Europe Future Ready

Europe stands at a crossroads. While possessing world-class research capabilities and skilled workers, the continent has fallen behind in technological innovation and commercialization. The root cause is not a lack of talent or ideas, but a fundamental mindset problem: Europe views technology through a lens of risk rather than opportunity. Europe must adopt a strategic approach to technology, mobilizing its assets to translate ideas into globally competitive solutions. In a world where technology defines power, this strategic shift is an imperative: to protect Europe's citizens, secure prosperity and global influence.

Three obstacles that define Europe's current position:

1. **Mindset**: Europe must replace risk aversion with a delivery mindset that turns its research excellence and talent into technological leadership. A risk-based approach dominates policymaking, stifling innovation before it can flourish.
2. **Misplaced Priorities**: For too long, Europe has been underinvesting in future-oriented sectors and missed the opportunity to define ist own strategic interests.
3. **Structural Fragmentation:** Overlapping regulations and unaligned strategies on important regulatory dossiers, bureaucratic barriers and fragmented capital markets prevent the emergence of European champions.

Three Pillars for Transformation

The Issue
Europe lacks a coherent concept of digital sovereignty and clearly defined strategic priorities. Calls for technological autarky are no substitute for genuine innovation strategy.

Our Proposals:

- Conduct transparent assessments of technological vulnerabilities and strategic dependencies
- Integrate economic and security policy, recognizing technologies as geopolitical instruments
- Pursue interest-driven partnerships on core technologies with like-minded partners
- Advance integration of core capabilities, particularly in financial services
- Reduce dependencies in critical infrastructure, e.g. through the targeted development of European consortia
- Strengthen cooperation between business, science and public administration on cybersecurity and cyber-defence (e.g. through joint situational centres, CERTs)

The Issue
Overlapping regulations cause fragmentation and deter innovation. Excessive bureaucracy hinders global champions.

Our Proposals:

- Simplify administrative processes and ensure decision-makers possess technological literacy
- Harmonize digital regulations across Member States – putting innovation first
- Develop unified approaches to data use and transfer within the EU and with trusted partners
- Align public investments with long-term technological priorities
- Lower energy costs and modernize grids for a digitalized, climate-neutral future
- Introduce an innovation check for EU legislative initiatives that affect the Single Market
- Develop an ecosystem of regulatory sandboxes that must be easily accessible for SMEs and start-ups

The Issue
Weak infrastructure, fragmented financing, and the absence of a Banking Union limit Europe's ability to scale innovations.

Our Proposals:

- Invest strategically in energy systems, digital networks, mobility, and defense infrastructure
- Align geopolitically important dossiers and strategies for future digital technologies and defence
- Foster competitive, innovation-friendly environments enabling European AI leaders to scale globally
- Develop autonomous launching capabilities and satellite networks for economic and military sovereignty
- Prioritize European software and automation leadership in robotics, space, and medical technologies
- Complete the Banking Union to empower start-ups and future industrial champions

Europe Future Ready

Call to Action: Changing the Narrative

Unleash Europe's potential – make technology Europe's decisive edge. The time to act is now. Europe possesses the talent, research base, and innovative capacity to become a global technological leader. What is required is a fundamental shift in mindset – from risk-averse to opportunity-driven, from fragmentation to unity, from regulation to innovation. Forge assets into a strategic edge – Europe's secure and prosperous future depends on it.

This position paper synthesizes insights from industry leaders, policymakers, and academic experts to chart a path toward European technological leadership and economic renewal. It outlines the structural barriers holding Europe back and proposes concrete solutions to transform the continent into a global innovation leader.

Chair
Prof. Dr. Kurt J. Lauk, Dr. Julia Reuss

Participants
Dyria Sigrid Alloussi – United Europe e.V.
Prof. Dr. Patrick Glauner – Deggendorf Institute of Technology
Dr. Laura Hirvi – Meta
Mats Kuuskemaa – e-Residency Estonia
Felix Rank – Young AI Leaders
Martin Reinhard – Hessian Ministry of Interior
Dr. La Toya Waha – SAP

Imprint
United Europe e.V.
Layout: Julius Schuler
Elbchaussee 359
D-22609 Hamburg

UNITED EUROPE
competitive and diverse