

# EPFMA

## Bulletin



91

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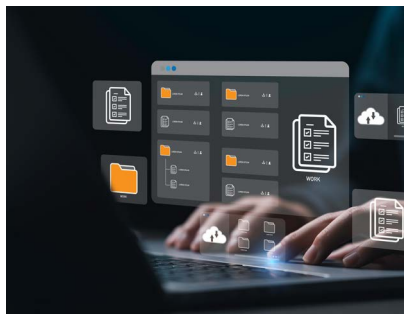
European Parliament Former Members Association

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### New access rules for former MEPs from 1 May 2025

In order to facilitate the daily activation process of former Members' badges, as of 1 May 2025, a new simplified daily activation system has been introduced. Former Members no longer have to notify in advance their visit to the European Parliament. On the day of arrival, former MEPs have to badge via terminals with badge readers (see image). If you do not have an EP access card as a former MEP, you are invited to go to an accreditation centre to request one. If you wish to access the EP by car, you will still need to send an email to [upaa-accr@europarl.europa.eu](mailto:upaa-accr@europarl.europa.eu) to activate your badge remotely.



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## CALL FOR CONTRIBUTIONS

The Editorial Board would like to thank all those members who took the time to contribute to this issue of the FMA Bulletin. We would like to draw your attention to the fact that the decision to include an article lies with the FMA Editorial Board and, in principle, contributions from members who are not up-to-date with the payment of the membership fee will not be included. Due to the long time lag between the call for contribution and the publication, some articles may be outdated.

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# MESSAGE FROM THE PRESIDENT

Dear Members,

As we reach the midpoint of 2025, our Association continues to thrive with vitality, engaging actively with the challenges and opportunities that define the evolving European landscape. It is my pleasure to share with you the highlights of our activities over the past months and introduce the content of this edition of the FMA Bulletin, which focuses on a topic of growing importance: Artificial intelligence and data ownership. Expert insights offer an authoritative analysis of the critical questions posed by artificial intelligence and data governance.

This spring also marks the 75th anniversary of the Schuman Declaration, which serves as a timely reminder that visionary political choices can shape the long-term direction of our societies. In the current context of geopolitical tensions, democratic fatigue and digital transformation, the values underlying the Declaration (solidarity, cooperation and peace through common institutions) resonate more strongly than ever. They remain an essential reference point for addressing the complex challenges facing Europe today and continue to inspire our commitment, as former members, to a united and democratic Europe.

Since January, our community has been particularly active, demonstrating former Members' commitment to contributing to public debate and promoting European values worldwide. I would like to express my heartfelt thanks to all those who have participated in our programmes and initiatives.

Our activities in early 2025 have been marked by the success of our FMA visit to Poland in March. The visit offered valuable opportunities for dialogue on European unity and security, at a time when these themes are increasingly pertinent.

We are proud to share the reflections of several participating members, offering a rich and multifaceted perspective on the discussions that took place in Warsaw.

In parallel, the EP to Campus programme continues to flourish. On Europe Day (9 May), we hosted an online lecture in collaboration with Lutsk National Technical University in Ukraine, where former MEP Alain Lamassoure shared insights on the workings of Parliament and its role in contemporary Europe. Through initiatives like these, the FMA contributes to strengthening democratic dialogue and understanding among younger generations across Europe and beyond. The collaboration with the Historical Archives of the European Union provided another opportunity to reflect on the European project's foundations and future direction with secondary school students.

We have also strengthened our cooperation with international partners. In April, we had the pleasure of meeting with former Canadian parliamentarians at the European University Institute's School of Transnational Governance in Florence, underlining the importance of transatlantic dialogue. In this edition, you will find a detailed and engaging report of the Canadian Association of Former Parliamentarians' visit to Italy, coordinated with great dedication by Vice-President Monica Baldi.

Looking ahead, we are pleased to announce upcoming events such as our FMA librorum on 3 July, and the FMA visit to Denmark, scheduled for 5 to 7 November, which will further deepen our discussions on European identity and resilience.

Last but not least, I am very pleased to offer a warm welcome to the elected or re-elected Board members of our Association, following the

elections held on 21 May 2025 during our annual general assembly. Their expertise and commitment will help drive the FMA's future initiatives and ensure that our mission to promote parliamentary democracy and European unity continues. You can find a full overview of the members of the Management Committee in the 'FMA at work' section. I would like to thank all the candidates for their interest in actively contributing to the Association's activities.

A special word of thanks goes to our dear outgoing Board member, Mr Miguel Angel Martinez, whose journey is emblematic of the values that have defined the European project. From his early days as a passionate advocate for social justice, to his tenure as a key figure in the European Parliament, Mr Martinez has left an indelible mark on the European political landscape. In an era marked by challenges that transcend national borders, we will continue to draw inspiration from his legacy.

As ever, I invite former Members of the European Parliament to join the FMA. Your experience and vision remain essential in safeguarding and strengthening Europe's democratic model. Our Association continues to offer a platform for reflection, dialogue and meaningful action.

Wishing you all an enjoyable read and looking forward to seeing many of you at our upcoming events.

With my very best regards,

**Dr. Klaus Hänsch**  
FMA President



## Key facts

### **The EU must defend its interests on the global stage**

*(April session - P10\_TA(2025)0057)*

The European Parliament urges stronger EU action in response to global geopolitical challenges, including Russia's aggression, Middle East conflicts and rising great-power competition. MEPs call for faster and increased military and political support for Ukraine, robust security guarantees, and enhanced cooperation with NATO and the US. They advocate for greater EU presence in the Middle East and a common strategy. Parliament also supports raising common debt to strengthen EU defence capabilities and calls for unity and assertiveness in EU foreign and security policy.

### **Sustainability and due diligence: MEPs agree to delay application of new rules**

*(April session - P10\_TA(2025)0064)*

The European Parliament voted to delay the application of new EU due diligence and sustainability reporting rules. The decision, part of broader efforts to simplify regulations and boost competitiveness, grants large companies an extra year, until 2028, to comply. Smaller listed firms will follow a year later. Member states now have until July 2027 to transpose the directive into national law. The proposal, endorsed by a strong majority, still awaits final approval by the Council to enter into force.

### **MEPs adopt their roadmap for supporting energy-intensive industries**

*(April session - P10\_TA(2025)0065)*

The European Parliament urges measures to strengthen the competitiveness of energy-intensive industries like chemicals, steel and cement, while supporting their transition to cleaner technologies. MEPs stress the need for a cost-effective shift, lower energy costs and electrification. They call for faster permitting, simplified rules and better access to raw materials to attract investment. The resolution also highlights addressing unfair competition and supporting affected workers. Parliament insists urgent action is needed to protect jobs, boost innovation and prevent carbon leakage.

### **Parliament's priorities for the EU's post-2027 long-term budget**

*(May session - P10\_TA(2025)0090)*

The European Parliament has outlined its priorities for the EU's 2028–2034 long-term budget, calling for a more ambitious and flexible framework to meet today's geopolitical, economic and environmental challenges. MEPs reject the "one national plan" model and mega-funds merging existing programmes, instead urging for transparency, strong parliamentary oversight, and targeted investment. They emphasize the need for increased defence, crisis-response capacity, and continued support for cohesion and green policies, while insisting on rule-of-law conditionality and new EU revenue sources to ensure sustainable funding.

### **MEPs call for bolder EU action on water resilience**

*(May session - P10\_TA(2025)0091)*

The European Parliament has called for an ambitious EU Water Resilience Strategy to tackle increasing water-related challenges. MEPs demand binding sectoral water efficiency and abstraction targets, stronger action against pollution—including a phase-out of PFAS—and improved preparedness for droughts and floods. They urge dedicated funding for modern infrastructure, sustainable management and innovative technologies like AI and smart irrigation. The strategy, expected by summer 2025, aims to protect health, ecosystems, and economic resilience amid growing climate and resource pressures across Europe.

### **Parliament encourages Kosovo and Serbia to advance their EU accession reforms**

*(May session - P10\_TA(2025)0093-94)*

The European Parliament urges Kosovo and Serbia to advance EU accession reforms. Kosovo must strengthen judicial reforms, fight foreign interference and uphold inclusive governance, while Serbia must improve rule of law, media freedom and combat corruption. MEPs stress the importance of normalising Belgrade-Pristina relations and implementing existing agreements. They also call for investigations into the Novi Sad train station collapse and alleged protester repression in Serbia.

### **Human rights breaches in Tanzania, Russia and Tibet**

*(May session - P10\_TA(2025)0095-96-97)*

The European Parliament condemned human rights violations in Tanzania, Russia and Tibet. It demanded the release of Tanzanian opposition leader Tundu Lissu and called for fair elections. MEPs denounced Russia's forced deportation of Ukrainian children as a genocidal strategy and urged their safe return. In Tibet, MEPs condemned China's repression, demanded an independent investigation into Tulkun Dorje's death, and urged the release of religious prisoners. Parliament also called for EU sanctions against those responsible for rights abuses in Tibet.

### **European Parliament endorses new screening rules for foreign investment in EU**

*(May session - P10\_TA(2025)0102)*

The European Parliament has adopted new rules to strengthen the screening of foreign investments in the EU. Screening will now be mandatory for all member states in sensitive sectors like media, raw materials, and transport infrastructure. The European Commission gains power to act independently, especially in cases of disagreement between countries. The law also includes indirect foreign investments. The goal is to safeguard security and public order while keeping the EU market open and competitive. Negotiations with the Council will follow.

### **Parliament approves new tariffs on Russian and Belarusian agricultural goods**

*(May session - P10\_TA(2025)0109)*

The European Parliament approved higher tariffs on Russian and Belarusian agricultural products, including sugar, flour, and fertilisers, to reduce EU dependency and limit funding for Russia's war on Ukraine. The new regulation introduces a 6.5% tariff on fertilisers, rising to €430 per tonne by 2028. These measures aim to boost EU fertiliser production and encourage market diversification. The Commission will monitor price impacts and protect the internal market. Parliament now awaits Council approval for the regulation to enter into force.

## Other main dossiers discussed in the plenary sessions were:

01.04.25

The European Parliament approved **financial aid packages** for **Egypt** (€4 billion) and **Jordan** (€500 million) to support economic stability, reforms, and EU interests in a volatile region.

The funds' release is subject to **Egypt's satisfactory implementation of the International Monetary Fund (IMF) programme** and other policy measures to be agreed in a memorandum between the EU and the Egyptian authorities.

02.04.25

Parliament approved a **new EU-Guinea-Bissau fisheries protocol**, allowing 41 EU vessels to fish until 2029. The €100+ million deal **supports sustainable fishing** and aims to **combat illegal practices**.

03.04.25

The European Parliament condemned **human rights abuses in Cameroon, Iran, and Belarus**. MEPs urged press freedom in Cameroon, an end to executions in Iran, and asset freezes targeting Lukashenka's regime to support repression victims.

06.05.25

The EU approved €8 million in **aid for 2,400 Van Hool workers** dismissed after the company's bankruptcy. The support includes **job-search help and training**, funded through the **European Globalisation Adjustment Fund**.

07.05.25

Parliament says **Türkiye's EU accession** process must remain frozen due to democratic backsliding, protest crackdowns, and **non-compliance with EU values**, despite Türkiye's strategic importance and public support for EU integration.

08.05.25

Parliament approved **flexibility measures for carmakers**, allowing them to average CO2-emissions from 2025–2027 to meet targets, supporting the automotive sector amid rapid technological shifts and global competition.

08.05.25

MEPs approved changing the **EU wolf status** from "strictly protected" to "**protected**" to align with the Bern Convention, allowing member states more flexibility to **manage growing wolf populations** while ensuring conservation.

08.05.25

Parliament approved **extending EU gas storage rules to 2027**, lowering the fill target to 83% with flexible deadlines, aiming to reduce prices and proposing a **full embargo on Russian gas imports**.

MEPs introduced several amendments to ease tensions in the gas market, as speculation surrounding the existing mandatory 90% fill rate target by 1 November each year was driving the cost of refilling during the summer.

08.05.25

The European Parliament approved **extending duty-free access for Ukrainian imports**, especially steel, to support Ukraine's economy amid war. The measure aims to strengthen mutual EU-Ukraine trade ties.

The new regulation will enter into force for three years, until June 2028, once an agreement has been reached with the Council. The Commission is currently working on a **longer-term solution** to offer **economic certainty for EU-Ukraine trade**.

22.05.25

The European Parliament backed proposals to simplify the **EU's Carbon Border Adjustment Mechanism (CBAM)**, introducing a 50-tonne threshold that exempts 90% of importers, mainly SMEs, while still covering 99% of CO2 emissions from key imports like steel and cement.

The changes aim to **reduce administrative burdens** without weakening environmental goals.

For more information, please visit:

<http://www.europarl.europa.eu/news/en/news-room/plenary>



## ART AND THE BEAUTY OF LIFELONG LEARNING

I have always been inspired by the paintings of Van Gogh because of the beauty of nature, the paintings of Rembrandt because of the interplay of light and shadow, the paintings of Monet, because of the fantasy of colours. Visiting museums from Vienna to Bilbao, from Amsterdam to Florence, or Rome to London, each time it allows new inspirations to ripened in me.

It is one thing to admire the stories written by our European famous paintings, yet to go into the National Gallery of Slovenia in order to learn how to paint oneself is a completely different experience. Attempting to make art ourselves requires so much bravery, it is an unknown and at the same time attractive field. Those of us who survived the communist regime still know the voices of that time around learning: just listen, don't comment, there is only one truth, follow the prescribed models, there is no freedom of creation. And drawing? - that's not for you.....

Even without the experience of a strict regime entering the creative world of art is so much more difficult because deep inside there are voices saying: 'You don't know this. Stick to what you know. This is not for you.'

Self-expression through drawing is, at least for me, something completely different from expression through speech. It is much harder, more emotional and in a way more sophisticated. What keeps me there however is that in life it is worth trying unknown areas.

In a sense Art and Politics are both about change and they have always been connected. Centuries ago, a painting was the only visual historical source, usually painted with the eyes of the victor when it came to war.

**"In a sense Art and Politics are both about change and they have always been connected."**

So creating, not just observing, is an important part of lifelong learning that feeds the beauty of curiosity and gives inspiration for new creations. From the initial basic steps of learning colour shades and the skill of applying them to the canvas, working on a drawing becomes a pleasure and a meditation at the same time.

The drawing draws the creator into the story, which is drawn step by step on the canvas. In the past I wrote books, among other things, but now I draw stories instead of writing them. And the narratives are not smaller.

To draw the home of a friend's ancestors, surrounded as it was at that time by a meadow and horses, with a blooming lime tree in front of the house and children playing in the yard encapsulates more than one life, more than one time.

Under the guidance of the internationally renowned painter Niko Arnikis, I created, among other things, a portrait of a boy based on Rembrandt's motifs, which I am attaching, based on a living model.

Technique oil on canvas, 297x420mm. The painting was also part of the exhibition in the National Gallery of Slovenia. In its own way, drawing this portrait convinced me that I can do something completely new, something different.



Painting created by Zofija Mazej Kukovič ©

In life, we seek and strive for beauty, the beauty of nature, the beauty of friendship, the beauty of kindness and solidarity towards people.

There are many beauties in life that we have our own influence on, and to keep on adding to those by embracing life-long learning, regardless of our age and regardless of our past career in both business and politics. The beauty of art is reflected in a life that is one of lifelong learning. From my own experience, I say that it is worth a try.

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# UKRAINE – IN RETROSPECT, MISSED OPPORTUNITIES, AND INSIGHTS ALONG THE WAY

Back in April 2014, I provided colleagues in the European Parliament with some key findings to be of help when debating the EU package of support to Ukraine and efficient resource allocation. The findings were based on OECD research, discussions and personal input.

In retrospect, here they are as follows and, I presume, some of them are valid as ever:

## Key facts

- The growth momentum of the regions of Ukraine enjoyed in the years before the 2008-09 financial crisis was lost. Export demand was subdued. Domestic demand growth was constrained by slow credit growth.
- The degree of centralisation of the fiscal structure was high. The institutional environment was not conducive to investment.
- The Inter-regional disparities continued to increase, including access to basic services, especially education and healthcare.
- The large informal labour market made it difficult to assess labour-market trends with precision but the link between education and productivity appeared to be weak.

## Key policy issues

- Being a highly centralised polity, there was a wide agreement that Ukraine needed greater decentralisation. Sub-national governments, however, often faced capacity challenges.
- Fragmentation at lower levels made it difficult to realise policies of scale or even to perform basic service provision effectively.

- Sub-national governments tended to depend heavily on central transfers – it was the national budget that prescribed them. The top-down approach made the local finances related to central planning and the lack of autonomy, and respectively, of accountability to the local community was a drawback.

- Regional development policy was undergoing a major legislative and institutional overhaul.

## Key recommendations

- Revise the formulae for the allocation of transfers to sub-national tiers of government - to make it simpler and less discretionary, by reducing the number of indicators used in the formula.
- Base the resources allocated for the provision of local public service on the needs of the population in each area, not input indicators.
- Revise the revenue structure of the oblasts to allow them to retain any extra revenue generated at the oblast or local level.
- Implement a territorial reform (valid even more so today) prior to any decentralisation of functions to the lower levels of government in order to allow towns and local communities to reach the necessary scale of capacity building and merging of municipalities.

- Introduce a property tax to enhance municipal financial capacity, preceding its introduction by the creation of a reliable cadastre.

- Create a monitoring system for the effectiveness of the policies implemented, with special reference to local public goods and services.

- Use the State Fund for Regional Development (SFRD), based on EU principles and strategy documents, as an instrument to foster inter-regional cooperation.

- Make a rigorous cost-benefit analysis of any special zones or industrial parks, in line with the European and international best practice, to minimise spatial distortions and maximise the zone's integration with the wider economy. The risks of corruption, distortions and fragmentation are real, and experience suggests that special zones are, at best, a second-best policy option. The first-best option is to generally improve the overall investment climate.

From today's perspective, it is difficult to say if things are on the path to improvement in the context mentioned above. Lack of access to systematic and comprehensive data on sub-national finance limits the scope of a more comprehensive analysis and also underscores the need for transparency in inter-budgetary relations and predictability at all levels of government.

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# THE IRON CURTAIN TRAIL

For decades, the Iron Curtain divided Europe into east and west. Back in 2005, the European Parliament, by a large majority of Members from all Member States and all political groups, adopted a resolution calling on the Commission and the Member States to 'realise the "Iron Curtain Trail" [...] in order to promote European identity'.

Commemoration has been visible since 2001 in the form of the Berlin Wall Trail: it is properly signposted, has been made bicycle-friendly and is a designated memorial site. Because Germany, too, had been divided for decades, the German Bundestag unanimously voted in 2004 to develop the German-German Cycle Trail.

Following these examples, there is now a cycle and hiking trail along Europe's former Iron Curtain, on the old 'death strip', where European history, politics, nature and culture can be 'experienced'. Mikhail Gorbachev, who founded Green Cross International in 1993, has been patron of the Green Belt running 10 000 km from the Barents Sea to the Black Sea since 2002.

The EuroVelo 13 route - the Iron Curtain Trail - covers 20 countries, including 15 EU Member States. It starts at the Barents Sea and runs along the western border of the former Warsaw Pact states to the Black Sea. The route takes cyclists along the Norwegian-Russian and Finnish-Russian borders to the Baltic Sea, and then along the coastlines of Russia, Estonia, Latvia, Lithuania, Kaliningrad, Poland and the former GDR. From the Priwall peninsula near Travemünde to the point where Saxony, Bavaria and Czechia meet, it follows the former border between West and East Germany.

It then heads up through the Bohemian Forest, past Moravia and the Slovak capital Bratislava, and crosses the Danube. Along Hungary's southern border, the trail crosses Slovenia and Croatia. It then mainly follows the course of the Danube between Romania and Serbia before crossing Bulgaria, North Macedonia and Greece and, at the most northerly point in Türkiye, ending up on the Bulgarian Black Sea coast.

The trail goes through several national parks which have interesting plant and animal life and links a whole range of unique landscapes that were located in the no-go zone and have remained largely untouched. It also links a host of memorials, museums and open-air installations commemorating Europe's divided history and how it was overcome by peaceful revolutions in Central and Eastern Europe.

The Iron Curtain Trail also takes cyclists along what remains of the border patrol roads. Work on the project is under way in many European countries and regions, and numerous sections have already been signposted and made bicycle-friendly. In Poland, almost the entire route has been fully signposted over the last few years

and all shortcomings have been rectified in a bicycle-friendly way.

There are various options for cycling around within the Green Belt: on the western or eastern side of the border, close to it or further away, on perforated-slab patrol roads or on tarmac. The proposed route runs as close as possible to the former border, mainly on surfaces that are easy to cycle on, avoids busy roads, frequently crosses the former border and includes many sites that bear witness to history.

In keeping with the words of Wilhelm von Humboldt - 'Only those who know the past have a future' - we have to engage with the past. That is why we gratefully honour the memory of the peaceful revolutions in Eastern and Central Europe without forgetting the decades-long division of our continent.

Marianne Birthler, Vaclav Havel and Lech Wałęsa became patrons of the EuroVelo 13 route. The books I wrote in German and English for the Austrian publishing house Esterbauer were presented in 2019 by Hans-Gert Pöttering at the House of European History in Brussels.

**Michael Cramer**

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# FMA ACTIVITIES

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EPFMA  
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# VISIT UNDER THE EU PRESIDENCY

## SETTING THE TONE FOR EUROPEAN UNITY

We live in the world full of uncertainty, polarized, unpredictable, heading toward disorder. It is a fragile world. Surprisingly, globalization has not disappeared, but national interests have entered its space with great force, linking foreign policy to domestic priorities.

In this crumbling world, we witness the policy course of the new American administration in collision with the world order, reinforcing existing geopolitical divisions. Even if the globalization designed by the West has pulled out of poverty millions of people, American administration has decided that it does not work anymore for America.

And we need to bear in mind that whatever is the democratic future of the US, for us, the Europeans, both Russia and China remain on the other bank of the river, together with other autocratic and authoritarian regimes sparing no effort to shape a new global order. It is painful to say but the links between the two, Russia and China, are much stronger and mutually supportive compared to those between EU and US. The era of sound transatlantic alliance which we used to take for granted, both its bilateral and global dimension, seems to be coming to the end.

The history of European integration is a story of change. Over time Europe has developed capabilities to respond to challenges and opportunities. This time the change goes deeper, Europe is reinventing itself. Since 24 February 2022 its focus has been the independence of Ukraine while at the same time under our watch the existing geopolitical divisions were getting stronger. Many international flows have been weaponized.

I would not go as far as some politicians and commentators do and say that we should thank President Trump for the wake up call that has come with his shifting away from



*From left to right: FMA Board Members Michael Hindley and Teresa Riera Madurell, Marek Siwiec, Eva Quistorp, FMA President Klaus Hänsch, Danuta Hübner, FMA Vice-President Monica Baldi and Britta Thomsen, Warsaw 27 March 2025*

strategic transatlantic policy based on relations toward a short term transactional one. Nevertheless it is true that the Trumpian geopolitical revolution has created a list of impulses for European action.

Europe is not just fine tuning itself. European leadership, at national and European level, have activated different formats of the cooperation to set the tone for unity. Lack of it has always been our major weakness. This time we respond in a strategic way. At the beginning of 2024 also the Weimar triangle was resurrected. This was a pragmatic step aiming at new energy, acceleration of action, visibility of Europe. Leaders of three states, of 190 millions of European citizens, states that had been recently through challenging experiences, representing a broad political coalition of European consensus, recreated a 1991 Weimar momentum to bring together national interests and European public good and interest. Weimar Two has a chance to facilitate European unity when so much is at stake.

A coalition of the willing is often the only solution to be available in the short term to generate impulses for joint European action for security, competitiveness, new approach to financing European projects, to

pursue global responsibility of Europe. The new European policy package is actually an action plan for security, competitiveness and their financing. We are bringing together security or, if you wish, defense and economy, or, if you wish, competitiveness, the two major strategic areas of European response to the challenges ahead. It allows us to depart from the old paradigm according to which economic and trade cooperation facilitates peace or even allows to avoid wars. It does not seem to work any more.

White Paper on defense looks at the EU's weaknesses, aims at building a European pillar of NATO, proposes a variety of huge investment in defense and concrete financing tools. It is an intergovernmental instrument, where decisions will be taken by QMV. What seems important to me is that we need to decide as soon as possible about new own resources. It is clear that our short term objective is military support for Ukraine, but the defense action plan is about building a European long term collective defense.

Of course our major twopack, competitiveness and defense, is a complex endeavor. These are interlinked priorities of strategic nature.

And they both require long term financing of investment. What seems important for me is that when it comes to financing there are no silver bullets, but there should be no taboos either.

A role for EU debt is on the table but safe asset remains a taboo, there are changes to fiscal discipline expanding fiscal space, there are options to shifting expenditures within the MFF, there is the request to the EIB to rethink its scope of funding, the option of moving toward expanding the potential of CMU. The constitutional moment in Germany can be inspiring, Poland is considering an idea of a rearm-bank and invite like minded states to it. And of course a big question is opening Europe's ReArm Plan to the logic of „buy European”.

For decades we have been saying that European economy requires massive investment. Indeed, Europe can be only as strong as its economy is. We slept over the peace dividend time, now we know that if we need peace, not only military capabilities matter, we also need competitive strong economy. We need to reach a moment when European companies needing scaling up will not need to go on the other side of the pond. Omnibuses will be essential for creating regulatory environment conducive to business activity. There should be more of them, of both horizontal and sectoral nature. But we must not continue relying on omnibuses to simplify our regulations. Simplification should be part of our legislative design.

And my feeling is that the European Commission perfectly understands that business community needs rapid changes on the ground, fast deliveries, where omnibus approach can accelerate emerging conducive regulatory environment. A good example is the proposed change to CBAM bringing immediate relief to 200 000 SMS. But they also need European strategic vision, so that we all know where the port is and how to use the wind that can take us there. Some things already go in the right direction, but there will be hard debates in the council. It is up to business community which is under global pressure to push our economy toward productivity growth. I hope you share my view that things go in the right direction.

**Danuta Hübner**

*EPP, Poland (2019-2024)*

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## IN HIGH GEAR

The Former Members Association visits the countries holding the EU Presidency every six months. However, this visit was special for me. Firstly, it was to Poland and, more importantly, it took place at a unique moment for Europe and the world.

President Hänsch invited me to speak at the dinner in Warsaw. It was supposed to be 'interesting'. It was about Ukraine and Moscow's real plans. It seemed to go well, because the questions and discussion that

followed lasted a long time and touched on the most important dilemmas facing Europe today. As we talked among experienced politicians, I had the impression that the current batch had a lot to learn. The profound, fact-filled statements contrasted with the hot air and shouting often heard in the Polish Sejm, for example.

The FMA delegation had the opportunity to see contemporary Poland, both in terms of politics and

architecture. I hope that both made a good impression on our guests. For me, this meeting was special for another reason. Not so long ago, 20 years ago, Hannes Swoboda of the S&D Group in the EP, who was present in Warsaw at the time, introduced Polish socialists to the inner workings of the Parliament. Today, as partners, we discussed the future of a United Europe!

**Marek Siwiec**

*PES, Poland (2004-2014)*

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*The FMA Delegation with Ms Aija Kalnaja, Mr Alessandro Di Tolla and Mr Marc Arno Hartwig at Frontex © Frontex, 28 March 2025*



# VISIT UNDER THE EU PRESIDENCY

## THE POLISH PRESIDENTIAL ELECTION JUNE 2025

The narrowest of wins in the Polish Presidential election for the rightwing candidate, Karol Nawrocki, supported by the PiS (Law and Justice Party) over the Civil Coalition (KO) centrist candidate, Rafal Trzaskowski, has thrown Polish politics into even more confusion. The margin of victory could hardly be closer, 50.89% to 49.11%, and is hardly a mandate, more a recipe for turmoil.

The two men could scarcely be more different, Nawrocki a robust character is a much published historian who gained prominence as the Head of the revisionist Institute of National Remembrance. He was the carefully chosen candidate of the PiS Party boss, Jaroslaw Kaczynski, who has been Chair of the PiS since 2003. Kaczynski thought, rightly it seems, that an energetic and younger candidate would be a plus for his party, which needed to update its image after eight years in power, a reign which ended a year ago when the former President of the EU Council and leader of the Civil Coalition, Donald Tusk, became Prime Minister. But the reformist Tusk has been hampered by constructional wrangling with the President Andrzej Duda. Though it is the Parliament (Sejm) which has the power, nonetheless the Prudency has limited delaying powers and Duda, a PiS stalwart, was able to frustrate Tusk's reforms. Whilst PiS is a party in the more traditional sense, Tusk's Civil Coalition is an umbrella organization from the political centre to the moderate left. The Presidential election was yet another re-run of the now familiar Polish and Central European divide, pro-EU versus Euro-sceptic battle.

The KO candidate, Rafal Trzaskowski, could not be more different than the eventual winner, Nawrocki. The son of a famous jazz musician, former MEP, excellent linguist, Trzaskowski is the Mayor of Warsaw, an open supporter of women's and gay rights.

As a close associate of Tusk he was an easy target as the supposed elitist insider. Nawrocki's campaign was almost entirely negative; against liberalising Poland's restrictive abortion laws, anti-gay rights, anti-EU, and anti-immigrants. In a cruel twist the many Ukrainians who have sought refuge from Putin's war, have found themselves the target of anti-immigrant feeling. As elsewhere it has suited populist nationalists to deliberately conflate refugees, asylum seekers with immigrants. On the one hand, Poland has generously taken in many Ukrainian refugees and has been an unswerving ally of the Ukraine; but on the other hand, populists have voiced criticism that Ukrainians receive social support at the expense of native Poles. The anti-EU stance defies logic and reality. Poland is much admired as a growing economic power. Much of its success is fuelled by access to the EU open market, remittances from Poles, who have found employment for their energies and skills in the wider Europe, and from direct EU grants, which have dramatically transformed Poland's once creaking transport and information infrastructure.

New to this election was the infusion of outside influence, and not only from other populists from Central Europe in Hungary, Slovakia and Austria but also from the USA in the form of the CPAC (Conservative Political Action Conference), once a fringe of the Republic Party right but now under the endorsement of President Trump is seeking to extend its influence beyond the USA to Europe.

CPAC's annual event took place in Warsaw during the election and Trump gave Nawrocki a White House interview and endorsement. Of course, Trump's strategy is to weaken the EU as much as to support Polish nationalism. "Divide and Rule" is once more in fashion among would-be dictators.

Many people - visitors, observers, commentators, and among my friends and acquaintances in Poland testify to a rising and dangerous bitterness in Polish politics. One of the highlights of the FMA Delegation to Warsaw in March was an exchange with the lively and much respected veteran "Solidarity" activist and now editor of Poland's leading liberal newspaper, Adam Michnik. Michnik was asked if the external threat to Poland from Putin's aggression could not bring together Poland's domestic rivals, he responded wryly "that's the million dollar question". The immediate answer in the light of the election campaign and result seems to be "no".

Poland lies at the epicentre of European politics. It has the potential, and in some peoples' eyes, the chance to be major power to offset the Franco-German duopoly of the EU. Or, it could regress into the isolation of a relative small state, more defined by what it is "against" than what is "in favour of".

**Michael Hindley**

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*The FMA Delegation with Adam Michnik (middle) at Europa Experience in Warsaw, Poland*

# OUR WARSAW VISIT IN A HISTORIC MOMENT, FULL OF GOOD DIALOGUES

With many thanks to Elisabetta, Klaus Hänsch, Monica Baldi and our team with Valerie and Sacha, I look back to three days in Warsaw in a historic turbulent and dangerous time, when Trump seems to follow Putin and use the tech oligarchs to destroy the old US American democracy and Ukraine seems to be left alone to European and Canadian solidarity. In the moment, when we need to work quick on better self-defence of the European Union, it was good to speak to the EU Minister and Frontex experts in Poland as to our former EU Commissioner Danuta Hübner and colleagues from Poland.

In a time when multilateral and constitutional rules of the 80 years after German Nazi regime and wars, seem to be quickly destroyed, the world economy disrupted, we started with a visit to the museum of the Polish Jews, where nearby is the monument of the heroes of the upheaval of the Warschau Ghetto, were Willy Brandt kneed down in 1972, near by a statue for Jan Karski and Irena Sendler. We had the honor to meet experts from the Friedrich Ebert Foundation and Małgorzata Bonikowska from the centre for International relations, Mr Tomasz Grodzki Chair of the committee on European Affairs of the Polish Senate and Mr Schetyna from the committee for Foreign affairs of the Polish Senate, Mr Andrzej Grzyb, Chair of the Defence committee and of the European Union Affairs Committee at Sejm, accompanied by Mr Naturski from the European Parliament Liaison Office in Warsaw. They all shared the interest in strengthening the Weimar Dreieck, maybe Quartett with including England in defence affairs and the urgent need to overcome the bureaucratic and political blockades in better arms production, cyber space defense and disinformation defence into better cooperation, sharing of capacities and financial strategies.

A high light was the meeting with Adam Michnik, the famous intellectual of Solidarnosc, who had worked with our colleague Geremek and is founder and editor of the liberal democratic newspaper Gazeta Wyborcza. He made a strong appeal: Europe has to defend its freedoms against Putin's regime and lies as well as against the attacks of Trump and Vance against European rules and traditions of democracy. To visit Frontex was an important experience too, to see their daily work to defend the European borders and work in a European team. I remember the young energy and enthusiasm of the Minister of the European Union Adam Szapka with the responsibility and the chances of Poland now to shape our sovereignty and keep our liberal and social and ecological values,

On my way home with the train to Berlin, I saw solar panels and wind energy and an intensive exchange of young people from all over Europe between Warsaw, Riga, Berlin, Paris, this gives me hope.

**Eva Quistorp**  
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*FMA President and Delegation leader Klaus Hänsch with Andrzej Grzyb, Chair of the National Defence Committee of Sejm, Warsaw 27 March 2025*



*FMA Delegation Members with Tomasz Grodzki, Chair of the Committee on European Affairs of the Senate, Warsaw 27 March 2025*



*From left to right: FMA Vice-President Monica Baldi, Polish Minister of the European Union Adam Szapka and FMA President and Delegation leader Klaus Hänsch, Warsaw 28 March 2025*



*The FMA Delegation at the Polish Senate, Warsaw 27 March 2025*



# FORMER MEMBERS' NETWORK

DELEGATION OF THE CANADIAN ASSOCIATION OF FORMER PARLIAMENTARIANS IN ITALY

## JOURNEY TO ITALY

The FMA recently organised a special tour of Italy (1 to 13 April 2025) within the framework of its partnership with the Association of Former Canadian Parliamentarians (CAFP).

The programme included many meetings, events, conferences and seminars in which the two delegations played an active role. While the Canadian party was headed by CAFP President Leo Duguay, the FMA group was led by Vice-President Monica Baldi.

The first stop on the tour was a hybrid event held on 2 April at the EPLO in Rome, where the importance of transatlantic relations, especially in the light of recent American policy, was highlighted. Welcomed by Ilaria Garampi, the conference's participants included the prestigious 16-member Canadian party, the Women20 delegation (which was led by Elvira Marasco) and FMA members Giampaolo D'Andrea, Andrea Manzella, Gay Mitchell, Robert Moreland, Daniela Rondinelli and Margarita Starkeviciute.

The next day, the Canadians headed to the Italian Chamber of Deputies' prestigious Sala della Lupa for a special meeting with the Association of Former Parliamentarians of the Italian Republic (whose current president is Giuseppe Gargani).



FMA Vice-President Monica Baldi with Léo Duguay, leader of the Canadian Delegation of Former Parliamentarians (CAFP) and President Emeritus

As outlined in Cinzia Dato's detailed account, a number of veteran politicians were in attendance.

On 7 April, the CAFP delegation was in Florence to take part in a high-level seminar ('A Changed World: Fostering Resilience in the New Global Order') organised by the European University Institute's (EUI) School of Transnational Governance, where it was hosted by Marco Del Panta and Fabrizio Tassinari (respectively the Secretary-General and Director of the EUI). The talks delivered by ex-EU Commissioner Danuta Hübner, former Spanish Government minister Arancha González, Gian Paolo Meneghini, Peggy Nash, Karen Redman and Sir Graham Watson were very much appreciated, as were the brilliant observations made by former Canadian PM Kim Campbell and Enrique Barón Crespo, the ex-European Parliament President highlighting what he called the current 'global disorder'. Those in attendance discussed the changing world order, EU-US tensions resulting from the actions of the Trump administration, the increasingly fraught nature of trade relations and new challenges to governance.

These topics were also debated in the meetings held with Nicoletta Fabio (the Mayor of Siena), Roberto Ciappi (the Mayor of San Casciano Val di Pesa), Dom Bernardo Gianni (the Abbot of San Miniato al Monte Abbey) and representatives of the Metropolitan City of Florence, as well as in events hosted by the Circolo degli Esteri (the social club affiliated with the Italian Ministry of Foreign Affairs), the Corpo Consolare Fiorentino and the Spadolini Foundation. The two-week tour also included a number of stops in museums and other locations where Italy's extraordinary cultural and artistic heritage is preserved. The delegations took a particular interest in Michelangelo (the year 2025 marks the 550th anniversary of his birth) and Caravaggio. An event organised by Ars Pace and hosted by Marquess Francesco Mazzei entitled 'PEACE IN ART' was particularly appreciated.

It was held in Fonterutoli (Province of Siena), a place which has gone down in history for the peace treaties that were signed there which put an end to a number of territorial disputes between powerful Church dioceses, as well as the long-standing quarrel between Florence and Siena over how to demarcate the borders of the Chianti region. The event blended culture, emotions, peace and the sheer aesthetic beauty of Elisabetta Rogai's painting *EnoArte@*, for which she used the same wine that the visitors sampled while listening to the seductive sounds emanating from Andrea Ceccomori's flute. In an era marked by great change, new trade patterns, tariffs and mounting geopolitical tensions, the one true soft power is art, understood as a tool for peace and cultural diplomacy that can enable parties to establish a dialogue based on long-lasting international ties.

**"Given the extremely complex geopolitical landscape, we must react decisively, and do so alongside Canada - a country with which we share values, a common history and an affinity for multilateralism - and our other strongest allies."**

Given the extremely complex geopolitical landscape, we must react decisively, and do so alongside Canada - a country with which we share values, a common history and an affinity for multilateralism - and our other strongest allies. The recent election of Mark Carney as Prime Minister of Canada strengthened the country's economic and trade relations with the European Union, though June's G7 Summit in Kananaskis, Alberta, will be an important test.

**Monica Baldi**  
EPP-ED, Italy (1994-1999)  
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# EUROPEANS, AND ITALIANS IN PARTICULAR, ARE SOLIDLY BEHIND CANADA

CAFP delegates have recently returned from a meraviglioso trip to Rome, Florence, and Siena. None of this would have been possible without the invaluable assistance of Monica Baldi, Vice President of the European Parliament Former Members Association.

Her extensive knowledge of Italy and her connections with government officials and hoteliers made our stay exceptionally pleasant. So pleasant, in fact, that many of us, having indulged in the finest cuisine and wines of Tuscany, are now adjusting our belts to accommodate a noticeable gain in avoir du pois. In Rome, we were treated to an analysis of global peace development by Dicastery Michael Czerny S.J., which contrasted with serious discussions with former members of the Italian Parliament concerning President Trump's unprecedented attack on Canadian sovereignty. An exchange with former members of the European Parliament and the Women 20 Italia delegation amplified the need for cooperation between our associations. Canadian delegates also had the opportunity to view an impressive collection of Caravaggio's works and were received at the Ministry of Foreign Affairs at the Circolo degli Esteri.

The opportunity to meet with the Mayor of San Casciano led to an extraordinary four-course lunch featuring Tuscany's finest food and wine. A visit to Basilica of San Miniato al Monte was highlighted by a Gregorian chant led by Abbot Dom Bernardo, which was truly inspiring. Our stay at the Kraft Hotel was further enriched by a meeting with the Consular Corps of Florence. Our discussions focused on immigration matters and explored ways to enhance trade among countries while circumventing U.S. barriers. A visit to the private home of Michelangelo (Casa Buonarroti) revealed the remarkable history of this renowned artist. Of particular interest were his works created at the age of 15, showcasing his extraordinary talent as a child prodigy. The most significant and serious part of our tour was a panel discussion at the Florence School of Transnational Governance (European University Institute). Delegates, including Peggy Nash and Karen Redman, outlined the necessary changes to establish a new world order. Former Prime Minister Kim Campbell concluded by urging all of us to resist the narrow-minded worldview being imposed upon us by Donald Trump.

In Siena, a meeting with the mayor led to a serious discussion on Canada-Italy collaboration, focusing on fostering improved cultural relations and increased trade. Meeting in the Town Square (Piazza del Campo), where the Palio is held twice a year, etched in our minds the excitement of the annual horse race, which is comparable to the Kentucky Derby.

We were also treated to an enlightening discourse on the differences between Sangiovese grapes grown in Montepulciano versus those grown in Montalcino. Both were exceptional. A visit to the Mazzei winery, hosted by the patriarch Francesco Mazzei the Marchese who is the 25th generation of a family winery established in 1435, sharpened our appreciation for fine wine. An exhibition of fine art painting with wine by the outstanding artist Elisabetta Rogai completed an excellent education on the complexity of fine wine and fine art. The most memorable aspect of our visit is the strong sense that Europeans, and Italians in particular, are solidly behind Canada in its current and temporary conflict with the Trump administration.

## Léo Duguay

*Leader of the Canadian Delegation of Former Parliamentarians (CAFP) to Italy and President Emeritus of CAFPE*  
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*FMA Vice-President Monica Baldi with former EP and FMA President Enrique Barón Crespo, FMA Member Sir Graham Watson and Members of the Canadian Delegation of Former Parliamentarians at the Florence School of Transnational Governance for the Seminar 'A Changed World: Fostering Resilience in the New Global Order'*

# FORMER MEMBERS' NETWORK

DELEGATION OF THE CANADIAN ASSOCIATION OF FORMER PARLIAMENTARIANS IN ITALY

## CANADA, EPICENTRE OF NORTH AMERICA

The Canadian delegation's time in Italy this spring unexpectedly turned into an intense working visit as a result of challenging current events. Thanks to our Vice-President, Monica Baldi, FMA's cultural ambassador to the European University Institution of Florence, I participated in a lively and constructive debate between these two partners, who share history, values and a world view, as well as a commitment to the UN multilateral system. Of course, one of the partners hails from a continent named after another Florentine, Amerigo Vespucci, who emigrated to and lived in Seville, Spain, taking full advantage of freedom of movement.

I began my speech by recalling my solidarity work as a young labour law lawyer with two great trade unionists, Daniel Benedict (USA) and Romeo Maione (Canada), and our fight against the dictatorship in Spain. Three of the former Canadian MPs in attendance lived through this period.

These MPs were from the cross-border conurbation of Detroit (USA) and Windsor (Canada); six million people live in this automotive industry hub, where components cross the border over 20 times a day. This mirrors the situation in El Paso (USA) and Ciudad Juárez (Mexico) – in both cases these economic systems are increasingly integrating into NAFTA.

Imposing tariffs and building iron curtains is attempting to close the stable doors after the horse has bolted; proposing outright annexation as a solution is not only impossible, but also an offensive suggestion.

Graham Watson, compatriot of Adam Smith, explained how ridiculous this turn towards commercialism is. It would mean breaking away from the WTO, whose precursor was created in Havana in 1947 as part of the UN system and which took its current form in 1995, and returning to the protectionism that led to the tragic 1930s.

The EU was born of the desire to make amends for history and to build a shared future. Canada is a partner in solidarity and a perfect example of a society with which we share democratic convictions and a worldview on sensitive topics such as the abolition of the death penalty (another product of Florence, thanks to Cesare Beccaria), arms control and the welfare state.

The transatlantic relationship continues to be fundamental for stability and prosperity in the world. It must be kept relevant and renegotiated in the face of new challenges rather than be dismantled, forcing us backwards.



Former EP and FMA President Enrique Barón Crespo with Mayor of Siena, Nicoletta Fabio in Siena on 11 April 2025

Nothing lasts forever, but cooperation with our Canadian counterparts restores faith in the shared wish to defend what we have achieved and to carry on working together to tackle new challenges.

**Enrique Barón Crespo**

PES, Spain (1986-2009)

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From left to right: Fabrizio Tassinari, Executive Director School of Transnational Governance and moderator, former EP and FMA President Enrique Barón Crespo, FMA Vice-President Monica Baldi, CAFP President Emeritus and Delegation Leader Léo Duguay and Kim Campbell, Former Prime Minister of Canada at the School of Transnational Governance on 7 April 2025 in Florence

# EP FMA AND CAFP MEET WITH FORMER ITALIAN PARLIAMENTARIANS AT MONTECITORIO

On 3 April 2025, our association welcomed delegates from the Canadian Association of Former Parliamentarians to the Italian Chamber of Deputies. They were in Italy from 1 to 13 April for a visit organised by the European Parliament Former Members Association, which promotes initiatives intended to strengthen the European and international network of former parliamentarians, so that, together, our associations might shape the key policy areas with which our democracies are grappling. In today's context, this laudable endeavour on the part of the former MEPs clearly gains a huge significance and is paramount for safeguarding democracy, human rights and peace.

Monica Baldi, the Vice-President of the European Parliament Former Members Association, went to tremendous lengths to make the meeting happen and ensure the success of the exercise. Ideas were exchanged on key political concerns, starting with a well-received address by Baldi and the leader of the Canadian delegation, Leo Duguay. The Italian association was represented by President Gargani, Honorary President Falomi, Secretary Soriero, Treasurer Alaimo and Vice-President Tassone. Rivolta, Calzolaio, d'Andrea, Cossiga and Dato were also in attendance.

The delegation was welcomed into the impressive Sala della Lupa, where they heard about the historic events that had made it a symbol of the defence of democracy and parliament. The first of the many speeches was given by President Gargani, who enthralled with his focus on representative democracy and the crucial role that parliament plays in any kind of democratic government. Bound by our statutes to safeguard our parliaments and constitutions, our associations currently feel a duty to keep the crisis in parliamentarism and the compatibility of proposed reforms with the founding values of constitutional democracy high on the agenda.

If the principle of governance and, with this, decision-making power, do not go hand in hand with representativeness – an ailing concept – we run the risk of democratic banishment. If political culture is fuelled by a desire to sustain an omnipotent monocratic body rather than to reinvigorate the complex participative organisation that is society, engaging citizens in the institutional and decision-making system, our political systems will change dramatically – and not for the better. On the whole, the words of our Canadian guests echoed our own in affirming the importance of an independent, united and federal Europe, which

is needed for the stability of both Canada and indeed the entire world, and to curb dangerous meddling by the United States. Therefore, even from across the Atlantic, we are called upon to defend and bolster a united Europe, our parliaments and constitutions. We are also reminded at this juncture of the precious words of Pope Paul VI, who said that European unity was not an end in itself, but essential for the entire world, and of Pope Francis, who reminded us that Europe was the home of human rights and universal peace. At a time when nationalism, sovereigntism and populism seem to be enjoying an effortless resurgence while even constitutionalism and the principles of liberal democracy are on the wane, and the brakes placed on power, including crucial supranational institutions, are losing their grip, I would like to end with the words of the great Stefan Zweig, who, lamenting the birth and spread of the mass ideologies of the twentieth century, and humanity's descent into barbarism with its programmatic dogma of anti-humanitarianism, decried nationalism as 'the pestilence of pestilences [...] which has poisoned the flower of our European culture'.

## Cinzia Dato

*Senator and Governing Board of the Association of Former Parliamentarians of the Italian Republic*



*The Canadian, European and Italian Delegation guided by respectively Léo Duguay, Monica Baldi and Giuseppe Gargani with Senator Cinzia Dato in the Chamber of Deputies of Italy (Sala della Lupa) on 3 April 2025*



# FORMER MEMBERS' NETWORK

DELEGATION OF THE CANADIAN ASSOCIATION OF FORMER PARLIAMENTARIANS IN ITALY

## SEMINAR AT STG\_EUI 'A CHANGED WORLD'

The FMA was pleased to welcome former Canadian parliamentarians to a seminar entitled *Fostering Resilience in the New Global Order* at the EUI's School of Transnational Governance in Florence on 7 April.

Speakers and participants at the seminar focussed on the rapidly changing course of politics in the USA following the election of Donald Trump to the American Presidency and the consequences, almost overwhelmingly negative, for Canada, Europe and the rest of the world.

As FMA former Chairman Enrique Baron Crespo pointed out, an amendment was needed to the title of the seminar itself, which would more appropriately read '...in the new global disorder'.

After introductory remarks by George Papaconstantinou, Acting Director of the School of Transnational Governance and Marco del Panta, outgoing Secretary General of the EUI, FMA Vice President Monica Baldi welcomed former Canadian Prime Minister Kim Campbell and delegation leader Leo Dugay with a perspective from the EU on the threats posed by the new US President's policies.

Leo Dugay pointed to the anger felt by Canadians towards a country formerly seen as a friend and noted that Americans themselves are starting to protest.

Experts Fabrizio Tassinari and Gian Piero Meneghini spoke of the end of dependable expectation of peaceful change and of how global developments were overtaking the process of EU construction. The Hon Peggy Nash regretted the undermining of the rule of law and of shared prosperity: former MEP Sir Graham Watson pointed to a new opportunity to enhance co-operation between Europe and Canada.

The Hon Karen Redman spoke of the damage being felt in her region of Waterloo in southern Ontario. Ex PM Kim Campbell drew attention to problems posed by the development of social media while trade experts Arancha Gonzalez and Danuta Hubner highlighted the introduction of tariffs which are predatory rather than transactional and the politically driven geo-economic fragmentation they are causing.



*FMA Member Sir Graham Watson with FMA Vice-President Monica Baldi at the Conference: 'A Changed World: Fostering Resilience in the New Global Order' on 7 April 2025 in Florence*

Enrique Baron Crespo signalled the only possible silver lining to the current cloud: that President Trump's action may force Europe to take greater responsibility for its own future.

The magnificent former Medici Palace in Via Cavour and the excellent hospitality of the School of Transnational Governance provided superb conditions and setting for a thorough assessment of the challenges faced and an analysis of how Europe and Canada can best respond.



*From left to right: FMA Member Sir Graham Watson, Former EP and FMA President Enrique Barón Crespo, Ms Spadolini and FMA Member Giampaolo D'Andrea at the Spadolini Library in Florence*

### Sir Graham Watson

*ALDE, United Kingdom (1994-2014)  
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# TRUMP, CANADA AND THE EUROPEAN UNION

Since being elected, the President of the United States Donald Trump has regularly repeated his view that Canada should become the 51st state of the United States. He has moderated that view only in the sense that it would not be by military operation but by economic procedures. Indeed at his meeting in early May with the new prime minister of Canada, Mark Carney, (a former governor of the Bank of Canada -also later of the Bank of England), he again effectively expressed his desire to annex Canada receiving from the Canadian Prime Minister the response "it is not for sale". Trump's remarks have had a considerable effect on Canadian politics. Last December Canada's Liberal government trailed Conservatives by 25% in opinion polls. On April 28th 2025, Mark Carney led the Liberal party to a general election victory.

This subject of the 51st state was at the heart of a discussion on the 2nd and 3rd of April in meetings in Rome between Former Members of the Canadian Parliament and former members of the European Parliament (which included former members of the Italian Parliament on the 3rd April). Feelings were raised as April 2nd was "Liberation Day", when Trump announced his new tariffs which included high tariffs for Canada effectively ending the North American Free Trade Agreement (NAFTA). On the 7th April there was a further meeting in Florence at which the former Canadian and European Parliamentarians participated in a discussion "A changing World: Fostering resilience in the new world order" which included a passionate performance from former Canadian Prime Minister Kim Campbell highly critical of Trump.

Immediately before the Rome meeting, I attended the meeting of Former Members of the European Parliament in Warsaw followed by a meeting in Brussels of Former Members of the EU Economic and Social committee. At both meetings, the Trump attitude

towards Canada was discussed with a realisation that Canada is perhaps the most significant ally of the European Union outside of our continent. Indeed some proposed Canada to join the European Union.

I knew from those meetings that I could say, with full support from many members of the European Parliament both past and present, the words "we are totally with you" and I could add it is that of the view of many governments of the European Union and of the United Kingdom.

Perhaps one can say that Trump's actions removed a veil that hid the closeness between the Europe and Canada. Originally colonised by the French and British, Britain became its ruler after the Seven Years War in 1763. As the part of North America that remained loyal to Britain it became British North America until the formation of Canada in 1867 with Ottawa as capital with increasing powers being transferred to the Canadian Parliament from Britain leaving Britain with responsibility for foreign and defence policy.

In 1931, Canada became fully independent with the one exception - any constitutional changes that should be approved by British Parliament. This proved to be Academic as the British parliament always approved the Canadian Parliament proposals... This condition was removed by the Canadian and British Parliaments in 1982 (Despite some lobbying of the British parliament - and even the European Parliament to oppose this change).

Canada is now totally independent of the UK but one link remains. The head of state of the United Kingdom and of Canada is the same King Charles who clearly shares Mr Carney's view of Trump that Canada is not for sale and will open the new session of the Canadian Parliament with the Queen on May 27.



*FMA Member Robert Moreland at Europa Experience in Rome on 2 April 2025*

Canada's relationship with the European Union could be described as amicable over a long period of time. Canada joined both the First World War and the Second World War at the beginning of each war on side of the Allies. It has been a long-standing member of NATO and of the G7, it participates in the European space agency and is an associate member of Horizon. In 2016, Canada signed a free trade agreement with the European Union, which has been approved by the European Parliament but is still dragging on with waiting some signatures from some member states. The population of Canada is 75% of European inheritance particularly with the large post war emigration from all over from Europe to Canada. Perhaps the only hiccup on the increase in harmony between Europe and Canada was caused by the European parliament when it voted 40 years ago to show its horror at Canada's baby seal culling which eventually became European law in terms of a ban on imports of seal products. However, any harm to relations soon passed.

As for the issue of joining the European Union the approach of the Canadian government has been cautious -preferring to talk more on the lines of closer cooperation with the European Union. Clearly, there would be issues particularly in relation to agricultural policy, fisheries et cetera but the goodwill is there and we wait to see what will happen in the future.

**Robert Moreland**  
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# FORMER MEMBERS' NETWORK

## FP-AP VISIT TO CYPRUS

### FP-AP MEETING IN CYPRUS – EUROPE AND THE SEA

I have always paid special attention to – and even have a particular fondness for – the European Association of Former Members of Parliament of the Member States of the Council of Europe (FP-AP), which is committed to the spiritual and moral values that form the European peoples' shared heritage. Those values are the foundations for the principles on which real democracy is based: individual freedom, equality and dignity, political freedom and the rule of law.

It was therefore with great pleasure that I travelled to Nicosia (Republic of Cyprus) in May 2025 to represent the Former Members' Association (FMA) at the FP-AP Council to discuss a draft report on 'Europe and the sea: the role of parliamentary diplomacy'. The rapporteurs are colleagues of mine: Jean-Pierre Fourré, former first Vice-President of the French National Assembly and former FP-AP President, and Jacques Remillier, former Member of the French National Assembly.

After passing on best wishes from Klaus Hänsch, President of the Former Members' Association (FMA) and former President of the European Parliament, I paid tribute to Miguel Ángel Martínez Martínez, former Vice-President of the European Parliament, former President of the Parliamentary Assembly of the Council of Europe and former Member of the Cortes Generales, who has been a long-standing member of the delegation to the FP-AP and decided not to carry on. I also communicated Teresa Riera Madurell's apologies. Godelieve Quisthoudt-Rowohl is the third member of the FMA's delegation to the FP-AP General Assembly.

The proposed text examines current and future challenges relating to ocean basins and coastal areas, the leading role that Europeans should play in international negotiations on maritime policy (fishing, energy, marine research, combating pollution) and the role of current and former parliamentarians.

I drew attention to the fact that 2 billion people in the world have no access to drinking water and 4.4 billion people have no access to sanitation and that access to drinking water is an important human, economic and political issue against the backdrop of climate change, which is creating major migratory flows towards Europe in particular. I went on to propose an amendment on desalination. With political will and EU scientific research funds, the technology has the potential to be a field in which the EU and its companies can be world leaders. The amendment was accepted.

**"I drew the attention to the fact that 2 billion people in the world have no access to drinking and 4.4 billion people have no access to sanitation and that access to drinking water is an important human, economic and political issue against the backdrop of climate change, which is creating major migratory flows towards Europe in particular."**

I would also propose that the final text includes references to the European Ocean Pact announced in the European Commission's work programme. The Commission recently launched a call for evidence, in January 2025. The pact aims to: keep the ocean healthy, resilient and productive; support a sustainable, competitive blue economy, including fisheries and aquaculture, and work towards drawing up a global programme for marine knowledge, research and innovation, as well as investment.

The final text will be adopted at a meeting in St Malo (France) on 19 September of this year.

A final word on the Republic of Cyprus, whose population is still cruelly separated. Excellent speeches by the President of the Cypriot Former Members' Association, Sophoclis Fittis, and the President of the FP-AP, Filippo Lombardi, were followed by an address by President of the Cypriot House of Representatives, Annita Demetriou.

Afterwards, a seminar was held with an address by His Excellency Euripides Evriviades, former ambassador of the Republic of Cyprus. The seminar dealt with the topic: 'Cyprus between East and West: past, present and future.'

Mr Evriviades recalled that Cyprus has always been dominated by imperial powers (Greek, Roman, Byzantine, Arab, Frankish, Venetian, Ottoman, British) thanks to its location at a point where important trade flows come together. It has absorbed many cultures, making it a very multicultural, captivating place. Cyprus has always been dominated but never shared.



Sadly, Türkiye took advantage of an attempted coup d'état against Cypriot President Makarios on 15 July 1974 by Greek officers working for the Regime of the Colonels in Greece, invading the north of the island (38 % of the territory) in two days in a purported effort to protect the Turkish minority.

Between 1974 and 1975, 200 000 Greek Cypriots in the north were hounded out and forced to leave. The partition is not recognised by the international community. Türkiye's withdrawal from Cyprus is one of the conditions for the country to join the EU.

After the speeches, conference and interviews with the mayor of Nicosia, Charalambos Prountzos, and the mayor of Larnaca, Andreas Vyras, we left with a heavy heart to see this people separated by force, its history denied and multiculturalism spurned.

But we are also proud and pleased to see that, thanks to its wisdom, love of life and membership of the European Union have made the Republic of Cyprus vibrant and full of life and enabled it to enjoy prosperity and peace.

**Jean-Pierre Audy**  
EPP, France (2005-2014)  
[audyjp@yahoo.fr](mailto:audyjp@yahoo.fr)

## About FP-AP

The **European Association of Former Members of Parliament of the Council of Europe Member States (FP-AP)** is a non-profit, non-political association that brings together former national and European parliamentarians from the member states of the Council of Europe. Its main mission is to **promote the European ideal, foster democratic values, and contribute to parliamentary diplomacy.**

FP-AP organises conferences, debates, and other events to raise awareness of key political and social issues, and to support the role of institutions such as the Council of Europe and the European Parliament. It also works to maintain relationships with similar associations worldwide. The current **President of FP-AP is Filippo Lombardi** (Switzerland), elected in 2024 for a two-year term.

More information: [www.fpap-europe.org](http://www.fpap-europe.org)



Group picture of FP-AP Members at the meeting on 23-24 May 2025 in Cyprus © FP-AP

## THE EUROPEAN UNION, ITS INSTITUTIONS AND VALUES

The meeting with students organised by the European Parliament Former Members Association at the prestigious seat of the Historical Archives of the European University Institute in Florence was interesting as always and generated fruitful exchanges.

Telling high school pupils about different events that shaped Europe's way of life, that took place before they came into the world, was an emotional experience both for myself recounting the facts, incidents and situations and for those listening, as these events have now become chapters of history.

This year's meeting covered the following topics: the visit to the European Parliament of Commander Massoud, the lion of Panshir, the man who fought the Taliban and who was assassinated on 9 September 2001; the tragic assassination of Somalia's ambassador to the United Nations in Geneva, Yusuf Ismail Bari; the European Convention, which was supposed to finally give Europe a 'constitution' but which, after all of the work, was rejected by the French and Dutch in referendums and then led to the creation of the Lisbon Treaty now in force; the war in Ukraine; and the need to always defend democracy and freedom. The pupils were asked to present what their experiences and opinions were of the concept of a 'table': a family table can be a moment of meeting and confrontation, just like a negotiation table.

They are not as different as they may appear; in fact, only those who from a young age are open to relating to others – family members, friends, teachers, people



*Cristiana Muscardini during her lecture at the Historical Archives of the European Union in Florence on 8 April 2025 © EUI / HAEU*

they encounter in their daily lives – will succeed even as adults in relating to others and respecting themselves by respecting others. In the debate, having had the opportunity to talk to the pupils' teachers beforehand, I also decided to address loneliness and violence – topics that are unfortunately closely intertwined and regularly make the headlines. Teenagers who are unable to hold peaceful discussions with others are all too often inclined to band together in real gangs and use force to demonstrate a superiority that they do not actually have.

Their behaviour, however, implicitly reveals their insecurities and their inability to engage in dialogue. The pupils were also interested in what I had to say on the misuse of IT systems and the many social media platforms out there, which keep people stuck in a virtual reality, making them unable to distinguish between what is real and what is not.

It was really interesting to see how the pupils interpreted the topic they had been given and great to find out that the family discussion table still plays an important role in many of their lives.

Each year, as well as being able to talk about the values and events of the European Union and the European Parliament in particular, I have also had the opportunity to learn about the school and personal lives of many young people, who will one day be the backbone of Italy and Europe.

I would therefore once again like to express my appreciation for this initiative and the organisers who passionately devote themselves to setting up these meetings.

### **Cristiana Muscardini**

*NA, UEN, EPP, ECR, Italy (1989-1999, 1999-2009, 2009-2012, 2012-2014)  
cristiana.mistral@gmail.com*



# FMA ANNUAL EVENTS

## FMA: EXPERIENCE, REFLECTION AND DIALOG

The FMA Annual Events returned to Brussels on 20–21 May 2025, bringing together former and current Members of the European Parliament and institutional guests in a series of deeply meaningful and forward-looking gatherings. As ever, this annual moment served as both a solemn tribute and a vibrant forum for dialogue and exchange. On 20 May, the sixteenth Annual Memorial Service, held in the Hemicycle, offered a heartfelt tribute to former colleagues who passed away in 2024 and 2025. The service, steeped in dignity and gratitude, paid tribute to their lasting contributions to the European democratic project.

*"In this Hemicycle where the voices of our colleagues once rose in passionate defence of freedom, justice and unity - we pause to honour those voices now silent, but never forgotten."* - remarked FMA Vice President Ms. Baldi in her speech, after opening the ceremony. Then EP Vice-President Ewa Kopacz delivered a speech: *"Those we commemorate today... were united by the conviction that the EU is not an abstract institution, but a common project built through daily effort and responsibility."* - highlighted Ewa Kopacz during her tribute.

Monica Baldi read the honour roll call and FMA President Klaus Hänsch closed the ceremony with a moving reminder of what we owe to those who came before us:

*"Standing up; Going strong; Holding fast."* Later that evening, the FMA hosted a Cocktail Reception and Dinner Debate. Quaestors Marc Angel and Fabienne Keller offered a warm welcome to guests, setting the tone for an evening of insightful discussion.

The keynote speech, delivered by Arianna Podestà, Deputy Chief Spokesperson of the European Commission, explored the theme: *"Europe's Choice: from trade to defence, the key decisions shaping our future in the current geopolitical landscape."*

Ms. Podestà challenged attendees to reflect on the EU's strategic path: *"Will we embrace cooperation and autonomy, or remain passive players in a world shaped by others?"* Finally, Former Minister of Portugal and member of FMA, Maria João Rodrigues, was invited by the president to take the floor as Chair of the Board of the Think Tank RIE Re-Imagine Europa to make a short reference to the recent report:

*"A Power Agenda for a Global, Sustainable And Responsible Europe Risks and Opportunities for the EU in an Era of Geostrategic Shifts"* prepared by RIE and the European Conclave, very relevant for the current context. The dinner concluded with a lively discussion during the Q&A that followed the speech. The next day, the FMA held its 24th Annual General Assembly. Members reaffirmed their commitment to the association's mission and



FMA President Hänsch offering a gift to Miguel Ángel Martínez, AGA 21 May 2025

engaged in discussions on key topics while voting was underway for the new Management Committee. During the AGA, former FMA Board Member Mr. Miguel Ángel Martínez was formally thanked for his years of dedicated service to the association and was presented with a token of appreciation on behalf of the FMA. *"Your story (Mr. Martínez's) reminds us that our strength lies in unity, cooperation, and a shared commitment to building a better future for all Europeans."* - said FMA President Hänsch. After lunch, the election results were announced: Michael Hindley, Manuel Porto, Godelieve Quisthoudt-Rowohl and Teresa Riera Madurell were re-elected, and Edit Herczog was welcomed as a newly elected member. That afternoon, the newly composed committee held its first meeting, continuing its work to keep the FMA a vibrant forum for dialogue, engagement and legacy-building. This year's Annual Events underscored the enduring relevance of the FMA and its mission. From honouring the voices of the past to engaging with today's critical geopolitical challenges, the 2025 gatherings highlighted the importance of experience, reflection and dialogue in shaping Europe's shared future.

All pictures of the Annual Events can be found on the FMA Flickr Account:

[bit.ly/AnnualEventsFMA25](https://bit.ly/AnnualEventsFMA25)



**Teresa Riera Madurell**  
S&D, Spain (2004-2014)  
[trierama@gmail.com](mailto:trierama@gmail.com)



Summary of the FMA Annual Events 20-21 May 2025 © FMA / EP 2025



# EP TO CAMPUS PROGRAMME

## LECTURE WITH THE UNIVERSITY OF LUTSK ON EUROPE DAY

LUTSK NATIONAL TECHNICAL UNIVERSITY, UKRAINE | 9 MAY 2025 | ONLINE

This is the second time that Lutsk University has called on the FMA for Europe Day. This year, the commemoration was particularly significant as Russia celebrated 80 years since its victory over Nazi Germany and leading European figures gathered around President Zelensky in Kiev. Our event was perfectly organised, having been well prepared in advance with the professor in charge.

The European Parliament was of particular interest to the international relations students at this Volhynian university in view of Ukraine's future accession to the Union. They have already received training on the European institutions and the Community decision-making process. I recalled that the entire European project had been conceived and inspired by the desire to ensure peace between the nations that had been at the root of two world wars, and that it had made it possible to achieve what had once been considered a utopian goal: reconciliation between our countries, first between the founding countries and now throughout the EU.

I emphasised the unique nature of this multinational parliament, which is the only one of its kind in the world: elections held on the same day by universal suffrage,

multilingualism at all levels, the role of the d'Hondt method, parliamentary groups reflecting European political parties, and effectiveness in seeking compromise, both within Parliament and in interinstitutional trilogues.

One role of the European Parliament is misunderstood by observers, but it is nevertheless essential: the necessary intervention in the decision-making process of an assembly organised around political parties, to which each country sends numerous MEPs, tends to take much of the heat out of national clashes in the Council of Ministers, where each state has only one representative. This is how the game always ends in a win-win situation.

Although the European Parliament fully exercises its legislative function and uses all its powers to scrutinise the Commission, it does not have the final say on budgetary expenditure and is prohibited from intervening in revenue matters. This has not prevented it from being very active on the international stage in promoting our common values. One of its original initiatives, the Sakharov Prize, was awarded to the entire Ukrainian people in 2022. Since February 2022, through its resolutions, decisions and hearings, Parliament has consistently supported Ukraine's independence.



© LNTU, Ukraine 9 May 2025

The Speaker of the Rada was received at the plenary session in February 2025.

The students were also interested in understanding that Ukraine's entry into the EU family will require a new treaty. Created as an economic community, the European Union is now becoming a true political community with a common foreign and defence policy. Moreover, in the coming years, it will have three dozen members. The traditional Community decision-making system will have to be adapted accordingly, as we did with the Treaty of Lisbon to manage the consequences of the major enlargement of 2004. The problem of the over-representation of small countries in the institutions, starting with the Parliament itself, will be difficult to avoid. Similarly, agreement will have to be reached on applying this new treaty after ratification by a super-majority of states, representing a super-majority of citizens, in order to overcome a possible failure of ratification in a member country. Unanimity will have become impossible.

**Alain Lamassoure**

LDR, EPP, EPP-ED, EPP, France  
(1989-1991, 1992-1993, 1999-2009,  
2009-2019)

[a.lamassoure@wanadoo.fr](mailto:a.lamassoure@wanadoo.fr)



Students of the Lutsk National Technical University participating in the virtual conference with FMA Member Alain Lamassoure © LNTU, Ukraine 9 May 2025

# UPCOMING EVENTS



## ACTIVITIES

03  
JULY 2025

### Librorum (online)

On Thursday 3 July 2025 from 17.00 to 18.15, the book *"Migrationshintergrund: Erlebnisse eines Europäers"* by deceased FMA Member Jannis Sakellariou will be presented post-mortem during the online Librorum event. Interpretation will be available in English, French and German.

5-7  
NOVEMBER 2025

### FMA Visit to Denmark

From 5 to 7 November 2025, the FMA will visit Copenhagen on the occasion of the Danish Presidency of the Council of the European Union. The Delegation will be led by FMA President Klaus Hänsch. Registrations will open via mail.

9  
DECEMBER 2025

### Cocktail Reception and Annual Dinner

The Annual Dinner takes place on 9 December 2025 from 19.30 to 21.30, preceded by a Cocktail Reception from 18.30 to 19.30. These events are only open to FMA Members and Invited Guests. Members will receive a notification by email as soon as registrations open.

10  
DECEMBER 2025

### Librorum, Annual Seminar and Get-Together Lunch

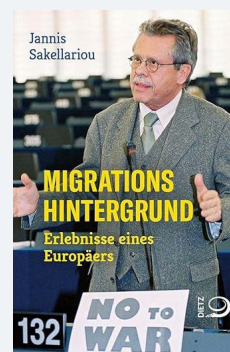
From 10.00 to 11.00, the FMA is organising a hybrid Librorum event presenting *"Ten Elections. A History of the European Parliament at the Ballot Box (1979–2024)"*, followed by the Annual Seminar from 11.00 to 13.00. FMA Members are invited to attend the Get-Together Lunch starting at 13.00. More information about the upcoming events will follow soon via email, the FMA website and social media channels.

## UPCOMING LIBRORUM EVENTS

3 JULY 2025 | 17.00 - 18.30 | ONLINE

**"Migrationshintergrund: Erlebnisse eines Europäers" by former MEP Jannis Sakellariou (post-mortem)**

The FMA, in collaboration with EPLO Germany, will honor the memory and legacy of Mr. Sakellariou, who passed away in 2019, through the presentation of his book at this special and heartfelt event. The event will begin with a welcome address by FMA Vice-President Monica Baldi, followed by an introduction by Georg Pfeifer, Head of EPLO Germany. FMA Honorary Secretary Teresa Riera Madurell will then present the book and its author. Former President of the European Parliament and the FMA, Enrique Barón Crespo and former Head of the EU Delegation to Tunisia, Laura Baeza, will offer their reflections. The Q&A session with the audience will be moderated by Monica Baldi, who will also deliver the closing remarks to conclude the event. **More information and registrations:** [bit.ly/Librorum3July25](https://bit.ly/Librorum3July25)



10 DECEMBER 2025 | 10.00 - 11.00 | HYBRID: EUROPEAN PARLIAMENT & ONLINE

**"Ten Elections. A History of the European Parliament at the Ballot Box (1979–2024)"**

This Librorum event will present the book *"Ten Elections. A History of the European Parliament at the Ballot Box (1979–2024)"*, edited by Michele Fiorillo, political philosopher and democratic theorist. The volume brings together insights and reflections from a wide range of current and former Members of the European Parliament as well as distinguished experts in European politics, including among others FMA Members Enrique Barón Crespo, Richard Corbett, Domènec Devesa and Danuta Hübner. **More information:** [bit.ly/Librorum10Dec25](https://bit.ly/Librorum10Dec25)



# FMA AT WORK

## MEMBERS OF THE MANAGEMENT COMMITTEE



Klaus  
HÄNSCH



Monica  
BALDI



Jean-Pierre  
AUDY



Teresa RIERA  
MADURELL



Edit  
HERCZOG



Michael  
HINDLEY



Edward  
McMILLAN-  
SCOTT



Manuel  
PORTO



Godelieve  
QUISTHOUDT-  
ROWOHL



Paul RÜBIG



Marc ANGEL  
*Quaestor  
responsible  
for relations  
with the FMA*



Fabienne  
KELLER  
*Quaestor  
responsible  
for relations  
with the FMA*

## — FMA BUREAU

President: **Klaus HÄNSCH**

Vice-President: **Monica BALDI**

Treasurer: **Jean-Pierre AUDY**

Secretary: **Teresa RIERA MADURELL**

### LIST OF MANAGEMENT COMMITTEE RESPONSIBILITIES

#### **FMA Bulletin Editorial Board:**

Ms Baldi (Chair), Mr Audy, Mr McMillan-Scott, Ms Riera Madurell and Mr Rübig.

**EP to Campus:** Mr Hindley (Chair), Mr Porto and Ms Quisthoudt-Rowohl.

**Relations with Budgets Committee, DG Finance:** Mr Audy.

**Dinner Debate:** Ms Baldi.

**Delegates to the Bureau of the European Association of Former Members (FP-AP):** Mr Audy and Ms Riera Madurell. If necessary they will be substituted by Ms Quisthoudt-Rowohl.

**FMA Communication:** Ms Baldi (Chair) and Mr Hindley.

**Delegates to the Annual General Assembly, seminars and colloquies of the FP-AP:** Mr Audy, Ms Riera Madurell and Ms Quisthoudt-Rowohl. Besides the FMA delegates or their substitutes and in agreement with the European Association, other FMA Management Committee Members may participate in the annual seminars or colloquies at their own expense.

**Relations with Former Members Associations outside Europe:** Ms Quisthoudt-Rowohl (Chair), Mr Audy, Ms Baldi and FMA Member with advisory role Isabella De Martini.

**Annual seminar and relations with think tanks, policy institutes and foundations:** Ms Riera Madurell (Chair), Ms Baldi, Ms Quisthoudt-Rowohl and Mr Rübig.

**Archives:** Ms Herczog.

**Working Group on Democracy Support and Election Observation:** Mr McMillan-Scott (Chair), Mr Hindley and Ms Quisthoudt-Rowohl.

**Relations with the House of European History:** Ms Herczog.

**Relations with the European University Institute (EUI):** Ms Baldi.

**FMA Recruitment:** Mr Audy, Ms Riera Madurell and FMA Member with advisory role Michel-Ange Scarbonchi





Brussels, 21 May 2025

Dear Member,

Re: RESULTS OF THE VOTES

Please find below the detailed results of the votes which took place at the Annual General Assembly of the Association on 21 May 2025:

### 1) The election for five members of the FMA Management Committee:

The following members were elected in the order below and will now serve on the Management Committee for a period of two years until the Annual General Assembly meeting of 2027:

1. Teresa RIERA MADURELL
2. Godelieve QUISTHOUDT-ROWOHL
3. Michael HINDLEY
4. Edit HERCZOG
5. Manuel PORTO

There were 196 votes cast, of which 3 were ruled invalid, leaving a total valid poll of 193.

### 2) The vote on the Annual Report 2024:

	FOR	AGAINST	ABSTAIN
To approve the Annual Report	185	0	3

There were 196 votes cast, of which 8 were blank, none was ruled invalid leaving a total valid poll of 188.

### 3) The vote on the Annual Accounts 2024:

	FOR	AGAINST	ABSTAIN
To approve the Annual Accounts	180	0	7

There were 196 votes cast, of which 9 were blank, none was ruled invalid, leaving a total valid poll of 187.

We would like to take this opportunity to thank all those who took part in these elections.

Yours sincerely,

Isabella DE MARTINI

Scrutineer

Thomas MANN

Scrutineer

# IN MEMORIAM



## Witold TOMCZAK

✝ 11 March 2025

*NA (2003-2004), IND/DEM (2004-2009), Poland*

He served as a Polish Member of the European Parliament. At the national level, Mr Tomczak represented *Liga Polskich Rodzin*.



## Lord Charles O'HAGAN

✝ 23 March 2025

*ED (1979-1992), EPP (1992-1994), United Kingdom*

He served as a British Member of the European Parliament. At the national level, Mr O'Hagan represented *Conservative and Unionist Party*.



## João CRAVINHO

✝ 16 April 2025

*PES, Portugal (1989-1994)*

He served as a Portuguese Member of the European Parliament. At the national level, Mr Cravinho represented *Partido Socialista*.



## Jaromír ŠTĚTINA

✝ 17 April 2025

*EPP (2014-2019), Czech Republic*

He served as a Czech Member of the European Parliament. At the national level, Mr Štětina represented *TOP 09 a Starostové*.



## Gerhard HAGER

✝ 18 April 2025

*NA, Austria (1999-2004)*

He served as an Austrian Member of the European Parliament. At the national level, Mr Hager represented *parteilos*.



## Francis ZAMMIT DIMECH

✝ 21 April 2025

*EPP (2017-2019), Malta*

He served as a Maltese Member of the European Parliament. At the national level, Mr Zammit Dimech represented *Partit Nazzjonalista*.

# IN MEMORIAM



## Ruth HIERONYMI

☞ 30 April 2025  
*EPP-ED, Germany (1999-2009)*

She served as a German Member of the European Parliament. At the national level, Ms Hieronymi represented *Christlich Demokratische Union Deutschlands*.



## Patrick O'FLYNN

☞ 20 May 2025  
*EFDD, NA, United Kingdom (2014-2019)*

He served as a British Member of the European Parliament. At the national level, Mr O'Flynn represented *Social Democratic Party*.

## Annual Memorial Service for deceased former MEPs

On Tuesday 20 May 2025, from 17:45 to 18:15, the Former Members Association, under the patronage of the European Parliament, held its sixteenth Annual Memorial Service in honour of deceased former Members of the European Parliament.

The ceremony was opened by FMA Vice-President Monica Baldi, followed by a tribute delivered by European Parliament Vice-President Ewa Kopacz.

The commemoration also included poetry readings by members of the FMA Management Committee Michael Hindley, Miguel Ángel Martínez Martínez, Manuel Porto and Teresa Riera Madurell.

The service was accompanied by musical performances from Marc Sabbah (viola), Sebastien Walnier (cello) and Philippe Lambert (trumpet). FMA President Klaus Hänsch concluded the service.

The event took place in the Hemicycle of the European Parliament in Brussels and was livestreamed with interpretation in English, French, German, Italian, Spanish and Polish.

The recording is available via the following link:

<https://www.formermembers.eu/event/annual-memorial-service-2025/>





# ARTIFICIAL INTELLIGENCE AND DATA OWNERSHIP



# THE EUROPEAN PARLIAMENT AND INNOVATION

It is now quite clear that the Capitol Hill attack, four years ago, was not some ragtag rebellion: it was the beginning of a revolution against the very idea of parliamentarianism. The bell tolled not only for the US Congress, but for every parliament, beginning with the European Parliament, and for everything connected to them in the history of the West.

Now, however, parliaments – with their natural opposing strength – seem to have been given a jolt and are using the exact same technology as the revolution of the ‘people of the oligarchs’.

While, not so long ago, many pursued the ‘idea’ of replacing parliaments with digital tools, artificial intelligence has now arrived on the scene. And things have changed. It is understood that algorithmic technology can give parliamentary functions the real effectiveness of results that seemed to be compromised. The functions remain the time-honoured ones, established in the relationship with the political community and the other institutions: common approach, legislation, oversight, federative coordination. But the new tools for preparation and investigation – the ‘knowledge before deliberation’ – can change the quality and strength of democratic representation.

Those parliamentary functions can now rely not only on a wealth of data needed for their performance but also on precise assessments – predictive or retrospective – of their effects.

The new cognitive tools, when triggered by the ‘old’ adversarial procedures – the irreplaceable heart of liberal democracy,

can remap the political system in the EU and in the Member States. And this is a unique achievement for the time we live in. While in many other fields there are concerns about a backsliding of ‘human’ culture in decisions and the processes leading to them, the opposite is happening here. What we might call the ‘superhuman’ reinforcement of the investigation stage that identifies the relevant options, makes each parliament ‘freer’ to deliberate over the narrow array of alternatives that technology must always leave to politics in any case.

It should be noted that introducing generative algorithms into traditional parliamentary procedures does not destroy work – it instead calls for a greater contribution of administrative excellence.

The rigour of procedural rules is not enough. What is required above all is the invention of ‘rules of rules’: meta-rules aimed at ensuring both data security and legal certainty in the overcrowded space of EU and national legislation.

**“It should be noted that introducing generative algorithms into traditional parliamentary procedures does not destroy work – it instead calls for a greater contribution of administrative excellence.”**

But there is more. If the current parliamentary ‘poverty’ really will marry the powerful fortune of artificial intelligence – and succeed in containing it in an instrumental position of integration – the political horizon will expand.

Parliament can then take on social law enforcement functions in a public sphere that has been invaded by falsehoods that pollute news, photos, voices – in a continuous screening of common opinion. The evidence, gathered in the adversarial process, can thus become a ‘parliamentary truth’ in the critical points of public debate: when citizens’ trust is more shaken.

Of course, the ‘sheriff’ is very powerful, but ‘post-human’ algorithms are not exclusive. Every parliament – the oldest institution in human history – can make it its own counter-power tools.

The ‘human factor’ must, along with technology, play a role, still firmly believing in the protection of its ancient place of freedom. In the heart of Europe, more than 82 per cent of German voters at the last election showed that they still believe in their Bundestag. Parliaments rooted in the people will, indeed, always be the EU’s first line of defence against any attack.

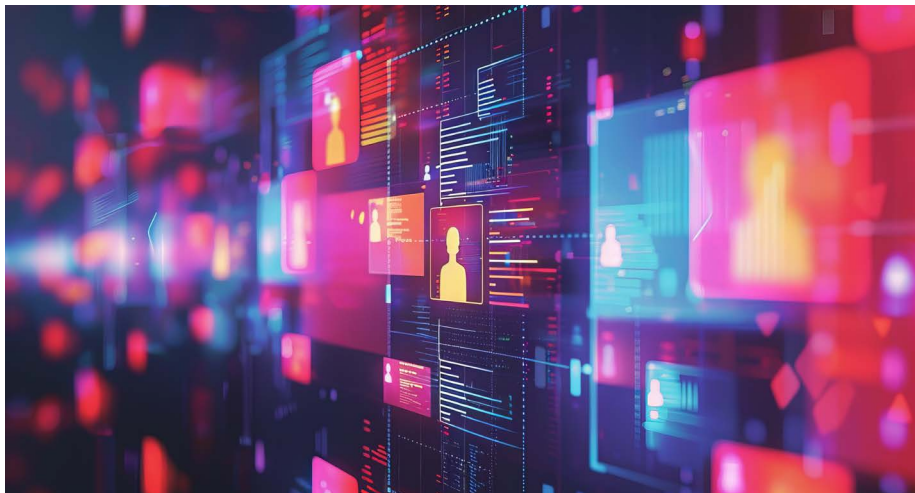
**Andrea Manzella**  
*President of the Center for Parliamentary Studies at LUISS University, Rome*  
*PES, Italy (1994-1999)*  
*an.manzella@gmail.com*

# AI AND DATA STORAGE: A SOCIETAL CHALLENGE

In the process of digital transformation that involves all of contemporary society, artificial intelligence and the management of digital memory are central, both technologically and legally. In this context, the challenge of data storage or retention is one of the focal points of the new 'anthropological question' that technological advancements raise: what space is left for individual freedom in a world where digital memory tends to be infinite, omnipresent and, too often, opaque?

The effectiveness of AI systems, particularly generative ones, is based on the availability of large volumes of data. The data is mostly personal, often unstructured, from heterogeneous sources and stored on complex infrastructure systems that are spread across on-premises environments and thus hosted in a user-owned data centre and cloud. Personal data, which is a useful element for information exchange, has progressively grown to become a primary value: it is the genetic element that feeds artificial intelligence, providing 'nourishment' for systems that are increasingly capable of learning, predicting and deciding. Isn't it perhaps paradoxical that in an age in which we celebrate the ephemeral, the continuous flow of liquid information, potentially perennial digital archives are being built which create lasting records of our every activity, our every thought, our every emotion?

The deployment of artificial intelligence systems, and in particular machine learning techniques, is therefore an expression of the new forms of tension between efficiency and the protection of fundamental rights.



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Algorithms 'live' on large amounts of historical data, on accumulated memory. The temptation to conserve everything, indefinitely, becomes irresistible. But are we sure that 'more data' means 'better intelligence'? And above all, are we willing to accept the risk of our past becoming a permanent judgment on our future?

**"The deployment of artificial intelligence systems, and in particular machine learning techniques, is therefore an expression of the new forms of tension between efficiency and the protection of fundamental rights."**

The data is never neutral. We have seen that, to name just one of many possible examples, in the health sector: AI systems trained on clinical images of predominantly light-skinned people tend to produce less accurate diagnoses on patients with different skin tones. This is one of many discrimination – bias – problems rooted in the quality and variety of data stored – not just in the capacity of the algorithm.

The subject of retention goes beyond technical matters, then. It is, first and foremost, a question of anthropology and power. Whoever controls data controls the representation of reality. And whoever controls reality exerts an unprecedented influence on social, economic and even political dynamics.

For that reason, compliance with data retention regulations needs to be monitored at all times. How is information about us stored? And for how long? Who has access to those files? Is the information correct and complete? What safeguards are there for individuals' rights? In this sense, the General Data Protection Regulation (GDPR) marked a turning point, giving priority to the principles of



accountability and storage limitation in the rules governing the processing of personal data.

Article 5(1)(e) GDPR is clear: Personal data shall be kept 'for no longer than is necessary for the purposes for which [they] are processed'. What is more, information additional to what is necessary in relation to the purposes for which they are processed must not be stored (minimisation principle, Article 5(1)(c) GDPR). Lastly, personal data must be kept up to date (principle of accuracy, Article 5(1)(d) GDPR).

These principles are both simple and revolutionary, particularly in the era of the big data economy. From an infrastructure point of view too, the needs of AI require a radical rethink of archiving solutions. The workload required to develop AI calls for exceptional performance. That is why modern architecture increasingly relies on high-density memories and hybrid cloud solutions, mostly provided by providers whose main facilities are outside the European Union.

The result: technological power ends up concentrated in a few non-EU service providers with all the consequences that this entails for digital sovereignty, business continuity and strategic independence. We are called on to strike a delicate balance.

It is not a question of curbing innovation, but of guiding it. Against that backdrop, data protection authorities are called on to take on a leading role. Not only as supervisory bodies, but also – and perhaps above all – as guarantors of an innovation model compatible with the fundamental values of the legal system.

Data storage for AI, if poorly governed, can become a social control tool, a weapon in the hands of opaque powers, or a mechanism for exclusion and discrimination. But, if well regulated, it can be the key to a new era of shared progress, in which digital memory is not a prison but a resource for the community.

**"Data storage for AI, if poorly governed, can become a social control tool, a weapon in the hands of opaque powers, or a mechanism for exclusion and discrimination."**

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# GOOD JOB, BUT NOT ENOUGH

Over the past decade, Europe has undergone a remarkable transformation in its approach to supercomputing and Artificial Intelligence. Ten years ago, supercomputers across the EU were relatively simple, CPU-based machines, typically financed and operated by individual Member States. Coordination existed through PRACE, but there was no truly unified European effort to position Europe as a global leader in computational science.

This decentralised model, while valuable in its time, often led to duplication of efforts and limited international visibility. Europe's fragmented approach to high-performance computing stood in stark contrast to the unified strategies adopted by global leaders like the United States or China.

Today, the landscape has changed dramatically. The establishment of the EuroHPC Joint Undertaking marked a turning point. This ambitious initiative, co-funded by the European Commission and Member States, has enabled the

development of a continent-wide map of computing resources. Europe now boasts eight supercomputers in the global Top 25, an achievement that not only reflects technical progress but also political commitment. European researchers can now compete on equal footing with their peers in the United States and elsewhere, no longer held back by lack of access to cutting-edge computational power.

From drug discovery to climate modeling, artificial intelligence is not just accelerating research—it is redefining how science is done. The traditional model of hypothesis-driven investigation is increasingly being complemented, and sometimes even replaced, by data-driven exploration, where patterns and insights emerge from vast datasets without prior assumptions.

**"The quantum computers being deployed under the EuroHPC (High-Performance Computing) umbrella are based entirely on European technology—a remarkable success and a sign of growing confidence in homegrown innovation."**

This evolution is happening in an increasingly complex technological environment, driven in large part by the rise of artificial intelligence. This rapid ascent of AI is already reshaping the foundations of many scientific disciplines.

Because of that, modern supercomputers are today hybrid machines: they combine traditional CPUs with powerful GPUs, and increasingly integrate experimental quantum systems. The integration of diverse architectures has forced a rethinking of software paradigms and programming models, with Europe investing heavily in training new generations of developers to work across these platforms. In this context, digital skills become as vital as the hardware itself.

Notably, the quantum computers being deployed under the EuroHPC umbrella are based entirely on European technology—a remarkable success and a sign of growing confidence in homegrown innovation.

However, maintaining Europe's leadership in scientific computing is not enough.



*JADE. One of the quantum simulators acquired through the EuroHPC pilot project HPCQS and located in Jülich, Germany. © Pasqal (website EuroHPC)*

We must ensure that our businesses can also benefit from these capabilities. Initiatives like the AI Factories are central to this effort. These are dedicated infrastructures designed to give European enterprises—particularly SMEs—privileged access to AI and HPC tools, enabling them to innovate, develop products, and scale competitively in global markets.

But this is only the beginning. The next frontier is the development of ‘gigafactories’ for AI and digital technologies: industrial-scale facilities combining data centers, algorithmic innovation, and sector-specific applications. These infrastructures will be crucial to establishing Europe’s long-term strategic autonomy in the digital domain.

These infrastructures are not just technical assets—they are geopolitical instruments. In a world where control over digital capabilities equates to strategic influence, Europe cannot afford to remain a consumer of technologies developed elsewhere.

To achieve true digital sovereignty—meaning that future supercomputers incorporate as much European-made technology as possible, from chips to software stacks—Europe must take bold steps. At present, many of the core components of our most advanced machines are still imported. Changing this will require not only sustained investment, but also a transformation of the policy framework that governs technology development in the EU.

Funding, while essential, is no longer the primary barrier. What we lack is the flexibility to implement large-scale industrial policies that support our own



*Barcelona Supercomputing Center © BSC website (2025)*

technology ecosystem. This will require revisiting EU competition law and procurement rules: an essential step, even if it may be unpopular within parts of the Commission and among some Member States. These frameworks, designed to ensure fairness, must evolve to allow Member States to support key technological industries, as is already common practice in other global regions.

A united Europe has always achieved its greatest successes when acting with clarity of purpose and collective ambition.

The digital age should be no exception. Let us ensure that our political structures are as advanced as the technologies we aspire to lead.

**“The next frontier is the development of ‘gigafactories’ for AI and digital technologies: industrial-scale facilities combining data centers, algorithmic innovation, and sector-specific applications. These infrastructures will be crucial to establishing Europe’s long-term strategic autonomy in the digital domain.”**

The progress of the past decade is encouraging, but we must not rest on our laurels. Now is the time to deepen our commitment to European digital sovereignty, to act decisively, and to ensure that the next generation of computing technology is not only used in Europe, but made in Europe.

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# DATA STORAGE, DIGITAL SOVEREIGNTY, AND AI GOVERNANCE

Artificial intelligence is often seen as a transformative force, disrupting industries, reshaping how decisions are made, and increasingly mediating how we live, work, and interact. Yet under the visible layer of chatbots, image generators, or predictive algorithms lies a less visible but crucial story: the infrastructure that makes AI possible. Central to that story is data storage, which is not only a technical necessity but a key domain of economic and (geo) political tension.

It is, in fact, the growing capabilities of AI what are urging a fundamental reconsideration of data storage. Although it has been long treated as a technical concern, data storage has emerged as a strategic frontier in the geopolitical contest over 'digital sovereignty'. This term encapsulates the ability of states or regional blocs to retain control over their data, infrastructures, and the technological rules that govern them.<sup>1</sup>

One core concern is economic concentration. What was once a decentralized layer of the internet has consolidated into an infrastructure dominated by a handful of global cloud providers, primarily based in the United States and China.

These actors operate massive data centres that serve not only private firms but also public institutions, universities, and civil society at large.



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As a result, data centers are now treated as critical infrastructure (similarly to ports, pipelines, or satellites) whose location, ownership, and accessibility carry real strategic vulnerabilities and dependencies.

This dynamic is intensified by the transnational nature of AI supply chains and data flows. Data used to train AI systems may be collected in one country, stored in another, and processed in yet another. Each jurisdiction imposes its own legal and normative frameworks, which makes it increasingly difficult to establish coherent lines of accountability.

However, while the technical (data, models, computational or services) flows of AI are global, the regulatory frameworks that govern them remain national or regional.

**"A model trained using data stored and governed under a U.S. regime will reflect different biases, values, and risk assessments than one built within a European or Asian context."**

This complexity raises deeper normative questions: where data is stored, and under whose rules, shapes which data is included in AI systems, how it is structured, and who has access to it. As such, the legal and cultural assumptions embedded in these infrastructures determine how AI systems behave. For instance, a model trained using data stored and governed under a U.S. regime will reflect different biases, values, and risk assessments than one built within a European or Asian context. The epistemological foundations of AI are, in this sense, also geopolitical.

<sup>1</sup> Floridi, L. (2020). The fight for digital sovereignty: What it is, and why it matters, especially for the EU. *Philosophy & technology*, 33, 369-378.

Yet the aspiration for sovereign AI infrastructure is constrained by cost and feasibility. Building and maintaining national or regional data storage systems that can support advanced AI is capital-intensive and technologically demanding.<sup>2</sup>

Hence, for many governments and institutions, reliance on dominant foreign providers remains the only practical route. However, such dependence carries significant strategic risks, including limited autonomy, surveillance exposure, and reduced control over technological passageways.

This shift has prompted a wave of policy responses aimed at restating control over data.<sup>3</sup> The EU's push for a trusted cloud ecosystem such as GAIA-X can be considered part of a broader strategic policy to ensure that European data is processed according to European rules. Meanwhile, legislative instruments such as the Data Governance Act and the Data Act aim to establish a harmonised framework for data sharing, interoperability, and user control, reinforcing Europe's strategic autonomy in managing its data and digital assets. Yet, the lack of a domestic AI industry and of a common security policy limits EU's capacity to successfully export the EU's approach to digital sovereignty.<sup>4</sup>

Similar initiatives can be seen in India's data localization mandates<sup>5</sup>, and in efforts by ASEAN<sup>6</sup> or the African Union<sup>7</sup> countries to develop regional cloud capabilities. In light of these dynamics, policymakers face a critical window to shape AI governance not just through ethics or innovation strategies, but through concrete decisions about the data infrastructure. Ensuring that data storage reflects democratic values, legal accountability, and strategic autonomy requires sustained investment, regulatory clarity, and international coordination.

The challenge is to move beyond reactive measures and toward a proactive digital industrial policy that links data governance with long-term capacity-building in cloud infrastructure, cybersecurity, and AI standards.

If digital sovereignty is to be more than a mere ambition, it must be embedded in the material foundations of the AI ecosystem.

**"Building and maintaining national and regional data storage systems that can support systems that can support advanced AI is capital-intensive and technologically demanding."**

3 European Parliamentary Research Service. (2020). Digital sovereignty for Europe (PE 651.992). European Parliament. [https://www.europarl.europa.eu/RegData/etudes/BRIE/2020/651992/EPRS\\_BRI\(2020\)651992\\_EN.pdf](https://www.europarl.europa.eu/RegData/etudes/BRIE/2020/651992/EPRS_BRI(2020)651992_EN.pdf).

4 Calderaro, A., & Blumfelde, S. (2022). Artificial intelligence and EU security: The false promise of digital sovereignty. *European Security*, 31(3), 415-434.

2 Moerel, L., & Timmers, P. (2021). Reflections on digital sovereignty. *EU cyber direct, research in focus series*.



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5 Arora, A. (2023, July 19). Data localization: India's tryst with data sovereignty. *Tech Policy Press*. <https://www.techpolicy.press/data-localization-indias-tryst-with-data-sovereignty/>

6 ASEAN Digital Masterplan 2025. ASEAN Secretariat. <https://asean.org/book/asean-digital-masterplan-2025/>.

7 Smart Africa is a pan-African initiative that promotes regional cloud development and supports sovereign digital infrastructure through its "Data Governance Framework" and "Smart Cloud" initiatives. See <https://smartafrica.org/>.

# ARTIFICIAL INTELLIGENCE AND DATA IN THE EU

## *Introduction*

The EU faces a number of significant challenges with regard to AI, data storage strategies and developments in the relevant markets, all of which are critical to its ambition of becoming a global leader in these fields. The key challenges are outlined below, with a brief explanation how they fit into the current landscape and the latest trends.

## *Regulatory complexity and the compliance burden*

The EU's robust regulatory framework, which includes the AI Act, the General Data Protection Regulation (GDPR) and the Data Act, sets high standards for data privacy, ethical AI and interoperability.

However, these regulations are complex and sometimes overlap, creating compliance challenges for businesses, especially smaller innovative AI firms. For instance, the AI Act's risk-based approach imposes stringent requirements on high-risk AI systems, which can stifle innovation because it is hard to explore novel innovation cycles if the compliance risks are too high. As a result, it is difficult to imagine an AI-model like DeepSeek being designed in the EU. Despite these challenges, many European companies have become quite successful. Just to name a few few, DeepMind (UK, bought by Google), Aleph Alpha (Germany), Shift Technology (France), Mistral AI (France), UiPath (Romania).

## *Data sovereignty and infrastructure gaps*

The EU promotes data sovereignty through initiatives, such as Gaia-X, that aim to reduce reliance on non-EU cloud providers.

The EU still relies on foreign providers for most data storage and processing, raising concerns about nationally defined data control and security models in a globalised context. The lack of available local infrastructure hampers the EU's ability to store and process the vast datasets needed for AI training, undermining its competitiveness. Scaling up European cloud and storage solutions to enable the EU to compete globally is a significant challenge.

## *Fragmented market and investment disparities*

The EU's market is fragmented across 27 Member States with varying economic capacities, different languages and diverse innovation ecosystems. Moreover, investment in AI and data storage is uneven. Fragmentation hinders the creation of a unified digital market, limiting economies of scale for European AI and storage companies.

Unless infrastructure and investment gaps are addressed, the EU's share of the global AI market is projected to remain below 10 % between now and 2030.

## *Global competition and technological dependence*

The United States and China outpace the EU on AI model development, semiconductor production and cloud infrastructure. Most advanced AI models (such as GPT-4 and Llama) and chips (such as Nvidia graphics processing units) originate outside the EU, creating dependencies on foreign technology. Initiatives like the European Processor Initiative are promising, but are not yet competitive at scale.

## *Ethical AI and the AI health market*

The EU prioritises ethical AI, emphasising transparency, fairness and accountability. However, it is hard to implement these principles without stifling innovation. For example, the GDPR's strict rules on data sharing can limit the datasets available for AI training, while the AI Act's requirements for explainability may conflict with the complexity of advanced models.

Over-emphasising ethics could slow the adoption of AI, while under-emphasising it could erode public trust. Striking the right balance is a delicate task, as



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highlighted by the debate around creating an AI health market in the EU, which would entail using AI for healthcare applications.

The European Health Data Space Regulation, which is expected to become law soon, aims to facilitate the secure and standardised exchange of health data and establish a common framework for the reuse of health data, facilitating access for AI development, testing and deployment. However, its integration with existing laws, such as the GDPR and the Medical Device Regulation, adds complexity. The resulting challenges are multifaceted, encompassing legal, technical and organisational dimensions.

The AI health market involves using AI for applications such as predictive analytics, personalised medicine and the efficient management of healthcare data. Creating such a market in the EU requires a robust framework for data storage and AI training data operations.

AI training data refers to the datasets used to train AI models, enabling them to learn patterns, make predictions and perform tasks. AI training involves processing large volumes of personal data, requiring a lawful basis under Article 6 of the GDPR.

‘Legitimate interest’ requirements are often considered, but there is considerable disagreement among EU data protection authorities about the interpretation of this paragraph.

#### *International cooperation*

The AI and data space is global. This being the case, it may be helpful to review the options for strengthening international cooperation for the benefit of EU



players. For example, mutual recognition agreements (MRAs) could serve as a basis for cooperation. These are bilateral agreements that aim to facilitate trade between two parties by confirming that each party recognises the other’s conformity assessment results (such as testing, inspections and certifications) for specific industrial products.

The EU and the United States, which have the world’s largest bilateral trade relationship, have had MRAs in place since 1998, covering many sectors. There would be a number of significant challenges involved in negotiating additional MRAs between the EU and the United States, as a result of regulatory, structural and political differences. Nonetheless, I believe that these could be overcome by focusing on areas such as data storage and training data models.

**“The European Health Data Space Regulation, which is expected to become law soon, aims to facilitate the secure and standardised exchange of health data and establish a common framework for the reuse of health data, facilitating access for AI development, testing and deployment.”**

These agreements reduce technical barriers to trade, lower costs for businesses and streamline market access by eliminating the need for duplicate assessments.

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