

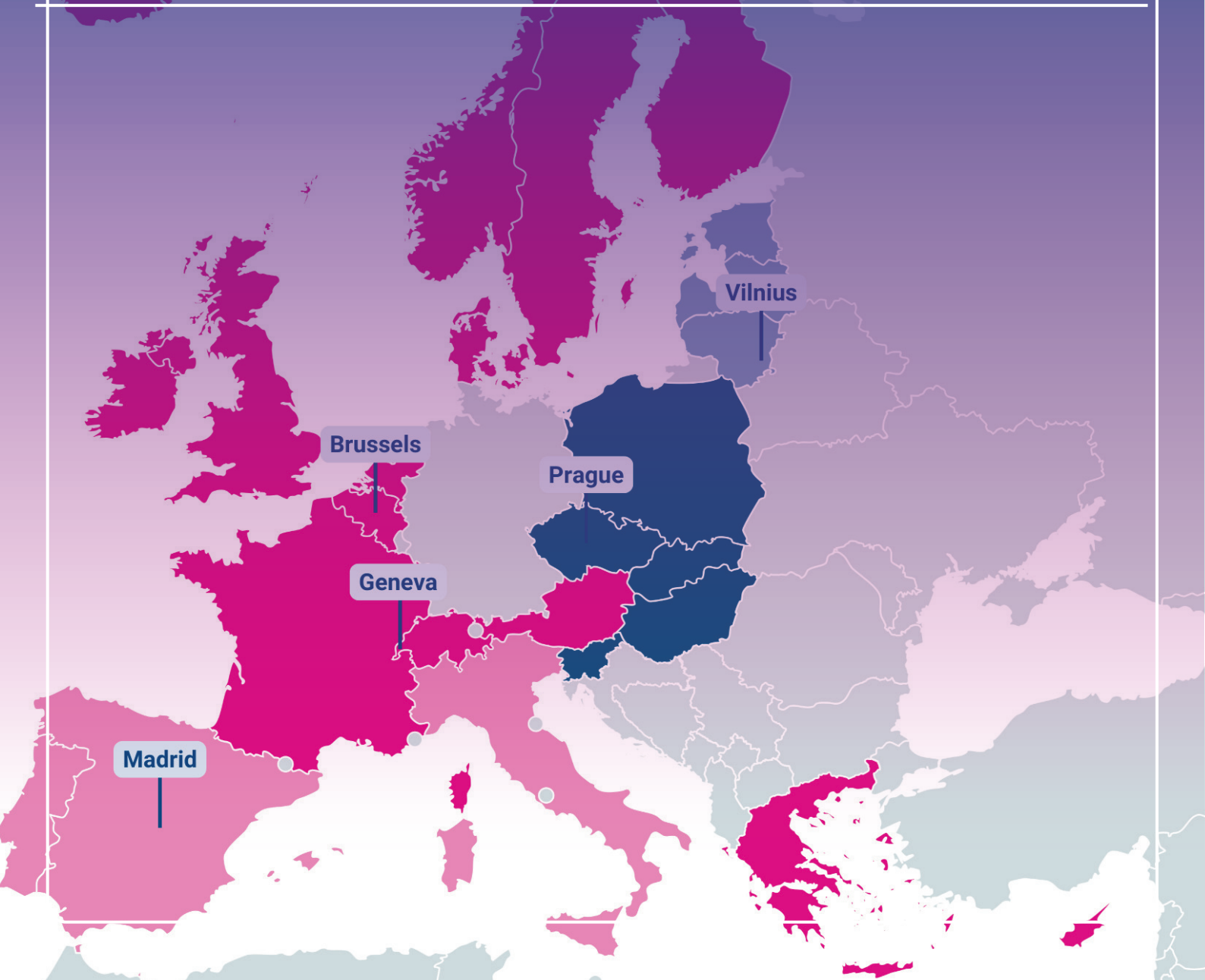


**FRIEDRICH NAUMANN
STIFTUNG** Für die Freiheit.

Europe

Vol. 1

LIBERAL CHRONICLE 2024/25



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FNF
INITIATIVES
IN EUROPE

JULES MAATEN

As we reflect on 2024, we'd like to ask: which moment or event stood out to you most this year?

The most consequential event was for me the European Elections. Europeans went to the polls in much higher numbers than in the past, conscious of how important they were. European democracy took a step forward. Also, despite the forecasts of doomsayers, the populists did not take over the shop. In fact the political center held quite well. Unfortunately some of the populists did well, particularly in France and Spain, and the Liberals not so well, also especially in those countries. We have a fight on our hands.

2024 was a pivotal election year and a time of significant change. In your view, what are the primary goals for the region, and which shifts will likely have the most impact?

Many citizens feel that the established political parties, in fact that the whole political establishment seems unable to deal with the problems that they face today. Rightly or wrongly, they perceive a lack of decisiveness, and a cosy decision making culture in the political centre that puts form over substance, and puts discussion and political games over actual doggedness to come with solutions.



We need to throw off this impression as soon as we possibly can, and speak clear language with determination. As Liberals we should actually be very good at that.

What should be the key objectives for liberals in Europe in 2025, and how can the European Dialogue contribute to these goals?

Not so long ago, as Liberals we set the political agenda. The world was inexorably becoming more liberal, or so it seemed. Today unfortunately that obviously is no longer the case. There is an illiberal wind that blows nobody good. And as response we do not come much further than defending the accomplishments of past decades, defending the liberal-democrat status quo. For our citizens that is not an inspiring proposition, especially not at a time when it is plain for all to see that Europe is running behind on innovation and economic competitiveness, or where it regards our global geopolitical position, and preserving the European way of life. We need to develop and present a forward looking view. We need to show where we believe our European society should be heading. Initiatives such as our Project Europe 2050, and our Policy Labs with ELF (European Liberal Forum), try to help fill this vacuum. We are also seeing some good debates about this amongst European Liberals.

Looking ahead, which projects and challenges are you most looking forward to in 2025?

We need to focus on the most important challenges, like the ones that I mentioned before. I am also looking forward to our activities regarding foreign interference in decision making processes in Europe and on disinformation, and also on EU competitiveness and resilience.

We also believe that the time has come to take a closer look at what the consequences are of Brexit, both for ourselves and for the British - we see more and more areas where it makes sense for us to work together, for example on trade issues and on defence, and it makes sense to explore ways forward. We have our work cut out.



© FNF Europe
Jules Maaten, Regional Director Europe, Friedrich Naumann Foundation for Freedom

PROJECT HIGHLIGHTS

Eastern European Summit IV

From September 13th to 15th, the Prague office of the FNF, in cooperation with the JuLis, held the fourth Eastern European Summit in Tallinn, Estonia. There, young liberals from all over Central and Eastern Europe, with the support of experts from the Estonian Reform Party, worked on policy demands on the issues of Baltic countries' membership in the European Union, security, Russian regional influence, and sustainable economics. The results were elaborated in a new position paper. It contains the collective demands of 14 liberal youth organizations across Central and Eastern Europe. They strongly believe their calls for action are essential in solving the abovementioned challenges. Their joint position paper can be accessed [here](#).



© FNF Central Europe
Eastern European Summit in Tallinn, Estonia



© FNF Central Europe
Forum 2000 in Prague, Czech Republic

Forum 2000

The 28th annual Forum 2000 Conference, titled "Proving Democracy's Resolve and Resilience", was held in Prague, Czech Republic on October 13–15, 2024. Against a backdrop of deepening global divisions, the rapid proliferation of technology-related risks, and the internal fissures within democratic systems, the conference critically examined these challenges as well as possible solutions and ways forward.

The discussions revolved around the following thematic areas: World Order on the Brink, Fragile Democracies, Democracy and Technology, Forum for Ukraine, Thematic, and Regional Focus. FNF Prague supported two panels at the conference - "How to Work with Partners Facing Democratic Challenges? The Cases of Hungary and Slovakia" with Anne Brasseur, a Member of the Board of Directors of FNF as one of the speakers; and "Defying Digital Tyranny" with Jules Maaten, Regional Director Europe as a moderator of the panel.



© FNF Central Europe
Forum 2000

Exploitation of Children in Travel and Tourism

Despite its taboo nature, FNF Europe sought to revive this critical topic through a [survey](#) on European citizens' perceptions, an [image video](#), and a conference inviting several experts on the topic. These efforts aim to raise awareness, particularly amid ongoing EU debates on a new proposal to strengthen measures against child sexual abuse.



© FNF Europe
Conference: Exploitation of Children in Travel & Tourism

The 20th Issue of 4liberty.eu Review: 20 Years in the EU: CEE and Its Path to Progress

This special [edition](#) celebrates the remarkable journey of Central and Eastern European (CEE) countries over the past two decades since their accession to the European Union in 2004. By reflecting on the past, assessing the present, and envisioning the future, the issue written by the members of the 4liberty.eu network delves into the profound benefits and challenges of EU membership. Additionally, it casts a forward-looking lens on the aspirations of Ukraine and Georgia as potential new members of the European community.



Publication: 20 Years in the EU: CEE and Its Path to Progress

As a key initiative of the Friedrich Naumann Foundation for Freedom, this publication underscores our commitment to fostering dialogue and understanding in the region, offering insights from thought leaders and policy experts from our network of liberal think tanks from CEE.



©FNF Spain, Italy, Portugal and Mediterranean Dialogue Moments of the debate with Eva-Maria Poptcheva, MEP elected in Spain and Vice-Chair Committee on Economic and Monetary Affairs and Salima Yenbou, MEP elected in France and Member of the Delegation to the Parliamentary Assembly of the Union for the Mediterranean

The report, based on a cross-regional survey, provided primary research and extensive first-hand data on the perspectives and challenges faced by youth in Jordan, Lebanon, Italy, Morocco, Portugal, Spain, and Tunisia. The event brought together Members of the European Parliament, experts, youth organizations, and other stakeholders in a participatory dialogue, which underscored the importance of an eye-level conversation between Europe and the Mediterranean region.

Youth in the Mediterranean at the heart of the debate in the European Parliament

In January 2024, FNF Madrid, in collaboration with its partner ESADEEcPol and Renew Europe, presented the report “The Youth of the Mediterranean and the Challenges of a Permanent Crisis: Income, Independence, Housing and Challenges” at the European Parliament. This collaboration exemplifies a shared commitment to addressing socio-economic issues and promoting liberal solutions that prioritize individual empowerment and equal opportunities.



©FNF Spain, Italy, Portugal and Mediterranean Dialogue Participants of the debate Youth in the Mediterranean in the European Parliament.

JULIUS VON FREYTAG- LORINGHOVEN

You are the new Head of Office, Baltic States, tasked with opening our newest office in Vilnius. What strategic goals have been set for the Foundation's new office in Vilnius, Estonia, and which topics will you focus on as it's Director?

The mission of our new office in Vilnius is simple and straightforward: we want to bring Baltic experiences and analyses on security and defence to Germany. In a similar way we also want to learn from the Baltic States how to be more innovative and learn from their experiences with less bureaucratic e-governance. In 2024 we have managed to register our new office, registering our bank account and solving all bureaucratic challenges - still a bit less than in Germany. And soon we hire our first team and negotiate the conditions of our new office work.

What insights do you believe Europe—and especially Germany—can gain from the Baltic region? How do you plan to bring these insights to the forefront?

Of course Germany is way richer as the economic heavyweight of Europe.

But, it is appalling how such small countries can be so advanced to big countries like Germany in so many ways. They spend relatively so much more to support Ukraine, also because they know the threat from Putin's Russia better than most countries in the West and know that they are next, if Russia wins in Ukraine. But also digital processes and innovation are everywhere so much advanced. In both areas we want to make their advance more visible so people understand that we need to learn from them.



© Julius von Freytag-Loringhoven
Julius von Freytag-Loringhoven, Head of Office, Baltic States, Vilnius, Friedrich Naumann Foundation for Freedom

Are there any specific projects planned for 2025 that you would like to highlight?

The big thing in 2025 will be the opening of our office in the heart of Vilnius, where we want to become a loud voice getting into the discussions in other parts of Europe. And we work on simulations that show what military-political and civilian cooperation mean in times of a potential attack. If we can convince more people through an experience of a simulation to act, then this is our highlight.



© Julius von Freytag-Loringhoven
Picture of Vilnius, Lithuania

**FEMALE
EMPOWERMENT**

MEP SVENJA HAHN

The ALDE Party, ELF, and FNF collaborate on “Alliance of Her,” a masterclass programme for women in politics. As an alumna of the programme, how important are initiatives like this for supporting and promoting women in politics?

The Alliance Of Her is our flagship programme and the only one of its kind in Europe. I believe it to be the best programme any aspiring politician could ever have, irrespective of their gender.

“Since launching, it has provided a vital springboard for tens of liberal women to kickstart their political career. Graduates of the programme, including myself, have eventually achieved remarkable milestones, including becoming local councillors, party leaders, national Ministers, Members of their national Parliament as well as the European Parliament.

Despite a few steps forward in recent years, there is a long way to go to achieve gender equality in European political representation. In the current mandate of the European Parliament, only 38.7% of MEPs are women, compared to around 41% in the previous mandate. This is the first decrease since the first European elections in 1979. This is the Alliance of Her’s real mission: overthrowing an obsolete political system which is centred around the patriarchy and giving talented and hopeful women in politics the right



© ALDE Party
Svenja Hahn, Member of the European Parliament
FDP, Germany
President of ALDE Party

tools, belief and confidence to change the course of history. The Alliance of Her is a training academy, sisterhood and torchbearer for more equal participation in politics.

As an organization that unites liberal parties from across Europe, the ALDE Party plays a critical role in advancing liberal values. Are there specific plans for how ALDE can help counter the rise of populism and the far right?

The fight between autocracy and democracy is the most significant challenge we face as Europeans but also globally. We believe that as liberals, our biggest weapon to counter growing extremism is finding concrete solutions to the real problems that worry people.

“We work with our member parties to present a strong and cohesive liberal voice across Europe. This means supporting them with capacity-building, strategies and policy development to effectively address populists and extremists in their own countries.

Populists thrive on misinformation and fearmongering. We want to counter their narrative with a message of hope: through our campaigns and social media efforts, we aim to connect directly with citizens, especially younger generations who are key to shaping the future of Europe as free, prosperous and forward-thinking.

Liberalism is not just a values-driven ideology, it’s a practical approach to solve today’s pressing issues. The only viable way to ensure both economic and societal freedom for all European citizens and make them thrive is by embracing innovation, strengthening our economy and competitiveness, taking responsibility for our own security and continue safeguarding our democratic and social values – be it local, regional, national or European.

What are you looking forward to in 2025, both in your role as President of the ALDE Party and as a Member of the European Parliament?

As ALDE Party President, I am looking forward to reforming our party, our infrastructures, our events and our communication strategy to ensure our political family is ready and equipped to respond to the overarching challenges of our time.

We want ALDE Party to be the best meeting point for our member parties to come together, exchange ideas, network and grow with each other. We need to become bridge builders, focus on our strengths and believe in our tools, disregarding the illiberal forces from inside and outside the European Union that are aiming to destroy our shared future.

In the European Parliament, I look forward to fighting the good fight to restore the EU as a global leader on the world stage. A key element for our geopolitical power and the much needed economic growth will be building new trade partnerships. We will also work on European legislation that enhances our competitiveness by reducing bureaucratic hurdles and strengthening our sovereignty in strategic sectors like AI and clean tech.

2025 will be a defining year for Europe. Supporting our Ukrainian friends to win Putin’s war of aggression will be a crucial step to defending our freedoms and ensuring Europe can be built by our citizens for our citizens, and not for the self-serving autocrats of this world.

PROJECT HIGHLIGHTS

Alliance of Her in Copenhagen

The programme in cooperation with ALDE and European Liberal Forum, aims to support liberal women to lead, succeed, survive, and thrive in political life. In the autumn session the participants engaged in a series of expert-led training sessions such as public speaking, self-presentation, media communication and storytelling. They also had the opportunity to visit the Danish Parliament, meeting Eva Kjer Hansen, ALDE Vice President, to discuss the future of liberal parties.



© ALDE Party
Alliance of Her in Copenhagen

Alliance of Her in Potsdam

The "Spring" Masterclass Session, held at FNF in Potsdam, Germany; gave the participants the opportunity to take part in a series of training sessions covering political messaging, team management, campaigning, and resilience. Participants engaged in an expert-led masterclass and listened to inspiring political leaders. The sessions emphasized community building among participants.



© ALDE Party
Alliance of Her in Potsdam

Delegation on Women in Politics

FNF was honored to host in **Brussels** a delegation of female politicians from Ukraine, Armenia, and Georgia. During their visit, they engaged in discussions with Members of the Femm Committee, addressing the challenges they face as female leaders. Additionally, they met with Members of the European Parliament, including Dan Barna, Nathalie Loiseau and Petras Auštrevičius from the Committee on Foreign Affairs, to exchange perspectives on the political landscape in their regions.



© FNF Europe
Delegation on Women in Politics

UN Study training with women journalists

Women journalists from five African countries (in cooperation with FNF Tanzania and FNF Zimbabwe) engaged in the Hub's training on UN human rights mechanisms. The journalists had productive conversations with the UN Special Rapporteur on Freedom of the Press, Irene Khan, and the President of the Human Rights Council, Omar Zniber. During the training in Geneva and back home, the journalists published political analyses, radio podcasts and TV reports in their media houses: about the UN study training and the work of the FNF and its commitment to the importance of the right to freedom of expression and the independence of media.



© Annie Mpalume
The journalists had the opportunity to ask questions and discuss the functioning of the UN mechanisms and their work with the sitting Council President H.E. Omar Zniber.

IAF SEMINARS

To support its worldwide project work, the Foundation launched the International Academy for Leaders (IAF) three decades ago, a forum and venue for international political dialogue and training. The IAF events, which are conceived in close cooperation with the Foundation's projects abroad, bring together well-known experts and personalities from various subject areas, opinion leaders, committed young liberals and aspiring leaders to discuss international issues in politics, business and science.



© IAF
Seminar in Gummersbach

Seminars in 2025:

- Strategic Planning for Political Parties, 19.01. – 26.01.2025
- Liberalism vs. Populism: How can Liberals Win? (One TikTok at a time!), 09.02. – 21.02.2025
- Local Politics and Citizen's Participation, 09.03. – 21.03.2025
- IAF Liberty Campus: Connecting Ideas, Public Policy & Political Leadership, 06.04. – 13.04.2025
- Moderation: Facilitation and Program Design, 27.04. – 09.05.2025
- Freedom of the Press – Challenges in the Digital Age, 22.06. – 04.07.2025
- The Green Side of Liberalism: Environmental Protection from Climate Change to Energy Policy, 13.07. – 25.07.2025
- Liberalism & Geopolitics: How to Deal with a Changing World Order, 07.09. - 14.09.2025
- Strengthening NGOs: Sustainable Fundraising – Building Long-Term Partnerships, 21.09. - 03.10.2025
- The Future of Market Economy: Challenges and Threads, 19.10. - 31.10.2025
- Political Communication: How to Shape Narratives and Amplify Impact, 09.11. - 16.11.2025
- Empowering Women in Politics – A Leadership Workout, 23.11. – 05.12.2025

For further details, please visit: [IAF Seminars 2025](#).

CHALLENGES FOR EUROPE

MEP JAN-CHRISTOPH OETJEN

In many of the 2024 elections, liberals faced significant losses, though the FDP successfully retained their seats in the European Parliament. With the upcoming snap elections in Germany, what are your expectations and hopes?

Germany needs a strong result of the Free Democrats (FDP) in the upcoming snap elections. Not only to ensure that the liberal voice is properly represented in parliament in the interests of all citizens, but also to ensure that our economic expertise is included in the political processes in these times of uncertainty. However, it is also clear that it will not be an easy task. Germany is facing major challenges and these can only be tackled with courageous ideas. Besides the threat of economic depression, other political challenges are ahead of us in Germany that need a liberal approach to find a suitable solution. For example, the migration policy, in which we urgently need to reduce irregular migration without neglecting the need for much needed labour force in Germany. Moreover, Russia's war of aggression against Ukraine, which continues to escalate after 1000 days.



© Thierry Monasse
Jan-Christoph Oetjen, Member of the European
Parliament FDP, Germany
President of the European Liberal Forum

The USA, with a new president at the top, is not helping to ease the global political environment either. Clearly, the upcoming election will determine Germany's future and, to a certain extent the future of the entire EU. The people in Germany are realising this too. I remain confident that many people will once again embrace the liberal idea and trust the FDP with their vote.

From your perspective, what was the most significant impact Liberals had on European politics in 2024?

We were finally able to adopt the European asylum and migration pact in 2024. After many years of negotiations and back and forth, we were finally able to agree on a common approach. As part of the Renew Europe negotiation team, I had the honour of contributing to shaping the pact. The overall package is strong and contains many liberal achievements. The implementation has begun and must now be critically monitored so that this European solution to the challenges around asylum and migration can work properly.

Furthermore, after many hours of hearings and negotiations between the political groups, the European Commission has been confirmed and is ready to work. As European liberals, we were able to appoint five Commissioners ourselves, many of them in key positions. With its proposals, the Commission will have to ensure a more competitive Europe. With the liberal Commissioners at the forefront, we can hope for strong and solid proposals.

What are you anticipating to be the biggest challenges and most important issues for liberals in Europe in the upcoming year?

The biggest challenge is and remains the competitiveness of Europe with the aim of creating jobs and new opportunities for companies in Europe. Getting our economy up and running has to be our top priority. We are facing many uncertainties. A new Commission that now has to review and rethink many of the policies from the previous mandate. Foreign influence, such as from Russia, will make it difficult to bring everyone together and make Europe fit for the future. We have many brilliant minds in the EU; new ideas and innovations are emerging in every member state. We must not only encourage them, but also ensure they stay on our continent. It must also become easier in future for existing companies to operate in the European single market. This requires one fundamental element: Less red tape. With ever-new regulations, Europe has become synonymous with administrative paperwork. That has to change noticeably. We need to create a competitive framework in which companies can flourish without having to rely on state subsidies. We need quick and efficient solutions to cut red tape significantly. At the same time, we must be open to new technologies and innovations. Europe has the chance to once again be at the top of the game. We liberals have the solutions. These solutions are our core competency. We can now show people how Europe can really work.

PROJECT HIGHLIGHTS

Global Gateway

The new European Commission has announced a renewed emphasis on economic competitiveness with particular attention to advancing the Global Gateway initiative, especially in African countries. This region is a key arena of economic and geopolitical competition in particular with China. In response, FNF Europe has published the Global Gateway report, analyzing the EU's competitive position and offering concrete recommendations for an effective strategy.



COMPETING WITH CHINA IN AFRICA STRATEGIC SUGGESTIONS ON THE EU GLOBAL GATEWAY

D. A. Foretia, J. C. Kouam, R. Nantchouang, C. Soong, A. Vasselier and G. Wiegand



ANALYSIS

Publication: Competing with China in Africa: Strategic Suggestions on the EU Global Gateway

European Liberal Hour

This short breakfast briefing series, established in 2023, takes place up to eight times a year. Its primary goal is to bridge the political expertise of Brussels and Berlin, providing a platform for liberal viewpoints, to present and discuss significant issues and topics in exchange with members and employees of the German Parliament, as well as other relevant actors and experts in political Berlin. Topics in 2024 included, for example, geoeconomics, foreign interference, migration, and the EU defence industry.



© FNF Europe
European Liberal Hour on the topic of Foreign influence in the EU

Budapest Forum

The Budapest Forum, organized by our partners Political Capital along with CEU Democracy Institute and Municipality of Budapest, is one of the largest and most important international policy events in Hungary. Every year since 2021, it gathers mayors, commissioners, MEPs, experts, academics, and activists, drawing them to address critical global challenges through panels, discussions, and side events. Attracting over 450 in-person participants and 40,000 online viewers annually, it has been praised for its organizational quality, thematic diversity, and focus on the pivotal role of cities. The 2024 forum, themed “The Year of Elections,” focused on democracy, the rule of law, and European integration amid Hungary’s EU Presidency and a new European Commission. It was held on September 18-19, 2024 aimed to confront democratic challenges by nurturing collaborative, impactful policy solutions.



© FNF Central Europe
Budapest Forum in Budapest, Hungary

This year, FNF chaired a panel entitled “State of Liberalism in the Central Eastern European Context – After the European Parliament Elections”, moderated by the Director of FNF’s Prague office Dr Lars-André Richter, with speakers from Slovakia, Hungary, Italy, and Romania.

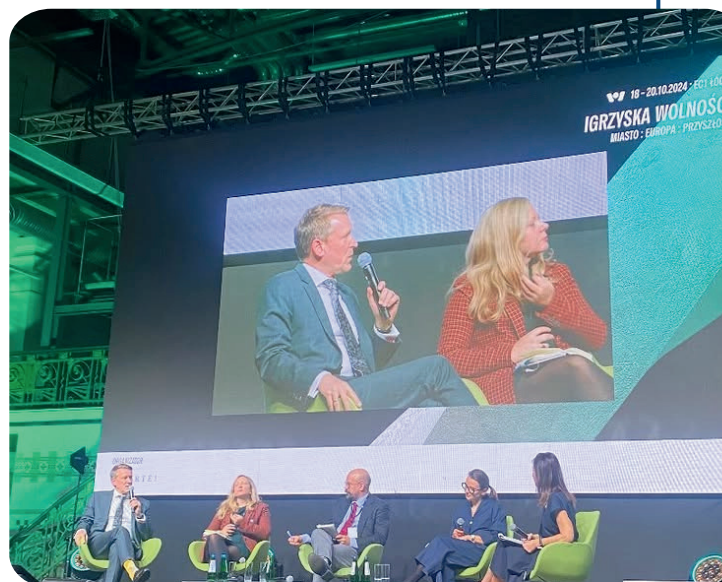
Grand Challenges Europe 2050

The European Union often sets its goals for 2050, but what will Europe look like 25 years from now? [The report](#) seeks to answer that question based on current data and expert interviews. It explores the challenges ahead and offers recommendations to guide Europe's future development. The findings were launched at a Brussels event, engaging a broader political audience. More publications and other activities are planned for 2025.

Freedom Games 11th Edition

The 11th Freedom Games transformed the Polish city Łódź into a vibrant hub of ideas, uniting leaders from culture, sports, business, and public life. With the theme City. Europe. Future., the festival featured 130 events, 949 speakers, and unique experiences like concerts, theatre, author sessions, and the Living Library.

The Friedrich Naumann Foundation played a key role, this time with contributions from its offices from Prague, Sofia, Jerusalem and Moscow in Exile. FNF hosted pivotal panels on disinformation, populism, future of democratic Russia and defending liberal democracy, including "The Future of Liberal Democracy in Central Europe," featuring prominent speakers like Adam Bodnar, the Polish minister for Justice. The Sofia office also co-organized the impactful exhibition "The Future of Ukraine", displayed in the main hall of the event.



© FNF Central Europe
11th Freedom Games in Łódź, Poland

This year's Freedom Games were for the first time widely covered by Polish media and broadcasted live on the national public broadcaster, making the festival's discussions accessible to an even broader audience.

A larger and reformed European Union #EU30+

The enlargement of the European Union is an absolute geopolitical imperative for the EU and a litmus test for its long-term ambition as a global power. Yet the dossier remains a critical and complex one for the EU in the current geopolitical context transfixed by Russia's war in Ukraine.

The position paper takes a closer look at why EU enlargement matters for the European Union and the countries aspiring to join, evaluates the support that the EU provides to the candidates, and considers the EU reforms needed to ensure that a European Union of 30+ members remains functioning.



FRIEDRICH NAUMANN
FOUNDATION For Freedom.
European Dialogue

A LARGER AND REFORMED EUROPEAN UNION #EU30+

Getting ready for EU enlargement



Publication: A Larger and Reformed European Union
#30+

Migration Policy Group

In March 2024, FNF Madrid hosted a Migration Working Programme in Sicily, Italy, as part of the Mediterranean Dialogue project. This initiative brought together the FNF Migration Policy Group—a network of liberal policymakers and experts from across Europe, North and West Africa, and the Middle East—to engage directly with migration management realities, particularly focusing on Italy's case study.

The programme's focus was multifaceted, aiming to address migration governance challenges, identifying opportunities for economic integration, and promoting liberal values of human rights and individual dignity in migration policy. The FNF Migration Policy Group engaged with representatives from reception centers, local authorities, and migrant entrepreneurs, which shed light into how migration processes influence both economic opportunities and challenges in Sicily.



© FNF Spain, Italy, Portugal and Mediterranean Dialogue Migration Policy Group in Sicily, Italy



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European Dialogue



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FROM THE FRINGES TO THE FOREFRONT: HOW EXTREME PARTIES IN THE EUROPEAN PARLIAMENT CAN SHAPE EU-CHINA RELATIONS

Kara Němečková, Ivana Karásková

ANALYSIS

Chinas Influence in the European Parliament (EP)

China is expanding its influence, not only economically and geopolitically but also through subtler means such as engaging with politicians in the European Parliament. The long-term goal is to cultivate a network of influential voices that seamlessly integrate support for China into European discourse. [This analysis](#) explores the opportunities these tactics create for China.

Publication: From the Fringes to the Forefront: How Extreme Parties in the European Parliament can Shape EU-China Relations

GLOBAL LIBERALISM

PROF DR KARL-HEINZ PAQUÉ

2024 was a super election year and liberals did not always win in those elections. Now Germany is about to vote for a new government while Donald Trump is being inaugurated for his second term as US President. What do you think liberals around the world should focus on in 2025 and how can we combat populism?

In the face of rising autocracy and populism, we must be bold in promoting liberal philosophy worldwide. The global liberal movement must spearhead the intellectual resistance to these trends. We cannot shy away when the extremes on the left and right are trying to silence everyone around them. Nor should we preach only to the already converted. Liberals must speak to the aspirations and struggles of people across the globe, inspiring them with a vision of hope, fairness, and freedom. To do this, we must communicate more effectively—not just globally, but within individual nations. Translating our ideas into diverse languages, tailoring our message for different cultural contexts, and ensuring that our voice is clear, swift, and resonant.



© FNF
Prof Dr Karl-Heinz Paqué, Chairman of the Board,
Friedrich Naumann Foundation
President of Liberal International

Unfortunately, in Western, democratic countries, liberal ideas are losing ground particularly among young people, who are more likely than ever before in modern history to vote for polarising, illiberal figures. This trend has intensified over the past decade. Politicians who belong to this movement sow mistrust in democratic institutions. Groups that are vulnerable anyway are scapegoated, and our political system based on law and order is being questioned. Promoting democratic values such as freedom, democracy, equality, dignity, respect and fairness, especially among young citizens, therefore has to be our central goal.

The European Dialogue Region includes two hubs, one focuses on Human Rights and the other on Global Security. Both topics have gained more importance during the last couple of years. What, from your perspective, makes those topics important to liberals around the world and what unique aspects do liberals bring to those topics?

Security has in recent years come to the forefront of the political debate. Also as liberals we realise that our security is a fundamental part of preserving and promoting our freedoms, and our Global Security Hub plays a crucial part in this effort. Liberal democracies must be able to defend themselves.

Reading the reports on NATO's 75th anniversary these days, one gets the impression that it is an international organisation in crisis.

Above all, its financial future is a cause for concern. It will take great attention of transatlantic relations to dispel growing American scepticism. The decisive factor here will be whether the financial commitment of the European countries – at least two percent of their respective GDP for defence – is actually maintained in the long term or even significantly exceeded. And NATO Europe finally needs a common market for defence equipment. This will only come about if the member states develop a willingness to share the workload within Europe, including between the different branches of the military.

Our new Human Rights Hub in Geneva exemplifies the importance that we attach to human rights, which is such an integral part of our DNA. Human rights are the liberal core of the global order. The rights of women, LGBTQI+ people and other minorities are violated worldwide. Those who stand up for democracy and human rights, including journalists, are persecuted, imprisoned and tortured. Russia's war of aggression against Ukraine has shaken not only the international security order but also the legal order. Liberal democracies must be better able to defend themselves against their opponents and defend human rights. It is for this reason that I have for example been particularly active recently in defending democracy and human rights in Venezuela and Georgia, and why we awarded Vladimir Kara-Murza the Freedom Prize 2024.

What do you perceive as the biggest challenges facing liberalism on a global scale in the forthcoming year?

Our world faces an array of challenges: escalating violence and horrific wars in various regions of the world, most notably of course in Ukraine and Gaza; the rise of populism, which has even reached the highest political office; the existential threat of climate change that is destroying the natural foundations of life; the struggle for human rights, freedom and democracy that we witness in every corner of the world – the list is sadly very long. As liberals, we know that these challenges require global solutions and a concerted effort of us all.



© FNF Europe

Group picture after the Fireside chat: Venezuela, Hasta el Final: How European Liberals Can Support the Fight for Freedom at the ALDE Congress 2024 in Estoril, Portugal

UNITED FOR UKRAINE



© FNF Europe
Conference: United for Ukraine-Building Resilience in Times of War

United for Ukraine-Building Resilience in Times of War

Europeans must not allow the fate of Ukraine to be determined solely by Russia, China, or the United States. Ultimately, the responsibility for deciding what constitutes an acceptable peace lies with Ukraine itself. This sentiment was expressed during the "United for Ukraine - Building Resilience in Times of War" event, hosted by FNF Europe in Brussels, which featured discussions with Dr Marie-Agnes Strack-Zimmermann, Dr Stefan Grobe, and Mariia Golub.

The event was live streamed to a world wide audience. The stream is available at [FNF Europe](#).



© FNF Europe
Conference: United for Ukraine-Building Resilience in Times of War

GLOBAL SECURITY HUB

Georgien

As Georgia is heading to the polls, we travelled to Tbilisi earlier this month with the Liberal Defence Expert Network to take the pulse of the political situation on the ground. Here are the main takeaways after a visit to the Georgia-Russia occupation line, participation in the Black Sea Security Conference and meetings with local experts. Georgia is a testing ground for Russian hybrid warfare method. Russia is deploying a sophisticated set of hybrid methods to influence the elections. If these are effective, we can expect them to be used elsewhere in Europe. The conflicts in South Ossetia and Abkhazia are far from frozen.



© FNF Global Security Hub
Liberal Defence Expert Network in Tbilisi, Georgia

The unresolved conflict over the annexed regions South Ossetia and Abkhazia is used by Russia to stir internal division in Georgia. Kidnappings and the further encroachment of Georgia territory happen on a regular basis.

Georgia needs stronger signalling from the EU to return to its European path. Particularly at the political level, there is a need for clear statements and support for liberal forces.



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The Role of Women in and After War

Women play critical roles in wartime serving in the armed forces and leading essential organizations. Simultaneously they remain underrepresented in decision-making processes and face increased risks of violence and sexism. FNF Europe, WIIS Germany, and the EPC hosted an event to examine women's challenges in the Ukraine war and propose solutions for their empowerment.



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TALIBAN'S AFGHANISTAN

INDIAN READINGS ON PLAYERS, STAKEHOLDERS & CAVEATS

Soumya Chaturvedi

Neighbourhood Perspectives

Introducing three exciting papers from FNF's Global Security Hub and FNF Pakistan: "Neighbourhood Perspectives" is a series on Afghanistan, offering insights from its neighbouring countries. This collection weaves together a mosaic of perspectives, highlighting the unique historical experiences of diverse actors. You can find the papers here:

[Taliban's Afghanistan](#)
[Pakistan's Viewpoint](#)
[Russia's Interest](#)

PAKISTAN'S VIEWPOINT OF AFGHANISTAN

Imtiaz Gul

RUSSIA'S INTEREST

IN AFGHANISTAN

Oleg Khokhlov

HUMAN RIGHTS HUB



© Pierre-Michel Virot

Former Federal minister of Justice, Dr Marco Buschmann held his inaugural speech with a full room in the Palais des Nations.

The FNF Human Rights Hub's opening event

On July 10th, 2024, the FNF celebrated the inauguration of its Human Rights Hub in Geneva. At the heart of the Palais des Nations, the historic home of the United Nations in Geneva, the opening event brought together ambassadors, friends and partners of our Foundation to promote the rule of law as a core strategy to strengthen the agenda for freedom.

As a liberal foundation working around the world to defend and promote human rights, the vision of the Hub is to motivate and enable FNF's network, promote the work of partner organizations through supporting their visibility at the international level and enabling experience and capacity sharing among each other.

The Hub was humbled to receive Dr Marco Buschmann, former Minister of Justice, to provide the keynote speech.

The image of women and women's rights

In the European Union, the growing influence of far-right parties could impact coexistence, particularly for minorities and women. This [publication](#) examines the agendas of European right-wing populist parties, focusing on their views on gender equality, gender-related issues, and the roles they assign to women in society, politics, and the economy.

The election programmes and political agendas of the following parties were analyzed:

Alternative for Germany (Germany), Fidesz (Hungary), Fratelli d'Italia (Italy), Partij voor de Vrijheid (Netherlands), Prawo i Sprawiedliwość (Poland), Rassemblement National (France), Vox (Spain).

The publication was released just in time for the European elections 2024.



IMAGE OF WOMEN AND WOMEN'S RIGHTS

An analysis of right-wing populist Party programs before the European elections
Human Rights Hub

ANALYSIS

Publication: Image of women and women's rights



EURO 2024, OLYMPICS & HUMAN RIGHTS THE FAIRY TALE OF APOLITICAL SPORT

Michael Pöpl

Publication: Euro 2024, Olympics & Human Rights – The fairy tale of apolitical sport

Euro 2024, Olympics & Human Rights – The fairy tale of apolitical sport

This [publication](#) examines the relationship between international sports events and human rights. While events like the Olympics and World Cups are celebrated as platforms for unity and fair play, they often conceal significant human rights concerns and political exploitation. Through historical and contemporary examples, the analysis explores how these global spectacles are being leveraged by autocratic regimes for propaganda and economic gain, often at the expense of vulnerable groups. The paper highlights the gap between the ideals of sport and the reality of its governance, calling for a reevaluation of the principles underlying international sporting events and their impact on human rights.

Side-Event to the Human Rights Council Session 57:

On the situation of human rights in Cambodia

Led by the Hub and in cooperation with Liberal International (LI), the side-event provided a unique opportunity for pro-democracy Cambodians in exile to meet with Astrid Thors from LI, the UN Special Rapporteur on the situation of Human Rights in Cambodia and diplomats. The Human Rights Hub amplified the voices of silenced activists and strengthened their platform for democracy.



© FNF
Astrid Thors speaking on behalf of Liberal International on the human rights situation in Cambodia in Room XX of the Palais des Nations, Human Rights Council 57th session.



© FNF
Jan-Michael Simon, chair of the UN group of human rights experts on Nicaragua, next to Maria-Claudia Pulido, Executive Secretary Inter-American Commission on Human Rights.

On the human rights situation in Venezuela and Nicaragua

Joining efforts with others, the Hub has successfully advocated for the renewal of the UN Fact-Finding Mission on Venezuela. The UN Fact-Finding Mission is an essential mechanism to document human rights violations in the country and ultimately hold the Maduro regime accountable for its brutal repression. Human Rights Defenders were connected with inter-regional and international mechanisms for justice in Venezuela and with Renew in Brussels.

PROJECT HIGHLIGHTS 2025

FNF Europe, Brussels

- Project Europe 2050
- Innovation Lab with ELF
- Publications:
 - Charged with consequence: How Europe navigates the risks of Chinese EVs
 - Comparing the Deep Costs of Brexit: How Private Households in the UK and EU Are Affected
 - Chinese Foreign Interference in the European Parliament
 - Rainbow Families in Europe
- and more

FNF Central Europe, Prague

- Eastern European Summit
- Freedom Games
- School of Diplomacy
- Publications:
 - How to deal with the populist: The Polish Victory Recipe and CEE Experience
 - AI and Democratic Values: Safeguarding Freedom, Rule of Law, and Equal Rights in the EU
 - Barriers to Women's Political Engagement in Hungary
 - Joining Orbán's club? Perspectives for Czechia's European Policy After the 2025 Elections
- and more

FNF The Baltics , Vilnius

- Opening of the Office
- Lennart Meri Conference
- First Simulation Game: Civil-Military Cooperation
- and more

FNF Global Security Hub, Brussels

- Munich Security Conference
- Two Liberal Defence Expert Network study trips
- Publication on European Perceptions of NATO Engagement in the Indo-Pacific
- and more

FNF Human Rights Hub, Geneva

- Focus on Anti-LGBTQ+ legislation
- Different publications on Human Rights and the UN
- Forum on Business and Human Rights
- and more

IMPRINT

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Yearly Magazin

Editors:

Lisa Hemp
Hanna Glarmin

Contributors:

Odilia Abreu, Jeroen Dobber, Marina El-Khoury, Dr. Nele Fabian, Svenja Hahn MEP, Johanna Hans, David Henneberger, Gréta Kiss, Babora Krempaská, Sahra Lissek, Michaela Lissowsky, Jules Maaten, Jana Moritz, Jan-Christoph Oetjen MEP, Katharina Osthoff, Prof Dr Karl-Heinz Paqué, Patrick Reiland, Lars-André Richter, Toni Skorić, Aneta Švrčinová, Natalia Tkáčová, Julius von Freytag-Loringhoven

Contact:

Friedrich Naumann Foundation for Freedom
Europe
Avenue de Cortenbergh 71
1000, Brussels, Belgium
Email: Brussels@freiheit.org
Regional Director: Jules Maaten

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