

State of the Union 2025

Initiatives and quotes

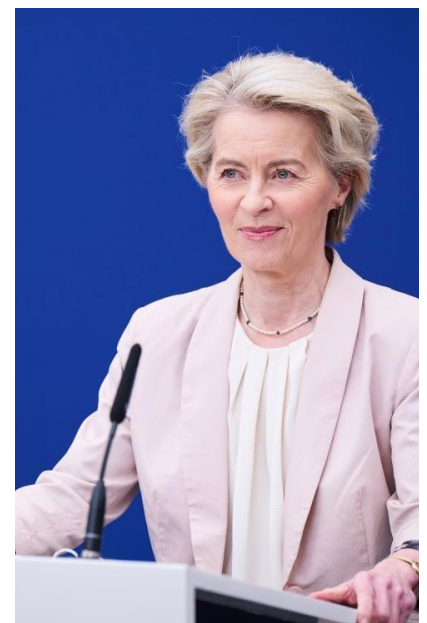
10 SEPTEMBER 2025

"This must be Europe's Independence Moment.

I believe this is our Union's mission. To be able to take care of our own defence and security. To take control over the technologies and energies that will fuel our economies. To decide what kind of society and democracy we want to live in. To be open to the world and choose to strike partnerships with allies - old and new.

It is about having the freedom and the power to determine our own destiny. And we know we can do it. Because together we have shown what is possible when we have the same ambition, unity and urgency."

Ursula von der Leyen,
President of the European Commission



Geopolitics

Ukraine

"There are tens of thousands more Ukrainian children whose fate is unknown. (...) We must do everything in our power to support Ukraine's children. Every abducted child must be returned!"

- Host a **Summit of the International Coalition for the Return of Ukrainian Children.**



"This war needs to end with a just and lasting peace for Ukraine. Because Ukraine's freedom is Europe's freedom."

We need more pressure on Russia to come to the negotiating table. We need more sanctions. We are now working on the 19th package in coordination with partners. We are particularly looking at phasing out Russian fossil fuels faster, the shadow fleet and third countries.

At the same time, we need more support for Ukraine."

- **Reparations Loan:**

"This is Russia's war. And it is Russia that should pay. This is why we need to work urgently on a new solution to finance Ukraine's war effort on the basis of the immobilised Russian assets. With the cash balances associated to these Russian assets, we can provide Ukraine with a Reparations Loan. The assets themselves will not be touched. And the risk will have to be carried collectively.

Ukraine will only pay back the loan once Russia pays for the reparations. The money will help Ukraine already today. But also be crucial in the middle and long-term for Ukraine's security. For example, funding for strong Ukrainian armed forces as the first line of security guarantees."

Defence

- **Qualitative Military Edge** – a new military programme to support investment in the capabilities of the Ukrainian armed forces.
- Europe will frontload 6 billion euro from the ERA loan and enter into a **Drone Alliance** with Ukraine.
- **Eastern Flank Watch** – provide Europe with independent strategic capabilities; invest in real-time space surveillance and build this wall of drones.
- **European Semester of Defence** – to monitor progress towards 2030 in terms of defence targets.



Gaza

“What is happening in Gaza has shaken the conscience of the world. People killed while begging for food. Mothers holding lifeless babies. These images are simply catastrophic. (...) Man-made famine can never be a weapon of war. For the sake of the children, for the sake of humanity – this must stop.”

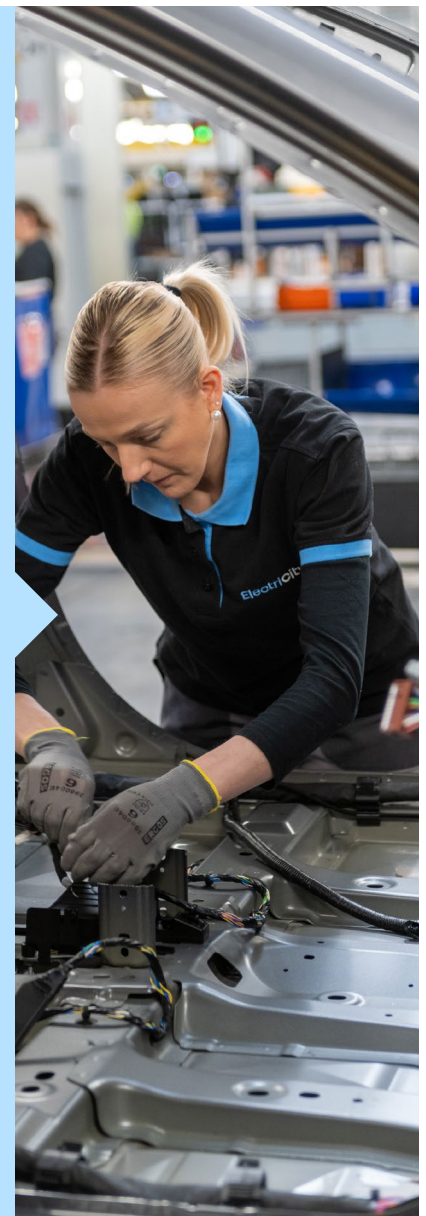
- The Commission will **put bilateral support to Israel on hold** without affecting civil society or Yad Vashem.
- Commission **will table two further proposals to the Council: sanctions on extremist ministers and violent settlers;**
- **partial suspension of the Association Agreement on trade-related matters.**
- **Establishment of a Palestine Donor Group** – including a dedicated instrument for Gaza reconstruction.

Competitiveness & Jobs

“Europe’s independence will depend on its ability to compete in today’s turbulent times. We have everything it takes to thrive here in Europe – from our single market to our social market economy. But we know the economic and geopolitical headwinds are strong. And we have seen how dependencies can be used against us.

This is why we will massively invest in digital and clean tech. With more to come in our future Competitiveness Fund and a doubled Horizon, our research and innovation programme. And we are tackling the key bottlenecks identified by the Draghi report – from energy to capital, investment to simplification.”

- Continuing the simplification agenda - further **omnibuses** on military mobility and digital.
- Launch **a Battery Booster package** which will put 1.8 billion euros up for equity to boost production in Europe (supply side).
- Introduce a **“made in Europe” criteria in public procurement** (demand side)
- Propose **an Industrial Accelerator Act** for key strategic sectors and technologies.
- Put forward **Quality Jobs Act** to ensure that modern employment keeps pace with the modern economy.
- Propose **European Anti-Poverty Strategy** laying out the plan to help eradicate poverty by 2050, reinforced by a strong Child Guarantee to shield children from poverty.





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Cost of living & affordability

The European Commission will put forward a series of packages on **affordability and the cost of living** to address the real concerns of EU citizens;

Housing

“A home is not just four walls and a roof. It is safety, warmth, a place for family and friends. It is belonging. But for too many Europeans today, home has become a source of anxiety. It can mean debt or uncertainty.”

“Eight years ago, the European Pillar of Social Rights made housing a social right in Europe. It’s time to turn this promise into reality.”

- Present first ever **European Affordable Housing Plan** – to make housing more affordable, more sustainable and of better quality.
- Revise State aid rules to enable housing support measures.
- Propose a legal initiative on **short-term rentals** to tackle the remaining issues
- Convene **the first EU Housing Summit**.

Cars

“We have to work on affordability. Millions of Europeans want to buy affordable European cars. So we should also invest in small, affordable vehicles. Both for the European market, but also to meet the surge in demand globally.”

- Propose a new **Small Affordable Cars initiative**: Europe should have its own E-car – environmental, economical and European with European supply chains.



Energy

- Propose new **Grids Package** – in order to generate more homegrown renewables – with nuclear as a baseload and modernise and invest in infrastructure and interconnectors.
- A new initiative called **Energy Highways** will bring governments and utilities together to address outstanding issues and remove eight critical bottlenecks in energy infrastructure.



Food

- Review implementation of unfair trading practices legislation
- Launch **“Buy European food”** campaign.

Decarbonisation & Climate goals

“Low-carbon sources account for over 70% of our electricity. We are global leaders in clean tech patents – better than the US, and racing with China. We are catching up with US venture capital for clean tech – and way ahead of China. This is why we are firmly on track to achieve our 2030 target to cut emissions by at least 55%. This is the power of the European Green Deal.”

“Global overcapacity is squeezing margins and leaving little incentive to pay a clean premium. This makes it harder for Europe’s steel industry to invest in decarbonisation. That is why the Commission will propose a new, long-term trade instrument to succeed the expiring steel safeguards. Europe will always remain open and it will always protect its industry from unfair competition.”

- Long-term trade instrument to succeed the expiring steel safeguards





Health

- **Global Health Resilience Initiative:**

*"We are on the brink – or even at the start – of another global health crisis. As a medical doctor by training, I am appalled by the disinformation – that threatens global progress on everything from measles to polio. And this is why today I can announce that the EU will head a new **Global Health Resilience Initiative**. Because the world is looking to Europe – and Europe is ready to lead."*

Defending European democracy

"Our democracy is under attack. The rise in information manipulation and disinformation is dividing our societies. It is not only eroding trust in the truth – but also in democracy itself."

- **European Democracy Shield** – more capacity to monitor and detect information manipulation and disinformation.
- Set up new **European Centre for Democratic Resilience** – will bring together all the expertise and capacity across Member States and neighbouring countries.
- New **Media Resilience Programme** – to support independent journalism and media literacy.
- Social media – commission panel of experts to advise on possible social media restrictions.



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Migration

"It is we in Europe who decide who comes to us and under what circumstances, not the smugglers and traffickers.(...)"

We need a new sanctions regime that targets smugglers and traffickers. To freeze their assets. To restrict their freedom of movement. To deprive them of their profits."



Climate change/wildfires

“This summer, we all saw the pictures of Europe’s forests and villages on fire. More than a million hectares were burned. The scale of the damage is enormous. And we know it is not a one off. Climate change is making each summer hotter, harsher, and more dangerous. This is why we have to radically step up our efforts into climate resilience and adaptation, and nature-based solutions.”

- propose to create a new **European firefighting hub** based in Cyprus, which could also support EU’s regional neighbours.

To sum up

“The point is that we need to make sure our Union is faster and can deliver for Europeans. Because this is how we can win this fight together. To deliver Europe’s independence moments.”

“80 years ago our Continent was hell on earth. 40 years ago our Continent was divided by a Wall. But on each occasion, Europeans decided to fight for a better future. To make itself whole - and to make the whole strong. And this is what I will strive for every single day.

Long live Europe!”

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