

FEPS
FOUNDATION FOR EUROPEAN
PROGRESSIVE STUDIES

Annual Activity **REPORT 2025**





TABLE OF CONTENT

Message by the President	01
FEPS is the European progressive political foundation	02
Foreword by the Secretary General	04
Core mission for 2024	05
Key facts and figures 2025	06
FEPS at work: research and studies	
<i>Main achievements / Europe in the World</i>	08
<i>Main achievements / Migration</i>	12
<i>Main achievements / Social Europe</i>	16
<i>Main achievements / Economy and finance</i>	20
<i>Main achievements / Environment and climate</i>	24
<i>Main achievements / Digital economy and society</i>	28
<i>Main achievements / Gender equality</i>	32
<i>Main achievements / Political Europe</i>	36
<i>Main achievements / Defending and deepening democracy</i>	40
<i>Main achievements / Future of social democracy</i>	44
FEPS at work: training	48
FEPS at work: outreach	
<i>The Progressive Post</i>	52
<i>Communication</i>	54
FEPS network	60
FEPS at work: financial overview	62

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MESSAGE BY THE PRESIDENT



In 2025, the world order as we knew it collapsed. This followed a long process of disintegration of a weakening multilateral system. The Russian aggression against Ukraine in 2022 and then Donald Trump's election were two major turning points.

For the EU, 2025 was a challenging year. Following their exclusion from the US-led negotiations, European countries have played a decisive role in creating a 'coalition of the willing' that pledged strengthened support for Ukraine, making the Union the main provider of financial and military aid to Ukraine. Also, **Europe recognised that the US can no longer be considered a reliable ally.** JD Vance's speech at the Munich Security Conference marked a major political and ideological change. He accused Europeans of not defending freedom of speech and put into question US support for Europe, while backing European populist and extreme-right parties. The 2025 US National Security Strategy – claiming Europe's economic decline and 'civilisational erasure' due to uncontrolled migration – represents another fundamental breach of the transatlantic partnership. These developments reflect a new 'ideological or cultural war' that fundamentally challenges a 'West' defined by common values.

Israel's destructive war against Gaza cannot be forgotten. It represented a real test of the EU's resilience and unity, showing that, in this fractured geopolitical environment, the EU must adapt rapidly and conceive itself as a full-fledged power to escape vassalisation. While a renewed political will guided by the common European interests is strongly needed, political divisions and a lack of strategic vision remain.

In this world dominated by imperialist and authoritarian ambitions built on force and not on rules, the very existence of the European Union may be in question. For progressives, what is at stake is not only the international order, but our democratic and open societies, and the European social model.

The rise of populist and extreme-right parties across most member states challenges national political systems and European decision-making. After the 2024 European elections, the extreme right has grown and its collaboration with the conservatives has intensified on important issues, such as climate policy, deregulation and migration. The new changing majorities in the EP undermine the fundamental political balances on which the European project was built.

The new Commission's European Agenda placed competitiveness, followed by defence and security, as main priorities, while the Green Deal has disappeared. Progressives do not deny the importance of competitiveness. Serious gaps, particularly in the digital and technological sectors, have to be reduced. The EU lacks a real European industrial policy fostering private and public investment. However, explaining these gaps as the result of excessive regulation is not adequate. Competitiveness must be understood in a broader way. Jacques Delors insisted on "competition, cooperation and solidarity". If European policies undermine cohesion and social standards, the European project has no chance of rallying European citizens. European power needs economic competitiveness, as well as social cohesion and justice. A solid climate policy is another indispensable component of an economy that works for the people. For progressives, important pieces of legislation – like the Digital Markets Act, Digital Services Act and AI Act – must be defended against the tech oligarchs and their monopolies.

As new FEPS President, I am committed to working with a wide range of stakeholders and the whole social democratic family to elaborate a new progressive vision for a democratic, sustainable and social Europe that promotes security and peace in a world order based on rules and multilateralism.

By Nicolas Schmit
FEPS new President

FEPS IS THE EUROPEAN PROGRESSIVE POLITICAL FOUNDATION

The Foundation for European Progressive Studies (FEPS) is **the think tank of the progressive political family at EU level**. Our mission is to develop innovative research, policy advice, training and debates to inspire and inform progressive politics and policies across Europe.

We operate as a thinking hub to facilitate the emergence of progressive answers to the challenges that Europe faces today.

FEPS works in close partnership with its members and partners, forging connections and boosting coherence among stakeholders from the world of politics, academia, and civil society at local, regional, national, European, and global levels.

Today, FEPS benefits from a solid network of 77 member organisations. Among these, 41 are full members, 31 have observer status and 5 are ex-officio members. In addition to this network of organisations that are active in the promotion of progressive values, FEPS also has an extensive network of partners, including renowned universities, scholars, policymakers, and activists.

Our ambition is to undertake intellectual reflection for the benefit of the progressive movement, and to promote the founding principles of the EU – freedom, equality, solidarity, democracy, respect of human rights, fundamental freedoms, human dignity, and the rule of law.

BACKGROUND

FEPS was created in 2008 as the European-level political foundation associated with – but independent from – the Party of European Socialists (PES) and the Group of the Progressive Alliance of Socialists and Democrats in the European Parliament (S&D). Since its creation, FEPS has mainly been funded by the European Parliament.

FEPS was set up to "serve as a framework for national political foundations, academics, and other relevant actors to work together at the European level" (art. 1.4 of Regulation (EC) 1524-2007).

These credentials have made FEPS into an important stakeholder, recognised by foundations and international think tank rankings such as the Pennsylvania Global Think Tank Index. In 2020, FEPS was ranked fourth best party-affiliated think tank worldwide.

In August 2017, FEPS was officially registered with the status of European political foundation (number: EUPF 4BE0896.230.213).

In 2019, FEPS was honoured to be granted Special Consultative Status to the **United Nations Economic and Social Council (ECOSOC)**, the highest status given by the UN to non-governmental organisations, thus allowing it to participate in the work of the UN.



FOREWORD BY THE SECRETARY GENERAL



The year 2025 was defined by two elections the year before: the European Parliament election and the White House presidential election. This was the first full year of the new European Commission, but it also became the year dominated worldwide by the erratic US president who returned to the White House in January 2025. Those who did not take the challenge of the far-right seriously before had to think again, this time also facing the international networks of ultra-conservatives, which are boosting nationalism within the European Union as well.

In this “time of monsters”, pro-European progressives faced new tasks. How to ensure that the EU finds a way back to economic growth, when the right-wing forces just keep repeating the mantra of “competitiveness”? How to uphold the climate ambition, when for the emboldened Eurosceptics this is just ideology? How to advocate multilateralism and international law, when double standards are exposed, also represented by institutional leaders in the EU.

The year 2025 made it clear that the transatlantic alliance was broken, and Europe must take its strategic autonomy seriously. We ourselves are responsible for restoring peace on our continent. At the same time, the test of sovereignty is whether we can preserve our social model and reinvent our growth model at a time of global disruption. FEPS must play its part in this rescue effort: protecting democracy and the welfare state from hostile right-wing attacks, promoting ideas for consolidating rather than undermining the achievements of the EU, and even seeking the path of further enlargement to East and South-East.

In 2025, FEPS prepared seriously for and contributed to the PES congress in Amsterdam, which, in October

2025, announced mobilisation (in Europe and beyond) as the focus of our collective ambition and action in the coming period. This was about creating momentum, not only to reflect on necessities, but also to point to opportunities and sharpen arguments ahead of the struggle that lies ahead. To tell the difference between genuine and fake solutions is becoming increasingly hard; it is for progressive political think tanks like FEPS and the members of our network to help the political family by making sense of the rapidly changing world and offering insight and good arguments in the EU-focused discussions.

For FEPS, as for other political foundations of the EU, the operational norms are defined by EU regulations. With a new regulation adopted, FEPS also had to prepare in 2025 for a transition, hoping that the inclusive model established in previous years can be maintained and we would not be forced to compromise when it comes to the quality of our activities. Under the impact of the new regulation, as well as the effects of the inflation waves of previous years, operational adaptation was a constant part of our agenda in 2025.

Finally, this also became a year to say goodbye to our President, Maria Joao Rodrigues. She led our foundation for eight and a half years, and the December (Extraordinary) General Assembly elected Nicolas Schmit to become the President of FEPS. The handover period confirmed that we have a lot to be proud of, but it also clarified that there are great expectations for the years to come, and FEPS leadership will need to look for the sources of further improvement and innovative solutions.

László Andor
Secretary General

CORE MISSION FOR 2025

In 2025, FEPS continued to focus on a few, well-crafted horizontal priorities, starting with the goal of a Stronger and Strategically Autonomous Europe. This time, the need for this required less explanation than before. However, this entails boosting the power and capacity of the European Union to act as an integrated Community that is committed to delivering on the promise of peace, sustainable development and a new multilateral global deal.

Our second horizontal priority was to develop policies for a Recovered, Resilient and Transformative Europe. A new European development model needs to be designed, together with policy instruments to fight inequalities and ensure social progress for all. Delivering on this objective requires a coordinated approach to economic, fiscal, labour, social, gender, green and digital policies.

As a third priority, we continued our work on a Democratic and Enlarged Europe. Here, reform is the key word. One cannot strengthen our Political Union without forward-looking institutional reforms, so that it can defend and promote democracy, as also empower and engage citizens in the new steps of the deliberations about the Future of Europe.

To properly respond to the challenges of our time, conventional approaches do not suffice. When we experience a full-scale attack on European democratic values, regulatory autonomy and the integrity of the EU single market, the EU cannot just adapt and remain “constructive”. A constant retreat risks backsliding in all possible areas: from consumer rights to gender equality. In this situation, the question is not only how to resist but also how to develop a principled, practical progressive alternative.

Ensuring that we build a progressive alliance globally, FEPS remained engaged and proactive in international networking. While the centre of EU policy moved to the right on issues like migration or climate, FEPS’ programs and projects remained evidence-based, pursuing values of sustainability and humanity. When the European Commission presented policies with diminished aspirations (e.g. on the Multiannual Financial Framework), FEPS continued to advocate for ways to boost investment capacity. We expanded our work to investigate the social effects of artificial intelligence and established a new cooperation to develop a progressive approach to EU defence cooperation.

In 2025, FEPS relaunched the very successful Autumn Academy and prepared the transition to an integrated training programme, a crucial tool for educating the next generation of progressive leaders. We also expanded our social media outreach, widening our audience in EU circles and among member states and beyond who want to understand the social democratic agenda in the European context, or even contribute to it. Contribution became a key word to guide our activities, with the aim to fulfil our mission in an inspiring, instructive, and impactful way.

KEY FACTS AND FIGURES 2025

2025 began with the consolidation of the European institutions after the electoral year, with the new organisation of the European Commission, new alliances within the European Parliament, and the new leadership of the Committee of the Regions. FEPS diligently followed these changes, fine-tuning the Framework Activity Programme (FAP) adopted in September 2024. On one hand, it remained of great relevance that the focus continues on the tectonic shifts within the geopolitical context. The persisting brutal Russian war on Ukraine, the establishment of the diverse coalitions in the EU and beyond, as well as the deterioration of the old alliances, especially visible in the transatlantic relations, all pointed to a need for the European Union to reflect and readapt in order not only to cope, but also to continue being the relevant and valued project. On the other hand, the enduring polycrisis has continued to expand its scope, with phenomena such as rising poverty. Discontent with the governing parties, as well as with all traditional parties, fueled support for the nationalistic, hard-right radical parties. For social democrats, this was not an easy electoral year, and with some sister parties falling out of parliament, the question of how to renew has become even more prominent than ever.

FEPS saw itself as a space where informed, critical progressive pan-European debates should be taking place, where innovative research should deliver ideas on how to go beyond defensive narratives and showcase that the centre-left is capable of long-term thinking and where the proverbial gap between citizens and EU politics is bridged.

The main priorities of 2025 were **boosting the power and capacity of the European Union** to act as an integrated Community that is committed to delivering on the promise of peace, sustainable development and a new multilateral global deal; **paving the way to a new European development model** by equipping it with policy instruments to fight inequalities and ensure social progress for all, and **strengthening the Political Union through adequate institutional reforms and means**, so that it can defend and promote democracy, and empower and engage citizens in the new steps of the deliberations about the Future of Europe.

With these as a compass, FEPS embarked on a mission, accelerating its efforts in research, publications, communication and training. It worked closely with other progressive stakeholders. Concretely, this translated into the following objectives across the 10 thematic fields:

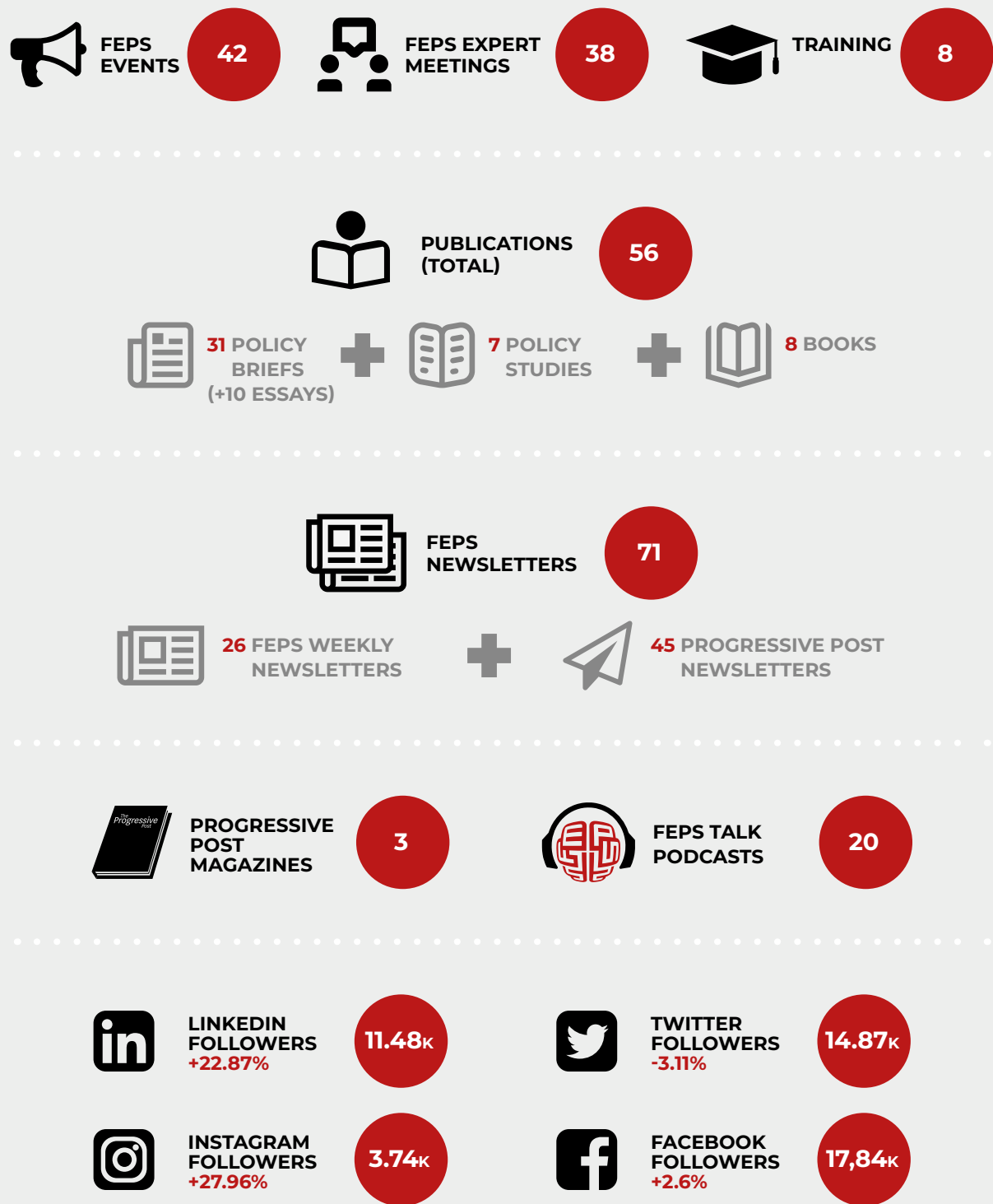
- 1. EUROPE IN THE WORLD** – focusing on the EU's role in striving for peace and development in a new multipolar global order, nurturing transatlantic relations but also stronger ties with the Global South, with a focus on foresight capabilities, European Strategic Autonomy, and the EU's commitment to the reconstruction and gradual integration of Ukraine
- 2. MIGRATION** – informing and sustaining a fair debate on asylum and migration, with a particular focus on monitoring the implementation of the New Pact on Migration and Asylum and fostering adequate integration policies, defining the features of an efficient and humane management of migration and developing fair and balanced relations with the countries of origin and transit; whilst analysing the nexus between demographic changes in Europe and migration dynamics
- 3. SOCIAL EUROPE** – ensuring the relevance and implementation of the European Pillar of Social Rights in the new legislature, expanding social objectives and EU integration in the field of health and wellbeing, deepening the debate on decent work alongside promotion of a new approach to public services and housing policies, while fighting new poverties and anticipating demographic changes.
- 4. ECONOMY AND FINANCE** – designing a resilient and sustainable economic development model, with a goal to design policy proposals towards a job-rich industrial policy, European fiscal capacity and fair taxation to support an innovative, fair and productive economy, and scaling up of economic democracy.
- 5. CLIMATE AND ENVIRONMENT** – addressing the climate emergency and supporting the implementation of the European Green Deal, with a commitment to search for further equitable ways to reach ambitious climate and environmental goals globally, create new clean jobs and mainstream climate and ecological objectives in European policies.
- 6. DIGITAL ECONOMY AND SOCIETY** – assessing the effects of accelerated digital transformation for European societies and economies, exploring how AI impacts workers, how we keep our democracy healthy in times of social media and how Europe can create its digital model for an autonomous, progressive path towards technological development that supports public services.
- 7. GENDER EQUALITY** – strengthening the commitment to the feminist and gender equality agenda, with a

focus on preventing backlash, delivering substantive equality through transformative and gender mainstreamed policies

- 8. POLITICAL EUROPE** – examining the functioning of and potential for the reforms within the institutional architecture of the European Union, with a mission to inspire the transition to a new model of integration that will allow for further deepening and enlargement
- 9. DEFENDING AND DEEPENING DEMOCRACY** – analysing the main threats to democracy (far right politics,

authoritarian tendencies, nationalism) inside but also outside the European Union – in order to find ways to foster participatory and representative democracy, with a specific focus on young people.

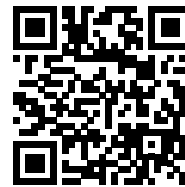
- 10. FUTURE OF SOCIAL DEMOCRACY** – evaluating the positioning of the progressive forces across the levels of governance, with a focus on their programmatic and strategic dilemmas, organisational difficulties and electoral appeal, governing capacities, as well as abilities to remain constructive opposition and to bounce back from the crises.



FEPS AT WORK: RESEARCH AND STUDIES

MAIN ACHIEVEMENTS

EUROPE IN THE WORLD



Ambition

The United States' retreat from multilateral legal norms and its growing use of trade as a coercive instrument underscore the need for the European Union to differentiate its approach and move decisively towards genuine strategic autonomy. FEPS has actively supported the creation of new networks and strategic dialogues with progressive think tanks worldwide to advance robust, value-based, and effective partnerships across Africa and Latin America.

In 2025, FEPS participated in key multilateral events, including the Financing for Development Forum in Seville, Spain; the World Social Forum in Doha; the AI for Good Global Summit in Geneva; and the T20 Summit in

South Africa. Moreover, FEPS has continued to mobilise solidarity with Ukraine, prioritising the social transformation of Ukraine, emphasising that progress must extend beyond threats. This approach aims for a just and sustainable recovery in Ukraine, ensuring that both immediate needs and long-term challenges are met.

Our vision seeks to advance global priorities, including upholding the rule-based multilateral order, advancing the green, just transition, promoting sustainable development, and advancing AI for good, aligned with the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) and the Pact for the Future, while defending human rights and gender justice.



Results

In the midst of fast-changing developments with international effects, FEPS has been actively involved in producing publications, organising public events, and fostering exchanges centred on implementing the Pact for the Future and enhancing networks with like-minded partners across the world, including Africa, Latin America and the US, as well as continuing to work on the social reconstruction of Ukraine.

FEPS has been a leading advocate for financing for development, aimed at ensuring the funding needed to address global challenges, such as inequalities, climate change, and reforming global governance.

At the 4th International Conference on Financing for Development, FEPS played a key role in organising two events: an official UN side event and a parallel event, during which we notably presented insights from the policy brief "Europe's strategic role in global development: A call for ambition and reform". Throughout this process, FEPS has collaborated with several prominent partner organisations, including Friedrich-Ebert-Stiftung, Avanza, Renner Institute, Fondation Jean-Jaurès, and the Olof Palme International Centre, all of which share a commitment to progressive and inclusive global governance.

In 2025, FEPS launched the EU-Africa progressive network, a new initiative to enhance dialogue on key European policies affecting Africa. We organised three online sessions on the green transition and industrialisation, due diligence and labour standards, and navigating democracy in the EU-African partnership. The policy brief, "Beyond Rhetoric: Crafting a Win-Win EU-Africa Partnership," was published in

tandem with an in-person event in Amsterdam that preceded the Afrika Dag.

This year, Afrika Dag 2025, organised by FEPS and the Foundation Max van der Stoep (FMS), focused on the theme "A new Global Order", offering a platform for African voices and sparking conversations among citizens, policymakers, and NGOs about reforming global governance and fostering equitable cooperation between Africa and Europe.

FEPS reaffirmed its solidarity with Ukraine and its continued work on the Social Transformation of Ukraine. In November 2025, FEPS organised the event "Mobilising progressive Baltic solidarity and EU action for Ukraine's accession and social transformation", held in Vilnius, Lithuania. This event brought together key stakeholders to discuss Ukraine's social policy challenges, focusing on housing, healthcare, education, and gender equality, and also explored Ukraine's path to EU membership, emphasising the need for progressive, inclusive policies to ensure that no one is left behind in the recovery process.



HIGHLIGHT 1 // THE 4TH INTERNATIONAL CONFERENCE ON FINANCING FOR DEVELOPMENT (FFD4)

EVENT



FEPS co-hosted two events at the 4th International Conference on Financing for Development (FFD4) on 30 June 2025 in Seville, Spain. The official UN side event, "New strategic partnerships for development - Developing countries and the EU", explored how to ensure that Global Gateway and similar strategies deliver on their full ambition, with a specific focus on perspectives and priorities from developing countries.

On the parallel event "Financing our Future: Crafting a Progressive Vision for the Future of Financing for Development", FEPS, together with its partners, looked at how to ensure that Global Gateway and similar strategies meet the full scope of their ambition, with a specific focus on perspectives and priorities from developing countries. We provided a progressive look at global challenges and proposed concrete strategies to not only contribute to a renewed global financial architecture that is just and inclusive, but also to boost the implementation of the Pact for the Future and the 2030 Sustainable Agenda.



HIGHLIGHT 2 // EU-AFRICA PROGRESSIVE NETWORK

PROJECT



In 2025, FEPS launched the EU-Africa Progressive Network to enhance dialogue on key European policies affecting Africa, addressing shared challenges such as just transition, social protection floors and more comprehensive approaches in crisis-affected contexts. This network's objective is to ensure policy coherence and effectiveness while promoting collaboration to develop shared solutions grounded in evidence and science.

Through this network, European participants gained firsthand insight into African perspectives on the effectiveness of EU policies, with a view to advancing towards more balanced and just EU-Africa relations. It also fostered a collaborative space to discuss and understand the diverse European national approaches toward Africa, as well as bilateral and regional interplays among European and African states. These discussions will also integrate academic expertise to ensure the proposed policies are not only coherent but also evidence-based.

POLICY CONTRIBUTIONS



Europe's strategic role in global development: A call for ambition and reform

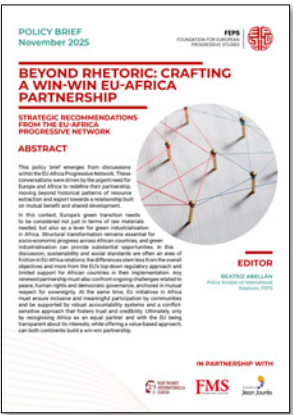
POLICY BRIEF

In a world marked by geopolitical tensions, climate crises and weakening global cooperation, this policy brief argues that the EU must redefine its relationships with developing countries – **moving from its current partnership approach to a strategic alliance**, the terms of which are grounded in mutual interest and defined in common.

The policy brief identifies four urgent imperatives:

1. **Renewing multilateralism** through more inclusive governance;
2. **Rethinking development priorities** and metrics beyond GDP;
3. **Reforming cooperation instruments** to foster joint action, peer learning and national ownership; and
4. **Overhauling the global financial architecture** to generate sustainable fiscal space for developing countries, protecting them from recurring debt crises.

At the heart of this redefinition lies the **Global Gateway**, which should evolve from a flagship investment strategy into a truly global platform for co-created transformation. **The EU's credibility will depend on the level of resources it commits to external action and on its determination to change – beginning with how it listens, decides and collaborates.**



Beyond Rhetoric: Crafting a Win-Win EU-Africa Partnership

POLICY BRIEF

This policy brief emerges from discussions within the EU-Africa Progressive Network. These conversations were driven by the urgent need for Europe and Africa to redefine their partnership, moving beyond historical patterns of resource extraction and export towards a relationship built on mutual benefit and shared development.

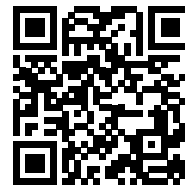
In this context, Europe's green transition needs to be considered not only in terms of the raw materials needed, but also as a lever for green industrialisation in Africa. Structural transformation remains essential for socio-economic progress across African countries, and green industrialisation can provide substantial opportunities. In this discussion, sustainability and social standards are often a source of friction in EU-Africa relations; the differences stem less from the overall objectives than from the EU's top-down regulatory approach and limited support for African countries in their implementation.

Any renewed partnership must also confront ongoing challenges related to peace, human rights and democratic governance, anchored in mutual respect for sovereignty. At the same time, EU initiatives in Africa must ensure inclusive and meaningful participation by communities and be supported by robust accountability systems and a conflict-sensitive approach that fosters trust and credibility. Ultimately, only by recognising Africa as an equal partner and by having the EU be transparent about its interests, while offering a value-based approach, can both continents build a win-win partnership.

FEPS AT WORK: RESEARCH AND STUDIES

MAIN ACHIEVEMENTS

MIGRATION



Ambition

In 2025, migration remained a central and contested issue in EU-Africa relations, shaped both by the aftermath of the adoption of the New Pact on Migration and Asylum in 2024 and its implementation deadline in 2026, and by the European member states' temptation to proceed autonomously towards ever more restrictive migration policies. Rather than resolving underlying tensions, policy debates continued to be dominated by securitisation, conditionality, return-oriented approaches, as well as by the debate on the 'safe third countries' concept, which would lead to the erosion of key principles of the international protection regime through the application of a broad or even flexible definition of the safe third country. Hence, the debate in Europe took place at the expense of balanced partnerships and long-term development objectives in the countries of origin and transit. Against this backdrop, FEPS, in cooperation with its partners, Friedrich-Ebert-Stiftung (FES) and Fondazione Socialismo ETS, sought to reframe the concept of migration governance through a more cooperative, rights-based and forward-looking lens.

FEPS' ambition for 2025 was to promote equitable EU-Africa migration cooperation by challenging prevailing narratives focused on security and control, and instead advocating policies grounded in shared responsibility, human rights and mutual interests. Through the continued work of the Progressive Migration Group (PMG), a network of African and European migration experts established by FEPS and its partners, FEPS convened experts and stakeholders across both continents to advance evidence-based recommendations, foster inclusive dialogue and amplify African perspectives in European policymaking.

This work focused in particular on expanding safe and legal pathways, addressing the imbalances in return and readmission policies and exploring the broader drivers of migration, including labour market needs, regional integration and global governance shifts. By connecting these strands, FEPS aimed to contribute to a more sustainable, people-centred migration approach that moves beyond unilateral measures and towards genuine partnership.



HIGHLIGHT 1 // PROGRESSIVE MIGRATION GROUP ROME

EVENT

In the year marking the 25th anniversary of EU-Africa relations and ahead of the 7th EU-AU Summit, the PMG examined the EU's emphasis on irregular migration, externalisation policies and return cooperation, highlighting how these approaches can undermine trust, regional integration and shared development goals.

The Rome consultation brought together African and European experts, civil society and policymakers to explore alternatives, including fair labour migration

agreements and expanded legal pathways that safeguard migrants' rights, dignity and security while addressing mutual interests. The event was also used to further disseminate the latest policy briefs on AU-EU migration governance by the group. By fostering open dialogue and producing actionable recommendations, the PMG aimed to promote more balanced, people-centred and cooperative migration policies, advancing equitable partnerships between Europe and Africa, and moving beyond crisis-driven narratives towards long-term, sustainable solutions.



HIGHLIGHT 2 // PROGRESSIVE MIGRATION GROUP NAIROBI

EVENT

Migration continues to sit at the core of relations between the European Union and the African countries, in a context marked by geopolitical shifts and increasing strain on multilateral cooperation. The obsessive emphasis on returns and conditionality risks narrowing the policy space, privileging short-term targets over long-term partnership and shared development goals.

In response, the Progressive Migration Group deepened its work on rethinking EU–Africa migration governance. It explored how current approaches affect regional integration, examined asymmetries in return and readmission policies, and reflected on how global transformations are reshaping mobility and responsibility.

The 2025 meeting in Nairobi brought together experts and civil society from both continents to sharpen these insights and translate them into action. The group also engaged with Kenyan civil society to deepen the understanding of the local context. By fostering open dialogue and strategic reflection, the PMG aimed to advance practical, forward-looking proposals that contribute to a more cooperative and human-centred migration partnership that sees migrants as people, not numbers.



HIGHLIGHT 3 // PROGRESSIVE MIGRATION GROUP PANEL AT THE AFRICA DAY IN AMSTERDAM

EVENT

On the occasion of the annual Africa Day event in Amsterdam, FEPS organised a PMG panel entitled "The erosion of migration governance". Despite its formal commitment to multilateralism and to the Global Compact for Migration (which, however, is not binding and has not been ratified by all EU member states), the European Union and its member states consistently pursue cooperation on migration at the minilateral or bilateral level, often through non-legally binding agreements with the countries of origin and transit. The informality and flexibility of these agreements, their temporary nature, the conditionality they entail, and the increasingly securitarian approach – mostly aimed at limiting mobility – not only

undermine the certainty of long-term commitments, but overlook the interests of the countries of origin, which are consistently in a position of inferiority. Finally, such cooperation operates outside the UN framework. This further contributes to the weakening of multilateralism and multilateral institutions, making migration governance increasingly fragile. The speakers of the event – Anna Terron, Tineke Strik, Amanda Bisong and Paddy Siyanga Knudsen – discussed what the EU and the African regional organisation and states could do to prevent the decline of multilateral cooperation in the field of migration, as well as the role of the UN in reasserting the value of multilateralism in migration.



POLICY CONTRIBUTIONS

EU-AU migration governance

POLICY BRIEF SERIES

This policy brief series, authored by Lukmon Akintola and Steffen Angenendt, based on discussions in the framework of the Progressive Migration Group meetings, addressed three main questions: reframing AU-EU migration governance, rethinking return and conditionality policies in the context of AU-EU migration relations, and revitalising multilateralism.

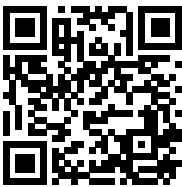
The three policy briefs call for rights-based and development-oriented governance, regularisation and labour mobility governance and the revitalising multilateralism through renewed commitments, inclusive governance, and sustainable financing.



FEPS AT WORK: RESEARCH AND STUDIES

MAIN ACHIEVEMENTS

SOCIAL EUROPE



Ambition

With 2025 being the first full year in the new legislative term, FEPS' work on Social Europe concentrated on ensuring the relevance and the implementation of the European Pillar of Social Rights, expanding social objectives and EU integration in the field of health and wellbeing, and deepening the debate on decent work alongside the promotion of a new approach to public services and housing policies.

As Europe continued to navigate a complicated socio-economic environment, the need for a robust and inclusive Social Europe remained critical. FEPS, therefore, oriented its work towards delivering empirical evidence and progressive ideas.

With housing now top of the agenda, FEPS wanted to provide studies and analysis of the reality at the national level, including in Greece, Finland and North Macedonia, to shape recommendations in view of the EU Affordable Housing Plan.

FEPS also wanted to develop a comprehensive vision for a mental health strategy in Europe, with

an intersectional approach through the issues of addiction, digitalisation and mental health at the workplace.

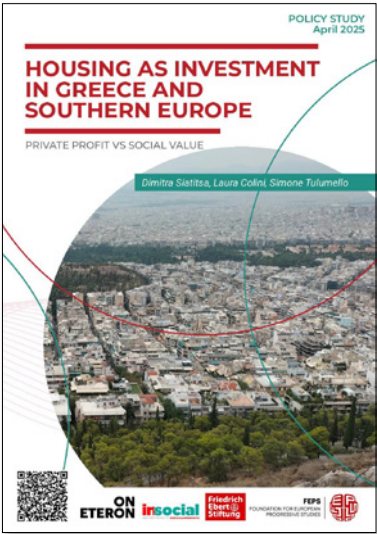
Beyond those specific issues, FEPS ensured a continuous analysis of the social policy debate, notably regarding the proposal for the next EU Multiannual Financial Framework, but also putting forward a new progressive vision for solidarity between generations and creating space for debates on wellbeing at large.



Results

FEPS'work on Social Europe showed a strong track record in 2025.

In the field of housing, FEPS published both a policy study on "Housing as investment in Greece and Southern Europe" and a policy brief on "Tackling the housing crisis in Europe". The study, in collaboration with Eteron, the Friedrich-Ebert-Stiftung (FES) and InSocial, focused on the housing crisis in Greece, drawing on comparative insights from Southern Europe, particularly regarding the consequences of the financial crisis, and highlighting policy recommendations for building a more inclusive and resilient housing system. The brief, in collaboration with Eteron, Kalevi Sorsa Foundation, and the Progres Institute, argued that the housing crisis must be addressed at three critical fronts: expanding the social and affordable housing stock, addressing energy poverty, and regulating short-term rentals. Both publications triggered high-level political engagement, notably with the Mayor of Athens, Haris Doukas, and with key Members of the European Parliament, including the Chair of the Housing Committee, Irene Tignali, as well as Andreas Schieder and Alicia Homs Ginel.



In the field of mental health, FEPS organised a diverse group of experts to publish a policy brief on "Healthy minds, stronger Europe", in collaboration with the Progresivni Analyticke Centrum (PAC) and the Institute for Rational Addiction Policies (IRAP). This policy brief proposed a progressive policy framework to support a comprehensive EU strategy on mental health. With an intersectional approach, the policy recommendations focused on three priority dimensions – addictions, psychosocial risks and mental health at work, and digital technologies – as they reflect the most pressing and cross-cutting challenges, with significant social

and economic impacts. On World Mental Health Day, FEPS hosted a political event to debate those recommendations, together with MEP Marc Angel and representatives from civil society.

One of the key policy visions was in the field of intergenerational solidarity. FEPS published its policy brief on the matter and, in conjunction with it, developed a large coalition of policy experts and civil society representatives. This publication had a significant impact, notably at the Congress of the Party of European Socialists in Amsterdam, but also connecting with other pieces of work on demographic change and healthcare. Most importantly, it directly influenced the work of Commissioner Micallef, who was in charge of developing an EU strategy on intergenerational fairness, published in early 2026.

"Social Europe" was also the underlying theme of FEPS' flagship event, "Call to Europe", which took place during the Danish Presidency of the Council of the European Union. In November in Copenhagen, we organised high-level expert meetings and a conference, under the motto "Wellbeing for all", bringing key political figures, including the Prime Minister of Denmark, Mette Frederiksen, former Danish Prime Minister Poul Nyrup Rasmussen, but also Members of the European Parliament Christophe Clergeau, Christel Schaldemose and Marianne Vind, as well national members of parliament Ida Auken and Henrik Møller. The event also featured representatives from civil society, trade unions and youth organisations. By addressing issues such as human security, work and the green and digital transformations, the debates paved the way for the social dimension to be put at the heart of the debate on European sovereignty and autonomy.



HIGHLIGHT 1 // CALL TO EUROPE - DENMARK

FLAGSHIP EVENT



In the context of the Danish Presidency of the Council of the EU, FEPS, together with *FES Nordic Countries*, and supported by the *S&D Group in the European Parliament* and *Socialdemokratiet*, organised the next edition of its flagship conference, *Call to Europe*, in Copenhagen on 28-29 November.

Under the motto "Well-being for all", expert meetings on Europe's defence and digital future were followed by the full-day public conference. In a series of panel discussions and keynote speeches, we stressed that a Europe that delivers for its people needs to promote well-being for young workers, advance human security in a changing geopolitical context, and ensure a green transition for all.

FEPS engaged with leading figures of the Danish progressives, such as Prime Minister Mette Frederiksen and former Prime Minister Poul Nyrup Rasmussen, as well as members of the European Parliament, national policymakers, trade union representatives, civil society, and youth.

POLICY CONTRIBUTIONS



Tackling the housing crisis in Europe – Progressive ideas for affordable and sustainable housing policies

POLICY BRIEF

In 2025, FEPS continued its leading role in pushing for housing policy at the European level with the policy brief "Tackling the housing crisis in Europe".

In collaboration with *Eteron*, the *Kalevi Sorsa Foundation*, and the *Progres Institut*, we argued that the housing crisis must be addressed at three critical fronts. First, Europe needs to expand its social and affordable housing stock. Second, energy poverty, as part of the green transition, risks exacerbating existing inequalities and should be taken seriously in regulating the housing market. Third, Europe must regulate short-term rentals and the touristification of housing.

The brief was accompanied by a leaflet summarising priorities for a progressive response and country factsheets for Greece, Finland, and North Macedonia. Hosted by Member of the S&D Group and Special Committee on the Housing Crisis Andreas Schieder, the research was presented in the European Parliament on 9 December 2025.



Intergenerational Solidarity in Europe – A progressive vision

POLICY BRIEF

Promoting welfare requires just and efficient taxation. Unfortunately, this goal has been undermined by tax avoidance and evasion tied to international investment.

To address this problem, FEPS, in collaboration with the Kalevi Sorsa Foundation, conducted a study on capital income taxation that analyses the current state of capital income tax avoidance across the European Union. Co-authored by Lauri Finér and Niko Pankka, this paper examines earlier research and distinctive case studies to contrast tax regimes across 15 selected European countries and presents policy proposals to address current problems.

The study concludes with five key recommendations to tackle tax base erosion, calling on the EU to adopt a directive establishing a minimum capital income tax rate and to broaden the scope of the Anti-Tax Avoidance Directive to include capital income.

HIGHLIGHT 2 // HEALTHY MINDS, STRONGER EUROPE

EVENT

Mental health is becoming a major public policy issue in Europe, with rising anxiety, depression, behavioural addictions, and suicide risk—especially among young people. In this context, FEPS and cooperation with its partners, *Progressive Analytical Centre* and the *Institute for Rational Addiction Policy*, established a progressive expert group and published policy recommendations in the policy brief "Healthy minds, stronger Europe".

By advancing a progressive, evidence-based approach focused on the links between digitalisation, addiction, and workplace conditions, it called for EU-coordinated action across health, social, and employment policies.

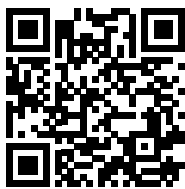
The recommendations were presented on World Mental Health, during a public event at FEPS, bringing together policymakers, civil society actors, experts and practitioners. The activity's impact lies especially in strengthening cross-sector dialogue, promoting gender-responsive policymaking, and delivering concrete policy proposals to inform EU-level mental health strategies, building also on the S&D Position Paper on "Health as a Priority Across All Policies".



FEPS AT WORK: RESEARCH AND STUDIES

MAIN ACHIEVEMENTS

ECONOMY AND FINANCE



Ambition

The major themes for European economic policy in 2025 have been the disruption of trade relations with the US, the competitiveness agenda and the manifold discussions around the EU budget (MFF). The year began with sweeping changes in US policies in the wake of the Trump election, with trade policy being the most affected. The refusal of the Trump administration to uphold the existing rules-based trade paradigm and its imposition of sweeping tariffs on all countries, including the EU, has been a major shock to the global economic order. The EU found itself ill-prepared to deal with this challenge. The trade deal with the US, achieved in July 2025, exposed how weaknesses in other domains, notably low defence capability, make the EU vulnerable to economic coercion.

All this was happening against the backdrop of two ongoing European processes: the elaboration of the

new multiannual budget and the effort to improve the EU's competitiveness. The budget discussion came into the fore after the Commission published its initial proposal in July 2025. This proposal contained two major innovations: a performance-based approach and a new budget structure, with major funds allocated to national envelopes. These innovations drew substantial criticism, particularly from the centre-left, due to their potential negative effects on regional funding.

The Commission's competitiveness efforts produced multiple "Omnibuses" on simplification, with potentially harmful consequences for sustainability and a just transition. The progressive camp has been pushing back against this simplistic and dangerous approach, but the narrative remains contested and will stay as one of our key priorities.



Results

The Economy portfolio actively engaged in the major themes discussed above.

On the MFF, we launched the **EU Investment Capacity Group**, which involved multiple brainstorming sessions for the progressive camp and produced several policy briefs on diverse aspects of the EU long-term budget.

We carried out several activities on trade and the transatlantic relationship. One planned activity was a meeting of the **Progressive Economics Network (PEN) in Washington DC** in April 2025. Additionally, after the EU-US trade deal in July, we organised an ad hoc, closed-door online discussion among progressive stakeholders in early September to discuss the implications of the deal. Also, we commissioned an additional policy brief on **"Moving beyond neoliberalism in EU trade policy"** to propose a new direction for the EU trade policy.

Competitiveness was the main theme of our big **Policy Conference** in September 2025. Our goal was to challenge the prevailing neoliberal narratives about

competitiveness and to propose a progressive alternative, grounded in quality jobs and sustainability. Another initiative is our ongoing project on **"Place-based industrial policy"**, which outlines four case studies of how the ways of design and implementation of industrial policy affect its outcomes at the local level.

Continuing from 2024, we finalised our paper, **"The profit-price spiral in food and energy: Analysis and toolbox to fight inflation"**, and presented it at several events. Our message is: even though inflation subsided in 2025, the EU remains highly vulnerable to similar supply-side shocks to those in 2022 and needs to enhance its inflation preparedness.

And to conclude, another notable stream of our activities in 2025 was on taxation. We finalised and presented the policy study on **"Tackling tax avoidance: Reforming capital income taxation in the EU"**. While not directly connected to the above-mentioned activities, the discussion on fiscal revenues will be extremely relevant to discussions on the MFF.



HIGHLIGHT 1 // EU INVESTMENT CAPACITY GROUP

PROJECT

In 2025, FEPS launched an EU Investment Capacity Group, in cooperation with FES, to stimulate the elaboration of policy proposals within the progressive family for the next European budget (MFF). The group is comprised of progressive policy makers, advisors and analysts. We organised 5 expert meetings of the group in 2025 on the topics of:

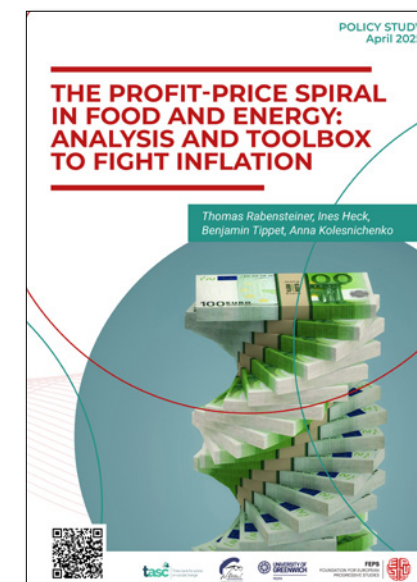
- (1) European Parliament's INI report on MFF,
- (2) EU cohesion policy,
- (3) Lessons from RRF for MFF,
- (4) EU investment capacity in the MFF proposal, and
- (5) New own resources in the MFF proposal.



For some of the topics, we commissioned policy briefs to serve as a basis for discussion, including: **"Lessons learned from the Recovery and Resilience Facility for a future European fiscal capacity"** by Atanas Pekanov, and **"Public investment in the proposed 2028-2034 EU budget"** by Cedric Koch and Dominika Biegon. The discussions in the meetings were proven extremely thought-provoking, especially with the involvement of European Commission officials, as we were able to bridge the gap between institutions, policymakers, and other experts and stakeholders.



POLICY CONTRIBUTIONS

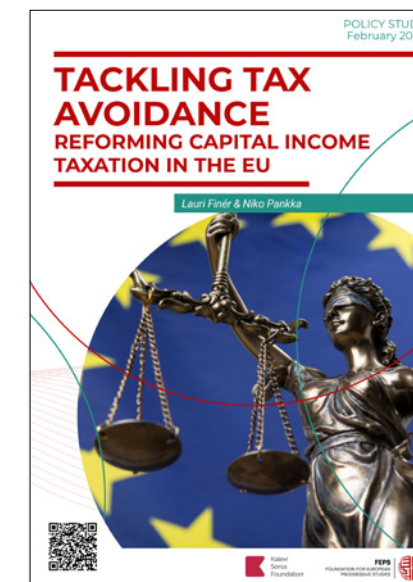


The profit-price spiral in food and energy: Analysis and toolbox to fight inflation

POLICY BRIEF

This study, authored by Thomas Rabensteiner, Ines Heck, Benjamin Tippet and Anna Kolesnichenko, focuses on two systemically significant sectors – food and energy – to show how companies in their supply chains reaped abnormally high profits during the 2021-23 inflation episode. Part of these profits is attributable to commodity market speculation. Another reason is monopolisation: food and energy markets are highly concentrated, with a handful of international companies controlling the trading and transportation of commodities.

In this paper, the authors argue that the EU needs to create a proper inflation governance framework that involves not just ECB monetary policy but a complex of measures for inflation preparedness, prevention, reduction and mitigation. Some of the measures discussed in more detail are price controls, income support, excess profit taxes, limiting speculation, increasing price transparency, building strategic reserves, and reducing fossil fuel dependency.



Tackling tax avoidance: Reforming capital income taxation in the EU

POLICY BRIEF

FEPS led the work in defining a progressive vision for solidarity between generations.

Building on existing research and consultation with academics, civil society and key political stakeholders, this policy brief constituted a progressive contribution. Early 2026, the European Commission presented its own strategy on intergenerational fairness and the influence of FEPS work was clear.

In the field of welfare policies, this policy brief addressed issues related to housing, employment and the future of work, care and healthcare, ensuring gender mainstreaming and intersectional approaches.

When it comes to democracy and participation, this policy brief addressed issues related to civic and citizenship education, lowering the voting age, cross-generational dialogue, youth participation, citizen's assemblies and digital democracy.

Finally, the policy brief explored how to mainstream intergenerational solidarity across the EU policymaking process, via youth tests, generational check and wellbeing indicators. It also links with the negotiations for the post-2027 EU Multiannual Financial Framework.

HIGHLIGHT 2 // PROGRESSIVE ECONOMICS NETWORK

PROJECT



FEPS further organised the work of the Progressive Economics Network (PEN), which was originally launched in 2022 in cooperation with FES and DPZ. PEN aims to bring together top economic advisors and policy analysts from across Europe and the US. In 2025, PEN focused on trade and the evolving nature of transatlantic relationships.

In April 2025, we organised a gathering of top European and US experts and politicians in Washington DC, where we discussed the emerging global trade regime that became evident in the first months of the Trump presidency, balancing priorities in the transatlantic relationship and the geoeconomics of sustainability.

Furthermore, on 13 November, we held a public seminar to discuss the need to change the European approach to trade. To that end, we commissioned a policy brief, "Moving beyond neoliberalism in EU trade policy", by Werner Raza and Bernhard Tröster.

FEPS AT WORK: RESEARCH AND STUDIES

MAIN ACHIEVEMENTS

ENVIRONMENT AND CLIMATE



Ambition

The climate and biodiversity crises are accelerating, with a wide range of impacts affecting European countries. Floods, forest fires, droughts and heatwaves are becoming more intense and more frequent, impacting the livelihoods and wellbeing of European populations and reminding us of the urgency of climate action. Following 2024, when, for the first time and earlier than anticipated, the global average temperature exceeded 1.5°C above pre-industrial levels, 2025 was a year of challenges for the EU climate agenda.

The various disruptions caused by the second Trump presidency in the US were detrimental to climate action and international solidarity. Within the EU, some forces in the new European Commission and Parliament promoted deregulation and environmental rollbacks in a series of policy files, protecting the interests of a few loud industrial voices rather than the wellbeing, safety and health of European workers and citizens.

The European Union must continue to forge its own path towards a just transition and to effectively progress towards its climate and energy targets. The EU needs an economic transition that provides quality jobs while decreasing pollution and unsustainable

resource use. With the rise of the extreme right across Europe, it has become even more important to protect current policy achievements and to further advance the implementation of the EU Green Deal. To do so, engaging with stakeholders from local, regional and European levels and listening to the different needs of different territories was essential. Addressing interconnected transition/competitiveness issues, as well as the necessary changes in industry, supply chains and trade policies, is also a key challenge for the new EU policy cycle.

On the international stage, after the disappointing results of COP29 in Baku and the worrying shift in climate and international cooperation under the Trump presidency, hopes were directed towards the COP30 led by Brazil, which marked the ten-year anniversary of the Paris Agreement. While imperfect and frustrating, the COP meetings are essential to maintain a multilateral dialogue and engagement on climate, more critical than ever following the (re-)withdrawal of the US from the Paris Agreement. Progressive forces around the world need to come together and advocate for their vision of a just and climate-resilient future, in line with international commitments and the best available science.



Results

In 2025, the FEPS Climate Portfolio aimed to finalise key research projects and disseminate their findings, to reiterate successful stakeholder engagement and to develop new projects in line with the main European priorities and global events of the coming year. This included discussing the next MFF and its role in just territorial transitions, assessing the implementation of the European Green Deal, analysis of the new Clean Industrial Deal, promoting just transition in the EU trade policies and cooperating with international partners on international climate diplomacy. The projects of the climate portfolio were made possible by building on fruitful past collaborations with other leading organisations, such as the FES Just Climate Competence Centre, Solidar and CEE Bankwatch.

One of our main topics of interest throughout the year was the negotiations around the MFF and its impact on the future of the European Green Deal. Publications such as "Shaping a European budget fit for climate action and a just transition" by Miłostawa Stępień and Anelia Stefanova and "Strengthening and mainstreaming Just Transition goals in the EU Budget" (see policy contribution 2), as well as their

accompanying events, highlighted the importance to integrate climate and social dimensions.

We also focused on reframing the political debate towards a socially-just understanding of industrial policy, away from deregulation and green backlash under the pretence of competitiveness. This was carried out through events such as our expert meeting on "Unpacking the Clean Industrial Deal" (see highlight 1) and the larger FEPS Policy Conference in 24th September, this year formulated under the title "A clean, just, and competitive European Industry".

Finally, addressing the global dimension of the climate challenges, we worked on developing international partnerships with a special focus on Latin America. This resulted in collaborations on the ground with partners in Brazil and Colombia (See highlight 2), to contribute to discussions around the goals and outcomes of COP30 and the role of EU partnerships in promoting a just transition. The main publication reflecting our global approach was "Governing the global just transition from fossil fuels to clean energy" by Celine Charveriat and Pierre Leturcq.



HIGHLIGHT 1 // UNPACKING THE CLEAN INDUSTRIAL DEAL

EVENT

This expert workshop, held in June 2025, gathered a knowledge community of experts, civil society representatives and policymakers working on EU industrial policy to unpack the policies proposed in the **Clean Industrial Deal (CID)** and discuss how to ensure an efficient and just industrial decarbonisation process. With a keynote speech by MEP Nicolas Gonzalez Casares, the event allowed for a better understanding of the potential benefits and risks associated with the key measures of the CID. The participants actively contributed to mapping policy and research priorities for 2025 and beyond.

The workshop's outcome emphasised that whilst the CID shows promise, its success will depend on how it is implemented. Indeed, the Simplification Omnibus has the potential to be detrimental to a coherent and effective industrial decarbonisation strategy, while the current old-fashioned vision of competitiveness is unfit to tackle the challenges of the 21st century. The discussion also highlighted how the principle of **technological neutrality** is used in ways that weaken efforts to decarbonise and to set industrial priorities, a topic that FEPS will continue to analyse in future studies.



POLICY CONTRIBUTIONS



Expected labour market effects of the Green Deal Industrial Plan (2)



Strengthening and mainstreaming Just Transition goals in the EU Budget

HIGHLIGHT 2 // EU-LATIN AMERICA DIALOGUES ON JUST TRANSITION

EVENTS

As part of our work developing international partnerships for a global just transition, FEPS organised events alongside the pre-COP30 in Brasilia (15th November) and the EU-CELAC Summit in Santa Marta (8 November), strengthening our network across the Latin American and Caribbean region.

Under the title "EU and Brazilian perspectives on a Just Transition match-making platform for COP30", FEPS hosted a public roundtable with the support of Plataforma CIPO to present our PB on "Governing the global just transition from fossil fuels to clean energy" to Brazilian and international climate experts engaged in the COP30 negotiations.

In parallel to the EU-CELAC Civil Society Summit in Santa Marta (Colombia), FEPS, together with partners FES and Solidar, organised a Dialogue on Just Transition and Trade, bringing together civil society organisations, trade unions, Indigenous and feminist groups, and policymakers from both regions. The event was supported by local partners represented by Oficina Internacional de Derechos Humanos – Acción Colombia (OIDHACO) and a diverse group of Latin American CSOs.



POLICY STUDY

Continuing our work with the SEER model started in 2024, this follow-up study by the same team (Milan Petit, Mikhail Sirenko, Erik Pruyt and Michael Obersteiner) developed an EU-wide analysis on the potential of labour policies for Just Transition regions, contrasting policy scenarios at European, national and regional levels.

The analysis revealed distinct patterns in how regions may respond to industrial policies, shaped by current manufacturing employment trends, vacancy rates, and workforce adaptation capacity. These findings suggest that, while the Green Deal Industrial Plan could positively influence manufacturing employment, its effectiveness largely depends on complementary labour market policies and regional contexts. In terms of impact, this paper identifies critical policy considerations for optimising outcomes across Europe's diverse regional economies by exploring various policy combinations, from enhancing regional labour mobility to supporting re- and up-skilling, revealing both opportunities and limitations in addressing unemployment and vacancy challenges. The results underline the importance of coordinated action at both regional and EU-wide levels.

POLICY BRIEF

In a year framed by debates around the MFF, FEPS highlighted the need to ensure that climate action, fairness, inclusivity and social protection are included in the next EU budget. This policy brief by Amandine Crespy and Tiago Moreira Ramalho analysed how the current MFF addresses eco-social risks through instruments such as the Just Transition Fund, the Recovery and Resilience Facility and the 'galaxy' of ETS-derived funds, and further argued that, to future-proof the EU's just transition agenda, five policy goals should be central in the next MFF

- (1) ensuring inclusive and participatory governance
- (2) strengthening territorial resilience
- (3) developing an eco-social security system
- (4) preparing workers and communities for profound transformations
- (5) investing in knowledge and governance capacity.

The PB proposes different strategies to achieve these goals: maintaining a dedicated fund for just transition, mainstreaming different just transition principles across EU funds and enhancing local knowledge and capacities.

FEPS AT WORK: RESEARCH AND STUDIES

MAIN ACHIEVEMENTS

DIGITAL ECONOMY AND SOCIETY



Ambition

Digital remained one of the most important topics on the European agenda across 2025. Facing both internal and external pressure, the European Commission unveiled its 'Digital Omnibus' proposal, intended to hollow out key provisions of European digital laws like the GDPR and the AI Act under the guise of 'technical simplification'. In parallel, the EU was pushed to reckon with its critical overreliance on American technology providers, Chinese critical raw materials, as well as the multiplicity of impacts of digital platforms that permeate every aspect of our society. Platforms are built on

extractive business models that put the interest of capital above all else, while externalising negative consequences to European societies.

2025 was a year in which progressives doubled down on ensuring that technology serves people and not a small global elite, that AI is deployed with and not against workers, and that our digital public sphere is governed by the common interest and democratic values, not profit maximisation and biased recommender systems that boost inflammatory and polarising content.



Results

In 2025, the second iteration of the highly successful FEPS-Nordic Digital Programme was launched, bringing together once again a diverse group of political foundations and trade unions from Denmark, Norway, Sweden and Finland. In comparison to the previous Programme, the topical focus was significantly expanded and organised in three main workstreams:

- Workstream I: AI in the public sector, examining the impact of semi- and fully automated decision-making systems on civil servants
- Workstream II: Trade union capacity building, with a focus on algorithmic management and data rights at the workplace
- Workstream III: AI and productivity, assessing whether the use of AI has resulted in measurable increases in productivity and/or translated into better working conditions

In addition to the Digital Programme, FEPS also published two policy briefs, on the European Democracy Shield (EUDS) and on digital sovereignty.



HIGHLIGHT 1 // UNDERSTANDING THE POWER OF AI OVER DECISIONS (DIGITAL PROGRAMME 2025-2026 LAUNCH CONFERENCE)

EVENT

On 5 November, together with the Workers' Group of the EESC, FEPS organised the kick-off conference for the 2025-2026 FEPS-Nordic Digital Programme, titled 'Understanding the power of AI over decisions'. The conference brought together the Nordic partners of the Programme, as well as Members of the EESC Workers' Group, representatives from the European Commission (including the Deputy Director-General of DG EMPL) and the European Parliament (including EMPL Committee Coordinator and S&D MEP Estelle Ceulemans), trade unionists, policy experts, advisors and many more.

The full-day programme launched FEPS' book 'Algorithmic Rule', featured various panels touching on all aspects of AI and workers' rights, and was further enriched by the opening of the art exhibition 'My boss, the algorithm', co-curated by FEPS and the EESC Workers' Group. The outcomes of the conference were distilled into a visual 'live drawing' by the same artists who created the exhibition artwork.



POLICY CONTRIBUTIONS



Algorithmic Rule – AI and the future of democracy in Sweden and beyond

BOOK

The future is here, and it is not simply digital; it is algorithmic. Algorithms now shape not only what we see and hear through the media, but decisions about health, employment and even children's education are also increasingly outsourced to automated systems. This book explores the algorithmic present, and what can sometimes be described as **algocracy – rule by algorithms**. To navigate this new reality, we must ask not only technological but also democratic questions.

This book looks ahead to a progressive algorithmic future. Transparency is essential, but it is not enough; the deeper challenge is to **ensure that citizens and workers themselves influence the algorithms that govern them**.



Demonetisation of anti-democratic and extreme content

POLICY BRIEF

The proposed European Democracy Shield (EUDS) aims to fortify the EU's democratic systems against disinformation, foreign interference, and evolving digital threats. While building on the existing regulatory backbone, **the Shield's effectiveness will depend on actionable solutions that address the business models fuelling disinformation.**

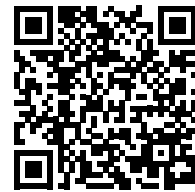
This policy brief, in partnership with CEE Digital Democracy Watch, recommends making **the demonetisation of disinformation a priority** to ensure the success of the EUDS, guaranteeing that online platforms and disinformation creators cannot profit from or facilitate the spread of false content. This includes enforcing transparency in ad revenue sharing and requiring disclosure of political ties through established ad repositories.

Furthermore, stable funding for civil society and independent journalism must be integrated into EU budget priorities. By focusing on these targeted measures, the Shield can move beyond patchwork regulation and provide a future-proof framework for defending democracy in the digital age.

FEPS AT WORK: RESEARCH AND STUDIES

MAIN ACHIEVEMENTS

GENDER EQUALITY



Ambition

Throughout 2025, FEPS continued to champion gender equality and feminist policy across the EU and within the EU's external actions, building on its long-term commitment to inclusive, transformative approaches in governance, foreign policy, and social development. Central to this effort was the **Feminist Foreign Policy Progressive Voices Collective (FFPPVC)**, launched in 2022 in collaboration with FES EU Brussels and an active network of partners. The Collective brings together feminist experts, policymakers, and civil society actors to exchange insights, develop strategies, and advance actionable recommendations for feminist foreign policy.

Gender-responsive budgeting is crucial in foreign affairs, but also for internal policies. At the 11th Barbara Prammer Symposium, FEPS, in collaboration with the Karl-Renner-Institut, actively promoted **gender-responsive budgeting** and fiscal policy as key instruments to reduce inequalities. Discussions showcased how public funds - from transport to social projects - can advance equality when allocated with a gender lens. Keynotes, such as Diane Elson's presentation on "Budgeting for Equality," underscored that gender budgeting should be understood as an investment in societal well-being rather than a cost, linking macroeconomic policy to concrete gender outcomes.



Successful gender budgeting requires advocates on all sides; hence, FEPS also focused on strengthening **women's political participation** and democratic resilience. Political participation being a long-standing topic to address, FEPS also further worked on emerging challenges, including exploring the intersection of **gender equality and digital transformation**, notably through a conference on AI and the workplace. Key sessions examined how AI risks perpetuating gender biases while offering opportunities for a fairer digital ecosystem. Stakeholders discussed proactive measures, including ethical governance, transparency, and

inclusive policy frameworks, to ensure AI strengthens rather than undermines equality.

Finally, FEPS linked gender equality to broader geopolitical and democratic concerns, including EU enlargement and anti-right populism. Expert meetings, such as those in North Macedonia and Brussels, explored how anti-gender narratives intersect with democratic backsliding, highlighting the need to embed equality in the EU's post-2025 Gender Equality Strategy, rule-of-law frameworks, and accession processes.



HIGHLIGHT 1 // FEMINIST FOREIGN POLICY PROGRESSIVE VOICES COLLECTIVE (FFPPVC)

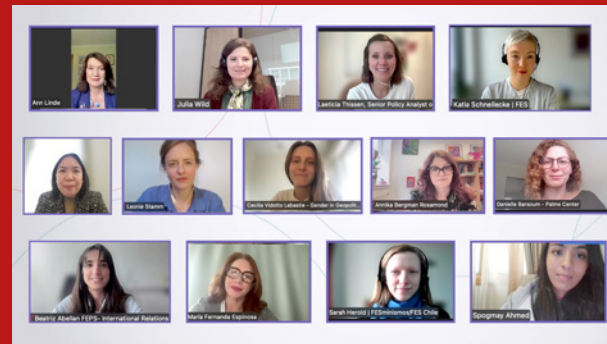
PROJECT

The Feminist Foreign Policy Progressive Voices Collective (FFPPVC), launched in 2023 by FEPS in collaboration with FES EU Brussels and a global network of partners, reflects on a dynamic 2025. The Collective hosted a UN CSW69 Parallel Event in New York on redrawing the lines of foreign policy through feminism, and convened four online discussions on current affairs, including financing feminist initiatives. A key insight emerged: less than 1% of feminist organisations access global funding, highlighting the need for concrete, politically informed strategies to secure resources.

In September, the FFPPVC disseminated the latest policy brief in its series on how feminist foreign policy serves strategic interests and goes beyond values to align with EU strategic interests at the Ministerial FFP Conference in Paris. The Collective also grappled with growing far-right opposition and shifting budget priorities, emphasising that feminist

principles must translate into tangible allocation decisions for peace, justice, and equality.

Looking ahead, the FFPPVC will strengthen task force collaborations, build partnerships, and prepare for the next Ministerial FFP conference in Spain, advancing feminist policies with measurable impact across the Global North and South.



HIGHLIGHT 2 // TOWARDS GENDER-INCLUSIVE DIGITAL POLICY

EVENTS

FEPS, in cooperation with FES Future of Work, organised the conference "Towards gender-inclusive digital policy" exploring how artificial intelligence (AI) intersects with gender equality in European workplaces, highlighting both challenges and opportunities for a fair digital transition. The event brought together policymakers, civil society, and industry experts to discuss how AI can either reinforce biases or promote inclusion, accountability and social justice.

Ivana Bartoletti, Vice President and Global Data Privacy and AI Governance Officer at Wipro, emphasised the need for ethical AI standards, diverse representation in technology, and gender-responsive digital policies. A follow-up political panel examined how EU and national institutions can integrate women's rights into digital governance, strengthen AI literacy, and address occupational inequalities.

The workshop "Between the AI cracks" highlighted automation, bias, and regulatory gaps, exploring intersectional approaches to ensure AI fosters fairness and transparency. By combining multi-stakeholder dialogue with actionable recommendations, the conference positioned the EU

as a leader in shaping an inclusive digital ecosystem, advancing gender equality in the AI-driven future. In 2026, FEPS will continue its work on the intersection of digital and gender equality.



POLICY CONTRIBUTIONS



Beyond values – How feminist foreign policy serves strategic interests

POLICY BRIEF

The latest policy brief by the FFPPVC highlights how FFP goes beyond normative commitments, such as promoting gender equality, peace and inclusive governance, to serve strategic state interests. Leonie Stamm, Research Analyst at the German Council on Foreign Relations, identifies four key rationales: efficiency, leadership, reputation, and alliances. By leveraging these, FFP can strengthen policymaking, enhance international cooperation, and elevate a state's global standing.

The brief underscores that FFP delivers practical benefits, including measurable results, improved diplomatic influence, and the creation of networks among like-minded states and civil society. It calls for pairing feminist principles with strategic implementation through evidence-based policymaking, institutional reform, and strong partnerships. Cross-party cooperation, regional coordination, and civil society engagement are essential to transform principles into actionable policy without compromising core feminist values.

Published ahead of the 4th Ministerial Conference on FFP in Paris, the brief contributes to advancing feminist foreign policy debates and supporting the work of the Feminist Foreign Policy Progressive Voices Collective (FFPPVC), co-chaired by Ann Linde and Machris Cabrerós. It completes the policy brief series of the FFPPVC.

FEPS AT WORK: RESEARCH AND STUDIES

MAIN ACHIEVEMENTS

POLITICAL EUROPE



Ambition

The priorities for the thematic field Political Europe for 2025 were guided by the conviction that the European Union needs internal reform. There is a clear necessity that results from the fact that the current institutional architecture, decision-making processes and capacities to act are no longer apt for Europe, which wants to be a power in the 21st century. The evidence that many of the adaptations are overdue has been clearly exposed by the poly-crisis, whereby in many aspects, the EU has had neither competence nor the means to deliver, while being

expected to do so by both the Member States and the citizens. But even more so, looking at the legislative period 2024 – 2029, it is clear that if it is to be a runway towards an enlargement – drawing from the previous experiences as well, one must realize that to expand, it needs to transform, especially since the aspiration remains to strive for a strong, resilient and effective Europe that matters geopolitically as an actor that acts coherently. Consequently, the work within the Political Union thematic field was in 2025 organised around four dimensions.



Results

First of all, the recent European elections remained a fresh experience. As such, they called for analytical work to examine not only the results and their underlying causes, but also their significance for democratic processes and civic mobilisation. For that reason, the efforts continue to look at the developmental trajectories of transnational political parties and promote fresh thinking about the institutions of the so-called top candidates, the drafting and adoption of the manifestos, the Europeanisation of the vote, as well as forging a stronger connection between the outcomes of the European elections and the process of consolidating the European institutions. The material collected beforehand (within the respective projects and the special edition of the European Progressive Observatory) served as an anchoring point, and the main event was the breakfast meeting with the MEPs of AFCE and representatives of the sister organisations, hosted by Juan Fernando Lopez Aguiñar. As such, both the publications and the summary of the deliberations at this session make a valuable contribution to the ongoing debate on reforming the EU electoral law.

The second stream of work looked at the question of enlargement. On this dossier, FEPS has been very active, and 2025 saw a major Enlargement Conference held in cooperation with the partners, as well as further meetings of the Friends of Western Balkans and FEPS connecting with the revived "Willy Brandt Programme" by the S&D Group. The vast legacy and volume of work from previous years led to a decision to finalise efforts to establish a new program encompassing all of these in the year to come.

The third stream of work related to the FEPS contribution to the EU Presidencies, two of which were held by Poland and Denmark, respectively. In both countries, social democrats were in the government at that time, being part (in the case of Poland) and leading (in the case of Denmark) the ruling coalitions. The strive therefore was to offer a space for debate among the EU level and national level politicians (from the hosting countries and others), as well as researchers and civil society and youth representatives, and other engaged citizens, on the existing priorities, as well as on the items that should and could have – but did not appear as the key on these two presidencies' agendas. The two events held in Warsaw and Copenhagen were therefore considered an important contribution to the deliberations on the short- and mid-term agenda for the EU, as well as helping reinforce the brand of the FEPS flagship event "Call to Europe".

Finally, the Political Union thematic field also looks at the EU's strategic partnerships, including the relationship that was being shaped after the UK's withdrawal from the EU. The new political opening following the first EU (European Commission)-UK summit was a turning point in what has been a troublesome and turbulent negotiation. With FEPS work done on the dossier, including specific questions such as the role of the EU as peace-keeper and the future of Northern Ireland, FEPS was well positioned to connect the actors from the EU, UK and member states who are stakeholders when it comes to the EU-UK relations, holding the first event EU-UK Progressive Forum, in July 2025.



HIGHLIGHT 1 // CALL TO EUROPE WARSAW

FLAGSHIP EVENT

The biannual Call to Europe, organised by FEPS in the country holding the Council of the EU presidency, continues to serve as an important platform for dialogue among policymakers, experts, and civil society. Following previous editions, the new cycle in 2025 coincided with Poland's EU Council presidency (1 January – 30 June) and took place under the slogan "Peace, Prosperity, and Progress."

The program offered a unique opportunity to exchange ideas with high-level Polish Governmental Officials (Deputy Prime Minister, Ministers, State Secretaries

and Leaders of the Parliamentary Group), MEPs, MPs, local officials, as well as their peers from across the EU on pressing topics such as strengthening democracy, advancing social and housing policies and balancing defence with social prosperity. The event was a three-tier event, with an expert group meeting focused on security issues in a broader sense on Friday, a high-level dinner and a day Conference on Saturday, which was well attended by 150 people of diverse generations. The edition of Call to Europe reinforced FEPS' commitment to interactive and inclusive formats that bridge European institutions and citizens.



HIGHLIGHT 2 // THE EU-UK PROGRESSIVE FORUM – A NEW CHAPTER

EVENT

The EU-UK Progressive Forum, co-organised by FEPS and FES on the 14th and 15th of July, explored the relaunch of relations between the EU and the UK, marking a shift towards more constructive engagement after years of post-Brexit tension. The conflict in Ukraine highlighted the need for coordinated policies, while the government of Keir Starmer signalled a diplomatic reset, prioritising cooperation on security, trade, energy, and climate action. Key developments, such as the Windsor Framework and the UK's re-entry into Horizon Europe, framed discussions on stabilising the relationship.

The programme combined a public session analysing the 19 May EU-UK summit with closed workshop sessions that addressed strategic questions on migration, mobility, energy, and defence, aiming to move beyond technical negotiations. Politicians and experts from the UK, the EU, and selected member states engaged in trust-building exercises and strategic debates, with the goal of developing a shared long-term vision for a pragmatic, stable, and

mutually beneficial EU-UK partnership. The Forum featured interventions from several Members of the European Parliament, as well as Caroline Read (UK Mission to the EU), Rosa Crawford (TUC UK), Katarzyna Ueberhan (MP Poland), Nicoletta Pirozzi (IAI), and Katherine Sangster (Fabian Society).



HIGHLIGHT 3 // A COMMON NEW CHAPTER FOR EU ENLARGEMENT

EVENT



In 2025, the Foundation for European Progressive Studies (FEPS), in collaboration with the Friedrich-Ebert-Stiftung, the Foundation Max van der Stoep, the Olof Palme International Center and the S&D Group in the European Parliament, focused on advancing a progressive and inclusive approach to EU enlargement under a challenging geopolitical landscape. The second "Enlargement conference" brought together MEPs, experts as well as decision-makers and representatives from the ten candidate countries to discuss reform proposals, regional socio-economic development, and strategies to counter rising nationalism and far-right pressures in Europe.

Discussions highlighted youth as key drivers of socio-economic development and democratic engagement,

emphasising the need to address unemployment, corruption, and public service gaps to rebuild trust in both domestic institutions and the EU. The meeting also examined the risks of disengagement and far-right exploitation of nationalist sentiment, advocating for tailored, region-specific strategies and citizen-focused incentives to make enlargement meaningful on the ground.

By facilitating strategic dialogue, knowledge exchange, and networking between policymakers and civil society, FEPS aimed to develop forward-looking, practical proposals that strengthen democratic resilience, promote regional stability, and advance a more inclusive and progressive EU enlargement agenda.



POLICY CONTRIBUTIONS

Serbia's civic awakening: the 2024-2025 student protests in focus

POLICY BRIEF

The **2024-2025 Serbian student protests** – triggered by the fatal collapse of the Novi Sad train station canopy – have become the most **formidable civic challenge to Serbia's authoritarian trajectory**.

This policy brief traces their evolution, from spontaneous gatherings and student blockades demanding accountability to the shift toward political engagement.

As the crisis is nowhere near its end, this paper concludes with policy recommendations for a more proactive EU response, arguing that the protests may signal a turning point in Serbia's democratic development and reshape its European future.



FEPS AT WORK: RESEARCH AND STUDIES

MAIN ACHIEVEMENTS

DEFENDING AND DEEPENING DEMOCRACY



Ambition

In 2025, FEPS' Democracy portfolio operates in a context where democratic erosion is no longer a warning sign but an established political condition. Democracy has fallen back to levels not seen since the late 1970s for the average global citizen, and nearly three-quarters of the world's population now live under autocratic rule. Democratic backsliding is no longer confined to a handful of exceptional cases, but has become a structural feature of the international landscape. Across regions, repression, executive aggrandisement, and attacks on checks and balances have deepened, while democratic governments have too often struggled to offer credible answers to insecurity and polarisation.

Within Europe, this pressure has become more internal, more institutional and more normalised. In Hungary, rule-of-law concerns remained entrenched, with continued pressure on media pluralism, civic space and democratic oversight. In Slovakia, concerns persisted around fast-track lawmaking, anti-corruption safeguards, public service media and the enabling environment for civil society. At the same time, Poland showed that democratic repair is possible, even if progress remained partial and contested. Romania illustrated a different kind of fragility: the repetition of the presidential election following the annulment of the

previous first round showed how quickly trust can be damaged when electoral integrity, foreign interference and constitutional adjudication collide. In Germany, the federal election confirmed that the far right is no longer simply a force of protest at the margins, but an increasingly embedded actor in the political mainstream.

These developments are not driven solely by ideology. In 2025, democratic anxiety continued to feed on material insecurity, a harsher geopolitical climate and the perception that institutions are not protecting citizens fairly or effectively. The cost-of-living crisis remained central to political discontent, while security concerns rose sharply. At the same time, the digital sphere became more contested, shaped by manipulation, opaque influence and AI-enabled disinformation. Against this backdrop, the portfolio was structured around three strategic priorities: defending democracy against authoritarian and far-right pressures; deepening democracy through participation, inclusion and civic trust; and addressing cross-cutting threats, particularly those emerging in the digital sphere and in the transnational organisation of the far right. The aim was not only to respond to immediate risks, but also to strengthen a long-term progressive democratic agenda for Europe.

Results

Against this backdrop, the first half of 2025 focused on strategic, closed-door interventions designed to inform FEPS stakeholders and shape the EU policy agenda. Under the pillar of defending democracy, FEPS organised a closed-door roundtable at the European Parliament on 20 May to present the policy brief '*Demonetisation of anti-democratic and extreme content*' to key S&D Group stakeholders. The discussion fed into ongoing debates around the European Commission's forthcoming Democracy Shield and positioned FEPS as a source for responding to the digital amplification of anti-democratic actors.

This work was complemented by a strategic and empirical strand on the transnational connections of far-right parties and their role in undermining democracy in Europe. An online workshop in July brought together researchers and political stakeholders to map these links and begin identifying progressive counter-strategies. The first of three strategic closed-door roundtables for this project, which continues into 2026, took place in December in the European Parliament. It presented an advanced draft of a FEPS policy brief to Heads of Delegation in the S&D Group. The brief analyses the new composition of power on the right, the growing alignment between centre-right and far-right voting patterns, and the implications for progressive strategy in the European Parliament, drawing lessons from national parliamentary experience.

Under the pillar of deepening democracy, FEPS also continued to provide policy inspiration on democratic renewal and representation through the youth dimension of the portfolio. In June, FEPS convened a closed-door roundtable on the Intergenerational Fairness Strategy, based on an advanced draft of a policy brief outlining a progressive vision for the strategy. The roundtable brought together stakeholders from the European Parliament, youth and senior organisations, and the European Commission, at a stage when the strategy was under preparation. The final policy brief was published in September 2025, contributing a social and democratic perspective to the debate.

This focus on democratic renewal through evidence and participation was further strengthened in October with the launch of Equalize, an empirically driven flagship project. Through a closed-door roundtable presenting early quantitative findings, FEPS initiated a broader investigation into differences in political attitudes and voting patterns within European Generation Z. The project also explores what these differences mean for the health of democracy, and how progressive strategies may need to adapt in response. Taken together, these activities show a portfolio that in 2025 combined immediate strategic engagement with longer-term agenda-setting: defending democracy where it is under direct pressure, while also investing in the ideas, alliances and evidence needed to renew it.



HIGHLIGHT 1 // EQUALIZE: THE GEN Z GENDER DIVIDE IN POLITICAL BEHAVIOUR EVENT

On 9 October 2025, FEPS convened an expert roundtable in Brussels to introduce project Equalize, a new flagship research project examining the growing political divergence between young women and men across Europe, led by FEPS with partners Friedrich-Ebert-Stiftung and ETERON. Covering quantitative evidence from across the EU and qualitative evidence from five EU countries – Germany, Greece, Poland, Spain and Sweden – the project explores how this emerging divide shapes voting behaviour, attitudes to gender equality, and broader democratic dynamics.

The roundtable brought together researchers, EU policymakers and youth representatives to discuss preliminary findings and their implications for party politics, youth participation and progressive strategy. Particular attention was given to the relevance of the

findings for forthcoming EU debates, including the Gender Equality Strategy, youth participation and democratic resilience. By connecting comparative evidence with policy reflection at an early stage, the event positioned FEPS as an actor in shaping a more informed and forward-looking progressive response to generational change.



HIGHLIGHT 2 // DEMONETISING DISINFORMATION EVENT

A key intervention of the Democracy portfolio in 2025 was FEPS' expert roundtable on the European Democracy Shield, held in the European Parliament, at a moment when the debate had become both more urgent and more politically consequential. First introduced by Ursula von der Leyen in May 2024, the Democracy Shield has since evolved from a largely digital initiative into a broader framework addressing disinformation and foreign interference, election integrity, democratic resilience and citizen participation. Yet, the speed of technological and

political change continues to outpace regulation. Recent developments, from the Romanian constitutional crisis linked to online platform activity to shifting platform policies and the rapid expansion of the creator economy, have underlined the need for concrete and enforceable responses. The roundtable contributed directly to ongoing EU discussions by presenting policy proposals from FEPS' brief *Demonetisation of Anti-Democratic and Extreme Content*, with a particular focus on how to make the regulatory framework more effective in practice.



HIGHLIGHT 3 // DEFENDING DEMOCRATIC VALUES AND ADVANCING PROGRESSIVE POLICY IN THE EU INSTITUTIONS EVENT

A key highlight of the Democracy portfolio in 2025 was the presentation of FEPS' policy brief "Countering the far right in the European Parliament" at the European Parliament. Although the publication was officially released in early 2026, an advance draft was presented to experts and practitioners on 10 December 2025. The brief examines the growing normalisation of the far right in the 2024–2029 European Parliament, addressing one of the most pressing challenges for progressive politics in Europe.

The brief examines how far-right influence is evolving and maps three possible threat scenarios: full alignment between the European People's Party and all far-right groups; cooperation between the EPP and the European Conservatives and Reformists only; and coordination among far-right groups without EPP involvement. Drawing on national case studies and academic literature, it also assesses strategic responses available to progressives.

The brief puts forward three main recommendations: preserve the remaining elements of the cordon sanitaire while limiting the symbolic influence of radical-right positions; strengthen cooperation among democratic, pro-European forces; and reject far-right narratives on migration by advancing credible, solution-oriented social and economic alternatives that resonate with voters.



POLICY CONTRIBUTIONS

Intergenerational solidarity in Europe: A progressive vision

POLICY BRIEF

Championed by progressives, intergenerational solidarity embodies the values of social justice, sustainability and democracy. Grounded in the universal character of human rights, it affirms equal dignity, wellbeing and responsibility within one community. This policy brief analyses the concept, drawing on existing research and wide consultation with academics, civil society and stakeholders, including the Young European Socialists and the European Seniors Organisation.

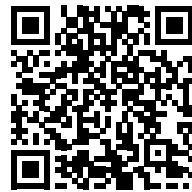
It offers a progressive contribution to the EU Strategy on Intergenerational Fairness, announced by the European Commission for early 2026. Exploring how solidarity between generations is mobilised in national contexts and across EU policies, the brief identifies four building blocks for a comprehensive approach: welfare policies, democracy and participation, policy mainstreaming, and financing. It addresses housing, employment, care and healthcare, alongside civic education, youth participation, citizens' assemblies and digital democracy, while proposing tools such as youth tests, generational checks and wellbeing indicators.



FEPS AT WORK: RESEARCH AND STUDIES

MAIN ACHIEVEMENTS

FUTURE OF SOCIAL DEMOCRACY



2025 was the first full year of the new European parliamentary legislative term. European progressives had drawn many lessons they wished to build on to reinforce the movement and were disappointed that the final distribution of top posts did not reflect the outcome of the EP election. Additionally, they were gearing up for tough times, in which not only the complex geopolitical and political context would test them, but also the slowly emerging, still silent alliance between the right wing and the radical, hard right.

While the S&D family remained the second largest in the EP, the constellation of the progressive forces was clearly weakened, and even though social democrats succeeded in having Antonio Costa as the President of the European Council, the composition of that body

was also showcasing limited capacity when it comes to their presence in the national governments. Instantly, the policy agenda was affected.

The achievements that had been a proud legacy of the previous legislative period would be either undermined or slowed in implementation, and the vision of a modern, egalitarian, sustainable, future-oriented and hope-inspiring Europe would be undercut. In previous years, social democrats already felt it was often tough to strive against the tide that scholars called 'the crisis of the traditional political parties' and the 'era of democratic deficit'. But more and more, they found that the so-called rules of the game were changing, and while they were not ready to accept the brutality of the emerging politics, they still had to find a way to navigate it.



Ambition

With that understanding adopted in the FEPS Framework Activity Programme for 2025, FEPS coined its mission on the 10th thematic field as **FUTURE OF SOCIAL DEMOCRACY** – evaluating the positioning of the progressive forces across the levels of governance, with a focus on their programmatic and strategic dilemmas, organisational difficulties and electoral appeal, governing capacities as well as abilities to remain constructive opposition and to bounce back from the crises.

The thematic field would strongly rely on the Next Left Research Programme as a core asset. Established with the support of the Karl Renner Institut in 2009, it has since been growing, accelerating and delivering inspiring results as the only programme of its kind, multi-disciplinary and pan-European in nature. The Programme continued to be chaired by Andreas Schieder, Chair of the SPO delegation in the EP, and would in 2025 see additions to its extended

universe. While the Focus Group, the Progressive Pollsters Network, the High-Level Conversation, the EP lectures and the publications (in the Next Left series as well as in the country case studies) would continue, there would also be new additions, including an extended format for the national round table.

There were five thematic pillars that the deliberations were based on *Interpreting Progressive values and anticipating the challenges ahead*; *Defining Progressive Alliances in the context of the left pluralism*; *Preparing to win elections and (re)gaining the electoral appeal*; *Boosting governing capacity and sharing the best examples*; *Supporting Social Democracy in the CEE and in the applicant countries*.

Results

Among a longer list; An expansion of the Next Left Universe with new communities (including the Progressive Historians Network); A reflection organised in the spring on "Facing the future *How to Make Social Democracy a Powerhouse Again*", including reflections by President of PS Belgium Paul Magnette, as well as a debate at the fringe of the PES Progressive Mobilisation in Amsterdam. Seminars with the Progressive Pollsters Network; Meeting of a special Next Left Task Force; Two meetings of the Next Left Focus Group; Three major

books, as well as three new Next Left Country Case studies published (Canada, Finland). A number of written contributions, including a special Next Left dossier in the Progressive Post; Inputs to other organisations' debates (in Paris, in London, in Rome), as well as press and media (including Radio Tok FM one-hour interview on "Facing the future"); 11th Oxford Symposium and the publication connected to it; A number of coordination framework, that allowed a greater cooperation with i.e. ongoing S&D Group's mission on the renewal of social democracy.

HIGHLIGHT 1 // OXFORD SYMPOSIUM 2025

FLAGSHIP EVENT

The 11th edition of the Oxford Symposium, co-organised by FEPS, Progressive Britain and the Karl-Renner-Institut, continued the tradition of fostering a space for progressive reflection, dialogue and knowledge exchange. The event took place at St. Catherine's College, Oxford, from 14 to 16 December 2025, bringing together a group of leading politicians, ministers, party leaders, chairs of parliamentary groups, senior academics, experts and civil society representatives from across Europe. This group of 100 personalities, who contributed to the 6 thematic panels and 6 breakout sessions, engaged in a deep, intense and inspiring exchange.

The Symposium opened with a welcoming dinner at St Edmund Hall, during which the new FEPS publication *The Great Unravelling: Globalisation in Retreat?*, edited by Professor Patrick Diamond and Dr Ania Skrzypek, was presented. Over the following two days, participants addressed pressing contemporary challenges, with discussions designed to stimulate forward-looking ideas and strengthen connections within the progressive community. By combining substantive debates with opportunities for informal exchange, the Oxford Symposium 2025 reaffirmed its role as a key forum for shaping progressive thought across Europe and beyond.



HIGHLIGHT 2 // THE FUTURE OF PROGRESSIVISM - RENEWAL OF SOCIAL DEMOCRACY

FRINGE EVENT AT PES CONGRESS 2025



As part of the PES Congress 2025, FEPS organised a dynamic fringe event on the renewal of social democracy, presenting the latest findings from the Next Left research programme. Central to the discussion was the new pamphlet *Facing the Future – How to Make Social Democracy a Powerhouse Again* – written specifically for the occasion, which offered insights into programmatic proposals that would look beyond the narrative of defending and

would underline that the political movements such as social democracy continues to have a choice about what mission they chose to embark on, how they wish to deliver it and in what ways they can regain public support for it.

The 60-minute session was designed to foster direct interaction between the audience members and social democratic leaders, ensuring that participants could actively contribute to shaping the debate. Speakers included Paul Magnette, President of PS Belgium; Kata Tüttö, President of PES at the CoR; Raphael Glucksmann, S&D Group Envoy for Social Democratic Renewal; and 20 representatives from sister parties and civil society organisations from across Europe. By combining presentations of the newest findings from the Next Left research programme with participatory exchanges, the event offered a space for sharing best practices from across Europe and exploring strategies for progressive renewal.

POLICY CONTRIBUTIONS



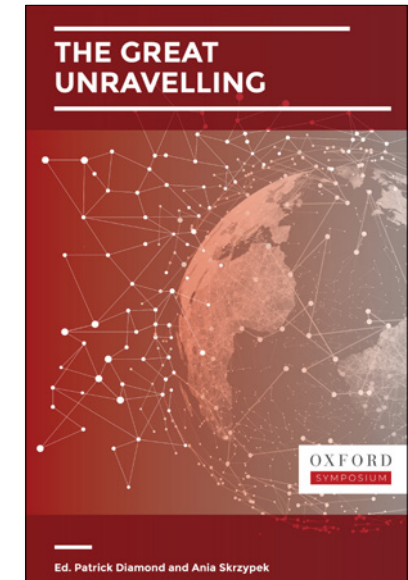
Facing the future: How to make social democracy a powerhouse again

BOOK

Across Europe, social democratic parties face political turbulence, economic transformation, and global shifts, with technological disruption, ageing populations, and pressures on public finances challenging welfare systems. In this pamphlet, Professor Patrick Diamond and Dr Ania Skrzypek argue that social democracy is far from being in terminal decline, highlighting instead opportunities for centre-left renewal and the need for politics rooted in security, dignity, and aspiration.

The authors propose a new social democratic programme – intended as inspiration rather than a blueprint – based on three pillars: restoring order and social cohesion, a new contract for freedom and fairness, and owning the future. Together, these ideas aim to empower citizens and regenerate progressive politics for the decades ahead, under the framework of the Next Left Research Programme.

The pamphlet was launched in the context of FEPS' fringe event "The Future of Progressivism - Renewal of Social Democracy" at the PES Congress 2025, co-organised with the Karl-Renner-Institut, and has been endorsed by: P. Magnette, K. Tüttö, I. Vateri and A. Schieder.



The great unravelling

BOOK

Launched at the 11th Oxford Symposium, "The great unravelling" examines the challenges that the evolving era of globalisation poses for progressive parties and movements in Europe and beyond. Bringing together leading politicians, academics, and experts, the book debates the structural causes and political consequences of a phase of globalisation that, while not ending, is entering a distinctive stage marked by turbulence and instability.

Rather than resisting globalisation outright, the authors argue that the centre-left's task is to broker a balance between competitive markets and social justice, ensuring that global integration supports rather than undermines social progress – a topic that this volume's chapters address from a range of compelling perspectives.

It features contributions from P. Lamy, V. Negrescu, A. Sowinska, D. Tsarouhas, J. Martins Pereira, D. Afscharian, L. Andor, F. Balate, K. Gawkowski, G. Benedetto, T. Petricek, M. Haas, T. Haesebrouck, N. Pirozzi, T. Cremer, K. Tüttö, A.C. Mendes, A. Ribeiro de Costa, M.J. Dornelas, P. Magnette, E-M. Holtzleitner, C. Crouch, M. Damberg and A. Schieder.

HIGHLIGHT 3 // NEXT LEFT FOCUS GROUP AND POLLSTERS NETWORK MEETING EVENT

Kicking off the 2025 cycle of the Next Left Focus Group, FEPS and the Karl-Renner-Institut, under the framework of the Next Left Research Programme, were hosted by the Lithuanian Social Democratic Party (LSDP) at the Lithuanian Parliament in Vilnius from 5 to 6 November 2025. Over two days, members of the Focus Group and the Progressive Pollsters Network met with key political figures and experts for a series of discussions and expert meetings.

The programme combined joint sessions with LSDP and government officials (and visits to the Prime

Minister's Office), and closed-door exchanges among Focus Group members and pollsters. Participants explored the latest research findings, shared successful strategies from progressive governments, and debated innovative approaches to European progressive policymaking. The participants reflected on the outcomes and conclusions to inform the next steps for the Lithuanian and broader European progressive community, reinforcing the Next Left Focus Group's role as a laboratory for new ideas and collaborative policy development.

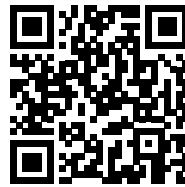


FEPS AT WORK: TRAINING

TRAINING

STARTING WITH THE TELLING NUMBERS :

- 300+ political leaders, activists and academics trained
- More than 70 new trainers and facilitators from across the EU
- 3 training manuals published
- 100+ new segments within 4 modules of the Progressive Ukraine Programme of the Open Progressive University



Ambition

Following the consolidation, perpetual evaluation and acceleration in implementation of the training strategy approved in 2021, 2025 marked a decisive step in FEPS' training ambitions. FEPS focused on establishing the building blocks of the FEPS European Progressive Training Lab (EPTL), a structured initiative designed to take FEPS' expanding portfolio of training to the next level, increasing visibility and connections among the three original pillars: knowledge, skills and demand-driven training.

EPTL has been carefully designed as a unique pan-European hub that builds on the experience, networks and intellectual assets developed through the FEPS Training Strategy. In 2025, FEPS aimed to strengthen its role in political education by offering a more integrated framework for knowledge development, skills enhancement and civic engagement across Europe.

A central priority has been fostering interdisciplinary knowledge rooted in comparative and pan-European perspectives. This is highlighted primarily through the FEPS Young Academic Network and the content behind Open Progressive University, which ensured that experiences and insights from across Member States are systematically integrated into training content. This approach supports a shared understanding of key

political, social and economic challenges and seeks to serve as a platform for innovation.

Equally important has been the creation of platforms for learning and exchange that enable informed dialogue and strengthen citizens' engagement on the future of Europe. FEPS Annual Autumn Academy, Open Progressive University, Training in the framework of major progressive events (YES Summer Camp, PES Congress...) and the regional academies.

FEPS also aimed to enhance the quality of non-formal and informal education by promoting innovative approaches, inclusiveness and involvement of outstanding scholars, trainers and multipliers through activities broadening and upskilling FEPS Pool of Trainers. This includes publishing three new manuals on leadership training, designing Skill Boosters and training regional networks.

Last but not least, in 2025, a new Training initiative was put in place. This was the Friends of Eastern Partnership College, which supported the EU's capacity for the enlargement and partnership projects. It went hand in hand with the activities of OPU and its Progressive Ukraine Programme, which also featured an in-person meeting in Kyiv in November.



Results

A key achievement of 2025 was the completion of the 9th cycle of the FEPS Young Academics Network – a project that has existed since 2010 and is organised in partnership with Karl Renner Institut. Following the seminar held in February, which focused on facilitating exchanges with policymakers and civil society representatives across the thematic working groups, participants reconvened in Vienna for a final seminar. The cycle concluded with the development of eight policy studies, scheduled for release in 2026, that represent a significant intellectual contribution to progressive policymaking.

2025 also saw the sixth edition of the flagship initiative, the FEPS Annual Autumn Academy, and the conclusion of the Progressive Ukraine Programme, a unique e-learning programme.

Further reinforcing capacity-building efforts, FEPS organised, with the support of FMS and Karl Renner Institut, a Training of Trainers upskilling session in Vienna. This initiative aimed to equip trainers with targeted methodologies and tools.

FEPS maintained its practice of organising training activities alongside major progressive gatherings. Notably, during the YES Council in Massy (Paris), FEPS delivered a dedicated training session on leadership,

complemented by a participatory panel discussion on the role of the European Union as a peacekeeper.

FEPS also contributed to discussions on enlargement and partnership in the field of training. In cooperation with Friedrich-Ebert-Stiftung, Foundation Max van der Stoep, and Olof Palme International Center, FEPS co-organised a targeted initiative bringing together 16 participants from progressive organisations across the Eastern Partnership region. The project provided a space for in-depth discussions on advancing progressive values, strengthening local policy approaches and building sustainable regional alliances.

Finally, the "Switzerland in the Heart of Europe" Training Day gathered young progressive political actors from across the EU, EFTA, and Switzerland. The workshop offered insights into EU institutions, current political developments, enlargement perspectives and EU-Switzerland relations, contributing to a better understanding of Europe's evolving political landscape.

Together, these activities demonstrated FEPS' ability to deliver a diverse and impactful training and set the basis for FEPS European Progressive Training Lab, while reinforcing its role as a hub for political education, dialogue, and capacity-building at the European level.



HIGHLIGHT 1 // FEPS ANNUAL AUTUMN ACADEMY

The FEPS Annual Autumn Academy 2025 brought together 57 emerging political leaders from across the EU for three intensive days of training, debate, and collaboration. Since its launch in 2019, the Academy has been equipping the next generation of progressive leaders with the tools, knowledge and networks needed to shape Europe's future. Many of the alumni are now front-bench politicians, as well as renowned scholars and civil society leaders.

Under the theme "For a Europe of peace, prosperity and progress", the programme explored both current and emerging challenges facing social democrats. Each day focused on a sub-theme: building a resilient Europe in an era of multipolarity, advancing a

transformative Europe that delivers quality jobs and strengthening a pluralist Europe through internal and international cooperation.

Organised in partnership with FES Competence Centre, Amicus Europae, Renner Institut and Eteron, the Academy featured a rich and highly participatory format, combining academic lectures, keynote addresses by the representatives of the European Council, panel discussions, workshops, masterclasses, mentorship sessions and visits to the institutions and organisations. Participants engaged with almost 100 high-level speakers, including EU Commissioners, ministers, MEPs, national politicians, academics, and civil society representatives.



HIGHLIGHT 2 // SKILL BOOSTERS AT THE FRINGE OF THE PES PROGRESSIVE MOBILISATION

During the PES Congress 2025 in Amsterdam, FEPS delivered a dynamic series of Skill Boosters as part of its Training Programme, offering participants an opportunity to sharpen their political toolkit in fast-paced, hands-on sessions. Designed to energise messaging, strengthen impact, and translate progressive ideas into action, these 45-minute workshops addressed three critical competencies for today's political landscape.

The first session, "How to talk to Generation Next!?", focused on reconnecting with younger audiences in a context where traditional assumptions about youth progressivism no longer hold. Through practical exercises, participants explored effective communication channels, relevant topics and accessible messaging styles, identifying blind spots and gaining tools to better engage young people.

In "Creating a progressive narrative", participants experimented with the Dutch "Loesje" brainstorming method to craft positive, humorous and thought-provoking slogans. The session encouraged a shift from reactive communication towards proactive narrative-building, equipping attendees with creative approaches to frame progressive ideas more compellingly.

Finally, "Confronting a populist in the wild" provided insights into the psychological mechanisms behind populist rhetoric, drawing on Kahneman's System 1 and System 2 thinking. Through interactive exercises, participants learned to recognise manipulative arguments and apply a structured five-step model to respond confidently in debates and everyday conversations.



HIGHLIGHT 3 // FEPS OPEN PROGRESSIVE UNIVERSITY

The Progressive Ukraine Programme, delivered within the Open Progressive University (OPU) in 2025, marked an important initiative by FEPS, in cooperation with the S&D Group in the European Parliament and the Foundation Max van der Stoep. This unique e-learning programme brought together 25 young Ukrainian students, equipping them with the knowledge, skills, and networks needed to actively contribute to Ukraine's future and its European integration path.

The programme combined academic depth with practical engagement, offering comprehensive modules on key topics such as Russia's war against Ukraine, post-war reconstruction, EU enlargement and the process of preparing for EU membership. Participants benefited from a rich learning experience that blended theoretical insights with policy-oriented discussions, fostering critical thinking and informed debate.

A distinctive feature of the programme was its interactive online format, which included both live and recorded sessions with high-level speakers. These ranged from the leadership of the S&D Group, including its president, vice-presidents, and Members of the European Parliament, to representatives of diverse EU institutions and EU-level organisations, national progressive leaders, civil society representatives, and renowned academics.



FEPS AT WORK: OUTREACH

THE PROGRESSIVE POST

The Progressive Post is the printed and online magazine of the Foundation for European Progressive Studies. Established in 2016, its mission is to look at trends and changes occurring at national, European and international levels through the lenses of progressives and Social Democratic values and to offer informed and thought-provoking analyses of European debates, challenges and developments. This is done thanks to the contributions of progressive policymakers, academics, experts and activists, to whom the magazine is also addressed. Besides the printed magazine, the Progressive Post family has other lively and flexible tools that aim to reach a wider audience using different platforms and media: the Progressive Page, FEPS Talks, the European Progressive Observatory and the Progressive Yearbook.

Progressive Post: the magazine

The Progressive Post's primary goal is to reach out to European progressives, offering them tools to better understand debates around key European and international issues while also showcasing the broad analytical work done by and within FEPS. The magazine regularly features special coverage, a focus, dossiers, interviews and book reviews. It is published three times per year. In 2025, (issues #27, #28 and #29), the magazine tackled, as usual, political, social, economic and foreign policy questions. In particular, the topics addressed in the course of the year were: European defence; the trade war triggered by US tariffs; the use of algorithm in the workplace and its impact on workers' lives and rights; the future of European Social Democracy; the far right's attacks to education systems; the anti-gender movement; the enlargement of BRICS; the peace prospects in a geopolitical context where conflicts are becoming the norm; the analysis of the European Commission's MFF proposal; how the EU's international partnerships are changing; and the outcome of COP30.

- **Issue #27** Spring edition
The EU in uncharted waters
- **Issue #28** Summer edition
European Social Democracy at historical crossroads
- **Issue #29** Autumn/Winter edition
Does peace still have a chance?



Progressive Page

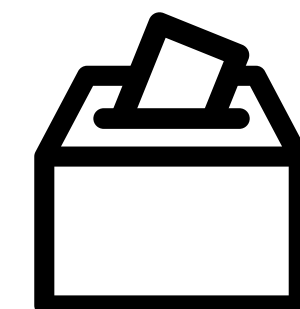
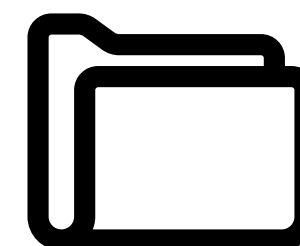
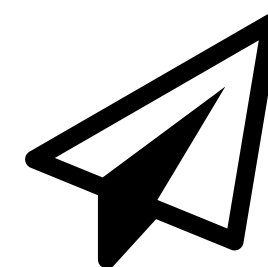
The Progressive Page is a short opinion page (about 800 words) published on the Progressive Post webpage and disseminated by a dedicated newsletter. It is written alternatively by FEPS authors (President, Secretary General and Directors) and outstanding guest authors (renowned policymakers, academics and experts). In 2025, the Progressive Page was authored by members of the European Parliament, such as René Repasi, Aodhán Ó Riordáin, Lina Gálvez, and personalities such as Barcelona Mayor Jaume Collboni, former Swedish Minister of Foreign Affairs Ann Linde, and FES President Martin Schulz. In 2025, we published 24 Progressive Pages tackling a wide range of issues, such as the election of the new mayor of New York; the Israeli war against Gaza; the housing crisis; the Serbian students' demonstrations; the attacks against the rule of law by far-right governments, and much more.

Dossier

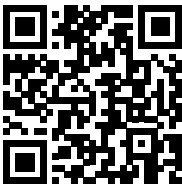
The Progressive Post Dossiers comprise a set of three to four articles dedicated to exploring a key topic within progressive politics or policy. These dossiers seek to offer deeper analyses of political developments, European policies, international trends, and challenges, drawing on diverse perspectives from experts, think tanks, and policymakers. Rather than being comprehensive, their purpose is to provide intellectual stimulation and encourage discussion on current issues. In 2025, the Progressive Post published 12 dossiers, ranging from European defence to international partnerships.

European Progressive Observatory

The European Progressive Observatory (EPO) aims to cover elections in Europe and key elections elsewhere. In 2025, EPO has offered its readers a sharp and timely analysis of elections in Germany, Portugal, Czech Republic and the Netherlands. EPO articles are published on the Progressive Post website and disseminated via a dedicated newsletter.



FEPS COMMUNICATIONS



Following the results of the 2024 EU elections, which saw a growth in support for the far-right and the normalisation of extremist narratives, **FEPS' communication team has been adapting and reflecting its communications** to grow FEPS' impact and provide **high-quality communications in a digital ecosystem that amplifies extremist rhetoric**.

With an ever-changing digital landscape, including more and more digital platforms falling under the influence of illiberal governments and disregarding EU regulations, **FEPS has adapted its social media strategy to reflect our core ethos:** inform European citizens about the research and policies that will benefit them and our democracy, and increase awareness of FEPS' work.

Social media

FEPS has significantly expanded its outreach across all social media platforms, including *LinkedIn*, *Twitter*, *Facebook*, *Instagram* and *YouTube*. **In 2025, FEPS created two new accounts: BlueSky and TikTok.** This was in response to major shifts in user patterns of social media platforms, particularly a significant decline in the use of X (formerly Twitter) and the mainstreaming of short-form video content.

The numbers are on FEPS' side, reflecting the big effort our team invests in social media, **our readiness to respond to algorithmic trends and our nonstop improvements in both format and content** to reach larger and diverse audiences. The numbers are also consistent with market trends, as the increase in followers across our social networks aligns with changes in public behaviour on social media.

Due to the Political Advertising Regulation, we cannot invest any money into paid advertisements. Therefore, **all our content is organic.** Achieving huge volumes of growth and engagement organically is a major achievement, but it also attests to the creation of a digital community for FEPS to expand its reach and spread our research.

FEPS Communications has undergone a remarkable transformation in recent years. This evolution is evident across all our platforms, from the enhancement of our primary communication tool - the FEPS website - to the modernisation of our newsletters, the continuous refinement of our visual identity and the expansion of our social media presence.

FEPS has continued implementing the Communication Strategy - adopted by the General Assembly in June 2020 - as it remains a valid compass for enhancing visual identity, reinforcing branding, introducing innovative and engaging communication tools, and expanding outreach and impact.

In 2025, LinkedIn experienced phenomenal growth, partly because of a dedicated communications strategy to grow on the platform, but also because of a high volume of users moving from X to other platforms to communicate. Growth steadied over 2025 but remained high at 25.29%, averaging around 40 followers per day, which is above the **industry standard**. Since 2023, LinkedIn's growth has **increased by 256.29%**.

Continuing the trend from last year, FEPS maintained the highest volume of engagement on LinkedIn compared to other political foundations - even those with higher followers. One of the aims of growing our digital communications impact is to create a community in addition to growing followers, which is emphasised in high engagement rates.

The type of content curated for LinkedIn has been stabilised, including *LinkedIn's* special tools and features, such as the newsletter function to distribute our Progressive Post newsletters, *LinkedIn Events* to promote FEPS' events ex-ante and strengthen our targeting capacity, and live streaming.

On *Twitter*, every political foundation has been affected by Elon Musk's takeover and the ongoing scrutiny of the platform in Europe, resulting in a year-over-year loss of over 15% in daily use. In 2025, every political foundation lost followers. It may appear that we lost followers on **X**. However, with this mass exodus in 2025, FEPS' engagement and audience on X have remained fairly stable.

With this mass exodus, many ex-X users turned to Bluesky, prompting FEPS to re-evaluate its working relationship with X. Rather than delete FEPS' X account, the strategic decision was made to open a Bluesky account and adapt the content usually created for X to Bluesky. Out of all the political foundations based in Brussels, FEPS currently has the highest number of followers.

In 2025, FEPS' Instagram grew by nearly 50%, thanks to a specialised communications strategy that focused on short-form video content and event promotion. **Producing more short, direct videos highlighting FEPS' events, podcasts, and other activities**

is now a stable part of the FEPS Communications team's regular work, particularly on YouTube Shorts and Instagram Reels. In 2026, Instagram will remain a key focus of the digital communications strategy.

It is important to note the impact of algorithms and feed layouts in deciding how people engage with our content. FEPS' content now reaches more than our followers, as posts appear in a non-following feed. As a result, producing short-form videos is now a crucial way to capture the attention of followers and non-followers alike.

In line with its short-form video strategy, FEPS, in tandem with its Instagram and YouTube Shorts strategy, created a TikTok account. Whilst taking into account the numerous concerns and limitations regarding the use of TikTok, the decision was based on content: FEPS produces short-form video content, and no other EU political foundation operates a TikTok account. With minimal strategy behind the account, FEPS' account has grown to nearly 100 followers with a steady like count.

PLATFORM		GROWTH %	2025	2024	2023	2022
	LinkedIn	+25,29%	11,480	8,854	3,340	1,632
	Instagram	+46,21%	3,746	2,698	1,363	804
	Youtube	+21,52%	1,276	1,099	601	478
	Facebook	+2,86%	17,843	17,379	17,000	16,769
	Bluesky	/	635	/	/	/
	Tik Tok	/	94	/	/	/
	X	-4,7+	14,878	15,355	14,500	13,600

FEPS' **Facebook** increased slightly in follower growth in 2025, a contrast to its stagnation from 2022-2024. This proves that there is still a core audience that we must maintain engagement with, especially in specific EU countries. Additionally, it also demonstrates that no social media can be taken for granted as the 'ultimate' platform for engagement and increased impact, and to focus all of our energy on one platform. We have to adapt to whatever changes come with global and European trends.

Improved strategy and planning have helped us better balance the spread of our posts and enhance our social presence, given the volume and diversity of content FEPS must promote digitally. By **tailoring our content** to each platform's specific needs, tone and format, we effectively engaged diverse audiences with content produced through the numerous activities in which FEPS is involved.

Audiovisual

As discussed, FEPS is constantly evolving and improving its audiovisual capabilities to adapt to an increasingly video-oriented environment, reflecting the shift in social media language towards short, **video-based content**. In 2025, FEPS improved the production of short clips by adapting its formats to include split screens, news clips, animated subtitles and a variety of video and sound effects.

In recent years, FEPS has moved into **in-house audio-visual production** to gain control of our content and make it sustainable in the long run.

A **systematic approach to event coverage** is now well-established, and all public events are recorded by default. This allows FEPS to expand both our ex-post communication and audience by making the content

easily accessible for those who could not attend. Hybrid events are strategically done based on the location of speakers and the target audience as part of a larger event strategy. **YouTube** has become not only a live-streaming platform but also a well-organised and appealing audiovisual archive.

FEPS' in-house live-streaming has undergone significant changes in 2024. FEPS has moved from the traditional Zoom webinar mirrored on *YouTube* to **a professional layout live-streamed on all social media platforms** via *StreamYard*. This, in addition to the multi-camera livestream system introduced in previous years, creates the conditions for a **large audiovisual production** that is also combined with other materials such as video interviews, book teasers, trailers, event summaries and more.



Short-form videos

2025 has been the year of 'on the spot' videos, such as short interviews, contests, and other formats that are aimed at competing for views and engagement in the social media arena. These videos are specifically planned to improve our presence on TikTok and Instagram.

To make them possible, we incorporated new equipment, such as the wireless rode go microphone set and FEPS-branded foam, which allows us to interview speakers in a freer and fresher way.

The idea behind these videos goes beyond the technical aspects; it's about creating more appealing, fresh and fun content while maintaining FEPS' academic rigour and political commitment.



FEPS Podcast

FEPS Talks are 20-25-minute podcasts featuring dialogue between members of the FEPS team and prominent progressive policymakers, academics, and civil society members. The podcast underwent an important revamp over the past few years, enhancing every aspect, from recording to branding and promotion.

In 2025, there were further improvements in FEPS podcast production, including recording podcasts with two and even three guests at once (four people, including the interviewer).



Over the year, we recorded 20 podcasts featuring distinguished guests, including the Mayor of Athens, Haris Doukas; Anne Van Lancker, President of SOLIDAR; former Prime Minister of Greece, George Papandreou; digital expert Cecilia Rikap and Omar Shaban, founder of the Gaza-based think tank PalThink, among others.

Strategising & planning

Communication is now an integral part of FEPS' work, and there is an organic link between what is being researched, debated and organised on one hand and what is being disseminated and communicated about on the other. **Ambitious strategising and consistent planning on communications ensure a robust performance.**

FEPS Communication Team continues working on:

- **A holistic approach to FEPS's work**, which calls for the communications dimension to be included at an early stage of the project's development.
- **Long-, mid-, and short-term communication plans with clear priorities for all FEPS communication tools.**

- Predictability and synergies, which are key to **maximising the lifespan and cross-promotion** opportunities of FEPS materials.

- Ability to respond to unforeseeable relevant developments, which is key for a political foundation. Together with the constant attention the communication team pays to current affairs, **quick reactions and prompt communication have been further reinforced**, facilitated by the entire team's participation. The Communications team has stabilised the production of commentaries on current developments, reacting promptly to key developments ranging from EU institution policies to global developments. These pieces also help showcase our experts, ensuring that the media clearly recognises our capacity to contribute to discussions on these issues.

Website

Launched in 2022, the FEPS website was conceived as our virtual headquarters. It offers a dynamic space where visitors can explore our projects, events, publications and key information about the FEPS network. Intuitive and interactive, the website provides an engaging experience that connects users with FEPS authors and ideas, while meeting high standards in design, usability and professional content.

Keeping the website up to date is a core task of the communications team. As one of FEPS' main channels for sharing content, it is often the first point of contact for our audiences and plays a key role in shaping their first impression.

In 2024, the Progressive Post website was integrated into the FEPS website, creating seamless links between publications, events, news and Progressive Post articles.

In 2025, this integration was further strengthened by giving Progressive Post its own distinct visual identity, allowing the magazine to stand out as a tool in its own right, while remaining clearly connected to FEPS.

A key innovation in 2025 was the integration of the registration tool directly into the website. This allowed us to centralise audience data and streamline the user experience: by filling in a single form, users could both register for events and opt in to our newsletter database.

Work on the back office will continue, with a focus on innovation. This includes exploring the migration of FEPS-owned secondary websites, improving the mobile user experience and enhancing the visibility of our members and experts.

Newsletters

A major shift in 2025 was the move from a weekly to a bi-monthly newsletter, with special editions on key topics or events, giving readers more breathing room while allowing for deeper coverage when needed. Newsletters are now generally sent on fixed days, with content planned week, or even months, in advance, while still retaining enough flexibility to be able to respond and adapt to the evolving political context. Publication day was also moved from the end of the week to the beginning, based on market

analysis that identified those days as more receptive to our readers.

In 2025, we sent 26 FEPS newsletters and 45 Progressive Post newsletters, disseminating information on articles, new publications, upcoming and past events, podcasts and other relevant activities and news. FEPS' metrics demonstrate notable success, with open rates of 41.9%, click rates of 3.3% and click-to-open rates of 7.6%.

FEPS visual identity

Our communication team continues to strengthen the **FEPS brand, ensuring it remains distinctive, attractive and recognisable to target audiences**. While maintaining consistency with our graphic charter, we innovate to keep our visual identity fresh and engaging.

organisation to new audiences, and incorporated **branded cubes** into our visual strategy to extend our visibility beyond FEPS venues. Since then, their use has been systematised to ensure our logo is consistently visible at all events.

Recognising the value of both digital and traditional communication tools, we have enhanced our branding across all formats. FEPS visibility has been increased both inside and outside our headquarters, as well as across physical and online events. In 2024, we introduced an official **FEPS flyer** to present the

A recent addition to our branded materials is a **pop-up wall**: a 2 x 2.30 m structure that is easy to assemble and adaptable to different settings. It allows us to quickly create a professional backdrop whenever needed, for example, when recording a podcast outside FEPS premises.



Media partnerships & external promotion

Another novelty that followed the adoption of the Communication Strategy is the reinforcement of external promotion of FEPS' projects through the establishment of commercial partnerships with influential EU-affairs media such as *Social Europe*, *Euractiv* and *Politico*.

Establishing and maintaining a strong network of journalists is a long-term and permanent task. Cooperation with member foundations continues to disseminate FEPS' intellectual work beyond the traditional EU bubble audience.



In 2025, FEPS' leadership, team members and activities were featured in at least 61 different media outlets across Europe, including *Euronews*, *Politico* and *Euractiv* and national media such as the *El Confidencial*, *France 24* and *The Guardian*.



Network: member foundations and the progressive family

FEPS member foundations, along with the broader progressive family, are key natural allies. Strengthening cooperation in communication and media remains a strategic priority.

progressive family partners. Since then, regular meetings with communication teams across the Progressive family have successfully continued throughout 2025, increasing the impact of our respective work and allowing the exchange of best practices. Collaboration on social media has become more active and highly effective.

The 2024 EU elections provided an opportunity to strengthen synergies and collaboration with

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FEPS Europe



FEPS_Europe



FEPS Europe



FEPS_Europe



FEPS



feps_europe

www.feps-europe.eu



FEPS NETWORK

77 MEMBERS
IN TOTAL

NATIONAL POLITICAL FOUNDATIONS AND THINK TANKS (41)

AUSTRIA
BELGIUM
BULGARIA
CZECH REPUBLIC
DENMARK
ESTONIA
EU
FINLAND
FRANCE
GERMANY
GERMANY
GREECE
HUNGARY
HUNGARY
HUNGARY
IRELAND
ITALY
ITALY
ITALY
ITALY
ITALY
ITALY
LUXEMBOURG
MALTA
NETHERLANDS
NETHERLANDS
NORDIC COUNCIL
NORWAY
POLAND
PORTUGAL
PORTUGAL
ROMANIA
SLOVENIA
SPAIN
SPAIN
SPAIN
SPAIN
SWEDEN
SWEDEN
UNITED KINGDOM
UNITED KINGDOM

Karl Renner Institut
Institut Emile Vandervelde
Institute for Social Integration
Masarykova Demokraticka Akademie
Economic Council of the Labour Movement (ECLM)
Johannes Mihkelson Centre
SOLIDAR Foundation
Kalevi Sorsa Säätiö
Fondation Jean-Jaurès
Friedrich Ebert Stiftung
Berlin Governance Platform
DIKTIO
Policy Solutions
Tancsics Mihaly Alapitvány
Institute for Social Democracy (ISD)
TASC Europe
Centro Studi di Politica Internazionale (CeSPI)
Fondazione Socialismo ETS
Fondazione Gramsci
Fondazione Italianeuropei
Fondazione Pietro Nenni
Fondazione DEMO
Fondation Robert Krieps
IDEAT
Foundation Max Van Der Stoel (FMS)
Wiardi Beckman Stichting
SAMAK
Tankesmien Agenda
Amicus Europæ
Fundação Res Publica
Fundação Mário Soares e Maria Barroso
Foundation for a Democratic Left
Progresiva
Fundación Felipe González
Fundació Rafael Campalans
Fundación Avanza
Fundación Pablo Iglesias
Tankesmedja Tiden
Olof Palme International Centre
Progressive Britain
The Fabian Society

OBSERVER MEMBERS (31)

ALBANIA / Foundation Qemal Stafa (FQS)
AUSTRALIA / Chifley Research Centre
CANADA / Broadbent Institute
CHILE / Fundación Salvador Allende
CROATIA / CEE Network for Gender Issues (CEE Gender Network)
CROATIA / Novo Drustvo
GERMANY / Das Progressive Zentrum
GREECE / Eteron
GREECE / InSocial
HUNGARY / Foundation for a New Republic
ISRAEL / The Macro Center for Political Economics
ITALY / Fondazione Di Vittorio
ITALY / Istituto Affari Internazionali (IAI)
LATVIA / Perspective
LITHUANIA / Institute for Solidarity (LSDP)
MEXICO / FEPESP
NETHERLANDS / European Forum for Democracy and Solidarity
NEW ZEALAND / The Helen Clark Foundation
REPUBLIC OF NORTHERN MACEDONIA / Progress Institute
SERBIA / Democratic Dialogue Network
SERBIA / Center for Democracy Foundation
SLOVAKIA / Progressive Forum – Proforum
SLOVENIA / Inštitut 1. Maj
SWITZERLAND / Social Democratic Party (SP)
(Observer member of PES)
SWITZERLAND / Anny Klawa Morf Stiftung
TURKEY / Progressive Thought Institute
TURKEY / SODEV
UNITED KINGDOM / Institute for Public Policy Research (IPPR)
UNITED KINGDOM / SPERI
UNITED KINGDOM / Greenwich Political Economy
Research Centre (GPERC)
UNITED STATES / Center for American Progress

EX-OFFICIO MEMBERS OF FEPS (5)

EU / Party of European Socialists (PES)
EU / Socialists and Democrats in the European Parliament (S&D)
EU / PES Committee of the Regions
EU / PES Women
EU / Young European Socialists (YES)

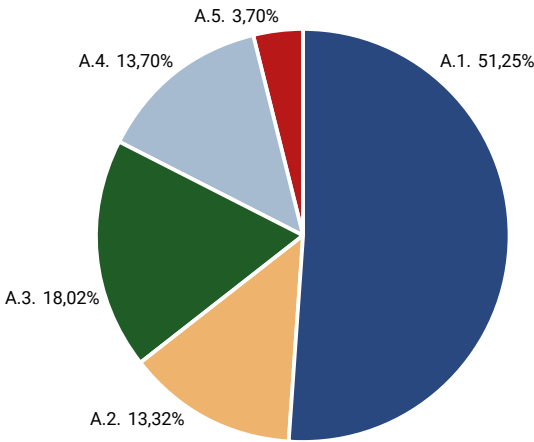
FEPS AT WORK: FINANCIAL OVERVIEW

EXPENDITURE		
	Budget 2025	Actual 2025
A.1: Personnel costs	2 688 604	2 675 297
1. Salaries and equivalent 1	2 396 855	1 894 442
2. Contributions	156 172	477 922
3. Professional training	30 000	9 174
4. Staff missions expenses	40 280	16 381
5. Other personnel costs	65 297	277 378
A.2: Infrastructure and operating costs	712 247	817 798
1. Rent, charges and maintenance costs	278 950	342 293
2. Costs relating to installation, operation and maintenance of equipment	124 233	145 310
3. Depreciation of movable and immovable property	260 000	236 072
4. Stationery and office supplies	19 065	28 929
5. Postal and telecommunications charges	30 000	65 193
6. Printing, translation and reproduction costs		
7. Other infrastructure costs		
A.3: Administrative costs	1 019 477	545 847
1. Documentation costs (newspapers, press agencies, databases)	7 149	9 468
2. Costs of studies and research	981 687	487 371
3. Legal costs	10 214	23 786
4. Accounting and audit costs	20 427	25 222
5. Miscellaneous administrative costs		
6. Support to third parties		
A.4: Meetings and representation costs	790 530	801 332
1. Costs of meetings	764 996	780 823
2. Participation in seminars and conferences	20 427	18 254
3. Representation costs	5 107	2 254
4. Costs of invitations		
5. Other meeting-related costs		
A.5: Information and publication costs	230 045	217 638
1. Publication costs	178 874	185 477
2. Creation and operation of internet sites and social media	13 443	8 627
3. Publicity costs	33 848	23 533
4. Communications equipment (gadgets)	3 881	
5. Seminar and exhibitions		
6. Other information-related costs		
A.6. Allocation to "Provision to cover eligible costs of the first quarter of year N"		348 405
A. TOTAL ELIGIBLE COSTS	5 440 904	5 406 316
B. Ineligible costs		
1. Allocations to other provisions		
2. Financial charges		
3. Exchange losses		
4. Doubtful claims on third parties		89 244
5. Others (to be specified)		67 136
6. Contributions in kind		
B. TOTAL INELIGIBLE COSTS	0,00	156 381
C. TOTAL EXPENDITURE	5 440 904	5 136 000

REVENUE		
	Budget 2025	Actual 2025
D. EP FUNDING		
1. European Parliament funding	5 168 859	5 136 000
2. Dissolution of Provision from N-1 to cover eligible costs of the first quarter of year N		
3. European Parliament funding requested (provisional) / awarded (actual) for year N	5 168 859	5 136 000
E. OWN RESOURCES		
1. Member contributions	272 045	215 000
1.1. from member organisations	272 045	215 000
1.2. from individual members		
2. Donations		63 042
(to be specified)		63 042
3. Other own resources		148 655
Other		26 270
Use of reserves		122 385
4. Interest from pre-financing		
5. Contributions in kind		
E. TOTAL OWN RESOURCES	272 045	5 562 697
F. TOTAL REVENUE	5 440 904	5 562 697

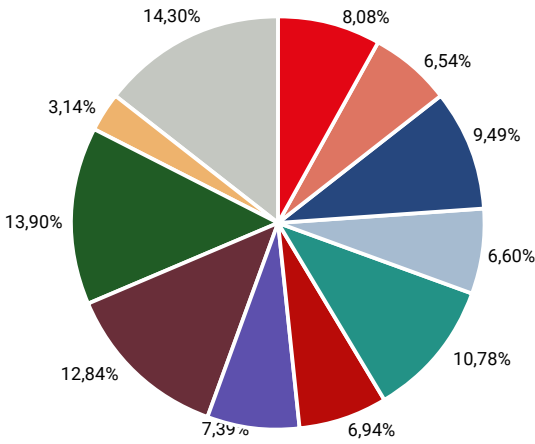
TENTATIVE SPREAD OF THE 2025 PROVISIONAL BUDGET

A.1. Personnel costs	51,26%	2 771 304,91
A.2. Infrastructure and operating costs	13,32%	720 000,00
A.3. Administrative costs	18,02%	974 477,32
A.4. Meetings and representation costs	13,70%	740 533,77
A.5. Information and publication costs	3,70%	200 000,00
	100,00%	5 406 316,00



ACTIVITIES BY THEMATIC BLOCKS

Future of Social Democracy	8,08%
Defending and Deepening Democracy	6,54%
Economy and Finance	9,49%
Digital Economy and Society	6,60%
Climate and environment	10,78%
Social Europe	6,94%
Gender Equality	7,39%
Migration	12,84%
Europe in the World	13,90%
Political Europe	3,14%
Training	14,30%





FOUNDATION FOR EUROPEAN PROGRESSIVE STUDIES

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