



# ANNUAL REPORT 2024

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## Ringling out an eventful year

Looking back on a very eventful – even frightening – year should make European policymakers even more determined to move forward with their huge (and ever growing) ‘to do’ list. The analysis, the facts, the policy failures, these are all well known, yet there’s no time to lose and it is high time to finally act to secure our overall welfare, security and democratic institutions. With a new European Parliament and Commission, and a freshly appointed European Council President, there is renewed hope that this new leadership will bring order into the Brussels hierarchy, allowing it to decisively respond to the many challenges the EU is having to grapple with.

As has been our guiding mantra for over forty years now, CEPS endeavours to continue to drive the debate towards better policies and societies – and this year has been no exception. We have proudly fulfilled our core role as a think tank in 2024 with an impressive publications record, covering all fields of EU policymaking. Our crowning achievement this year in terms of publications was undoubtedly our special series [‘The EU’s path to 2030. Defining Priorities for a Stronger Union’](#), which many CEPS researchers contributed to. This year, we’ve published nearly 150 publications catering to a wide range of policy audiences. These publications have been made up of a mix of shorter, more accessible CEPS Explainers and Policy Briefs, longer and more comprehensive CEPS In-Depth Analysis papers and specially commissioned reports, and finally over 50 snappier, punchier, more informal Expert Commentaries.

We can also be proud to have gathered large groups of actors and stakeholders together to participate in our many debates and conferences. Our hallmark in 2024 was the 11th edition of the Ideas Lab from 3-4 March 2024, with over 700 participants discussing (among many other topics) industrial policy, trade, the Belgian Presidency priorities and human rights. In October 2024, we hosted for the first time the Council of Councils regional conference, the global network of think tanks led by the Council on Foreign Relations. We were also proud to have been the chosen venue for former Italian prime minister Enrico Letta to present the findings of his single market report in April and to host Moldovan President Maia Sandu to discuss Moldova's long road to EU membership and countering Russian election interference in December.

Our researchers also participated in debates and conferences across Europe – and the world – to bring fresh insights on EU policymaking and its global or regional dimensions to new audiences. Many have been quoted or featured in a large variety of publications and debates for both local and global media. But the pinnacle of our 2024 research outreach has been the launch of [AI World](#), the most comprehensive and authoritative overview of global AI developments in Europe and globally. Its development and launch firmly places us at the top of the think tank league – at least here in Europe.

As an independent think tank without structural long-term funding, we're proud to lead or to participate in over 25 different Horizon Europe projects and many tenders for the EU institutions. Over the past year, we also have enhanced our support from large foundations, on top of the support we're receiving from the private sector for our task forces and special research projects.

We would also like to thank the many CEPS members and donors that contribute to our day-to-day work. Our renewed membership benefits package has certainly helped to convince some new faces looking for fresh insights to join us and actively take part in our debates.

And of course, we would like to thank our dedicated staff, for without them we simply wouldn't be able to undertake our mission, to 'think ahead for Europe'.

And with that guiding mission in mind, we hope to meet you – virtually or in person – and work together to help find the right solutions to the many challenges Europe has no choice but to tackle head on in 2025 and beyond. We remain confident that these challenges can and will be overcome, but only if Europe prepares itself well, if it acts decisively and – most crucially – if it remains united.



**Karel Lannoo**

CEPS Chief Executive Officer

# Research priorities

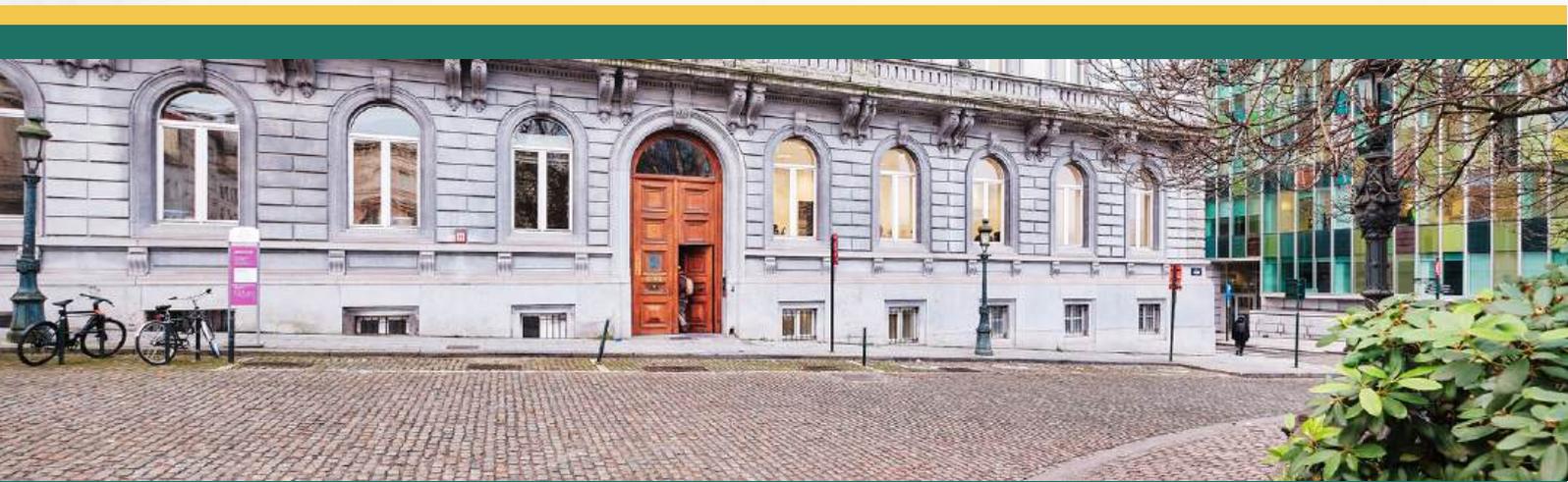
2024 was teemed with challenges – the ongoing war in Ukraine, escalating tensions in the Middle East, a potential economic downturn in the Member States, farmers demonstrating in many European capitals and the complex dance of EU enlargement and institutional reforms. Added to this were the ever-present and daunting prospects of climate change and conflict-driven migration, the ascent of populist and Eurosceptic factions within the EU and the unpredictability of the US elections – with Donald Trump’s decisive victory only amplifying that unpredictability even further as we move into 2025.

Amidst these trials and tribulations, the EU must craft a delicate balance and find its 'magic formula' that aligns the pursuit of competitiveness with imperatives like the green transition and strategic autonomy. And it needs to rebuild trust among its citizens, who often feel disenfranchised and excluded from key decisions that affect their future as much as they affect the future of the world order.

In such turbulent times, the role of researchers and think tanks becomes ever more critical. The diffuse sensation among researchers is that 'more of the same', an incremental strategy aimed at course-correcting the status quo, will not be sufficient for the EU to thrive during this extraordinary, multi-risk period.

At CEPS, as always, we’ve embraced our responsibility throughout 2024 to try to steer Europe and the broader international community towards stability and prosperity, including by engaging in disruptive, courageous systemic thinking. As we unveiled and embarked upon our research agenda for 2024-25, it’s therefore inevitable that our commitment goes beyond a set of individual projects.

We have spent the year inaugurating ground-breaking initiatives designed to elevate the calibre and influence of our work. To get a fuller picture, you can read the full Research Priorities for 2024-25 [here](#).



# CEPS in numbers



**14.1K**

New followers



**130K**

Total followers



**11.3K**

Shares & likes



**+1460**

Media mentions



**1.4M**

Website views



**68**

Researchers



**24**

Countries



**15**

Topics



**145**

Publications



**89**

Events



**7.6K**

Attendees



**163**

Members



# Highlights of the year

## THE EU'S PATH TO 2030: DEFINING PRIORITIES FOR A STRONGER UNION

As 2024 has been defined in Brussels by the start of a brand new European mandate, CEPS published a special series 'The EU's path to 2030', where each of our research units were asked to provide their insights on key policy issues, offering guidance and recommendations for EU policymakers throughout the new European mandate up until 2030 (and sometimes even beyond).

The contributions to this series offer a detailed overview of many policy files that are – and will be – highly relevant for the EU over the coming years. Our experts outline the best pathways forward, based on their in-depth research, and offer concrete recommendations for the years ahead. Find all the contributions to this special series [here](#).



## WELCOME TO THE AI WORLD

Get ready to navigate the AI revolution in a whole new way! CEPS' mission with the AI World, which is part of the AI ecosystems of excellence project funded by google.org, is to make AI accessible and engaging.



# AI WORLD

In short, think of the AI World as your one-stop-shop to decode everything from the latest AI breakthroughs to the visionary minds behind them. We break down complex tech concepts, connect the dots across industries and spotlight AI hotspots from Silicon Valley to Shanghai. Whether you're curious about how AI impacts jobs, intrigued by cutting-edge companies, or just want to learn at your own pace, this new platform is ready for you. Discover it [here](#), stay up to date and follow AI World on [LinkedIn](#) and [X](#).

## COUNCIL OF COUNCILS



# COUNCIL OF COUNCILS

For the first time ever, from 27-29 October, CEPS had the honour of hosting the 15th Council of Councils regional conference. The Council of Councils is an initiative of the Council on Foreign Relations, one of the largest think tanks in the United States. The Council of Councils connects 27 leading foreign policy institutes from 24 countries around the world, sparking conversations on issues of global governance and multilateral cooperation. This network facilitates candid, not-for-attribution dialogue and consensus building among influential opinion leaders and provides an ongoing exchange for research and policy collaboration. The group also considers long-term structural reforms that would enhance international institutions' global governance capacity. CEPS is the only Belgian and EU-level think tank taking part in this network.

Three days of discussions among the members and distinguished guests covered the width and breadth of issues facing today's complex world. The conference began by addressing geopolitical fragmentation, before moving on to industrial policy, technology governance, and support for Ukraine. The following day, participants tackled Europe's external relations with sessions on EU-Transatlantic, EU-China, and EU-Middle East. The conference wrapped up with a public session on what the rest of the world expects from the EU.

## COMMENTARY SERIES ON KEY GLOBAL ELECTIONS

2024 also witnessed a wave of global elections that reshaped political dynamics across multiple regions. In a series of Expert Commentaries that offer insights into these evolving political landscapes, our team delved into the complexities of electoral processes and their broader implications, extending beyond the EU to key regions such as the United States, Asia and South America.

Each commentary provides valuable perspectives on how these elections could influence domestic and international policies, governance, and global relations – especially with the EU. We have created a [dedicated webpage](#) featuring all available commentaries from this series on key global elections.



## DEDICATED SERIES ON THE EUROPEAN ELECTIONS

The 2024 European elections were a defining moment for the future of the European Union. As citizens across Member States cast their votes, several critical issues took centre stage. Our publications provided in-depth analysis and insights into the most pressing topics ahead, during and just after the elections, including the future viability of the lead candidate procedure, how to make the European elections 'more European', Europe's digital future and how we must tackle hate speech propaganda. Find all the publications in this series [here](#).

## NEW FORMAT FOR IDEAS LAB 2024

For its 11th edition, CEPS Ideas Lab returned rejuvenated and reimagined over two jam-packed days, from 4-5 March 2024 with over 700 participants. Celebrating more than a decade of thought-provoking discussions, we decided to go back to basics with this Ideas Lab, with the key focus being very much on what has always made Ideas Lab unique – presenting innovative ideas that spur European policymaking forward.

Alongside hard-hitting plenary sessions featuring high-level speakers from academia, European and other political institutions, and the private sector, we organised 24 dynamic, interactive closed-door sessions and mostly without the use of slides or other audiovisual supports. Eight of these 24 sessions were dedicated to brand new ideas to be considered by policymakers, including the new EU leaders that began their mandates at the end of 2024.

The result was unprecedented levels of dynamism in our conversations and sparks of absolute creativity. To read more about 2024's Ideas Lab, click [here](#) for our comprehensive [post-event report](#) and if you're intrigued further to know more about the upcoming 2025 edition, please click [here](#).



## NEW DATA SCIENCE UNIT

This year, the new CEPS' in-house Data Science unit was officially formed. Composed of Pierre-Alexandre Balland (CEPS Chief Data Scientist), Robert Praas (Data Scientist) and Katja Spanz (Project Officer), the CEPS Data Science unit leverages applied AI and data science tools to address a wide range of public policy challenges. Led by Pierre-Alexandre Balland, the team operates at the interface of technical and policy expertise. It generates actionable insights for policymakers on complex societal issues, including EU competitiveness, innovation and industrial policy, AI strategy, Ukraine's reconstruction, the future of work and climate change.

To transform policy problems into data science solutions, the team is actively building a suite of innovative digital tools and web platforms. The team collaborates closely with policymakers, industry leaders and academic institutions to shape Europe's digital and policy future.



## CEPS TECH PODCAST

CEPS launched its brand-new Tech Podcast. In the five episodes already released, we dive into the AI landscape in the EU, explore the European AI market, identify possible new policy measures and infrastructure needs, assess ways to link existing AI hubs, discuss data on jobs and industrial specialisation, and examine the skills that will be needed for the future AI workforce.

The podcast explores innovative new ideas, from building human-AI teams to the creation of a 'CERN for AI'. In each episode, CEPS researchers and our co-host, Tom Parker, engage in discussions with renowned experts and guests from academia, businesses, institutions and civil society. Find all the available episodes [here](#).



## DIVERISTY, EQUALITY AND INCLUSION

Launched in January 2023, the CEPS Diversity, Equality and Inclusion Committee (DEIC) continued its efforts in 2024 to cultivate a truly inclusive and diverse culture at CEPS. Building on initiatives, such as the CEPS Mentorship Scheme and the creation of a dedicated Standing Group on Research Ethics, DEIC was proud to be able to tick off almost all major planned actions contained within its first annual Action Plan that ran from May 2023-April 2024. With the success of the first, DEIC agreed and began to implement its second Action Plan which runs from May 2024 to April 2025.

In October 2024, we uploaded a fully revamped Diversity, Equality, and Inclusion [section](#) on the CEPS website, which showcases our DEI commitments, major milestones, relevant publications, and ongoing projects. DEIC also recently developed a comprehensive [Code of Conduct](#) designed to ensure a safe, welcoming and respectful environment at all CEPS events and for everyone involved.

DEIC also began a series of in-house DEI-themed events in 2024, held to mark relevant annual events, such as Pride and the International Day Against Homophobia, Biphobia and Transphobia (IDAHOBIT) in May, and the International Day for the Elimination of Violence Against Women (VAW) in November. DEIC also organised a highly well-attended and appreciated training session on gender identity and gender expression in the workplace during summer 2024.

# CEPS in the policy debate

For think tanks, measuring impact is the holy grail. Elusive as it may be to establish a direct causal link between an idea proposed in a think tank publication and the outcome in law, policy or action, CEPS' work in the surf of the European civil service nevertheless gives it more 'voice' in ongoing debates. Since the main objective of a think tank is to provide decision-makers with high quality and objective policy research on policy-relevant subjects, it is worth offering a glimpse of the critical role CEPS plays in political and policy arenas, not only at EU level but also on a wider international scale.



## JANUARY

**Andrea Renda** presented the paper 'Revamping the EU's health security framework to manage future health crisis' to the HERA Board meeting. **Timothy Yeung** presented the same paper during the Meeting of High Level Working Party and Chief Medical Officers organised by the Belgian Presidency.

**Sergio Carrera** participated in the Tällberg Foundation's podcast 'Knocking on Europe's Door', highlighting the key findings of the final report of the EU-funded ASILE project.

## FEBRUARY

**Tinatin Akhvlediani** was nominated as an Emerging Leader of the EU by the US Ambassador to the EU and participated in the International Visitor Leadership Program (IVLP) after being invited by the US State Department.

**Apostolos Thomadakis** spoke at the event 'EU Retail Investment Strategy' organised by the Swiss Finance Council and Zurich Insurance.

## MARCH

**Hien Vu, Timothy Yeung and Andrea Renda** presented their study 'Health emergency response governance in the EU after the COVID-19 pandemic' for the Belgian Presidency at a high-level conference on the Future EU Health Union.

**Tinatin Akhvlediani** spoke about the Eastern Partnership Policy and Economic and Investment Plan set out for the EU's eastern neighbours and for their European integration at the Euronest Parliament Assembly meeting on economic integration, legal approximation and convergence with EU policies at the European Parliament.

**Sergio Carrera, Julia Pócze and Davide Colombi** discussed the ASILE project results at the ASILE Final Conference.

**Laura Nurski** spoke at the 'Journée d'étude intelligence artificielle et avenir du travail' on AI and the Future of Work.

## APRIL

The CEPS Task Force report 'Criminal justice, fundamental rights and the rule of law in the digital age' was cited in an Opinion by the CJEU's Advocate General, Leila Medina.

**Karel Lannoo** participated in the 34th Conference of European Civil Law Notaries.

## MAY

**Julia Pócze** presented her Expert Commentary 'The EU has an accountability problem. Doubling down on ethics can help change that' during a webinar on 'How could a rule of law approach to ethics help to restore institutional trust in the EU?' with the Ombudsman.

**Tinatin Akhvlediani** spoke at the European Parliament's Plenary EESC on 'Lessons learned from the 2004 EU enlargement for tomorrow's Europe'.

**Laura Nurski** spoke during the 17th CPDP-AI International Conference on a panel discussing the 'Future of Work in the Age of AI: Transformation, Trust and Skills'.

## JUNE

**Fredrik Andersson** gave a presentation on overindebtedness to the Board of Eurofinas/LeaseEurope.

**Marta dell'Aquila** spoke at the CESI Summer Days session 'New Technologies, AI & Gender Equality at Work: Bridging gaps, now and tomorrow'.

**Patricia Urban** spoke to Battery Technology about the #DigitalBatteryPassport, highlighting that the battery passport can become an important tool to support transparency and sustainability across value chains.

**Tinatin Akhvlediani** moderated a session on Ukraine's gradual integration into the EU's Single Market at the Ukraine Recovery Conference (URC). CEPS was honoured to be invited in taking part in the URC for the first time.

**Karel Lannoo** participated in the seminar 'End of neoliberalism? What is the future of global economic governance' in Vienna organised by the Austrian Central Bank.

## SEPTEMBER

**Vasileios Rizos** spoke at the 'Developing circular economy policies' event organised by the Hellenic Society for a Circular Economy.

**Fredrik Andersson** participated in the workshop 'Faster Payments, Instant Fraud - Is the market ready?' during the Paris Retail Week.

**Cinzia Alcidi** spoke at the UN Science Summit, during the session 'Brain Skills and the Re-Training Revolution to Prepare for AI-Enhanced Future'.

**Fanny Sauvignon** spoke at the EcoPeace Middle East Conference in Cyprus.



## OCTOBER

**Marta dell'Aquila** spoke at the European Policy Forum for women-led innovation in agriculture and rural areas.

**Pierre-Alexandre Balland** gave a presentation on AI data used in the AI World to shape the future of work of Unleash.

**J. Scott Marcus** spoke at the European Parliament on reducing EU bureaucracy.

**Paula Gurtler** spoke during a webinar on Generative AI and Democratic Resilience in E Online.

**Karel Lannoo** participated in the Bank of Latvia and SUERF Economic Conference 'Financing a Better Future: the Vital Role of Finance in Achieving Sustainable Growth'.

Ten CEPS publications were featured in the Council of the European Union's [October 2024 Think Tank Review](#).

**Apostolos Thomadakis** spoke at the event 'CMU and EU-UK Relationship in Financial Services' organised by the City of London Corporation.

## NOVEMBER

**Andrea Renda** presented CEPS' work within the 'European Ecosystem of Excellence in AI' project during the European Business Summit.

**Patricia Urban and Davide Colombi** spoke to the trainees of the Council of the European Union about working for think tanks.

**Edoardo Righetti** spoke at the EIT Raw Materials' [webinar](#) 'Rare earths extracted from the Urban Mine'.

**Karel Lannoo** spoke at the [Financial System Conference 2024](#) organised by the Central Bank of Ireland during a panel on the future for financial services in Ireland and Europe.

**Cinzia Alcidi** presented the [2024 Annual Report of the EU Payment Observatory](#) to the SME Assembly in Budapest.

## DECEMBER

**Vasileios Rizos** spoke during the third annual [workshop](#) 'From mining to recycling: The R&I journey of battery raw materials in EU' organised by the Cluster Hub.

**Fredrik Andersson** was the keynote speaker in an event on the European Parliament on 'The Digital Finance Agenda: Challenges and Priorities of the EU Institutions for 2024-2029'.

**Apostolos Thomadakis** participated in an OECD Roundtable on the role of insurance companies and pension funds in today's capital markets.

**Karel Lannoo** gave welcoming and closing remarks at the Center for European and Transatlantic Studies Conference 'The Future of the Transatlantic Relationship under the Incoming US Administration' in Washington D.C.

**Julia Pócze and Karel Lannoo** spoke to Hungarian journalists about the Hungarian Presidency and whether it could be considered a success.

# The year in publications

In 2024, CEPS' exceptionally strong in-house capacity powered forward, producing nearly 150 publications, our highest editorial output in several years, and spanning 15 key topics.

As always, our publications – from shorter, punchier op-ed-style Expert Commentaries to longer, comprehensive In-Depth Analysis reports – are at the heart of CEPS' drive to 'think ahead for Europe'. Please read on for a carefully curated selection of some of our most prominent publications throughout 2024.





## AI, DIGITALISATION AND INNOVATION

### **Digital aspects of the EU Single Market: still an incomplete work in progress**

The Single Market is essential both for internal cohesion and for the EU's global competitiveness versus the United States and China. It seeks to ensure and enable the free flow of services, goods, capital and people within the EU/EEA; however, none of these four traditional dimensions of the Single Market have been fully achieved – neither in the physical world, nor in the online world.



### **Towards a European large-scale initiative on Artificial Intelligence**

While being a leading world region when it comes to regulating Artificial Intelligence (AI), Europe has accumulated delays in creating a fertile ecosystem for investment and innovation in this crucial domain for economic competitiveness, strategic autonomy and democratic resilience. To remedy this situation, several proposals have been presented for an ambitious initiative that catalyses research and innovation around trustworthy AI solutions made in Europe and according to European values and principles.

### **AI is political – let's use it to really transform society**

AI will definitely shape our far-off future but it's also already shaping our society today. Having regulation is crucial, but we must also shape innovation to match our aspirations. To succeed, it's crucial to understand the nature of this technology. It seems easy to make the argument that AI is a transformative technology, and that it inevitably triggers change.

### **Mapping the use of artificial intelligence in priority sectors and the competitiveness of Ukraine**

AI has emerged in recent years as a major driver of technological change across many sectors and its influence is only going to increase. In this context, CEPS collaborated with UNIDO (UN Industrial Development Office) on this report that highlights the critical role that AI will play in Ukraine's ongoing development. It maps how and where AI technologies are being implemented to identify leverage points for investment, research, market opportunities and to foster targeted development efforts.

### **Europe's digital future is brighter than we think – we just need to fight for it**

With war on the borders, rising geopolitical tensions and an uncertain political, it shouldn't come as a surprise that digital policy (for once) is not hitting the headlines in Europe these days. Yet despite Europe's well-known lag vis-à-vis other major world powers, there is another story to be told about Europe's digital agenda.



## ECONOMIC AND MONETARY AFFAIRS

### EU cohesion policy post-2027: why and how to enhance flexibility

The EU's recent crises and complex geopolitical landscape means the EU budget should be rethought in terms of crisis management and increasing spending demands. Despite these pressures, future Multiannual Financial Framework (MFF) discussions are more likely to focus on reallocating existing funds rather than expanding the EU budget. This situation has put cohesion policy, the EU budget's largest spending item, under scrutiny. Its potential role in financing new EU priorities could lead to clashing goals and deviation from its primary objectives.



### Study supporting the mid-term evaluation of the Recovery and Resilience Facility

While being a leading world region when it comes to regulating Artificial Intelligence (AI), Europe has accumulated delays in creating a fertile ecosystem for investment and innovation in this crucial domain for economic competitiveness, strategic autonomy and democratic resilience. To remedy this situation, several proposals have been presented for an ambitious initiative that catalyses research and innovation around trustworthy AI solutions made in Europe and according to European values and principles.

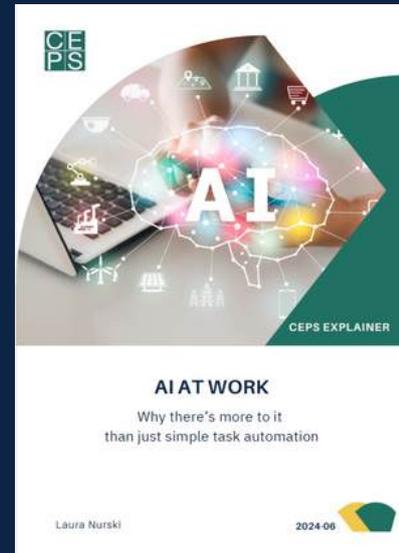




## EMPLOYMENT AND SOCIAL AFFAIRS

### AI at work: why there's more to it than task automation

To better understand AI's possible impact on jobs and employment, a task perspective is a good starting point. However, it isn't sufficient for a holistic understanding because it ignores several important concepts that lie in between individual tasks and labour market outcomes. Jobs, processes and organisations mediate technology's impact on workers which is not captured by the task model of the labour market.



### Shaping tomorrow's workforce: EU policy priorities for skills

As the European Year of Skills officially concluded on 8th May 2024, skills will remain a key discussion topic over the years to come. This provides an excellent opportunity to reflect on the current understanding of skills and their impact on labour market dynamics and competitiveness, as well as to anticipate future policy challenges. It also prompts a reevaluation of how policymakers can strategically focus their efforts on key areas to drive progress and innovation in the realm of skills development and skills use in the workplace.





## ENERGY, CLIMATE CHANGE AND THE ENVIRONMENT

### **Green and enviable: how to deliver net zero and a more competitive EU**

In the new 2024-29 political cycle, policymakers are poised to continue their efforts to deliver the objectives of the European Green Deal and the Fit for 55 package, to achieve climate neutrality by 2050. The CEPS In-Depth Analysis presents 30 policy recommendations across seven thematic chapters, addressing various aspects of the European Green Deal. These provide a comprehensive roadmap for policymakers, offering insights and guidance for the 2024–2029 political cycle.



### **Creating sustainable labour markets through eco-social policies**

Labour markets influence the way we produce and consume, thus playing an important role for both human wellbeing and the environment. Implementing labour market changes could help fulfil people's needs within planetary boundaries. However, despite the EU just transition's aim to address the social impacts of environmental policies, efforts to create a greener and more equal society are often fragmented.

This CEPS In-Depth Analysis report explores the potential of three different policies to create more sustainable labour markets: Working Time Reduction, Universal Basic Income and Universal Basic Services.

### **The EU should lead the green steel race... or it could be left behind in the dust**

A wave of low-carbon steel projects should be launched across the EU by 2030 but how commercially viable they are is still to be seen. According to Agora Industry, two critical factors underpin this uncertainty: a carbon price below EUR 150 per tonne of CO<sub>2</sub> emissions (currently it's below EUR 60) and average electricity prices well above EUR 40/MWh. This constitutes a 20-50 % higher production cost for green steel (often called the green premium), compared to conventional steel.

### **Reducing supply risks for critical raw materials**

The uptake of strategic green and digital technologies will massively increase demand for critical raw materials (CRMs) over the coming years. CRM supply chains, however, are now heavily concentrated in a limited number of countries, with China holding significant market power. In the EU, this has raised legitimate concerns about its excessive exposure to CRM supply risks. As a growing number of countries are coming to acknowledge these risks and adopt CRM strategies, the Critical Raw Materials Act was the EU's response to these concerns.

Building upon existing evidence and expert inputs, this CEPS In-Depth Analysis provides an overview of EU CRM supply risks and the options available for securing access to these resources.

## EU INSTITUTIONS AND POLICYMAKING

### How to make the European elections more European

With the 2024 European elections, we once again witnessed the discrepancy between the increased importance that the European Parliament plays in EU citizens' lives and the transnational character of most of today's issues on the one hand, and the national character that the European elections still have on the other.



### Confirmation hearings and voting in the new Commission: what is the European Parliament's role?

The European Parliament has significantly increased its role in appointing the European Commission over the last few decades. The EP has gained the power to formally elect the Commission President and approve the College of Commissioners as a whole. To be able to vote for the President has also enabled the EP to influence the Commission's policy agenda. The vote on the College has enabled the EP to organise confirmation hearings for Commissioners designate.

### Is the EU's Spitzenkandidaten procedure fit for the future?

To look beyond the rather simplistic dichotomy of the lead candidate procedure's success and failure, this CEPS Explainer analyses the procedure's past performance, outlines the impact that it has had in 2014 and 2019 and teases out some general conditions that would need to be met for the procedure to be more successful in 2029. It concludes that, while it (thus far) has had little impact on the 'Europeanness' of the EP elections, the procedure has made leadership selection more transparent, enhanced the Commission President's public stature and has empowered them, also vis-à-vis the European Council.

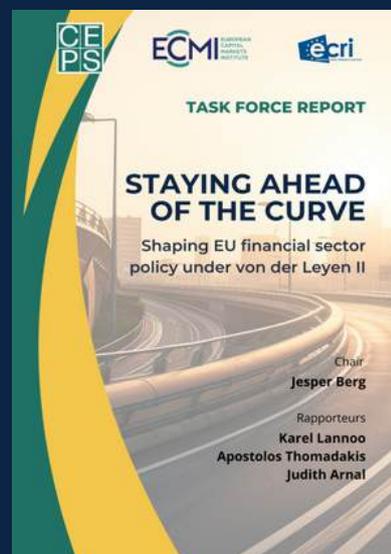
### All chill, no grill – and other key takeaways from the 2024 Commission hearings

The European Parliament hearings for the new Commissioners are now over. After some last-minute drama and a little delay, the EP has greenlit all candidates – for the first time in 20 years. In theory, the confirmation hearings are a great instrument for scrutinising the incoming Commissioners. Such a process can be healthy, especially for a complex polity like the EU. In practice, however, it's compromised by party-political tit-for-tat and structural issues around how it's organised.

## FINANCE

### **Staying ahead of the curve: shaping EU financial policy under von der Leyen II**

A comprehensive review of the financial services landscape is necessary for the EU to address structural inefficiencies, ensure market dynamism and support long-term economic growth. While Europe's financial system has expanded in size and complexity, and there have been efforts to diversify and integrate financial markets, progress remains uneven, with fragmented banking systems, regulatory inconsistencies and a lack of capital market depth. Enhancing the global competitiveness of EU financial markets means prioritising regulatory reforms that foster innovation, reduce costs and promote cross-border investments – starting with the robust enforcement of existing rules.



### **Ten years of the SSM: the past, present and future on banking supervision in the Banking Union**

European banking supervision has been operational for ten years as of November 2024. The Single Supervisory Mechanism (SSM) has evolved from a start-up to a mature, well-established, and respected supervisor. Nevertheless, whilst acknowledging the progress that has been made, Europe should not rest on its laurels. As the global financial landscape is continuously evolving, the European framework must naturally also evolve with it. Growing geopolitical tensions, the rise of FinTech and BigTech companies, the ongoing digital transformation, and climate change not only all impact banks but they also add more complexity to the work of supervisors.

To address these challenges, supervisors should enhance their competencies, approaches and tools to stay ahead of evolving market dynamics and to remain aligned with the rapid evolution of technology and the risks that climate change poses. Equally important, ensuring thorough and efficient supervision requires fostering and strengthening collaboration and information-sharing between all relevant authorities.



### Why the EU's enlargement is actually an unsung and successful catch-up story

The pattern of macroeconomic catch-up seen in the EU's enlargement process is a remarkably positive story – if largely unsung and still incomplete. The catch-up achieved thus far constitutes a key backdrop to today's debate about further enlargement. Without the rapid growth of the most recently acceding states it would be impossible for the EU to even contemplate taking in more members that are much poorer than most current EU Member States.



### A war without end – must the EU remain a bystander in the Middle East?

With Israel on the warpath around the region, despite international efforts to shift the conflicts from the battlefield to the negotiation table, there are growing fears about the consequences for the wider world, including in the EU. Whether the US can rein in Israel's military machine is an open question. The record doesn't bode well. Months of US-facilitated talks on ceasefires in Gaza and lately at the UN on Lebanon have had very little effect on Israel. That's because Benjamin Netanyahu has realised that it's in his interests to undermine these negotiations – perhaps believing that endless fighting rather than sitting down to talk helps to keep him and his extremist allies in power. Against this grim background, is there anything that the EU can – or indeed should – do?

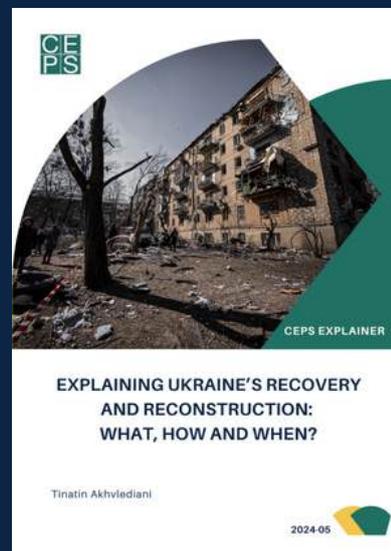




## RUSSIA, UKRAINE AND EUROPEAN SECURITY

### Explaining Ukraine's recovery and reconstruction: what, how and when?

Russia's full-scale invasion of Ukraine has resulted in colossal human loss. According to the World Bank, this has already in 2023 amounted to 26 000 civilian casualties, the displacement of around 3.7 million people internally within Ukraine and around 5.9 million externally in Europe and beyond. The war has pushed 7.1 million people into poverty and reversed 15 years of economic development. This is reflected in the drastic increase in inequality, particularly among women, children, people with disabilities and elderly. What is at stake for Ukraine's reconstruction and what conditions and timelines are necessary for scaling up efforts?



### A battle against time – and against Putin's Russia

With Putin's war against Ukraine, the EU's enlargement policy remains at the top of its foreign policy priorities, with the focus being on both Ukraine and Moldova. This is following the European Council's decision to open accession negotiations with both countries.

But where does this leave the countries of the Western Balkans and their very long journey towards the EU which began over 20 years ago? Will these countries' hopes for much needed political momentum in their accession prospects be fulfilled, despite the repeated delays and the EU's failure to respect its commitments to the region over the past few years?

### Freeze, seize and tax – that's how to make Russia (and its enablers) pay for Ukraine's reconstruction

As Russia's war against Ukraine barrels on, reconstruction costs are mounting. Yet a ballooning defence budget of EUR 40 billion and dwindling international aid could push Ukraine's war-torn economy to the brink.

With President Biden's support package stuck in Congress, the EU's decision to send an annual EUR 12.5 billion in budget support to Ukraine for the next four years is a much-needed injection that will prevent sovereign default. But it won't be sufficient to protect the country from further military onslaught, let alone allow it to 'build back better'.

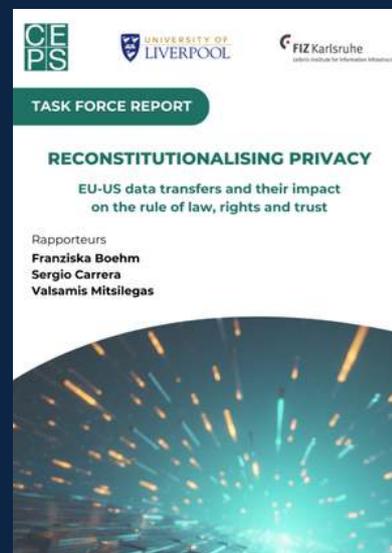


## HUMAN RIGHTS AND JUSTICE

### Reconstitutionalising privacy: EU-US Data transfers and their impacts on the rule of law, rights and trust

Does current US policy offer a level of privacy and rule of law protections that are essentially equivalent to those required in EU law so that transatlantic data transfers are lawful? And can the new EU-US Data Privacy Framework (DPF) be expected to comprehensively satisfy a legal test by the Court of Justice of the European Union?

The current DPF framework still generates profound legal uncertainty. Despite noticeable and welcomed improvements, US policy still does not fully satisfy the essential equivalence test and the Court of Justice's benchmarks.



### Why the EU really need to start worrying about hateful propaganda

Having a strong anti-EU faction within the EU institutions is not just a fever dream anymore – it could become a stark reality. Though there's plenty wrong with the extreme right, we need to talk about its reliance on hate speech as the dangers posed by bigoted political messaging are more severe than what meets the eye.

### A cold, hard look in the mirror: issues and priorities for the EU's area of freedom, security and justice in the wake of Trump 2.0

Following the 2024 US presidential elections, it's time to take stock of the state of democracy, rule of law and fundamental rights in the EU's Area of Freedom, Security and Justice (AFSJ). The EU's leadership now needs to look inward and reflect over whether some of the emerging issues stateside are being appropriately handled on our own soil. This CEPS Explainer focuses on policy areas in the AFSJ where the EU should address significant systemic shortcomings and make effective improvements.



## MIGRATION, ASYLUM AND BORDERS

### Irregularised migration and the next European Commission: ensuring enforcement and intersectional monitoring of the rule of law and fundamental rights

Has the Ursula von der Leyen Commission (2019-24) delivered a new start in EU migration policy? In short, no, the VDL Commission hasn't fulfilled its role as 'Guardian of the Treaties'. A home affairs and criminalisation approach prioritising the policing and expulsion of irregularised people has dominated the Commission's policy agenda. This has been at the expense of upholding the values of the Treaty on the European Union's Article 2 values, robust enforcement of EU legal standards and ensuring dignified treatment and effective justice to every individual.



### Global Asylum and the European Union's Role

What are the characteristics and impacts of emerging international and European Union asylum governance regimes, and what are their policy implications on the EU's role in implementing the United Nations Global Compact on Refugees, which calls for more equitable and effective arrangements for responsibility sharing? This is an especially pressing question as the UN GCR states that it is to be grounded in international refugee protection and international human rights instruments.

### A critical appraisal of the EU's regular migration system: objectifying structurally discriminatory and not aligned with basic EU and international standards

Policy issues impact the EU's current regular migration policy on how people are not from an EU country can move to and stay in the EU through legal channels. EU policy goals, combined with the specific way they are expressed under EU law, result in some main policy problems. In short, a system has been created that objectifies third country nationals, is made up of overly complex and fragmented rules, doesn't sufficiently meet core and basic EU and international legal standards, and can be an indirect cause of third country nationals falling into irregularity.



## INTERNAL MARKET, INDUSTRY, ENTREPRENEURSHIP AND SMEs

### A critical first response to Mario Draghi's competitiveness report

On 9 September 2024, Mario Draghi presented his long-awaited report on the EU economy and EU competitiveness. This is an immense report containing a myriad of proposals to reform and rejuvenate a stagnant and sluggish EU economy, an economy that he claims is fast losing ground to other major global competitors.

The overall message of the Draghi report comes across loud and clear and cannot be easily refuted – that the EU must change, that the status quo cannot hold any longer and that only bold reforms will successfully end the Union's economic malaise.



### Empowering the single market

Last year's celebration of 30 years of the single market never gave equal attention to the failures of the 'not-so-single market'. Empowering the single market is badly needed due to its many shortcomings, its many barriers, various taboos and lingering distortions. If empowered with a medium-term programme, led by the European Council and actively implemented by the Commission and the European Parliament, it could boost the EU economy by some 9 % of EU GDP, and possibly more if greater dynamism is generated via a stimulus of startups, higher R&D investment and a greater use of the new Unitary Patent.

### What 'North Star' for EU industrial policy?

Over the past three decades, EU institutions have gradually shifted towards greater reliance on goal-based strategies. This implies formulating an array of objectives and targets to achieve in the medium to long term, often encompassing economic and social dimensions and gradually incorporating environmental ones.

## **A 'good jobs compass' for the EU's internal market**

The EU and its workforce are experiencing a polycrisis, encompassing many geopolitical, economic, social and climate challenges. Resilience and open strategic autonomy are being increasingly emphasised by EU political leaders and there has been wave of support in favour of greater European solidarity and a 'whatever it takes' mentality since the pandemic and the start of the war in Ukraine. At the same time, European workers are reeling from years of austerity, deregulation, employment insecurity and deteriorating working conditions.

## **The EU according to Draghi**

Mario Draghi's opus magnum doesn't disappoint when it comes to length and ambition and is full of interesting proposals. Yet given the vision it puts forward, it will have no doubt also raise some eyebrows given its emphasis on growth and competitiveness over social and environmental stances. It's also a loud wake-up call that too much might end up being proposed – perhaps too late – and without any form of 'Plan B'.



## **DIVERSITY, EQUALITY AND INCLUSION**

### **Realising the democratic ideal: empowering marginalised voices in deliberative democracy**

Deliberative democracy supports an inclusive, informed, and reasoned approach to participatory government. It promotes discussions that helps citizens make informed decisions by creating spaces for people to share their opinions and explore possible solutions. However, diversity is essential for deliberative democracy to be worthwhile. This CEPS In-depth Analysis aims to engage two primary audiences. First, it offers academics and policymakers a comprehensive overview of the literature on involving marginalised populations in deliberative democracy. Second, the Analysis provides practical guidance for practitioners in deliberative democracy and event organisers who incorporate elements of democratic dialogue.



### **The gender-blind assumptions of the EU's green transition require a reality check**

The European Green Deal is committed to 'leaving no one behind'. However, as shown in a study for the European Parliament, co-authored by CEPS, the Fit for 55 package, a series of legislative measures to align EU legislation with the Green Deal, has paid scant attention to its intersectional and gendered repercussions. It seemingly delegates their management to Member States' social policies.

### **A 'nearly' gender-balanced Commission isn't good enough. It's actually an ominous omen for advancing gender equality in the EU**

During these frantic days at the beginning of a new mandate, at a time when the new College of Commissioners is being formed, Ursula von der Leyen's commitment to achieve full gender balance – shown as being important to her since the very beginning of her first mandate – is not being realised. Despite her request for one male and one female candidate and some last-minute changes, many Member States still only nominated men.

### **Omitting rape from the EU's Directive on combatting violence against women is a huge mistake**

It's always a good time to speak about gender equality and women's and girls' rights. Above all, it's good to talk about it because the EU is probably about to end up with a Directive on combating violence against women that doesn't fully protect women against it. The reason why is very simple – in its current form, which is now 'close to adoption', it miserably falls short of protecting women against rape. This is a major mistake and should be urgently corrected.

### **Hung(a)ry for gender equality deliberation in a conservative EU**

Hungarian women have it tough. Recently, the two highest-positioned female members of the Hungarian government, President Katalin Novák and former Chair of the Committee on European Affairs, Judit Varga, resigned over a scandal where they pardoned a man implicated in paedophilic sexual abuse. Hungary also has one of the lowest EU Gender Equality Index scores and was partly responsible for the recent Directive on combating violence against women and domestic violence not recognising non-consensual sex as rape.





# The year in events

## STAYING THE COURSE TOWARDS EU ENLARGEMENT IN A CONTESTED NEIGHBOURHOOD

By granting candidate status to Ukraine, Moldova and Georgia, the EU has rejected a Russian sphere of influence and instead determined where its future borders should lie. It has been more difficult, however, to change policies to effectively respond to an evolving geopolitical context, which also sees China and other state actors competing for influence.

Throughout the accession process, existing procedural structures have already been pushed to their limits. Challenges include, among other things, the obstructionism by certain Member States that is linked to the divisive issue of EU internal reform. This issue has cost the EU a significant amount of credibility in the Western Balkans and will take years to resolve.

This event marked the beginning of the REUNIR project's investigation into foreign threats to the military, socio-economic and democratic resilience of nine neighbouring countries. It will identify capability shortfalls, gauge local perceptions of the EU's support, and gain insights into political perspectives inside the EU on neighbourhood relations.

Speakers:

**Steven Blockmans**, Senior Research Fellow at CEPS (moderator)

**Eka Tkeshelashvili**, Former Minister of Foreign Affairs of Georgia

**Nikola Dimitrov**, Former Minister of Foreign Affairs of North Macedonia

**Christophe Hillion**, Professor, University of Oslo

**Zoltan Martinusz**, Director, RELEX.3 - Eastern Europe and Asia, Council of the EU

**Michael Rupp**, Team Leader for 'Coordination of Association and Enlargement processes', DG NEA, EC

## ESCAPING THE MIDDLE-INCOME TRAP: PATHWAYS TO SUCCESS

Many middle-income countries have set themselves a race against time: achieve high-income status within the next two to three decades. However, their odds are not encouraging, given headwinds in the global economy. Most countries that have risen from low-income to middle-income status have become stuck in a “middle-income trap”. Yet several pathways to success remain wide open.

This edition of the World Development Report identified what countries can do to escape the middle-income trap and, in doing so, it illuminated the development pathways open to all countries.

During this event, World Bank Chief Economist and Senior Vice President Indermit Gill presented some of the preliminary findings of the [report](#). We reflected on policy implications and hard choices required for countries to leap from middle-income to high-income status.

Speakers:

**Cinzia Alcidi**, Senior Research Fellow and Head of the Economic Policy and Jobs & Skills units at CEPS (moderator)

**Indermit Gill**, World Bank Chief Economist and Senior Vice President

**Andreas Kopp**, Senior Research Fellow at CEPS



**Indermit Gill**

World Bank Chief Economist  
and Senior Vice President

## EU CLIMATE POLICY PRIORITIES FOR 2024-2029

In the 2024-29 institutional cycle, the EU will roll out a new plan to support sustainable competitiveness while meeting its climate ambitions. Which will be the key priorities in the climate policy domain? How can we avoid that the EU loses its competitive edge in green technologies? What lessons can be drawn from COP29?

In this event, CEPS hosted the Director-General of the European Commission's Directorate-General Climate Action (DG CLIMA) Kurt Vandenberghe to discuss the European Commission's priorities in the field of climate policy for 2024-2029.

Speakers:

**Vasileios Rizos**, Head of the Energy, Resources and Climate Change unit at CEPS (moderator)

**Kurt Vandenberghe**, Director General, DG CLIMA, European Commission

## FUTURE-PROOFING THE SINGLE MARKET: A PRESENTATION OF THE HIGH-LEVEL INDEPENDENT REPORT BY ENRICO LETTA



**Enrico Letta**

Former Italian Prime Minister  
© European Union, 2024

The EU's Single Market is the 'crown jewel' of the Union, yet it remains an incomplete project in many respects. Faced with an evolving geopolitical and technological context that brings to the fore challenges such as climate change, the need for resilient supply chains, and an inclusive economy – the Single Market must adapt and overcome.

In response to this, the January-June 2024 Belgian Presidency of the EU tasked former Italian Prime Minister Enrico Letta with drafting a comprehensive report. This report was presented to the Council of the EU on 17 April. Just two days later, on 19 April, Enrico Letta joined us at CEPS for a presentation and discussion of the main findings of the report.

Speakers:

**Andrea Renda**, Director of Research at CEPS

**Enrico Letta**, former Italian Prime Minister

## THE EUROPEAN PARLIAMENT ELECTIONS: CRITICAL COALITIONS, TRANSPARENCY TROUBLES, AND PRIME PICKS

As the 'grand coalition' of EPP and S&D reached its end in 2019, we reflected on the decisive coalitions that pushed through legislation and discussed whether Renew fulfilled its predicted role as 'kingmaker'. We looked further into likely coalitions that could shape the EU's policy agenda in the 2024-29 term, and what that means for the EU's agenda and the key role that the EPP is to play – also in response to the rise of the far-right.

Following multiple scandals, the EP has revised its internal transparency rules, and the institutions have initiated the creation of an inter-institutional ethics body. The panel discussed whether this was sufficient to prevent another Qatargate and whether the EP has restored lost trust ahead of the elections.

We discussed the inter-institutional aspects of the EP elections and debated the potential conditions for the EP's support. Additionally, we asked whether the lead candidate procedure is still functional – and how else one could determine the (next) Commission President.

Speakers:

**Sophia Russack**, Researcher at CEPS (moderator)

**Klaus Welle**, former Secretary General of the European Parliament

**Eddy Wax**, Politics reporter, POLITICO

**Sophie in't Veld**, MEP, Renew

## A STRONGER MOLDOVA: OVERCOMING HYBRID THREATS ON THE EU PATH

Moldova stands at a pivotal moment. The recent presidential elections and the referendum to enshrine EU accession in the constitution showcased Moldova's democratic resilience, but also revealed the Kremlin's unprecedented hybrid aggression, aimed at subordinating Moldova and leveraging it against Ukraine.

These elections were a unique stress test, exposing boundless interference tactics—offering valuable lessons Moldova is ready to share. While the country has grown stronger, its resilience is not infinite. With each step Moldova takes closer to the EU, Russia intensifies its pressure, stretching Moldova's capacity to its limits.

This discussion with President Maia Sandu distilled Moldova's recent experiences, emphasise the urgency of safeguarding its path, and explore the shared responsibility for EU security to ensure Moldova's transformation into a strong, democratic state and future EU member.

Speakers:

**Tinatin Akhvediani**, Research Fellow at CEPS

**H.E. Maia Sandu**, President of the Republic of Moldova



**H.E. Maia Sandu**

President of the Republic of  
Moldova



## THE COUNCIL PRESIDENCY: HUNGARIAN PRIORITIES



**H.E. Bálint Ódor**

Ambassador, Permanent  
Representation of Hungary to  
the EU

On 1 July 2024, Hungary took over from Belgium to assume the rotating presidency of the Council of the European Union and finish the 18-month trio period. How will this change in the EU institutions influence Hungary's priorities for the Council presidency? And how will the presidency affect the overall policy of the Hungarian government?

In this event, CEPS welcomed His Excellency, Ambassador Bálint Ódor, to present the Hungarian priorities just two weeks before the official start of the presidency.

Speakers:

**Karel Lannoo**, CEPS' CEO

**H.E. Bálint Ódor**, Ambassador, Permanent Representation of Hungary to the European Union

## NEW COMMISSION, NEW PRIORITIES: TAKING FINANCIAL POLICY FORWARD UNDER VON DER LEYEN II

Financial markets have experienced heavy regulatory activity over the last 15 years. This intense rule-making rollercoaster raises the question – what's next? On top of this, the EU's financial sector has been losing its edge, exemplified by the debate over EU capital markets' waning competitiveness.

Set up in October 2023 to examine how the financial landscape is evolving and what challenges lie ahead, CEPS – along with its sister organisations ECMI and ECRI – brought together a balanced group of experts, financial sector representatives, policymakers, supervisors and academics to exchange views in a series of five closed-door meetings.

The resulting report analyses European financial market developments over the last few decades and reviews EU level achievements in financial market regulation and related areas, as well as the priorities emerging from this analysis. The report puts forward concrete recommendations on improving the regulatory and legislative framework and enhancing EU financial markets' competitiveness in the hope that they will be duly considered and taken forward by the new European Commission as it begins its work.

Speakers:

**Karel Lannoo**, CEPS' CEO

**Jesper Berg**, former Director General, Danish Financial Supervisory Authority

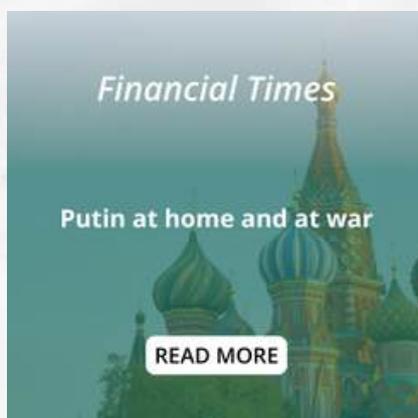
**John Berrigan**, Director General, DG FISMA, European Commission

**Judith Arnal**, Associate Senior Research Fellow at CEPS

**Eva Maria Poptcheva**, former MEP and Vice-Chair of ECON Committee

# CEPS in the media

In 2024, our research has received attention from prestigious outlets such as The Financial Times, Euronews, Politico, The Guardian, and more. These media mentions not only underscore the significance of our work but also amplify our global influence. Below, you will find a curated selection of our most important media mentions from 2024.



*The Wall Street Journal*

The Disruptive Bank Deal  
Everyone Wanted  
—Until It Happened

READ MORE

*Euronews*

Draghi's competitiveness  
report:  
Can Europe heed the call  
to action?

READ MORE

*Euractiv*

New term, new EU  
foreign policy?

READ MORE

*Politico*

Trump's courting of the  
crypto industry could spell  
trouble for Europe

READ MORE

*The Washington Post*

Georgia protests gather  
momentum after pro-  
Russia party suspends  
EU bid

READ MORE

*Financial Times*

EU must avoid quick fix to  
market fragmentation

READ MORE

*Georgian TV*

EU's response to  
Russian law

WATCH HERE

*Euronews*

Migration set to dominate  
EU summit as calls for  
outsourcing grows louder

WATCH HERE

*CNBC*

Macron's aim is to  
discredit extreme right,  
says Centre for European  
Policy Studies CEO

WATCH HERE

# The year in projects

We worked on 148 projects over the course of 2024 – encompassing initiatives that finished during the year, as well as those that are currently ongoing or scheduled to only formally begin in 2025.

As in previous years, CEPS is also participating in several Horizon Europe projects, the EU's largest Research and Innovation programme to date, spanning from 2021 to 2027. On top of these, we've also been actively expanding our 'horizons' to work on a slew of new initiatives - please see below an overview of some of our most prominent project activities in 2024.



## TRANSIENCE

**Modelling industry transition to climate neutrality, sustainability and circularity**

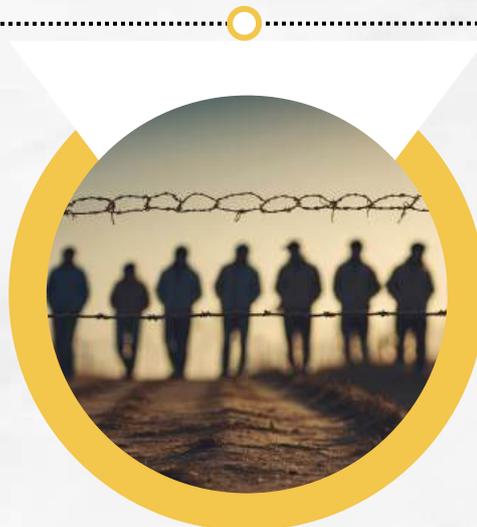


TRANSIENCE aims to characterise and assess circularity principles and measures *vis-à-vis* decarbonisation by looking at EU industry's twin transition. It will produce MIC3, an open-source model ecosystem to assess industrial circularity, decarbonisation and sustainability. It will integrate interoperable modules of the socioeconomic, service and product, material, industrial, energy and environmental aspects of European industry's transformation. MIC3 will finally be used as a scenario modelling tool to produce diverse pathways towards a more sustainable EU industrial sector.

CEPS will mainly work on stakeholder mapping, understanding their needs for new capacities, to create a robust stakeholder engagement and strategy.

## I-CLAIM

**Improving the living and labour conditions of irregularised migrants households in Europe**



I-CLAIM investigates the living conditions of irregularised migrants' households in Europe. It aims to reveal the spectrum of irregularity and shed light of the day-to-day experience of migrants with an irregular, unstable or precarious legal status. The project develops the concept of 'irregularity assemblages' to understand how migrants' irregularity results from the interplay of asylum laws, policies and practices, the labour market and welfare regimes, as well as political, media and public narratives. This framework will facilitate the consortium's work and allow for detailed policy recommendations.

## **REUNIR**

### **Future-proofing EU Security, Enlargement and Eastern neighbourhood policies**



Russia's 2022 invasion of Ukraine has ended the post-Cold War European security order, creating new realities in countries neighbouring the EU and shattering illusions in several member states about the Kremlin's true intentions in wider Europe. REUNIR's ultimate objective is to provide evidence-based policy recommendations to strengthen the foreign policy arsenal of the EU to support the countries of the Eastern neighbourhood and Western Balkans to withstand malign foreign influencing and stay the course on the European integration track.

REUNIR examines how the EU can strengthen its foreign and security toolboxes to bolster the resilience and transformation of (potential) candidate countries in a new age of international relations.

REUNIR's foresight approach takes the fundamental uncertainty and openness of alternative futures seriously. REUNIR empirically assesses foreign threats to the military, socio-economic and democratic resilience of nine neighbouring countries, determines capability shortfalls, maps local perceptions of the EU's support and political perspectives inside the EU on neighbourhood relations.

CEPS is the project coordinator and will lead the work on coordination, data management and the ethical framework, and on political exploitation of socio-economic interdependencies: threats and resilience.

## NEUROCLIMA

**Developing and assessing novel educational and user-centered actions towards scaling up behavioural change and climate resilience through an AI-enhanced solution**



NEUROCLIMA aims to establish systemic transformations towards climate resilience by creating a nervous system connecting policymakers, institutions and citizens based on innovative human-AI decision support.

This system will be reactive and proactive to both citizen's concerns, environmental changes and policymakers' proposals, providing a bidirectional relationship between citizens and institutions. Rigorous research and a monitoring mechanism for the EU Adaptation Strategy and the Mission on Adaptation to Climate Change will be needed to identify and leverage tipping points. The system's final goal is to propose engagement and assessment frameworks and toolkits to suggest concrete recommendations towards systemic change and the establishment of a more resilient EU.

CEPS will mainly contribute to conducting a legal and ethical assessment of the tools being developed and establishing guidelines. CEPS will also tailor AGGREGATOR to support an observatory for the EU Adaptation Strategy on Climate Change policies. Finally, CEPS will be testing the tools and conduct a market analysis to evaluate the transferability of NEUROCLIMA results.

## EU R&I and Health Policy to Tackle Global Challenges



This project aims to enhance CEPS' research activities in the field of research and innovation (R&I) policy, women's health innovation and the EU's global role in health governance. The objective is to make concrete contributions to address global challenges, increase the salience of these topics in the policy debate and promote deeper knowledge and collaboration with Low and Middle-Income Countries (LMICs).

This project is structured around two pillars: R&I activities and health policy research. The project's main initiatives include foresight workshops, a Health Policy Observatory, a Gender Policy Task Force, and efforts to reduce barriers to health innovation. The project seeks to enhance EU R&I instruments for global challenges via large-scale, multi-stakeholder collaborations. It also aims to reposition HERA as a global health leader by addressing its current limitations in international engagement and funding.

## European Ecosystem of Excellence in AI



The EU lacks a coordinated approach for developing AI, leading to a fragmented and inefficient AI ecosystem. There is a missed opportunity to estimate the demand for skills leading to 'good jobs' and creating long-term prosperity. This project, led by CEPS, will allow for the implementation of several initiatives aimed at promoting the creation of a European Ecosystem of Excellence in AI.

The project's main initiative is to produce an 'Atlas of AI', mapping the EU's AI landscape and market. The project will contribute to evidence-based policymaking through more precise information on the AI ecosystem and ways to connect existing AI hubs. It will make proposals on how to build the AI Ecosystem of Excellence in AI, enhance our understanding of the required skills for the future AI workforce and increase the public's overall understanding of AI's importance.

## Formation, operation and maintenance of the EU Observatory of Payments in commercial transactions



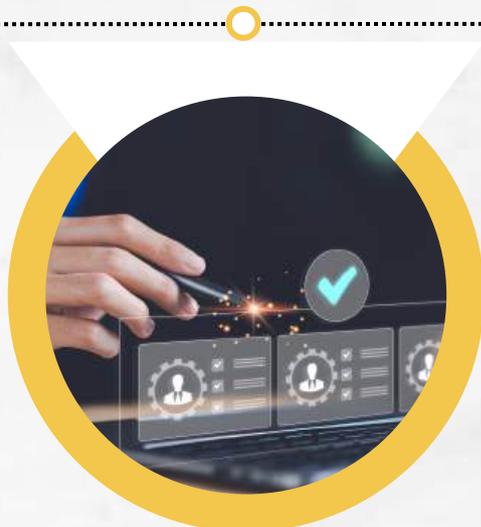
Late payments in commercial transactions have multiple damaging effects, particularly amongst SMEs, causing one out of four bankruptcies in the European Union. To ensure the viability of European businesses, especially SMEs, and to combat late payments, the European Commission has put in place in 2011 the Directive 2011/7/EU, setting rules, penalties and compensations for late payments. More than 10 years later, the Commission has decided to review this Directive.

The European Commission has contracted CEPS, in partnership with VVA, to set up the EU Observatory of Payments in Commercial Transactions (EU Payment Observatory) to support the enforcement of the new Late Payments Directive.

The EU Payment Observatory monitors trends and developments on payment performance and behaviour in commercial transactions in the EU. The Observatory collects, analyses and disseminates data, provides a repository of relevant initiatives and policy documents, and through its regular activities presents an overview of trends and developments in payment behaviour across the EU.

## GPAI

### Generative AI and the Future of Work dialogue



The emergence of powerful generative AI systems has prompted a reconsideration of many previous findings and predictions as recent studies show that AI will be able to automate both routine and non-routine tasks. This project aims to build a substantive body of evidence and discuss the impact of generative AI on workers across sectors and geographies. This project brings together partners from the EU, the US, Brazil, India and Kenya. They will focus on three topics: working conditions, generative AI's impact on skills, and consequences for job design.

The project's objectives include gathering evidence on the current and upcoming impacts of generative AI on the organisation of work in different sectors; assessing the likely impact of generative AI on job quality in different sectors - and providing recommendations on how future jobs should be designed to enable human-AI complementarity and decent employment conditions.

## AIOLIA

### Next generation AI and Human Behaviour: promoting an ethical approach



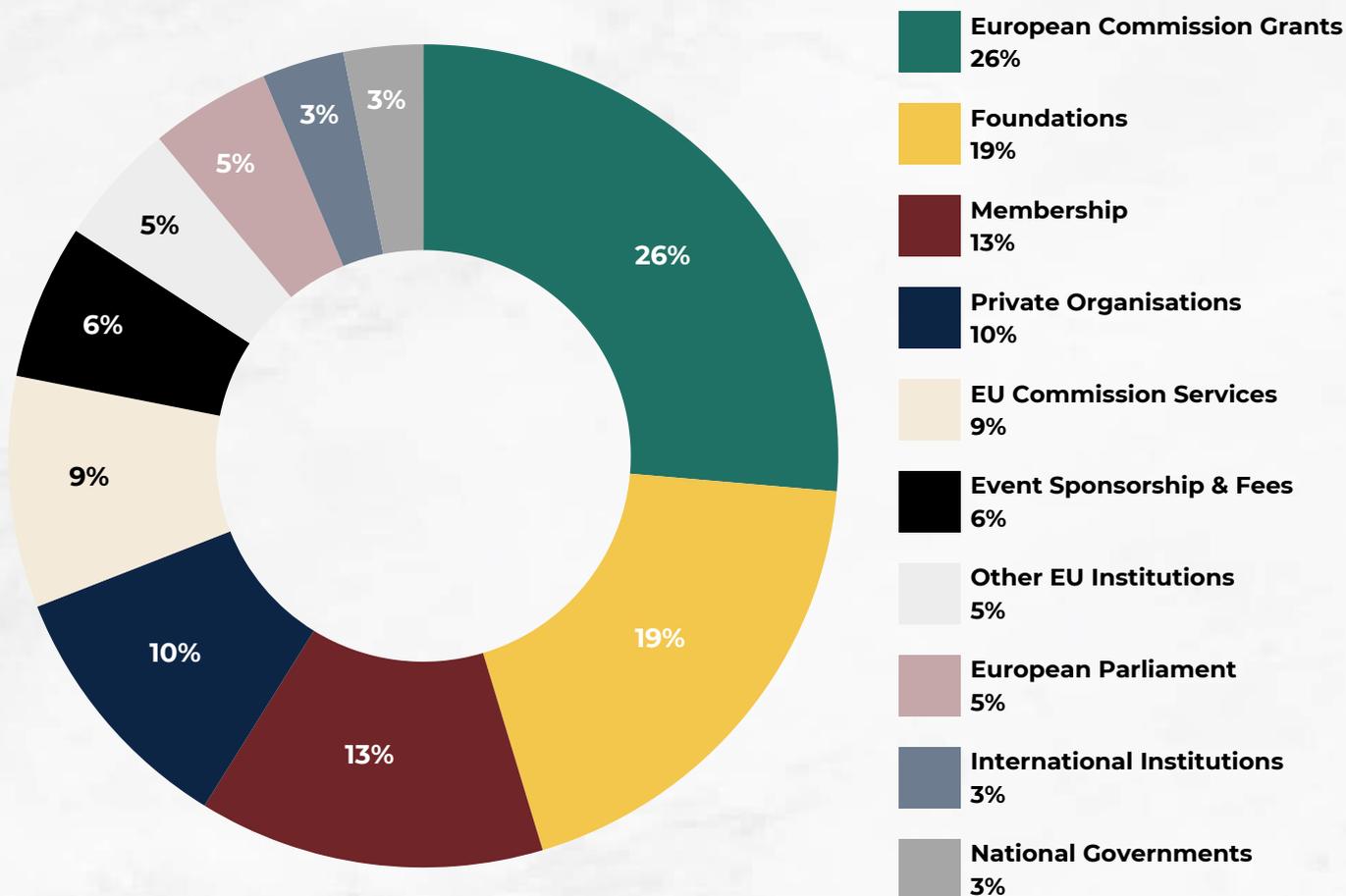
AIOLIA provides answers to the challenges posed by the operational interpretation of the EU AI Act and global AI regulations. It translates high-level principles into actionable guidelines that bridge the gap between AI ethics and their practical application in engineering. AIOLA will craft inclusive training material, ranging from lectures, long and short videos, mock reviews, a podcast and a chatbot that will teach AI ethics.

This project will start in 2025.

# Financial overview

CEPS' revenues come from a wide variety of sources, which is fundamental to ensuring our independence. Just over 45% of our net income originates from calls for tenders and grants from the EU institutions. This figures includes activities from six H2020 projects, 17 Horizon Europe projects, various DGs & Committees within the Commission and Parliament, and other EU agencies. In line with our strategic agenda we have increased the income originating from foundation funded projects to 19%. We received a further 14 % from membership fees that include a diverse group of corporations and institutions.

The remaining income was generated through projects with private organisations (10%), international institutions (3%), national governments (3%) as well as through organising events, such as Ideas Lab. This breakdown does not include revenue earmarked for CEPS' various project partners.



# Membership programme

Our membership network comprises approximately 170 members from industry, institutions and associations across diverse sectors and location. At CEPS, we greatly value this broad membership base as it serves multiple vital purposes. Not only does it bolster our mission to 'think ahead for Europe' and helps to uphold our independence, but it also enables us to stay attuned to Europe's ever-evolving landscape. Additionally, our members act as invaluable sounding boards, essential for testing the feasibility of our policy recommendations.

It's imperative to note that CEPS steadfastly declines any donation that might compromise our commitment to absolute independence in setting our research priorities. Moreover, we ensure that no member can contribute more than 2.5 % of CEPS' annual income, further safeguarding our impartiality.

By joining CEPS, members lend their support to our pursuit of independent and high-quality research that significantly contributes to shaping policy dialogues at both the European and global levels. In return, our members gain exclusive opportunities. These include direct interaction with EU decision-makers in a multitude of settings, both formal and informal. Members participate in well-informed and balanced discussions concerning European affairs, enabling them to access expert insights into political issues and legislative proposals.

If you would like to find out more about CEPS membership, visit our [Membership page](#) or email [laura.nicolas@ceps.eu](mailto:laura.nicolas@ceps.eu)



# Main membership benefits



## KNOWLEDGE

Deepen your insights of current and future policy implications by accessing briefings from CEPS researchers. You will also have access to our members-only insights exclusive summaries outlining the main context, takeaways and other relevant information from our latest publications.

## RESOURCES

Learn and exchange views on the most important EU policy developments by being part of CEPS Task Forces and CEPS' main annual event, Ideas Lab.



## NETWORK

Expand the visibility of your organisation by engaging with the CEPS network. CEPS hosts regular gatherings of its corporate and institutional members representing industry, regulators, institutions, associations, and academia.

## EVENTS

Engage in thought-provoking discussions with diverse stakeholders while taking advantage of complimentary access to CEPS Ideas Lab, exclusive thematic roundtable sessions, high-profile speaker events, expert briefings, and members-only webinars.



## NEWS

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		PREMIUM CORPORATE	CORPORATE	ASSOCIATION	PREMIUM INSTITUTIONAL	INSTITUTIONAL	INDIVIDUAL
	FEE	€30,000	€15,000	€10,000	€7,000	FROM €1,000 TO €2,500*	€300
RESEARCH	BRIEFINGS PER YEAR	4	2	1	2	1	
	MEMBERS-ONLY INSIGHTS						
	TASK FORCES	FREE ACCESS	50% DISCOUNT	50% DISCOUNT	50% DISCOUNT	25% DISCOUNT	
EVENTS	IDEAS LAB	PRIORITY SAVE THE DATE 10 GUESTS 1 SPEAKER	5 GUESTS	5 GUESTS	PRIORITY SAVE THE DATE 5 GUESTS	3 GUESTS	1 GUEST
	HIGH-LEVEL PUBLIC EVENTS	PRIORITY ACCESS AND RESERVED SEATS	PRIORITY ACCESS	PRIORITY ACCESS	PRIORITY ACCESS AND RESERVED SEATS	PRIORITY ACCESS	PRIORITY ACCESS
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\*Depending on size. €500 for civil society organisations.

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# About CEPS

The Centre for European Policy Studies (CEPS) stands as a preeminent think tank and a prominent forum facilitating discussions on EU affairs. Our institution boasts an unparalleled in-house research capacity, couple with an expansive network of partner institutes.

We serve as an impartial platform, fostering dialogues and proffering viable solutions for EU policymaking. This is accomplished through a spectrum of initiatives, including research projects, the publication of findings, the facilitation of task forces, and the organization of regular events and workshops.

At CEPS, our researchers are distinguished experts who offer profound insights and astute policy analysis spanning a wide spectrum of areas. These encompass economic and financial matters, strategies for enhanced regulation, the burgeoning digital economy, trade policies, energy and climate-related issues, as well as the complex domain of foreign policy, among others. Through our multifaceted approach, we endeavour to contribute significantly to the development of well-informed and effective policies in the European Union and beyond.





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