

in collaboration with

A clean, just and competitive European Industry

Policy Conference 2025

Wednesday, 24 September 2025, 09:00 – 17:30

Jacques Delors Building, Rue Belliard 99, 1040 Brussels and [online](#)

Background

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

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

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

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

Provisional agenda

(The conference will be held in English only)

09:00	Registrations and coffee
09:30 – 09:45	Welcoming remarks by Luca Menesini , President of the PES Group in the European Committee of the Regions
09:45 – 10:00	How is the European industry really doing? Fact-checking and myth debunking <i>Interactive scene-setting</i>
10:00 – 10:20	High-level political keynote by Paul Magnette , President of the Parti Socialiste (Belgium)
10:20 – 11:00	Combining decarbonisation, justice and competitiveness - What policy priorities and challenges for a win-win-win? Panel discussion with Tsvetelina Penkova* , S&D MEP and Vice-Chair of the ITRE Committee, Lucie Studničná , President of the Workers Group, European Economic and Social Committee, Judith Kirton-Darling , General Secretary, industriAll Europe, Ludovic Voet , Confederal Secretary, ETUC and Axel Eggert , Director General, Eurofer
11:00 – 11:20	Coffee break
11:20 – 12:35	Parallel sessions <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Energy-Intensive Industries: asking the tricky questions Presentation by Sören Borghardt, Senior Advisor, Stiftung Klimaneutralität. With, among others, Guillermo Peláez Alvarez, Regional Minister for Finance, Justice and European Affairs, Government of the Principality of Asturias.• Planning a just transition at company level With, among others, Klara Dobrev, S&D MEP, Ben Lennon, Climate, Industry and Energy Advisor, ETUC.• Towards the Circular Economy Act: policy coherence and product competitiveness With, among others, Nicolas Gonzalez Casares*, S&D MEP, Marine Courmont Lelieur, Head of European and International Affairs, Institut

National de l'Economie Circulaire (INEC) and **Marie-Jeanne Gaertner**, Environmental Policy Lead, Rreuse.

12:35 – 13:30

Registrations and lunch

13:30 – 15:00

European competitiveness – Meaning and Goals

Scene-setting by **Patrick Kaczmarczyk**, Postdoctoral Researcher, University of Mannheim

Political panel discussion with, among others, **Matthias Ecke***, Member of the European Parliament, **Estelle Goeger**, Member of Cabinet, Executive Vice President Séjourné, European Commission, **Isabelle Schömann**, Deputy General Secretary, European Trade Union Confederation (ETUC), and **Lúcio Vinhas de Souza**, Chief Economist, Business Europe

15:00 – 15:20

Coffee break

15:20 – 15:50

Trade Policy and Competitiveness: Friends or Foes?

Conversation with **Elizabeth Baltzan**, former Senior Advisor to the US Trade Representative and **Bernd Lange**, Member of the European Parliament and Chair of the Committee on International Trade.

15:50 – 17:20

Going beyond a neoliberal trade paradigm

Scene-setting by **Werner Raza**, Head of the Austrian Research Foundation for International Development (ÖFSE)

Political panel discussion with, among others, **Kathleen Van Brempt**, Member of the European Parliament and Vice Chair of the INTA Committee, **Jörg Wojahn**, Head of Unit, Bilateral relations in Trade and Sustainable Development, European Commission, **Ryan Mullholand**, Senior Fellow, Center for American Progress (CAP), **Marta Castilho**, Professor of Economy, University Rio de Janeiro, and **Daniela Iller**, Policy Officer for Trade and International Cooperation, FES, and

17:20 – 17:30

Closing remarks (FES-FEPS)

17:30 – 19:30

Networking reception

Opening reflections on *the future of the transatlantic relationship* with **Damian Murphy**, Senior Vice President, National Security and International Policy, Centre for American Progress (CAP)

** This agenda is at a preliminary stage and some speakers are to be confirmed.*



This event is produced with the financial support of the European Parliament. It does not represent the views of the European Parliament.