pragmatic proposal on defence and the white on the future of European defence (the “kubilius paper”)

Pax Americana and the US-led global order as we have known it are gone. US President Trump has driven a wedge between US and European security and is eroding NATO – to the delight of Vladimir Putin.

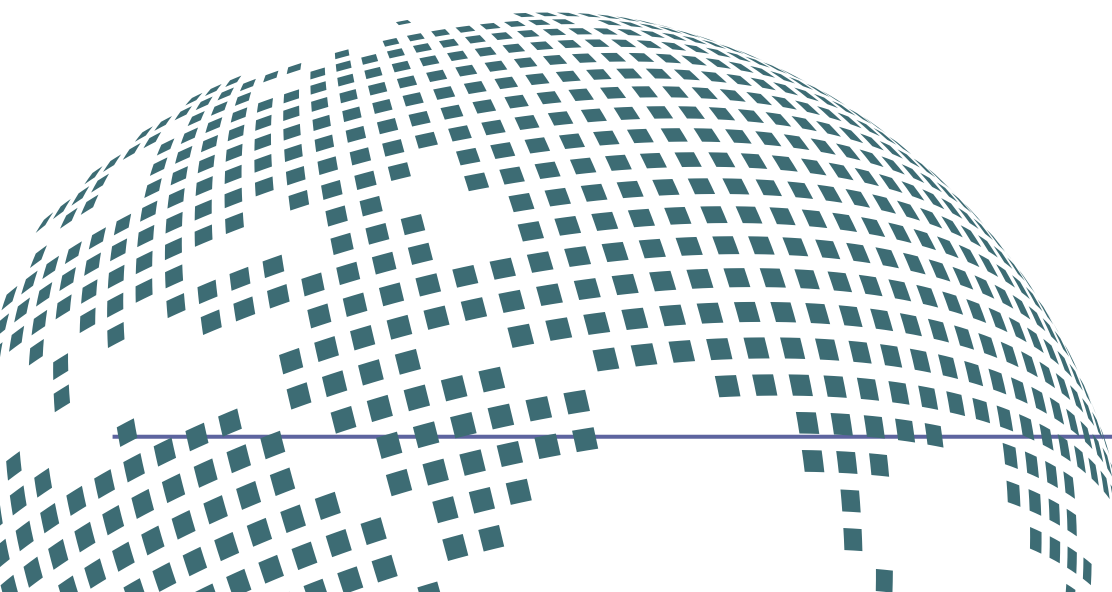
As the tectonic plates continue to shift beneath us, Europeans struggle to find new leadership formulas, a shared vision of their future including a related defence and security strategy, and a way to prevent the world from returning to an era where might makes right. The stakes could not be higher: If Europeans do not want to become the playball of strongmen in Washington, Moscow or Peking, they must become a serious geostrategic actor.

What are the priorities and what is needed to get there? Which are the biggest obstacles and what should we do about them? How could we reimagine the EU and NATO in this context? What would all this cost? And how can Europeans achieve smart defence?

Introduction: **François Lafond** (Democrats-EDP Expert)

Discussants: **Gerlinde Niehus** (Deputy Director, Defence and Security Cooperation at NATO Headquarters), **Vincenzo De Luca** (Former Ambassador and Consultant at Gianni & Origoni), **Matthias Barner** (Coordinator European Security at Konrad Adenauer Stiftung in Berlin), **Ana Juncos** (Professor of European Politics, College of Europe and University of Bristol), **Roberto Castaldi** (Associate Professor eCampus and Coordinator Euractiv)

Chair: **Bill Emmott** (Chairman of the International Institute for Strategic Studies, Former Editor-in-Chief of the Economist)



FRIDAY 20th JUNE

CERTOSA DI PONTIGNANO

12:30-14:00

Lunch at Certosa di Pontignano hosted by FEPS & Vision Think Tank

14:00-15:00

✳ Back to problem setting/ solving groups to prepare Pontignano paper

15:00-16:00

Plenary 3. From polarisation to media as platform for problem solving (in partnership with Re-Imagine Europa and Fieg)

A map of how tribalization cancelled conversation and a road map for building bridges and a proposal for a european platform for media as critical resource

Introduction: **Erika Stael Von Holstein** (Chief Executive Re-Imagine Europa)

Discussants: **Vassilis Kessidis** (Founding Member of European Policy Innovation Council – EPIC), **Francesca Traldi** (Scientific Advisor at the Konrad-Adenauer-Stiftung in Italy), **Giovanni Orsina** (Professor of Contemporary History at LUISS and Director of Master in European Studies), **Anette Novak** (Former Director General of the Swedish Media Council and CEO of ICT- and design research institute RISE Interactive)

Chair: **Alexandra Borchardt** (Lead Author at European Broadcasting Union and Senior Research Associate at Reuters Institute)

Rapporteur: **Chloe Mc Dowell** (Re-Imagine Europa)

✳ The participants will gather in the same rooms of the previous day

16:00-17:00

Plenary 4. The 450 billion bet: how to use Europe private savings to reboot Europe? A proposal

Four hundred fifty billion euro: this is one of estimation of the investment gap that the EU needs to fill. European households have enormous savings that ends up financing not-EU firms and with not enough investment in innovation. The missing link appears to be lack of a strategy at European level that can make clear to investors the financial (and political) return into European public goods (which includes defense, digital and green). This session will discuss the conditions to tap this potential.

Introduction: **Gregorio De Felice** (Chief Economist at Intesa Sanpaolo)

Discussants: **Romano Prodi** (Former President of the European Commission and former Italy's Prime Minister), **Marco Buti** (Padoa Schioppa chair at the RSC at the EUI, Former Chief of Staff of the EU Commissioner for the economy and Former Director-General for Economic and Financial Affairs at the European Commission), **Marcella Panucci** (Board Member at Banca Monte dei Paschi di Siena), **Riikka Torppa** (Deputy Head of Cabinet to the Commissioner for Financial Services and the Savings and Investments Union), **Anna Marucci** (Head of Debt and Funds Listing Italy at Euronext)

Chair: **Lilith Verstrynge** (Political analyst, writer at El Pais and Le Monde Diplomatique, Professor of International Relations at Sciences Po University Paris)

17:00-18:00

Plenary 5. Engaging citizens in the energy transition – (the case of affordable and sustainable housing through renovation) (GEF with collaboration of FEPS)

A rapid energy transition is essential to avoid catastrophic climate change. To succeed, it must be supported by the people it affects most. This means ensuring that the benefits of the transition are shared equitably across society. But how can policymakers secure such support?

This session explores how housing renovation and modernization can drive engagement by aligning accessible technologies, effective regulation and the promise of improved living conditions to make sustainability both appealing and attainable. The focus will be on how energy efficiency and renovation incentives, including targeted financial support, can bridge the gap between policy ambitions and implementation, ensuring that the transition is inclusive, equitable, and widely embraced.

FRIDAY 20th JUNE

CERTOSA DI PONTIGNANO

Introduction: **Taube Van Melkebeke** (GEF)

Discussants: **Liliana Śmiech** (Chairwoman of the Foundation Council at Warsaw Institute and Director General for International Affairs at Ludovika University of Public Services), **Paz Serra Portilla** (Member of Regional Parliament of Madrid - Verdes Equo), **Jesse Scott** (Senior Fellow at the Observer Research Foundation, adjunct faculty at the Hertie School and DIW Berlin German Economics Research Institute), **Alessandro Costa*** (Director General for Administration at the Fondazione Veneza Capitale Mondiale della Sostenibilità)

Chair: **Gemma Ware** (Host and Executive Producer of The Conversation Weekly podcast)

20:30-22:00

Dinner at Certosa di Pontignano hosted by FEPS & Vision Think Tank



☀ The City council of Siena

Siena, a city in central Italy's Tuscany region, is distinguished by its medieval brick buildings. The fan-shaped central square, Piazza del Campo, is the site of the Palazzo Pubblico, the Gothic town hall, and Torre del Mangia, a slender 14th-century tower with sweeping views from its distinctive white crown.

SATURDAY 21st JUNE

PUBLIC SESSIONS DAY

The Saturday morning session is scheduled in Italian, with translation into English and vice versa.

7:00-8:30

Breakfast

8:30-9:00

*Transfer to **Sala delle Lupe di Palazzo Pubblico** - Siena*

9:00-9:15

**Institutional welcome and short introduction to the vi
edition of the Siena Conference**

Prof. **Roberto Di Pietra** (Rector at UNISI), Avv. **Nicola Maione** (President at Banca Monte dei Paschi di Siena), **Eugenio Giani** (President of the Tuscany Region)

9:15-9:45

**The Europe of the Future – what do young citizens
want: the results of a Cluster 17 poll in partnership
with Vision**

Jean-Yves Dormagen (President and Founder of Cluster17) with **Lenny Benbara** (Associate Expert at Cluster17)

9:45-11:00

**Public event - the way forward for cohesion policies
(in partnership with the European Commision of the
Regional Council – Toscana)**

The European Commission's budget allocates 392 billion to the Funds (Regional Development, European Social, Cohesion and the "Just Transition") meant to reduce inequalities: between regions; within the Regions and on the labour market among differently qualified population groups.

It is the largest item within the EU budget and is managed by two different directorates: the one for regional policies and the one dedicated to employment. It is also one of the oldest policies of 16 the Union (the European Social Fund was established with the Treaty of Rome in 1957) and it is perhaps for this reason that a strong rethinking is necessary.

After all, this is what the European Commission's numbers say. Those of EUROSTAT indicate that the differences between regions (measured in deviation from the average per capita income amongst the countries that have benefited from the structural funds since the beginning) have been increasing since 2008. In addition, by the end of 2024, according to the Commission's platform, when we had already passed the halfway point of the current period within which the funds should be spent (2021 – 2027), only 6.4% of the 392 billion had landed on households and businesses.

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In the meantime, the other big EU development policy – the Recovery and Resilience Facility (RRF) – is moving faster: at the end of April, according to the Commission's numbers, 308 billion out of the 650 billion which were supposed to be spent in the 2021 – 2026 period were disbursed to the Member States[9]: can the RRF function as a benchmark for reforming cohesion policies? The recent European Commission's proposal provides guidelines that the Executive Vice President Raffaele Fitto will present to the Siena Conference[10].

Raffaele Fitto* (Executive Vice-President of European Commission) with **Maria Novella Rossi** (Sinologist and journalist at Rai)

Roundtable

Introduction: **Mikel Landabaso** (Director at European Commission Joint Research Centre, Seville), **Luca Menesini** (President of the PES Group in the European Committee of the Regions), **Raffaella Nanetti** (Emeritus Professor at University of Chicago), **Pasquale Orlando*** (Managing Authority of the Puglia Regional Government), **Sergio Negro*** (Managing Authority of the Campania Regional Government), **Eugenio Giani** (President of the Tuscany Region)

Chair: **Maria Novella Rossi** (Sinologist and journalist at Rai)

11:15-11:45 **Presentation of the proposals from the 4 pssg: discussion and the way forward**

12:00-13:00 **Presentation of the pontignano paper to media**

Introduction by: **Francesco Grillo** (Vision Think Tank Director, Professor at Bocconi and Senior Fellow at EUI) and **Alexandra Borchardt** (Lead Author at European Broadcasting Union and Senior Research Associate at Reuters Institute)

Discussants: **Maria Joao Rodrigues** (President of FEPS), **Barbara Kolm** (Member of Austria's National Council with the Freedom Party and former Vice president of the Austrian Central Bank, President of the F.A. von Hayek Institut and director of the Austrian Economics Center), **Simone Borghesi** (Deputy Rector at UNISI), **Romano Prodi** (Former President of the European Commission and former Italy's Prime Minister), **Sandro Gozi** (MEP, EDP Secretary General and Italy's Former Minister for European Affaire), **Andras Laszlo*** (President of Patriots for Europe Foundation)

Chair: **Victor Mallet** (Senior Editor at the Financial Times)

[9]https://ec.europa.eu/economy_finance/recovery-and-resilience-scoreboard/disbursements.html?lang=en

[10] https://ec.europa.eu/regional_policy/sources/communication/mid-term-review-2025/regulation-proposalmid-term-review-2025_en.pdf

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13:00-14:30

Lunch at Cortile del Podestà di Palazzo Pubblico - Siena

14:30-15:30

Public event – is David Ricardo still alive? A proposal to reform global trade beyond trade wars

Introduction: **Maarten Smeets** (Senior Associate at Clingendael Academy and Non-Resident Fellow at the World Trade Institute)

Discussants: **Ignacio Garcia Bercero** (Non-Resident Fellow at Bruegel), **Yan Dong** (Senior Research Fellow, Institute of World Economics and Politics, Chinese Academy of Social Sciences), **Desiree Van Gorp** (Neyenrode, Business University, Amsterdam)

Chair: **Katherine Butler** (Associate Editor Europe at The Guardian)

15:30-16:30

Public session on agrifood

A vision for agriculture and food for the reform on common agriculture policy

"There is no one in this room whose roots do not return to the earth." It was with these words that the first President of the European Commission, the German HALLSTEIN, presented the first budget of what was then called the Economic Community and which dedicated 75% of its resources to agriculture. After seventy years, the Common Agricultural Policy is still one of the policies that define the Union with a budget of 264 billion (for the period 2023 - 2027). There is no other productive sector that weighs as "politically" as that of farmers, despite the fact that they represent only 5% of the employed in the EU. CAP reforms have been talked about since their establishment (and that of the Union) but in 2025 a rethink becomes essential: can a policy that explicitly aims to "support incomes" be sustainable? Is the protection of micro farms consistent with the idea of making agrifood a competitive advantage? What can be a realistic approach that preserves tradition and accelerates innovation? What is the balance between mitigation and adaptation to climate change of which the sector is the first victim, and excessively strict rules that have contributed to slowing down the "green deal"?

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Introduction: **Christophe Hansen*** (European Commissioner for Agriculture and Food)

Discussants: **Massimiliano Giansanti** (President of Committee of European Farmers – COPA – and of Confagricoltura), **Elizabeth Koenig** (Vice-President at Banfi Srl), **Maurizio Bogoni** (Tenute Ruffino), **Cristina Guarda+** (MEP of Greens/EFA Group), **Dario Nardella** (MP and former Mayor of Florence).

Chair: **Agnese Pini** (Editor QN Group – La Nazione, Resto del Carlino)

16:30-17:30

Fireside chat – “The thing about Europe” - the memory of the greatest political project of the 21st century and a road map to land in the 21st century

Romano Prodi (Former President of the European Commission and Former Prime Minister of Italy) and **Barbara Kolm** (Member of Austria’s National Council with the Freedom Party and former Vice president of the Austrian Central Bank, President of the F.A. von Hayek Institut and director of the Austrian Economics Center) with **Chiara Mezzogori** (Vision Associate at Vision and Political Economy Tutor at LUISS)

VISION TEAM

Who worked on this *visionary* project

Francesco Grillo, Vision Director

Sara Chiminello, Vision Associate

Silvia Scarafoni, Vision Associate

Valerio Rosa, Vision Associate



Vision Think Tank

Vision is the think tank that brings together and young professionals who all share work and study experiences gained in the best universities and European capitals, and the belief that the technological revolution we are experiencing will lead to a radical change in the form of institutions and in the governance of economic systems.



SCAN FOR THE PROGRAMME