

Place-based industrial policy in Europe

Thursday **19 March 2026**, 09:00-12:45

@ **FEPS Office**, Avenue des Arts 46, Brussels

And

Online via Streamyard ([Registration link](#))

Any serious discussion of industrial policy must begin with the recognition that economic activity is fundamentally spatial. Places are not simply interchangeable economic units but unique political and social locations. Questions of local political economy, identity and culture shapes both which interventions are politically feasible and how they are implemented in practice. Sub-national state capacity, including administrative capability, technical expertise, and freedom from corruption, varies considerably and mediates policy effectiveness. The institutional thickness of a region, including universities, business associations, and civic organisations, can be as important as physical infrastructure in determining development potential. Therefore, industrial policy is not a technocratic exercise; it is a strategic tool for safeguarding democracy and resilience in an era where politics overdetermines economics and security overdetermines prosperity.

In this seminar, we are going to discuss the politics of place-based industrial policy, how political processes determine the shape of industrial policy, and how social democrats can better develop, implement and manage the politics of industrial policy in critical sectors and regions.

The seminar will start with a presentation of the policy study coordinated by FEPS and Progressive Britain. The study draws on four case studies - Pori (Finland), Silicon Saxony (Germany), Port Talbot (UK) and Cornwall (UK) - to distil lessons for European and national policymakers. The second part of the event will be devoted to a discussion of local experiences and learnings from industrial policy design and implementation.

9:00 – 9:30 **Registration and welcome coffee**

9:30 – 9:40 **Opening remarks by**

Tom Collinge, Deputy Director, Progressive Britain
Anna Kolesnichenko, Policy Analyst, FEPS

9:40 – 11:00 **Putting places, people and power into European industrial policy**

Presentation of the Policy Study by its authors

Theo Cox, Demos Helsinki
Ed Atkins, University of Bristol
Gerard Rinse Oosterwijk, European Parliament
Harry Pitts, University of Exeter (Online)

Comments by:

Lorenzo Mascioli, postdoctoral researcher at the Laboratory for Interdisciplinary Evaluation of Public Policies (LIEPP), Sciences Po Paris



Q&A with the participants

Moderated by **Anna Kolesnichenko**, Policy Analyst, FEPS

11:00 – 11:15

Coffee Break

11:15 – 12:40

The politics of industrial policy

How better develop, implement and manage the politics of industrial policy in critical sectors and regions

Keynote speech by

Matthias Ecke, MEP S&D Group

Panel discussion with

Bregje van Veelen, Assistant Professor, Lund University (SE)

Jayne Kirkham, MP for Truro and Falmouth (UK) (Online) (TBC)

Frank Bösenberg, Managing Director, Silicon Saxony (DE)
(Online) (TBC)

Q&A with the participants

Moderated by **Anna Kolesnichenko**, Policy Analyst, FEPS

12:40 – 12:45

Concluding remarks by

László Andor, Secretary General, FEPS

12:45 – 13:30

Networking Lunch