

A clean, just and competitive European Industry

Policy Conference 2025

Wednesday, 24 September 2025, 08:45 – 17:30

Jacques Delors Building – JDE 62, Rue Belliard 99, 1040 Bruxelles

Background

In a context of new industrial policies being developed by the European Commission, a **shift** in focus from the European Green Deal **to competitiveness**, and growing **international geoeconomic tensions**, it is essential to engage in constructive and multi-stakeholder discussions on industrial policy. Since the release of the Draghi report a year ago, competitiveness has become the main theme of the European Commission. However, the definition of competitiveness remains fuzzy and the narrative around it problematic. In the name of competitiveness, different initiatives are advanced that entail **deregulation and backtracking on green commitments**. In other cases, we see calls for channelling subsidies to large incumbent companies, also in the name of competitiveness. In terms of decarbonisation and just transition, the foundation provided by the **Clean Industrial Deal** now has to be turned into reality, with the many challenges that come with designing and implementing complex policies.

The conference will discuss the goals of European industrial policies and explore the necessary combination of the clean, just and competitive dimensions. What is competitiveness and its role in achieving European policy objectives? How can industrial policies be shaped in a way that supports a just transition, including accelerated decarbonisation, workers' rights and an enhanced quality of life and environment for all? What should be the EU's goals and vision for trade, coherent with its industrial policy and just transition?

To explore these questions, the policy conference will bring together a wide array of speakers, from high-level political figures to trade union representatives, civil society experts and academic researchers. The conference will propose evidence-based analyses on the state and needs of the EU's industrial policies, debates between high-level political, civil society and industry representatives, and stimulating discussions on different topics such as decarbonisation, competitiveness, labour markets, trade and circularity. The programme will include different formats: keynote speeches, high-level panel discussions, presentations and smaller interactive sessions.

The conference is organised by *FEPS* and *Friedrich-Ebert-Stiftung (FES)*, in collaboration with *the S&D Group in the European Parliament*, *PES Group in the European Committee of the Regions*, *the European Trade Union Confederation (ETUC)*, *IndustriAll Europe* and *SOLIDAR*.

Agenda

08:30 – 09:10 Registrations

09:20 – 09:30 Welcoming remarks by

- **László Andor**, Secretary General, FEPS
- **Claudia Detsch**, Director, FES Just Climate

09:30 – 09:45 **The European Green Deal and industrial decarbonisation: fact-checking**

Interactive scene-setting

09:45 – 11:00 **Combining decarbonisation, justice and competitiveness - What policy priorities and challenges for a win-win-win?**

Political panel discussion with:

- **Thomas Pellerin-Carlin**, Member of the European Parliament, S&D Group, and Member of the Committee on Industry, Research, and Energy
- **Lucie Studničná**, President of the Workers Group, European Economic and Social Committee (EESC)
- **Judith Kirton-Darling**, General Secretary, industriAll
- **Ludovic Voet**, Confederal Secretary, European Trade Union Confederation (ETUC)
- **Axel Eggert**, Director General, Eurofer

Q&A and discussion with participants

Moderated by:

- **Bart Vanhercke**, Director of the Research Department, European Trade Union Institute (ETUI)

11:00 – 11:20 Coffee break

11:20 – 12:35 **Parallel sessions**

1. Energy-Intensive Industries: asking the tricky questions

Inputs from:

- **Sören Borghardt**, Senior Advisor, Stiftung Klimaneutralität
- **Benjamin Denis**, Head of Industrial Policy Coordination, industriAll
- **Kimmo Järvinen**, Head of European Governmental Affairs, Swedish Steel Cooperation (SSAB)
- **Anaïs Laporte**, Associate Director and Head of Sustainability, Fourtold Consultancy



Moderated by:

- **Stephan Thalhofer**, Policy Advisor, FES Just Climate

2. Delivering a just transition for workers in every sector and region

Inputs from:

- **Klara Dobrev**, Member of the European Parliament, S&D Group
- **Christophe Rouillon**, Mayor of Coulaines (France), and Member of the PES group at the European Committee of the Regions
- **Ben Lennon**, Advisor, European Trade Union Confederation (ETUC)

Moderated by:

- **Ludovic Voet**, Confederal Secretary, European Trade Union Confederation (ETUC)

3. Towards the Circular Economy Act: priorities, policy coherence and product competitiveness

Presentation by:

- **Florian Flachenecker**, Taskforce Leader for the Circular Economy Act, DG Environment, European Commission

Panel discussion with:

- **Marine Courmont Lelieur**, Head of European and International Affairs, Institut National de l'Economie Circulaire (INEC)
- **Marie-Jeanne Gaertner**, Environmental Policy Lead, Rreuse
- **Suparna Arora**, Public Affairs Director on Energy Policy, FTI Consulting

Moderated by:

- **Chiara Antonelli**, Head of Programme, Climate and Circular Economy, Institute for European Environmental Policy (IEEP)

12:35 – 13:30

Registrations and lunch

13:30 - 15:00

European competitiveness – Meaning and Goals

The session will discuss what are the goals of the European economic policy and how competitiveness agenda can help achieve them. What does competitiveness mean exactly, and what does it mean in terms of policies? How to combine competitiveness, sustainability and quality jobs?



Scene-Setting by:

- **Patrick Kaczmarczyk**, Postdoctoral Researcher, University of Mannheim

Political panel discussion with:

- **Matthias Ecke**, Member of the European Parliament, S&D Group
- **Estelle Goeger**, Member of Cabinet, Executive Vice President Séjourné, European Commission
- **Isabelle Schömann**, Deputy General Secretary, European Trade Union Confederation (ETUC)
- **Lúcio Vinhas de Souza**, Chief Economist, Business Europe
- **Lorenzo Moretti**, Research Fellow, European University Institute (EUI), and Italy Lead and Head of Advisory, Luiss Hub for New Industrial Policy and Economic Governance (LUHNIP)

Q&A and discussion with participants

Moderated by:

- **Anna Kolesnichenko**, Economic Policy Analyst, FEPS, and **Marie Hasdenteufel**, Policy Officer for Economic, Social and Digital Policy, FES EU Office Brussels

15:00 – 15:20

Coffee break

15:20 - 15:50

Trade Policy and Competitiveness: Friends or Foes?

Conversation with:

- **Elizabeth Baltzan**, Senior Fellow, Atlantic Council, and former Senior Advisor to the US Trade Representative
- **Bernd Lange**, Member of the European Parliament, S&D Group, and Chair of the Committee on International Trade

Q&A and discussion with participants

Moderated by:

- **László Andor**, Secretary General, FEPS

15:50 – 17:20

Going beyond a neoliberal trade paradigm

In the world of trade disruptions, the main navigation principle for the EU is to clearly define its goals for trade and to stick to this vision. What goals do we want to achieve through trade? How can trade help achieve industrial policy goals? What does it mean for trade deals and cooperation with partners? Is the policy focus on competitiveness a driver or a brake to international partnerships?

Scene-Setting by:

- **Werner Raza**, Director, Austrian Foundation for Development Research (ÖFSE)

Discussion with:

- **Jörg Wojahn**, Head of Unit, Bilateral relations in Trade and Sustainable Development, European Commission
- **Ryan Mullholand**, Senior Fellow, Center for American Progress (CAP)
- **Marta Castilho**, Professor of Economy, University Rio de Janeiro

Q&A and discussion with participants

Moderated by:

- **Daniela Iller**, Policy Officer for Trade and International Cooperation, FES EU Office Brussels, and **Lavinia Mazzei**, International Cooperation Policy Officer, Solidar

17:20 – 17:35

Reflections on the future of the transatlantic relationship with

- **Damian Murphy**, Senior Vice President, National Security and International Policy, Centre for American Progress (CAP)

17:35 – 17:45

Closing remarks

- **Luca Menesini**, President of the PES Group in the European Committee of the Regions
- **Maria João Rodrigues**, President, FEPS

17:45 – 19:00

Networking reception

**Some speakers are to be confirmed.*



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