

SUSTAINABLE GROWTH & COMPETITIVENESS SUMMIT

11 December 2024 | Residence Palace, Brussels

The new EU Mandate needs a new approach to climate neutrality that can maintain economic competitiveness by ensuring the prioritisation of enablers of economic growth, energy security, and innovation.

In the new policy cycle, energy and climate policy should be centred on a Green Deal 2.0 whereby climate action and economic competitiveness mutually reinforce each other. Europe needs to boost its cleantech base, encouraging innovation and investment; supporting the development of industries, particularly SMEs; and ensuring social cohesion and well-being, to maintain support for climate policies.

Emphasis should fall on creating a secure and resilient energy system, enhancing infrastructure, and promoting research in environment-friendly and climate-neutral solutions. Private investment must be unlocked by making the EU an attractive location for innovation and cleantech development. These measures will ensure that climate action contributes to Europe's economic strength and global leadership in sustainable development and competitiveness.

Through three engaging panel discussions, the **Sustainable Competitiveness and Growth Summit** seeks to identify a common compass for pro-European liberal and market-oriented policies, bridging EU-level discussions with ongoing debates within Member States. By highlighting voices from different national perspectives, the Summit will outline the instruments and recommendations to drive the energy transition forward in the new legislative cycle.

Agenda

Date: Wednesday 11 December 2024, 15:30h – 19:00h

- 15:45 – 16:00 Keynote from **Ursula von der Leyen** (tbc), **President of the European Commission**, *“The EU’s pathway to boost sustainable competitiveness”*
- 16:00 – 16:45 Panel Discussion 1: **The role of the market in reindustrialisation: deploying sustainable growth and boosting competitiveness**
- 16:45 – 17:00 Break with refreshments
- 17:00 – 17:15 Fireside chat with **Peter Liese** (EPP, Germany), Member of the ENVI Committee in the European Parliament, EPP spokesperson for health and environment policy. With Bernd Weber, CEO, EPICO
- 17:15 – 18:00 Panel Discussion 2: **Energy security and resilience: Seeking new definitions**
- 18:00 – 18:45 Panel Discussion 3: **The social component of the EU’s new energy and climate policy**
- 18:45 – 18:50 Closing remarks, Bernd Weber, CEO, EPICO
- 19:00 onwards Cocktail reception and networking dinner

Panel Discussion 1

The role of the market in Europe's reindustrialisation: deploying sustainable growth and boosting competitiveness

The political guidelines for the next Commission prioritise sustainable prosperity and competitiveness, with a focus on several instruments: the Clean Industrial Deal and the Industrial Decarbonisation Acceleration Act. Others include the Competitiveness Fund and the revision of the Public Procurement Directive. These will be central to achieving this objective. In this context, the panel will explore the framework of a new European industrial policy that can enhance innovation, complement the existing Net Zero Industry Act, and ensure that the EU industry remains competitive in the global race for cleantech.

The discussion will also address how (de)regulation can complement and boost market dynamics to make decarbonisation a driver of competitiveness. What is the role of innovation in this process?

Moderator:

- **Davide Panzeri**
Europe Lead, ECCO Think Tank

Panellists:

- **Andrea Wechsler**
MEP (EPP, Germany)
- **Sylvie Lemoine**
Deputy Director General, CEFIC
- **Commission representative (TBC)**
Commission Representative

Panel Discussion 2: Competition, energy security and resilience: navigating trade-offs while avoiding new dependencies

This panel discussion will examine the EU's strategies for securing a resilient and sustainable energy future in the face of geopolitical challenges and supply chain vulnerabilities. The focus will include the role of an Energy Union in reducing energy costs and accelerating the transition to cleaner energy sources. Domestically, the EU must prioritise innovation in clean energy technologies and strengthen the 'Made in Europe' pillar of its economy. Internationally, it is crucial to establish robust partnerships and avoid over-reliance on single producers.

The discussion will also address the evolving meaning of energy dependence in a decarbonised world compared to a fossil-fuel-based one. What are the risks associated with new forms of dependency, and how can the EU build the resilience it desires?

Moderator:

- **Valentina Martinez-Ferro**
Special Adviser and Former Spanish MP, OIKOS

Panellists:

- **Pilar del Castillo**
MEP (EPP, Spain)
- **Matthew Baldwin**
Deputy Director General, DG ENER
- **Christoph von dem Bussche**
CEO, Gascade

Panel Discussion 3: The social component of the EU's new energy and climate policy

The twin green and digital transitions will profoundly impact social equity and community well-being, forcing thousands of EU citizens to change jobs as the fossil fuel economy winds down. Heating and mobility are where citizens feel the economic effects of green policies most directly. The energy crisis has elevated energy from a technical issue to a political priority, with the affordability of electric vehicles and natural gas for heating remaining pressing concerns. This panel will explore the intersection of climate goals and social impact, focusing on the critical role of SMEs in driving a just transition through craftsmanship, innovation, and a resilient economic fabric. These discussions are especially timely, as Member States must submit their Social Climate Plans by 2025, with the Polish Presidency of the Council potentially playing a key role in shaping this process.

Discussions will specifically address the impact of the ETS 2, the extension of the ETS to buildings and transport, and the role of the Social Climate Fund in mitigating the most pressing social costs.

Moderator:

- **Marcin Korolec**
Founder and Director, the Green Economy Institute, and Former Minister of Environment, Poland

Panellists:

- **Frank Siebern-Thomas**
Head of Unit, DG Employ
- **Eszter Lakos**
MEP (EPP, Hungary)
- **Krzysztof Bolesta (tbc)**
State Secretary for Climate and Environment, Poland
- **Matteo Campidelli**
Head of HVAC, INNOVA