



text

July 2025

NEWSLETTER

Think Visegrad in Brussels

In this newsletter

Think Visegrad in Brussels:

→ Europe 2025:

Danish EU Council Presidency, EU - China Summit, EU Budget 2028–2034, EU - US Trade Deal

→ From our members:

- selected publications
- future conferences

→ Our members on social media

→ What is **Think Visegrad**?

Welcome to the **July edition** of the newsletter of Think Visegrad in Brussels. This issue traditionally presents activities and publications of the **Think Visegrad** in Brussels projects, the individual members of the **Think Visegrad** platform and informs about the upcoming events.

For more, follow us on [Facebook!](#)



Europe 2025 : Danish EU Council Presidency, EU - China Summit, EU Budget 2028–2034,

DKEU Danish EU Council Presidency: Security, Enlargement & Green Competitiveness

📍 Brussels | 📅 1 July – 31 December 2025

Under the banner “**A strong Europe in a changing world**,” Denmark’s EU Council Presidency focuses on **boosting European defence, accelerating enlargement, modernising economic policy, and driving the green and digital transitions.**

🛡️ Defence: Strategic Autonomy on the Agenda

The Danish Presidency **puts defence front and centre.** The EU is expected to build **autonomous defence capabilities by 2030**, reduce reliance on third countries, and scale up industrial production.

While **NATO remains essential**, Denmark insists **strategic autonomy** must be strengthened.

UA Continued **military, political, and economic support for Ukraine** is a **non-negotiable priority.**

🌐 Enlargement: Geopolitical Imperative, Not Just Policy

Denmark frames enlargement as a strategic response to rising authoritarian threats. Talks with **Ukraine, Moldova, and the Western Balkans** will be **advanced**—on a merit-based approach.

📁 Competitiveness: Simplification and Smart Spending

Building on the **European Competitiveness Compass** and **Mario Draghi’s report**, **Denmark** is pushing for **regulatory simplification.** Businesses need clarity, stability, and **fewer bureaucratic hurdles** to remain globally competitive.

♻️ Green Transition: Growth Through Decarbonisation

The green transition is positioned not as a cost—but a **competitive advantage.** Denmark wants to accelerate **industrial decarbonisation**, secure access to **affordable energy** and **critical raw materials**, and push forward an investment-driven green industrial strategy.

The 2040 climate target, expected to be **agreed before COP30** in November 2025, will be a litmus test of EU climate ambition.

📺 What to Watch | July–December 2025

- Can Denmark **overcome political resistance** and move **enlargement forward**?
- Will simplification translate into **real regulatory relief** for EU businesses?
- How **ambitious will the EU be at COP30** (17–28 November 2025) in Brazil?

EUCN EU–China Summit: No Breakthrough, Tensions Persist

📍 Beijing | 📅 24 July 2025

Chinese President Xi Jinping met with **European Commission President Ursula von der Leyen** and **European Council President António Costa** in Beijing. The summit was marked by a **tense atmosphere**, with **limited progress on trade**, and no real convergence on geopolitical issues.

Tone Shift: Engage with Caution

President von der Leyen set the tone earlier this year in Davos, calling for “**constructive engagement**” and even expanded trade ties with China.

Yet in the run-up to the summit, she recalibrated her stance, warning the **European Parliament** about the “**strategic and systemic risks**” China poses to Europe’s security and competitiveness—stressing the need for a relationship built on “**predictability and reliability.**”

Trade: Defensive Postures on Both Sides

The EU again flagged **China’s overcapacity and trade imbalances**, while President von der Leyen warned that relations have reached “an inflection point.”

China responded with calls to **avoid “restrictive tools,”** denying responsibility for market distortions or Russia’s war economy.

Climate: Symbolic Unity Amid Strategic Divide

A joint statement reaffirmed both sides’ **commitment to climate cooperation** and the green transition.

But the outcome was modest. The **EU encouraged higher climate finance**, methane reductions, and ambition at COP30, yet **China remained non-committal.**

Escalation Ahead: Investigations and Sanctions

The EU is preparing to **expand investigations into Chinese firms** in sectors like **green tech and advanced manufacturing**, reflecting concerns over economic overdependence and systemic market distortions.

More sanctions on **Chinese entities linked to Russia** are also expected, building on the inclusion of **two Chinese banks** in the most recent package.

UA Ukraine: No Shift in Position

The EU urged **China to avoid any support** to Russia’s war machine and to use its influence for a just peace.

Beijing maintained its position and strategic alignment with **Moscow, offering no meaningful shift.**

The Bigger Picture

- The summit avoided escalation but delivered **no breakthrough**
- Rare earth deals **may help stabilize parts of the relationship**
- EU–China ties remain shaped by **growing distrust** and structural divergence

EU EU Budget 2028–2034: Strategic Shift or Missed Opportunity?

 Brussels |  16 July 2025

The European Commission unveiled its proposal for the **EU’s next seven-year budget** – calling for a modest **increase in funding**, accompanied by a **significant shift in spending priorities.**

Budget Size & Scope

The Commission proposes raising the long-term EU budget from **1.1% to 1.26% of GNI.** Most of this modest increase will be used to **repay pandemic recovery debt, not fund new priorities.**

Economists suggest the EU needs at least 0.8% of GDP more in common investment – five times the current increase.

Shifting Priorities

Funding for agriculture and cohesion would decrease in relative terms.

Increased focus on:

- **Competitiveness:** research, education, cross-border infrastructure
- **Defence & energy:** interconnectivity, strategic autonomy
- **External action:** support to Ukraine and EU neighbourhood

Green & Biodiversity Concerns

Green priorities are **merged into broader categories**, with **no dedicated biodiversity line**. Farm subsidies remain large, despite limited EU-wide justification and environmental harm

Corporate Levy Controversy

New flat tax on companies **with €100m+ turnover proposed:**

- Applies **regardless of profit**
- Criticised by **countries, business groups**, countries and **MEPs** as regressive and anti-competitive

Revenue Reform & Rebates

Planned new levies on:

- **Carbon emissions** (CBAM)
- **Tobacco**
- **Electronic waste**

Conclusion

While the proposal **improves strategic focus**, its **ambition remains limited**. Key issues like biodiversity, delivery capacity, and investment scale need further clarity. The outcome now hinges on **tough intergovernmental negotiations**.

EEUS EU–US Trade Deal: Certainty or Concession?

 Washington /Brussels |  27 July 2025

After months of tension, **Commission President Ursula von der Leyen** and **US President Donald Trump** struck a political deal that avoids a tariff war and takes **effect 1 August 2025**.

What Was Agreed?

▼ **15% Tariff Ceiling on EU Exports**

A **flat 15% cap** now applies to nearly **all EU exports to the US** – replacing previous layers of MFN and additional duties. Applies to cars, **industrial goods; pharmaceuticals** and semiconductors **stay at 0% for now**, capped at 15% in future cases.

Strategic Products – Tariff Relief

US duties on **EU aircraft, chemicals, and generic drugs** revert to pre-2024 levels. More products may follow through negotiations.

Steel, Aluminium & Copper – Joint Defence

Both sides will introduce **tariff-rate quotas based on past trade volumes**, cutting the

current 50% tariffs and tackling global overcapacity.

Two-Way Market Access

EU will eliminate residual low tariffs on US industrial goods.

Improved **access for US agriculture (€7.5bn worth)** and **fishery exports** under tariff-rate quotas.

EU consumers to save €5bn annually from lower import duties.

Supply Chain & Tech Security

Joint work on **export controls, investment screening,** and **critical supply** chain resilience to counter non-market practices.

Energy & Tech Commitments

EU intends to purchase **\$750bn in US LNG, oil,** and nuclear fuel and **€40bn in US-made AI chips** – aiding diversification from Russian and Chinese sources.

Defence Investments – Tensions Below Surface

The US claims the **EU has agreed to increase defence purchases from US firms.**

EU statements only confirm a "**strategic dialogue**" – **no binding commitment,** raising concerns over overlap with **von der Leyen's ReArm Europe plan** focused on EU defence sovereignty.

Country Impact: Uneven Exposure

DE Germany

13% of auto exports go to the US – new tariffs could cost billions.

IE Ireland

Pharma exports (\$50bn/year) heavily exposed – Dublin gave cautious support.

IT Italy

Projected **0.2% GDP loss;** hit to farming, pharma, and cars. **Trade bodies demand EU compensation.**

In this **July edition,** and throughout the year, we will bring you analyses, insights, and expertise from top experts within the **Think Visegrad platform,** offering a Central European perspective on what lies ahead for the EU—from security and defence to economic shifts and digital transformation.

Stay with us and stay ahead of the key developments **shaping Europe in 2025!**

From our members: selected publications



OSW

CENTRE FOR EASTERN STUDIES
OSRODEK STUDIÓW WSCHODNICH



PISM

POLSKI INSTYTUT SPRAW MIĘDZYNARODOWYCH
THE POLISH INSTITUTE OF INTERNATIONAL AFFAIRS

Marcin Jędrysiak

Ukraine: Verkhovna Rada restores independence of anti-corruption bodies

Marta Szpala

Protests in Serbia: civil disobedience and government repressions



Tereza Vachmanská

Too Few to Resist: Hybrid Threats and Demographic Decline in CEE Europe's Quantum Leap: New EU Strategy Aims to Turn Scientific Power into Market Leadership

Andrea Pahon

Europe's Quantum Leap: New EU Strategy Aims to Turn Scientific Power into Market Leadership

Filip Křenek

Policy Paper | Czechia and the Priorities of the Next Multiannual Financial Framework 2028-2034

Artur Kacprzyk

U.S. to Sell Allies Weapons for Ukraine

Justyna Szczudlik

China Makes Subtle Adjustments to Its Ukraine Policy



Zsolt Trembeczki

EU-INDIA FREE TRADE TALKS: CAN THEY WRAP UP IN 2025?

Our Members: Future Events

>INSTITUTE OF INTERNATIONAL
RELATIONS PRAGUE

[Learn more](#)

SAVE THE DATE

 **Webinar Invitation: Human Rights Justifications in the EU and Beyond**

 3 September 2025 |  12:30 CEST |  Online

Institute of International Relations Prague warmly invites you to join the upcoming session in the *HRJust Empirical Webinar Series* titled **“Human Rights Justifications in the EU and Beyond.”**

This event will present a forthcoming book developed under **Work Package 3** of the Horizon Europe project HRJust (States’ Practice of Human Rights Justification). The book gathers leading scholars in EU constitutional law, international law, human rights, political theory, and philosophy to explore how human rights are used – and should be used – as justifications for state and EU action across domestic, European, and global levels.

The Future of Transatlantic Relations: Between Unity and Uncertainty – Expert Discussion



The Future of Transatlantic Relations: Between Unity and Uncertainty

Expert discussion

On **19 June 2025**, from 10:00 to 11:30 in Brussels, we brought together Brussels-based stakeholders, European policymakers, and experts from across the EU, including the V4 region, to reflect on the future of the transatlantic relationship and discuss how Europe can collectively shape its strategic trajectory.

This public event featured a timely discussion in which leading experts and policymakers explored the pressing **challenges and assessed Europe's readiness** to build a stronger, more integrated, and strategically autonomous defence framework.



Our distinguished panel included:

- **Rebecca Christie**, Senior Fellow, **Bruegel**
- **Danielle Piatkiewicz**, Deputy Chief Operating Officer, **Alliance of Democracies Foundation**; Research Fellow, EUROPEUM Institute for European Policy
- **Botond Feledy**, Senior Research Fellow, **Centre for Euro-Atlantic Integration and Development**
- **Łukasz Ogrodnik**, Visegrad Group and Austria Analyst, **Polish Institute of International Affairs**
- **Matúš Halás**, Senior Researcher, **Institute of International Relations Prague**

The discussion was moderated by **Martin Vokálek**, Executive Director of **EUROPEUM Institute for European Policy**.

Our members on social media

[Centre for Euro-Atlantic Integration and Democracy](#)



[EUROPEUM Institute for European Policy](#)



[Center for Eastern Studies \(OSW\)](#)



[GLOBSEC Policy Institute](#)



[Hungarian Institute of International Affairs \(HIIA\)](#)



[Institute of International Relations Prague \(IIR\)](#)



[Slovak Foreign Policy Association \(SFPA\)](#)



[The Polish Institute of International Affairs \(PISM\)](#)



What is the ‘Think Visegrad in Brussels’ project?

In the first half of 2016, the Think Visegrad platform members agreed on the idea proposed by the EUROPEUM Institute for European Policy, to create a common representation office in Brussels. The main motivation for it is the need to encourage debate on issues of common interest to the EU and the V4 and explain the positions of the V4 to a wide audience. We would like to project an image of constructive partners, to explain the dynamics of the debates within our regions and to highlight our active contributions to EU policy-making. With this view and with the aim to boost discussions specifically on the Czech Republic and the EU, EUROPEUM has opened its Brussels office in January 2016.

The project run in the second half of 2016 and consisted of many interesting and successful events. The second part of the project was approved in June 2017 and continued until the end of the year. Project has been continuously running since 2018.





EUROPEUM Institute for European Policy
Avenue de Broqueville 40, 1200 Woluwe-Saint-Lambert
Bruxelles

You can find more information about GDPR under [this link](#).

In case you do not wish to subscribe to this newsletter anymore, [click here](#).

©2025 Institute for European policy EUROPEUM.

All rights reserved.

Think Visegrad in Brussels Newsletter | July 2025