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FORUM

German-Italian Young Leaders Dialogue Spinelli Forum 2025

Conference Report



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Introduction

The European Union and its member states face several increasingly complex and interlinked challenges that require coordinated action at the European level. These include reshaping the European security order in response to Russia's war of aggression against Ukraine, advancing Europe's strategic autonomy, strengthening the global competitiveness of European industries, and managing the political, economic, and societal transformations driven by climate change and digitalisation. Considering these internal and external challenges, joint action on the European level becomes increasingly important. As two founding members of the EU and leading economies, Germany and Italy carry both the responsibility and the strategic opportunity to advance solutions to these challenges through close and constructive cooperation.

The German-Italian Young Leaders Dialogue – Spinelli Forum seeks to contribute to precisely this objective of German-Italian cooperation: Since its launch in 2019 as a joint initiative of the German Federal Foreign Office and the Italian Ministry of Foreign Affairs and International Cooperation, the Forum

has aimed to develop forward-looking ideas on key European policy issues. Each year, young Italian and German leaders from politics, business, civil society, academia, media, and culture come together to discuss the future of the EU and the bilateral relationship between Germany and Italy and to jointly develop policy recommendations. The forum strives to facilitate and promote the exchange between the young generations of both countries thereby providing fresh impetus for German-Italian cooperation on the questions defining the future of Europe.

2025 marked the fifth edition of the initiative and combined three online workshops with a two-day in-person conference at the Federal Foreign Office in Berlin. It was organised for the second time by the Institut für Europäische Politik (IEP) in Berlin in cooperation with the Istituto per gli Studi di Politica Internazionale (ISPI).

The 2025 edition of the German-Italian Young Leaders Dialogue – Spinelli Forum gathered a total of 30 German and 30 Italian participants who were assigned to four thematic working groups:



- WG1: European Economic Growth and Social Cohesion,
- WG2: European Defence and Security Policy,
- WG3: European Climate and Energy Policy,
- WG4: European AI Regulation and Governance.

The process was structured using the Design Thinking Method, from initial problem exploration to the development of concrete policy recommendations that were to be presented to the German and Italian foreign ministries.

The virtual kick-off workshop (19th of September 2025) included interactive exercises with the aim of getting acquainted with one another and establishing a collaborative working environment and introduced participants to the structure of the programme. The discussions were enriched by external inputs: representatives of the policy planning units of both foreign ministries provided insights in how to formulate timely and concise policy recommendations. After the kick-off meeting, participants met within two online workshops in order to engage within the first phases of the design thinking method. During the first workshop (6th of October), each working group, supported by a dedicated facilitator (of which two belonged to the Spinelli-Forum Alumni network), mapped its policy field and identified four core challenges. Participants then formed subgroups around these specific issues. The second workshop (21st of October 2025) deepened this analytical phase. Subgroups refined their problem definitions by assessing their relevance for Germany, Italy, and the EU as a whole; identified key stakeholders; and explored risks, opportunities, and potential intervention points.

The final phase took place during the in-person conference in Berlin on 27–28 October 2025 at the Federal Foreign Office. Participants worked intensively to transform their problem analyses into concrete policy proposals. Through brainstorming, structured feedback rounds, and input from Spinelli alumni, each subgroup produced one recommendation, gathering 15 policy recommendations across the four working groups. On the second day of the conference, these proposals were first discussed in plenary. To create a dynamic and interactive experience, a gallery walk was set up, allowing each sub-group to present their results on a poster. All participants of the workshop, the facilitators and alumni, could freely move around the room and look at each poster, ask questions to the groups and provide feedback. After adding this last round of feedback to their policy recommendations, the subgroups summed up their results on a PowerPoint slide and then formally presented them to senior decision-makers: Christoph Wolfrum, Director General for European Affairs, German Federal Foreign Office, and Fabrizio Bucci, Ambassador of Italy to Germany, gave constructive feedback on each proposal.

Each group was supported by up to three alumni, who offered their support and expertise in the decision-making process on the policy recommendations and during the gallery walk, as well as in the follow-up to the gallery walk and the preparation of the final presentations. In addition, the alumni were invited to the reception and the presentation of the recommendations.

The following document offers an overview of the 2025 Spinelli Forum, presenting a comprehensive account of the policy recommendations developed this year. The accounts are based on discussions during the two online workshops and final conference, as well as the documented results on the posters and Power Point slides created by the participants. It is intended not only to highlight the valuable outcomes produced through many hours of collaborative work but also to serve as a blueprint for future editions.



Working Group I: European Economic Growth and Social Cohesion

Overview

The EU faces slowing growth, rising geopolitical competition, labour shortages, and widening regional inequalities. Germany's fiscal capacity and Italy's industrial strength position both countries to drive coordinated solutions, but current fragmentation limits Europe's competitiveness and social cohesion.

Policy Recommendations

1. Manufacturing Alliance for Production Sustainability (MAPS)

Germany and Italy should jointly map key industrial sectors, identify areas for coordinated green and digital investment, and create a cross-border platform that aligns regulation, innovation, and financing. This would reduce duplication, strengthen value chains, and boost sustainable competitiveness.

2. TED-ITA: Connecting Skills and Culture

A bilateral exchange programme allowing young graduates and vocational trainees to work for up to six months in the partner country. It raises the attractiveness of vocational training, alleviates labour shortages, and improves cultural and technical mobility between Germany and Italy.

3. Thrive Everywhere: Revive the Rural Where It Is Needed Most

An EU initiative to identify the most vulnerable rural regions, pair them with "twin regions" in other member states and provide ready-made development packages. Germany and Italy would support data collection and matchmaking. The goal: reduce the rural-urban divide and strengthen social cohesion.



**Subgroup 1:
Manufacturing Alliance for Production Sustainability (MAPS)**

Bridging the gap between competitiveness and sustainability

One of the many persistent challenges for European economic governance is the difficulty of combining industrial competitiveness with a sustainable green transition. Key sectors such as battery production, semiconductor machinery and low-carbon steel face intense global competition while simultaneously being required to decarbonise and comply with increasingly ambitious climate goals. Germany and Italy, as two of the EU's largest manufacturing economies, operate in various overlapping industrial fields. Without coordinated approaches, both countries risk duplicating efforts, missing opportunities for economies of scale and weakening their long-term industrial resilience. If this imbalance remains unresolved, the EU may fall behind technologically and deepen its dependencies on external actors, which in turn undermines both economic security and the Union's strategic autonomy.

Policy Recommendation:

The first step to implement Manufacturing Alliance for Production Sustainability (MAPS) would be a **structured mapping exercise to identify sectors** in which companies from both countries already demonstrate strong competitive performance. This mapping should draw on data provided by industry associations, research centers and national statistical agencies. In a second step, the **identified sectors should be evaluated** for their potential to combine competitiveness with sustainability. This includes assessing where joint investment, shared infrastructure, or coordinated innovation strategies could accelerate the green and digital transformation. Examples include cross-border cooperation in battery manufacturing, machinery for semiconductor production, and the development of green steel. A third step would involve **creating a cross-border stakeholder platform** that brings together industry representatives, government authorities, regulatory bodies and financial institutions. This platform would coordinate joint projects, align regulatory approaches, and support access to financing instruments aimed at sustainable industrial development. The EU, together with Germany and Italy, could immediately establish



a joint coordination body responsible for collecting industrial data, identifying cooperative opportunities and preparing sector-specific work programs under the MAPS initiative.

The implementation of this policy could bring various benefits. In the short term, coordinated action can reduce duplication, increase production efficiency, enable cost-effective innovation, and generate rapid returns on investment. In the long term, it can strengthen European industrial resilience, reduce external dependencies, promote sustainable economic growth, and create a more stable alignment between climate objectives and industrial competi-

tiveness. Potential risks should be addressed from the outset, amongst them national protectionist tendencies that may hinder cooperation and resistance from firms reluctant to adapt already established practices.



Subgroup 2:

TED-ITA; Connecting Skills and Culture

Labour shortages and unpopularity of vocational training

Europe continues to face significant labour shortages, particularly in technical and industrial occupations. At the same time, vocational education in both Italy and Germany suffers from low societal prestige and persistent stereotypes that often deter young people from pursuing these careers. This combination of labour-market mismatch, insufficient mobility and a weak cultural perception of vocational skills undermines the potential of labour markets in Germany and Italy and limits the EU's broader objective of sustaining a skilled and mobile workforce.

Policy Recommendation:

To address these structural challenges, a dedicated German-Italian exchange programme for young graduates could be established under the name TED-ITA: Connecting Skills and Culture. The programme would enable students and recent graduates from both countries to spend up to six months working in industrial sectors in the partner country. Participants

would acquire relevant technical expertise as well as soft skills that improve employability and adaptability in quickly changing labour markets. To ensure effective implementation, initial steps could include the **development of a policy paper outlining the programme's objectives**, structure and expected impact, followed by a **formal bilateral agreement between the German and Italian governments**. This agreement should define responsibilities, funding arrangements and cooperation mechanisms among companies, high schools and relevant ministries.

The TED-ITA: Connecting Skills and Culture initiative holds multiple potential benefits. For participants, it would enhance career prospects through practical experience and exposure to different work cultures. For companies and the national economy, it would widen the pool of potential employees and help mitigate labour shortages in relevant sectors. For both Germany and Italy, the programme would help raise the attractiveness and social value of vocational training by linking it to international experience and professional development. It would also strengthen bilateral relations, as participants return with a deeper understanding of the partner country's economy and society.



Subgroup 3:

Thrive Everywhere: Revive the Rural where it is needed the most

Figuring out the rural-urban divide

Rural areas in Europe are facing significant demographic and socio-economic challenges. Younger populations migrate to urban centres, while the access to services and adequate infrastructure is deteriorating, leaving many rural communities increasingly isolated. There is often a stark difference in access to healthcare, access to jobs, to public services between rural and urban areas. These inequalities not only limit the well-being and opportunities of rural residents but also worsen social polarisation, cultural divides, and regional disparities within the European Union. Addressing these challenges is essential to strengthen social cohesion and mitigate long-term demographic decline in rural areas.

Policy Recommendation:

The European Union could address these challenges through a three-step approach. First, **rural communities in greatest need should be identified**, and funding allocated based on an Investment Potential Score that assesses local resources, needs, and devel-

opment opportunities. **Selected communities would be paired with a “twin-region”** in another member state to facilitate knowledge exchange and mutual support. Second, **off-the-shelf solutions in the form of pre-planned projects would be provided to meet specific local needs**, ranging from infrastructure improvements to cultural and educational initiatives. Third, throughout implementation, communities should retain ownership of local projects while benefiting from federal expertise and guidance. Germany and Italy could play key roles in ensuring the success of this policy. Federal actors could serve as facilitators for rural development support and data on rural regions should be collected and shared to guide planning. Best practices should be identified and integrated to improve off-the-shelf solutions, while targeted campaigns and sponsorship can foster local engagement and support.

Successful implementation would reduce the urban-rural divide, improve access to services and employment, and help stabilise demographic trends in rural areas, while using already provided funds more efficiently. Moreover, bilateral regional partnerships could strengthen cross-country ties, improving cooperation at the national, regional, and community levels while promoting social cohesion and shared development goals.

Working Group 2: European Defence and Security Policy

Overview

Europe faces its most complex security environment in decades: Russia's expansionist war in Ukraine and interference in countries in Eastern Europe and Central Asia, hybrid threats, instability in the Middle East, and unreliable U.S. security commitment. At the same time, Europe's defence governance and industrial base remain fragmented, slow, and under-coordinated. As two central European defense actors, Germany and Italy must strengthen cooperation to enhance European resilience, capability development, and strategic cohesion.

Policy Recommendations

1. Guerrini Initiative: Italo-German Strategic Thinking Forum

A biannual, rotating forum bringing together defence ministries, industry, and civil society to address political and strategic fragmentation. It enhances cross-sector dialogue, improves information-sharing, and supports coordinated planning between Germany and Italy, with potential expansion to other EU states.

2. CIDER: Capabilities Industry Defence Enhancement Roundtable

An EU-level mechanism linking capability gaps with industrial expertise. By bringing together military, technical, and industrial actors, CIDER enables joint project design, reduces duplication, and strengthens cross-border defence cooperation. Germany and Italy can drive early political support.

3. HYREX: Hybrid Resilience Exercise

A structured programme coordinated by Germany and Italy to improve preparedness for hybrid threats across the public and private sectors. It combines advisory support, training workshops, and organisational resilience planning, creating a cross-border network for hybrid-threat response.

4. Creating Conditions for a European Defence Industry

A phased approach, starting with bilateral alignment, followed by enhanced cooperation (Art. 20 TEU) and emergency coordination tools (Art. 122 TEU), to improve procurement and investment coordination without treaty change. This reduces duplication, accelerates capability development, and strengthens Europe's defence industrial base.



Subgroup 1:

The Guerrini Initiative: Italo-German Strategic Thinking Forum

Addressing the Political and Strategic Fragmentation in European Security

Strategic and political fragmentation in European security policy poses significant challenges for the EU's ability to respond effectively to complex threats. The lack of coordination and information exchange between sectors, as well as insufficient cooperation among member states and between different types of institutions, results in duplicated efforts, inefficient resource allocation, and gaps in collective preparedness. This fragmentation limits Europe's capacity to develop coherent strategies, undermines rapid decision-making, and reduces the effectiveness of defence and security measures. Without closer integration and structured collaboration, the EU risks weakening its resilience and its ability to act as a unified actor.

Policy Proposal:

To address the strategic and political fragmentation in European security and defence policy, the EU could support the creation of the Guerrini Initiative, a bilateral Italo-German Strategic Thinking Forum. This bian-

nual event would rotate between Germany and Italy, providing a **structured platform for dialogue and collaboration** among diverse actors across sectors. The forum would bring together officials from defence ministries, representatives of other relevant government agencies, members of the defence industry, and selected civil society organisations. **Driving direct exchanges between policymakers, experts, and practitioners**, the initiative would help bridge existing gaps between institutions, enhance information-sharing, and facilitate coordinated approaches to common security challenges. It can serve as a venue for the development of joint policy proposals, identifying capability gaps, and promoting innovative approaches to collective security and resilience. Immediate steps for implementation could include **forming a joint German-Italian steering committee to plan the forum**, defining thematic priorities for each edition, and establishing mechanisms for follow-up collaboration between events. Over time, the forum could expand to include other EU member states, serving as a model for strengthening strategic thinking and cohesion within the European Common Security and Defence Policy. This initiative would improve decision-making, reduce duplication of efforts, and enhance the EU's ability to respond effectively to complex security threats while promoting cross-sectoral collaboration.



**Subgroup 2:
Capabilities Industry Defence Enhancement Roundtable (CIDER)**

Fragmentation of the European Defence Industry

The European defence sector suffers from a fragmented industrial landscape and a lack of comprehensive information about the capabilities and technical competencies of national industries. This fragmentation leads to duplicated efforts, inefficient procurement and an inability to coordinate investments across borders. Without a shared framework to identify capability gaps and match them with industrial strengths, the EU struggles to develop coherent defence projects and to make full use of its industrial potential. As geopolitical pressures increase, the absence of an integrated overview hampers the Union's capacity to respond collectively, weakens strategic autonomy and limits the efficiency of joint defence initiatives.

Policy Recommendation:

To address this structural fragmentation, the EU could establish a Capabilities Industry Defence Enhance-

ment Roundtable. The initiative would create a structured process linking capability needs with industrial expertise amongst member states. The first step would involve the European Commission **identifying common capability gaps** based on already existing assessments and defence planning documents. Once these gaps are defined, **technical experts from the military, engineering fields and defence industries would be brought together in a dedicated roundtable format** to refine the problem definition and determine precise operational needs.

Based on this analysis, the EU could **initiate joint projects designed to fill the identified gaps**. Industry actors would be invited to submit proposals, and the selected project would be approved and funded through EU mechanisms. This approach would support more efficient procurement and foster cross-border industrial cooperation. To launch the initiative, early political support from the European Commission and member states would be essential. Consultations with industry and other relevant stakeholders should be conducted to refine the concept and ensure that the framework responds to operational and industrial realities. Germany and Italy, given their significant defence industries, could play a central role in mobilising support for this first step.



In the short term, such a framework would enable more accurate, bottom-up identification of capability needs, ensuring that projects address real and immediate operational challenges. In the long term, the initiative could reduce duplication across Europe's defence landscape, strengthen interoperability and support a more integrated and competitive defence industry. Potential barriers include the reluctance of member states to share sensitive information on their capability gaps and uneven participation in joint ini-

tiatives. These risks should be openly addressed through clear confidentiality arrangements and transparent burden-sharing mechanisms.



Subgroup 3: Hybrid Resilience Exercise (HYREX)

Countering hybrid threats

Europe faces an increasingly complex landscape of hybrid threats, including disinformation, cyberattacks and other forms of interference targeting both public institutions and the private sector. Despite growing exposure, preparedness remains limited at individual, organisational and governmental levels. Expertise on hybrid threats is often concentrated within single institutions, failing to reach stakeholders who need it most, and there is no systematic mechanism for sharing knowledge or coordinating responses. This gap weakens societal resilience, leaves companies and institutions vulnerable and undermines the ability of governments to respond to hybrid campaigns in a coherent and timely manner.

Policy Recommendation:

To strengthen resilience across sectors, Hybrid Resilience Exercise (HYREX) proposes the establishment of a structured exercise and advisory mechanism coordinated by the foreign ministries of Germany and Italy in cooperation with the European Centre of

Excellence for Countering Hybrid Threats. The initiative would begin with the **appointment of individual strategic advisers for institutions and companies**, responsible for understanding and preparing for hybrid threats. These advisers would then participate in **dedicated workshops** designed to build awareness and provide guidance on resilience planning. Following the workshop phase, the advisers would carry back their acquired knowledge to participating organisations in order to **develop internal resilience strategies and designate channels for communicating information** related to hybrid threats. Over time, the HYREX could foster an exchange of best practices between German and Italian actors and contribute to the creation of a cross-border resilience network capable of responding more effectively during crises.

The initiative promises several benefits, such as increased private sector awareness, the strengthening of organisational resilience and the development of a broader network for crisis response. Challenges may arise from limited stakeholder engagement, insufficient funding or the risk of politicalisation, all of which would need to be managed to ensure the initiative's effectiveness.



Subgroup 4: Creating Conditions for a European Defence Industry

A lack of EU-level procurement and investment coordination

Current European procurement and investment in the defense sector is marked by duplicated efforts, inefficient use of resources and limited collective capability development due to a lack of supranational coordination. Existing institutional constraints, particularly the unanimity requirement, hinder progress and complicate attempts to build a more coherent European defence industry. Despite these limitations, urgent capability needs and growing geopolitical pressures demand solutions that can be implemented within the current treaty framework.

Policy Recommendation:

To strengthen cooperation without requiring treaty change, existing legal provisions of the European treaties can be used. **The first step is to deepen bilateral cooperation between member states**, particularly those with strong industrial bases such as Germany and Italy, to align procurement priorities and reduce duplication.

In a second step, enhanced cooperation under Article 20 TEU could be used to create a capabilities coalition among willing and able member states. This mechanism would allow a group of states to jointly develop capabilities even in the absence of unanimity. Finally, **Article 122 TEU could provide the legal basis** for coordinated action in situations of industrial urgency, drawing inspiration from the EU's emergency instruments during the COVID-19 pandemic. This could enable targeted support for critical defence supply chains and facilitate faster joint procurement. Initial implementation could begin with bilateral discussions involving governments and industrial stakeholders, a systematic assessment of industrial shortages and the gradual inclusion of additional member states.

This approach offers several advantages, including the ability to circumvent unanimity and make progress without binding commitments as a prerequisite. Over time, it could encourage greater complementarity within the European defence landscape and support the harmonisation of defence industrial capacities. However, challenges may arise from risks of institutional overlap, limited multilateral uptake and concerns related to national sovereignty and subsidiarity, all of which require careful management.

Working Group 3: European Climate and Energy Policy

Overview

Europe's energy transition and climate policy is under pressure from geopolitical dependencies, internal political backlash, and inadequate infrastructure. Heatwaves, droughts, and floods underscore accelerating climate impacts, while Europe risks losing competitiveness and global climate leadership. Germany and Italy, two of Europe's major industrial and energy actors, must help drive a coherent, resilient, and socially accepted transition.

Policy Recommendations

1. Strategic Mapping for Industrial Decarbonisation

Development of an EU-wide map of industrial capacities, identification of priority cleantech sectors, and linkage of public funding to clear sustainability and local-content criteria. Germany and Italy should launch bilateral mapping initiatives and jointly promote the framework at EU level.

2. Accelerating Europe's Electricity Grid Build-Out

Strengthens the one-stop-shop system, enables parallel permitting, and introduces mandatory interoperability standards for grid components. Germany and Italy can lead regulatory alignment and standardisation to speed up grid development.

3. EU-SIDS Climate Research & Innovation Programme (CRIP)

Launches a targeted EU initiative to support climate research and innovation with Small Island Developing States (SIDS). Germany and Italy would co-lead, channel funds through existing programmes, and enhance the EU's global climate leadership while supporting the world's most climate-vulnerable countries.

4. Clean Trade Club Complementing CBAM

Creates a voluntary "Clean Trade Club" to harmonise green standards with trading partners, reward cleaner imports, and support technical cooperation. This strengthens the Carbon Border Adjustment Mechanism (CBAM), reduces trade tensions, and incentivises global industrial decarbonisation.



Subgroup 1:
Strategic Mapping and Targeted Support for Clean Industrial Transition

Incoherent Plan for Industrial Decarbonisation

Despite widespread agreement on the need for a joint European industrial policy to support decarbonisation, there is no consensus on its concrete design, operational framework or the type of policy support required. As a result, the EU lacks a coherent strategic plan for industrial decarbonisation, even though the urgency of a clean industrial transition continues to grow. This gap raises a central question: how can the transition proceed effectively in the absence of an agreed framework?

Policy Recommendation:

A structured approach can help overcome the current fragmentation and provide a clear pathway for industrial decarbonisation. The proposed policy involves three steps. First, a **systematic mapping of European industrial capacities and technological potentials** should be conducted to identify strengths and gaps. Second, **key cleantech sectors should be selected** based on strategic relevance, scalability and cross-border value chains. Third, **sector-specific sustainability**

and local content criteria should be introduced for the allocation of public funds to ensure targeted support and more efficient spending on green industries. Implementation could begin immediately by initiating a **structured stakeholder dialogue** and establishing a dedicated **platform for mapping industrial capacities**. Funding streams should be aligned through instruments such as InvestEU, the EU Competitiveness Fund and other available financing mechanisms. In parallel, work on common standards could provide predictability for industry. Germany and Italy can play a leading role by launching bilateral cleantech mapping initiatives, coordinating lobbying efforts in the Council to build wider backing and ultimately transferring the proposal to the European Commission for further development.

This approach offers multiple benefits. It can stimulate demand for EU-produced clean technologies, increase the resilience of European supply chains and strengthen Europe's long-term innovation and employment base. Potential risks must also be managed, including insufficient data for effective mapping, possible retaliation from non-EU trade partners and political or social resistance at national and regional levels.



Subgroup 2: Accelerating Energy Grid Development

Slow and inefficient development of an interconnected European electricity grid

Lengthy project development and the incompatibility of grid components significantly hinder the creation of an interconnected and resilient European energy system. These obstacles limit the integration of renewable energy, reduce efficiency and slow down progress toward Europe's climate and energy goals. Fragmented approval processes, inconsistent oversight and the absence of common technical standards remain key barriers.

Policy Recommendation:

A three-step approach can improve the efficiency and speed of grid expansion. First, the existing **one-stop-shop framework for grid infrastructure should be strengthened and expanded** to simplify administrative procedures. Second, **parallel approval processes** should be enabled through coordinated oversight among national regulators and project authorities. Third, **mandatory interoperability standards**

for grid equipment and software should be introduced to ensure cross-border compatibility. Implementation could begin by aligning national regulatory authorities and integrating these objectives into the upcoming EU Grids Package. Germany and Italy can play leading roles: Italy's single authorisation procedure provides a positive example, while Germany can support the development and adoption of technical standards.

The policy would shorten project timelines, reduce transaction costs and strengthen Europe's energy integration. However, care must be taken to prevent rushed approval processes from undermining regulatory intent and to ensure compliance with international treaties.



Subgroup 3:

EU-SIDS Climate Research and Innovation Programme (CRIP)

Dwindling climate leadership of the European Union

The European Union's position as a global climate leader is losing relevance, while the urgency of climate action continues to grow. This is particularly concerning for the most vulnerable countries, which often have the fewest resources and limited political leverage to protect themselves from climate-related impacts. Small Island Developing States (SIDS) are among the most exposed to rising sea levels, extreme weather events, and environmental degradation, yet they struggle to access the scientific expertise, funding, and technological innovation necessary to adapt effectively. Without stronger cooperation and targeted support, these countries risk severe social, economic, and environmental consequences, while the EU's capacity to shape global climate governance and promote sustainable development is weakened.

Policy Recommendation:

To address this challenge, the EU could launch the EU-SIDS Climate Research and Innovation Programme (CRIP), a targeted initiative to **advance climate research, innovation, and science diplomacy in partnership with SIDS**. The programme would facilitate the exchange of research, data, and innovative solutions between EU member states and SIDS, helping to strengthen adaptive capacities, enhance resilience, and promote sustainable development. Germany and Italy could play a leading role in establishing and operationalising CRIP. Both countries would chair the steering committee responsible for selecting projects, leveraging their scientific networks and existing initiatives, such as the Italy-AOSIS Fellowship and the Global Shield Against Climate Risks. Funding could be channelled through established instruments, including the Italian Climate Fund, Germany's "Internationale Klimaschutzinitiative", and the EU NDICI – Global Europe programme. Implementation would involve **identifying priority research areas, setting up bilateral and multilateral research partnerships, and creating mechanisms for ongoing monitoring, evaluation, and knowledge dissemination**.



Over time, CRIP could strengthen the EU's global climate leadership, support SIDS in building resilience, and promote science-based policy solutions which are also transferable across regions. This initiative would not only address current climate change related problem but also boost long-term collaboration, capacity building, and strategic partnerships between the EU and the world's most climate-exposed countries.



Subgroup 4: Complementing CBAM Through a Clean Trade Club

Incomplete Carbon Border Adjustment Mechanism

The EU's current Carbon Border Adjustment Mechanism (CBAM) has reached the implementation stage in 2025 but remains flawed. It provides only limited incentives for large-scale industrial decarbonisation, potentially risks weakening the competitiveness of EU industries and is often perceived by non-EU partners as a protectionist tax rather than a cooperative climate tool. These shortcomings hinder global emissions reductions and complicate EU trade relations, particularly with major exporters of CBAM-covered goods.

Policy Recommendation:

A complementary approach can strengthen CBAM by aligning climate ambition with international cooperation. A Clean Trade Club (CTC) based on voluntary, multilateral participation would begin by harmonising green standards with key trading partners. Third countries that comply with these standards and export cleaner versions of CBAM-covered products

could receive tariff reductions or limitations, creating a clear incentive for low-carbon production. The CTC would also provide a platform for capacity building and technical cooperation, eventually enabling the development of binding trade rules that support global industrial decarbonisation. Early implementation should focus on **technical alignment in measurement, reporting and verification systems, improved data exchange and harmonised certification processes**. Subsequent steps include **developing voluntary commitments**, establishing **sectoral targets, selecting core club members and piloting sector-specific cooperation** before expanding membership and scope.

The approach offers several advantages, including stronger investment incentives, reduced carbon leakage, clearer regulatory expectations and increased coordination among participating countries. However, successful implementation requires careful management of methodological challenges, attention to WTO compatibility and mitigation of risks that could widen divides between club members and non-members.

Working Group 4: European Artificial Intelligence Regulation and Governance

Overview

Artificial Intelligence (AI) is reshaping Europe's economic, political and security landscape. With its AI Act, the EU aims to lead through trustworthy, rights-based governance. Yet major challenges persist, among them fragmented implementation, rising geopolitical competition, limited infrastructure and skills, and tensions between innovation and regulation. Germany and Italy can help shape a coherent European approach that safeguards rights, boosts competitiveness and strengthens digital sovereignty.

Policy Recommendations

1. AI Energy Transparency for a Net-Zero Digital Future

Introduces an EU framework requiring AI developers to disclose standardised energy-consumption data. This enables evidence-based climate policy, aligns AI expansion with EU climate targets and increases transparency for citizens and regulators.

2. Building a Human-Rights-Compliant and Sustainable European AI Ecosystem

Supports the creation of a competitive AI market based on European rights and values by identifying key gaps, funding compliant solutions and expanding cross-border cooperation and AI sandboxes. Germany and Italy help anchor a trustworthy innovation ecosystem.

3. Streamlining EU AI Act Enforcement

Clarifies authority hierarchies, strengthens data flows and harmonises dispute-resolution mechanisms to ensure coherent, efficient implementation of the AI Act.

4. Leveraging Industrial AI Capabilities to Support SMEs

Links public investment in major AI firms to mentoring and support requirements for Small and Medium Enterprises (SMEs). This strengthens knowledge transfer, accelerates SME growth and builds a more competitive, resilient European AI ecosystem.



Subgroup 1:

AI Energy Transparency for a Net-Zero Digital Future

Achieving both the EU's climate and digitalisation goals

The rapid expansion of Artificial Intelligence has created a growing incompatibility between the EU's objective to scale up innovation and use of AI alongside its climate commitments. Current AI systems consume extensive and increasing amounts of energy, yet data on this consumption is largely unavailable. Without accurate information, policymakers cannot assess the environmental footprint of AI deployment or design measures that align digitalisation with the EU's climate goals.

Policy Recommendation:

A European framework linking access to the internal market with mandatory disclosure of energy consumption data for AI systems could reconcile AI development with climate objectives. This approach requires the **creation of standardised data collection tools, clear thresholds for reporting obligations and robust enforcement mechanisms** capa-

ble of ensuring compliance. Initial steps could include **coordinated preliminary data collection and joint advocacy in the European Council** to advance EU-level action by Italy and Germany.

Transparent reporting would provide the basis for evidence-based policymaking, enable more effective regulation of high-impact AI systems and strengthen public awareness of the environmental footprint of digital technologies. Potential risks, such as data manipulation by companies or resistance from large platforms, must be anticipated and addressed through monitoring, audits and penalties for non-compliance.



Subgroup 2:

Building a Human-Rights-Compliant and Sustainable European AI Ecosystem

Mismatch between the EU's human rights standard and efforts to boost competitiveness in AI markets

The EU faces increasing dependency on AI systems that may not comply with European human rights standards, data protection requirements or transparency norms. This creates drawbacks for social compatibility, regulatory alignment and public trust in AI technologies. Without coordinated action, European industries may struggle to develop competitive, trustworthy AI solutions, and high-risk sectors could remain exposed to systems that undermine ethical and legal standards.

Policy Recommendation:

To strengthen European AI sovereignty, the EU could foster a human-rights-compliant and sustainable innovation ecosystem. Key steps include **identifying market gaps** in which compliant AI solutions are needed and **connecting relevant stakeholders** to develop practical, competitive technologies. **Bilat-**

eral frameworks between member states should be established, accompanied by calls for proposals to incentivise industry and research cooperation. **Bottom-up approaches, such as AI sandboxes**, can support experimentation with safe, ethical solutions while promoting sustainable innovation. Best practices should be widely shared across industries and sectors to encourage adoption. Germany and Italy can play leading roles: Italy can contribute expertise from its national legislation on AI and digital governance, while Germany can provide experience in data protection and regulatory compliance. Implementation of this policy could provide multiple benefits, including accelerated innovation, enhancing Europe's market position in AI, and creating secure, trustworthy AI systems. Potential risks include a lack of funding, strong external competition, complex governance challenges and the influence of geopolitical shifts, all of which must be addressed to ensure effective outcomes.



Subgroup 3: Streamlining EU AI Act Enforcement

Incomplete implementation of the European AI regulation

Despite the adoption of EU AI regulation, its implementation remains fragmented and inefficient. Coordination between authorities at EU, national and sectoral levels is still poorly executed, leading to legal uncertainty for industry, inconsistent enforcement and underutilisation of resources. Without a clear hierarchy and structured mechanisms for monitoring, data collection and dispute resolution, the regulatory framework cannot fully support innovation, institutional trust or international competitiveness.

Policy Recommendation:

To improve the effectiveness of AI regulation, the EU should establish a coordinated enforcement framework that clarifies authority hierarchies, improves oversight and accountability. Initial steps include **defining clear lines of responsibility across EU bodies and national regulators**, followed by **systematic collection and analysis of compliance**

data. Information flows should be strengthened both top-down to industry and bottom-up from stakeholders to ensure transparency and continuous feedback. **Dispute resolution mechanisms should be harmonised** across member states, and bilateral collaborations between Germany and Italy can be established through AI sandboxes. Early implementation could involve **developing data labelling frameworks, identifying gaps in current authority structures and launching coordination tools to optimise enforcement.** Germany can contribute industrial data and multilateral governance experience, while Italy can provide guidance on clear hierarchies, academic expertise and agile dispute resolution mechanisms.

This approach would harmonise AI regulation across the EU, reduce legal uncertainty, increase trust in institutions and enhance the international competitiveness of European AI solutions. Potential risks include inefficient resource allocation, reluctance for cooperation from member states, fragmented prioritisation, uneven skill distribution and incomplete or inaccurate data labelling, all of which must be addressed to ensure success.



Subgroup 4:

Leveraging Industrial AI Capabilities to Support SMEs

Unregulated and unfavourable AI-market in Europe

The EU's AI ecosystem faces an uneven distribution of knowledge and experience among investors, large companies and decision-makers. Small and medium-sized enterprises (SMEs) often lack the guidance, resources and market access needed to scale, while public investments in larger AI companies are not always tied to compliance or broader societal benefits. This gap limits the development of a competitive, ethical and resilient AI industry in Europe.

Policy Recommendation:

A targeted approach could link expertise and funding to the development of ethical AI and support of SMEs. Large AI companies would provide technical guidance and mentorship to emerging SMEs in exchange for public investment. This public investment in turn would be tied to compliance of European human rights and data protection standards. Implementation could begin **by mapping SME needs and iden-**

tifying large companies capable of providing mentorship, using Germany's "Made for Germany" initiative as a model. Partnerships with relevant stakeholders, including national agencies such as Italy's ENIA, research institutes and EU institutions like the European Parliament and the EU AI Office, would be established to support coordination, selection criteria and programme oversight. A pilot programme could then be launched to refine processes and evaluate outcomes before broader rollout.

This exchange creates an environment in which SMEs can scale faster, gain practical experience and adopt best practices, while public investment simultaneously promotes responsible corporate behaviour.

Participants

The Spinelli Forum 2025 gathered 30 German and 30 Italian participants from various backgrounds from various professional backgrounds divided into four thematic working groups. All participants contributed to their working group in their personal capacity, and not as a representative of their employer.

WG1: European Economic Growth and Social Cohesion

Elias Blaurock – University of Potsdam
Svenja Bounin – Munich Security Conference
Paolo Calegari – Novartis Italy
Francesco D'Ignazio – Société Générale
Lucrezia Flavia Ferretti – German Parliament
Christian Hecker – Permanent Representation of the State of Baden-Württemberg to the EU
Nina Karohs – College of Europe
Luca Landolfi – Italian Ministry of Economy and Finance
Francesco Giovanni Lizzi – University of Bologna
Carolina Oliviero – Orphoz (McKinsey)
Letizia Aurora Piccolo – Dini Romiti & Partner
Leandra Porcher – Leipzig University
Ottavio Pugliese – Campari Group
Anna Seip – European Commission, DG Research and Innovation
Hillena Thoms – European University Institute

WG2: European Defence and Security Policy

Alessia Basello – Rasmussen Global
Chiara Bertoli – OSCE Chairpersonship 2025
Tea Cimini – OECD
Giorgia Fedozzi
Alessandro Gagaridis – Royal Higher Institute for Defence (RHID)
Giulia Maria Galli – European Commission
Francesco Gregori – Deloitte
Giovanni Parente – University College Dublin
Lucrezia Sala – NATO
Carlo Marchese – Rheinmetall Italia SpA
Nils Fabian Müller – LUISS University Rome
Jannik Hartmann – DGAP
Ronald Schleeauf – University of Freiburg
Christina Keßler – Greens/EFA Group, European Parliament
Xenia Kelemen – University of Oslo

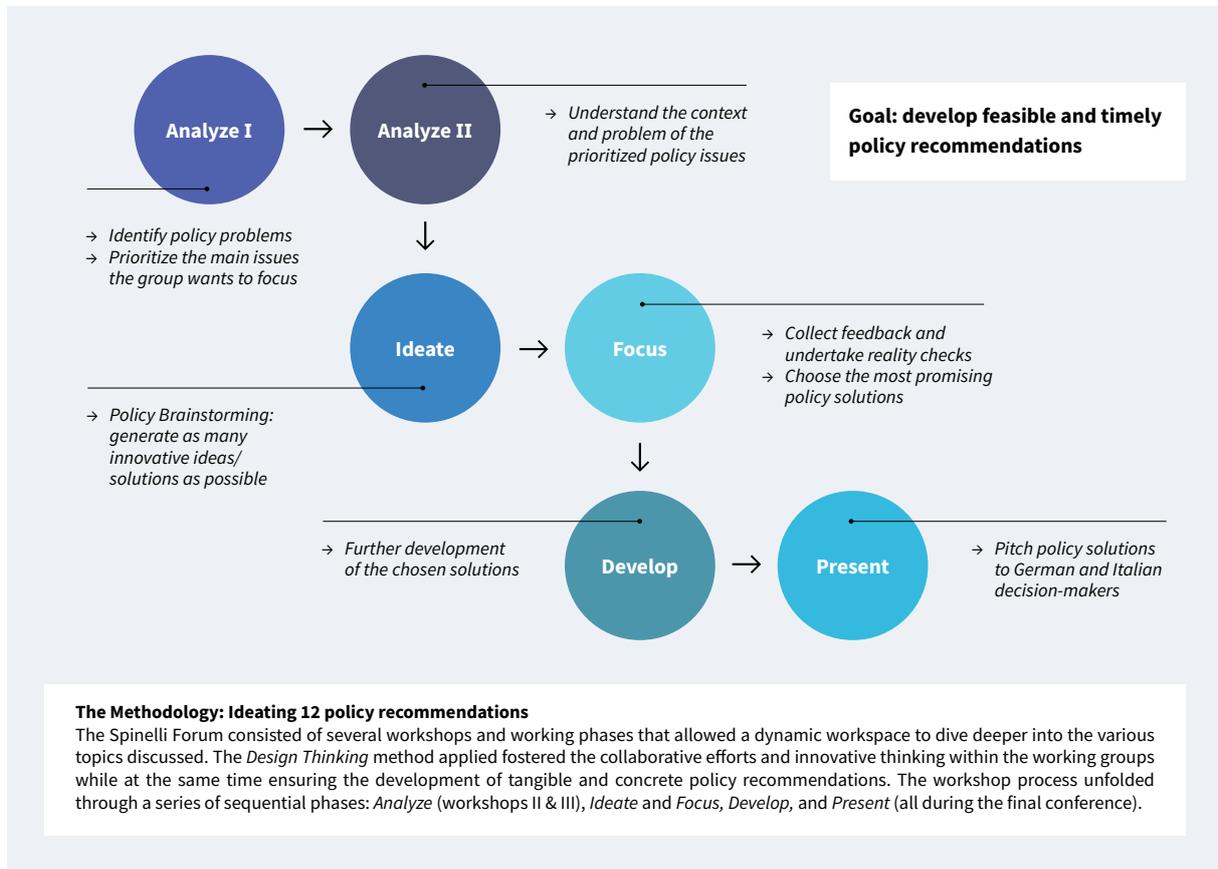
WG3: European Climate and Energy Policy

Alba Le Cardinal – European Commission (DG INTPA)
Fabia Miorelli – German Aerospace Center (DLR)
Davide Plos – Eni
Allegra Semenzato – OECD
Cecilia Trasi – ECCO
Federico Valotto – Echoes Cooperation – FuturaSun Group
Xiaoou Ye – MSCI
John M. Michaelis – European University Institute
Julian Parodi – Energy and Climate Policy and Innovation Council
Anna Loreen Mondorf – Air Liquide
Manuel Löw – German Energy Agency (dena)
Simon Munkler – EPICO
Emily Hartmann – Refugee Law Clinic, Humboldt University
Alend Gravi – United Nations Environment Programme (UNEP)

WG4: European AI Regulation and Governance

Laura Baldis – Coded Solution
Elena Birolo – ARCA Fondi SGR S.p.A.
Manuel Caccone – Unipol Assicurazioni
Eugenia Marabini – Italian Trade Agency
Selena Milanovic – Siemens Healthineers
Enrico Michele Reitano – Accenture
Davide Rauhe – Federal State of Hessen
Stephan Raab – Archdiocese Bamberg
Jérôme Jordan – RWTH Aachen University
Leonhard Hemmerlein – European University Institute
Derya Sahin – The World Bank
Teresa Becher – FU Berlin and German Bundestag
Nikolas Schmidt – OECD
Valentina Tonino – European Economic and Social Committee

Methodology



The Policy Recommendation Canvas

This poster will be used for the Gallery Walk and is part of the documentation of the conference. Please document your analysis in a way that it is understandable for people who did not take part in the workshop.



What is the concrete policy problem you are addressing?
Political and Strategic Fragmentation Undermining European Security

What is the title of your policy recommendation?
"Guerrini Initiative" - Italo-German Strategic Thinking Forum

Describe the target group of your policy recommendation and stakeholders it is addressed to: - policymakers - decision-makers - academics - military - industry - think tanks - civil society - governments - national parliaments	How does your policy recommendation work? - Italo-German bilateral event on strategic thinking - every semester / twice a year, one day event - held on a rotational basis	What are the benefits of your policy recommendation (short-term / long-term)? Short-term: - constant threat assessment - common scenario analysis - joint strategic dialogue - established strategic cooperation for joint strategic thinking Long-term: - important to others - as the "go-to" platform
What are potential risks and barriers of your policy recommendation? RISKS: 1. funding 2. non-implementation 3. incompatible to meet in person 4. others might be unhappy CONTINGENCY PLANS: 1. jointly funded 2. once a year to deliver it 3. online event 4. we'll work on other similar projects in the time	What are the next steps to develop this policy recommendation further? - institutional set-up - contact key stakeholders - event planning - call for papers/applications - public relations/comm - common strategy as a product/deliverable - action plan to implement	What can Germany and Italy contribute to your policy recommendation? - beginning with informal talks preceding the actual event - bilateral consultation will kickstart the initiative - regional cooperation with like-minded partners - direct connection with decision-makers - out-reaching on strategic thinking

What can you contribute to the policy recommendation?
 Potentially involving Spinelli Forum Alumni

Put the essence of your recommendation into a Twitter post (280 characters).
 How to advance EU political and strategic fragmentation bilaterally? The "Guerrini Initiative" will foster Italo-German bilateral cooperation and drive the future of European strategic thinking - stay tuned!
 #StrategicDialogue #ItaloGermanCooperation #GuerriniInitiative

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What is the concrete policy problem you are addressing?
LACK OF A COMMON FRAMEWORK THAT CONNECTS EUROPEAN INDUSTRIES AND TECHNICAL COMPETENCIES, RESULTING IN FRAGMENTED CAPABILITIES AND POOR SCALABILITY.

What is the title of your policy recommendation?
CIDER: CAPABILITIES INDUSTRY DEFENCE ENHANCEMENT ROUNDTABLE

Describe the target group of your policy recommendation and stakeholders it is addressed to: Target Group: EU Commission Stakeholders: MSs, industries, EDA (National Security Authorities)	How does your policy recommendation work? 1. Common capability gaps developed by EC; 2. Round table gathers technical subject matter experts (and MSAs) and narrow down the capability gaps; 3. A common project to fill the gaps is created; 4. Industry players bid for projects; 5. Tender gets approved by EC -> project is funded and covered.	What are the benefits of your policy recommendation (short-term / long-term)? Short-term: to enable bottom-up project capability gaps. Long-term: Minimization of duplication
What are potential risks and barriers of your policy recommendation? - Member states withholding information on their capability gaps. - Uneven contributions from MSs.	What are the next steps to develop this policy recommendation further? - Get political backing from EC and MSs; - share ideas with industrial stakeholders to get involved.	What can Germany and Italy contribute to your policy recommendation? - Support the idea at E-level; - Enhance information sharing and promote joint projects.

What can you contribute to the policy recommendation?
 //

Put the essence of your recommendation into a Twitter post (280 characters).
"CIDER: a bottom-up model for European defence readiness. Through a joint round table between the EC experts and industry, capability gaps are identified and industry bids to fill them through concrete, competitive projects. A practical path to turn coordination into capability."



GERMAN ITALIAN YOUNG LEADERS DIALOGUE SPINELLI FORUM

The Policy Recommendation Canvas
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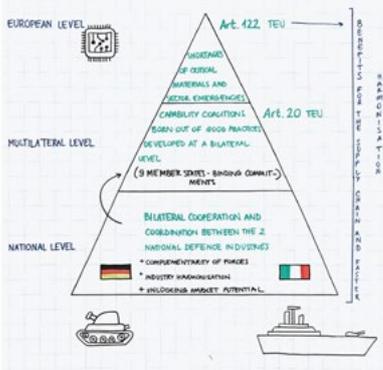
What is the concrete policy problem you are addressing? LACK OF INDIVIDUAL, COLLECTIVE AND GOVERNMENTAL PREPARADNESS TO HYBRID THREATS		
What is the title of your policy recommendation? HYREX - HYBRID RESILIENCE EXERCISE		
Describe the target group of your policy recommendation and stakeholders it is addressed to. 1. ITA & GER MFA 2. Coordination with European Center of Excellence for Countering Hybrid Threats → Then national implementation	How does your policy recommendation work? Appointed strategic advisors of companies and institutions from critical sectors recruited or invited / required to attend an X day workshop. They are responsible to plan their organization's resilience and channel info on hybrid threats	What are the benefits of your policy recommendation (short-term / long-term)? 1. RESILIENCE NETWORKS IN TIMES OF CRISIS 2. CHANNELLING INFORMATION WITHIN THE ORGANIZATION 3. INCREASED PRIVATE SECTOR AWARENESS AND PREPAREDNESS
What are potential risks and barriers of your policy recommendation? - Stakeholder buy-in / Incentive or Active participation - Political buy-in: EU & national levels - Funding - Risk of stigmatization / Political backlash	What are the next steps to develop this policy recommendation further? - Minimize & Hybrid CoE coordinate - Concept Note: Development of HYREX EU program - Secure Funding: National ministries or etc	What can Germany and Italy contribute to your policy recommendation? - Joint development and implementation - Joint Expertise - ITA & GER Experts - MFA / GER - Peer learning for participants
What can you contribute to the policy recommendation? Make an honorary response		
Put the essence of your recommendation into a Twitter post (280 characters) We are ill-prepared to counter hybrid threats. We need #HYREX - Hybrid Resilience Exercise. Appointed strategic advisors from critical sectors connecting, sharing best practices, and increasing their organization's preparedness and resilience to hybrid threats		

* Energy, defence, health, logistics... How big do companies need to be?



GERMAN ITALIAN YOUNG LEADERS DIALOGUE SPINELLI FORUM

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What is the concrete policy problem you are addressing? ABSENCE OF EU-LEVEL COORDINATION ON INVESTMENT & PROCUREMENT, LEADING TO: DUPLICATED EFFORTS, INEFFICIENT SPENDING, WEAK COLLECTIVE CAPABILITY		
What is the title of your policy recommendation? FROM TABOO TO OPPORTUNITIES: HOW TO CREATE THE CONDITIONS FOR A EUROPEAN DEFENCE INDUSTRY WITHIN THE CURRENT INSTITUTIONAL FRAMEWORK		
Describe the target group of your policy recommendation and stakeholders it is addressed to. NATIONAL GOVERNMENTS (ITA & GER)	How does your policy recommendation work? 1) ENHANCED BILATERAL COOPERATION 2) CAPABILITY COALITIONS → ENHANCED COOPERATION ART. 20 TEU 3) ART. 422 TEU FOR INDUSTRIAL EMERGENCY	What are the benefits of your policy recommendation (short-term / long-term)? 1) REINVENTING UNANIMITY 2) COMPLEMENTARITY OF FORCES (SERVING BINDING COMMITMENTS) 3) INDUSTRIAL HARMONIZATION
What are potential risks and barriers of your policy recommendation? 1) INSTITUTIONAL OVERLAP AND MULTILATERAL ADVANCEMENT 2) NATIONAL SOVEREIGNTY 3) SUBSIDIARITY	What are the next steps to develop this policy recommendation further? 1) BRING THE INTO BILATERAL DISCUSSIONS (W/ NATIONAL STAKEHOLDERS) 2) ATTRACT OTHER NATIONS 3) IDENTIFY INDUSTRIAL SHORTAGES	What can Germany and Italy contribute to your policy recommendation? KICK OFF BILATERAL DISCUSSIONS (CO-) LEAD CAPABILITY COALITION KNOWLEDGE-SHARING
What can you contribute to the policy recommendation? (Optional) FRAGMENTED EU DEFENCE SPENDING WEAKENS EUROPE'S SECURITY. OUR IDEA: 1) ENHANCED BILATERAL COOPERATION BY ITA & GER 2) ART. 20 TEU TO TURN CAPABILITY COALITIONS INTO STRUCTURED UNARMED COOPERATION TO HARMONIZE DEFENCE INDUSTRIES - BINDING & FLEXIBLE 3) ART. 422 TEU EMERGENCY TRIGGER FOR SUPPLY CHAIN SHORTAGES. 4) PRACTIC INTEGRATION FOR REAL CAPABILITIES. #EUDEFENCE #SPINELLIFORUM		

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What is the concrete policy problem you are addressing?
 Paradox: while there is broad agreement about the need for joint industrial policy, there is none about the exact design, approach and policy support framework of such policy.

What is the title of your policy recommendation?
 Set detailed overarching guidelines for a pan-European future-proof industrial policy.

Describe the target group of your policy recommendation and stakeholders it is addressed to:
 - Ministries for Economy & Industry (BMWi)
 - Perm Reps
 - MFAs

How does your policy recommendation work?
 - mapping of European capacities and potentials (country-specific)
 - identify clean-tech clusters (the winners, EU and local EU FMs funding an edge)
 - sector-specific industrial, city and local context criteria, M & S
 - => more holistic and regional approach + more regional use of it

What are the benefits of your policy recommendation (short-term / long-term)?
 - stimulate demand for EU-made clean products - short-term
 - increase resilience of EU supply chains - medium-term
 - increase innovation capability + jobs - long-term
 => cleantech clusters/ecosystem

What are the potential risks and barriers of your policy recommendation?
 - lack of data for the mapping / risk of a lack of objectivity
 - ? retaliation by extra-EU trade partners
 - political + social backlash at MS/regional level

What are the next steps to develop your policy recommendation further?
 - stakeholder dialogue / platform for supply -> CCT?
 - align and make "strategic approach" (i.e. EU Commission and member states)
 - develop guidelines (action plan)

What can Germany and Italy contribute to your policy recommendation?
 - bilateral cooperation + expert resources to work on clean-tech mapping initiative
 - DE + IT => Council (lobbying for support)
 - hand over to COMMISSION (DG GROW)

What can you contribute to the policy recommendation?
 - ambassadors / communicators / network
 - inform & nudge EU + national decision makers

Put the essence of your recommendation into a Twitter post (280 characters):
 Italy & Germany should lead by example & future-proof the EU's industrial policy by:
 * Mapping European cleantech potential: capacity, skills, energy, infrastructure & labour costs
 * Increasing & streamlining funding for the scale-up & manufacturing phases
 * Rewarding low CO₂ materials & EU content in procurement, auctions, funding

Additional notes:
 - Social up mobility for clean economy (green jobs, CCS, hydrogen, etc.)
 - + circularity / recycling

The Policy Recommendation Canvas
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What is the concrete policy problem you are addressing?
 HOW TO BUILD ENERGY GRIDS BETTER AND FASTER?
 • Long-term development (20+ years)
 • Incompatibility issues of grid components
 • Grid congestion (150,000 km missing by 2030 for electricity only)

What is the title of your policy recommendation?
 ACCELERATING ENERGY INFRASTRUCTURE DELIVERY:
 Harmonised Permitting and Technical Standards for a Connected Europe

Describe the target group of your policy recommendation and stakeholders it is addressed to:
 • National Regulatory Authorities (NRAs) & permitting agencies
 • Transmission System Operators (TSOs)
 • Project developers
 • EC & ENTSOs

How does your policy recommendation work?
 • Streamline and regionalize the one-stop-shop framework for grid infrastructure (PTEN-E)
 • Enable parallel permitting processes through coordinated strategic
 • Standardize interoperability standards for grid equipment and software (crucial to long-term)

What are the benefits of your policy recommendation (short-term / long-term)?
 • Streamlined project development
 • Lower Transaction Costs

What are the potential risks and barriers of your policy recommendation?
 • Baked approval processes might violate the spirit of the regulation
 • Potential violation of international treaties

What are the next steps to develop this policy recommendation further?
 • Alignment between NRAs, TSOs and EC on work conference
 • "no one-stop-shop"
 • Amendment of relevant legislative texts via upcoming EU Grid Package

What can Germany and Italy contribute to your policy recommendation?
 • Requested actors in the EU should have an established track record in grid energy infrastructure
 • ITA: wide international treaties in place (what practical)
 • GER: facilitate standard development (INTEROPERA)

What can you contribute to the policy recommendation?
 • Highlighting consensus on bottleneck issues
 • Stimulating discussion in the wake of EU(Energy)Grid Package

Put the essence of your recommendation into a Twitter post (280 characters):
 Europe's energy infrastructure development is slowed by fragmented planning and permitting. We propose: Parallelised permitting procedures, binding component standards, and a one-stop shop with NRAs to accelerate infrastructure delivery within the EU Grid Package.

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SCIENCE DIPLOMACY

WOULD ITA & DEM FUND IT?

REINFORCING THE PARTNERSHIP WITH SIDS

MORE CATCHY TITLE?

Antigua & Barbuda
 • Action Agenda
 • Samoa Agreement
 • UNICS

EU-SIDS CLIMATE RESEARCH & INNOVATION PROGRAMME
 (small islands & developing states)

What is the concrete policy problem you are addressing?
 HOW TO ENSURE THE EU'S GLOBAL CLIMATE CREDIBILITY & LEADERSHIP + FULFIL INTERNATIONAL COMMITMENTS

What is the title of your policy recommendation?
 EU-SIDS CLIMATE RESEARCH & INNOVATION PROGRAMME (small islands & developing states)

Describe the target group of your policy recommendation and stakeholders it is addressed to:
 - academic institutions
 - civil society
 - policy makers
 - private sector

How does your policy recommendation work?
 How: introduction of 3-yearly thematic fund
 - selection process
 - setting up independent structure (Steering Committee, presiding scientist & academic Council) selecting themes & participants
 Funding: leveraging already existing funding (e.g. climate fund, EU H2020 & Sci4Climate)

What are the benefits of your policy recommendation (short-term / long-term)?
 Short: follow-up action to last year's SIDS Conference sending an ongoing signal of care to the Pacific
 Long: mutual learning (sharing best practices) from experience on transition to the transition in all sectors
 Understand what will be needed to use 3% climate - under 2016 ambition
 - focus on small SIDS - transition, development - research

What are the potential risks and barriers of your policy recommendation?
 - acceptance by citizens
 - funding / budget constraints
 - difficulty in translating the programme's impact & highlighting

What are the next steps to develop this policy recommendation further?
 Identification: mapping of existing research gaps of stakeholders
 Inception: steering committee & academic Council
 Implementation: launch pilot call for proposal & programme

What can Germany and Italy contribute to your policy recommendation?
 - Please set power for advance the proposal (incl. through G7)
 - Build on previous cooperation and collaborate w/ existing initiatives (see Mexico)
 - Clarify the Steering Committee
 - Gather relevant stakeholders

What can you contribute to the policy recommendation?
 - connection of stakeholders
 - publicity (social media events)
 - leverage academic and practical backgrounds

Put the essence of your recommendation into a Twitter post (280 characters):
 team up w/ SIDS to advance science diplomacy through a new Climate Research & Innovation Programme. Good for #Team 🇪🇺, researchers & the planet!

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YOUNG LEADERS DIALOGUE SPINELLI FORUM

Putting a carrot on the stick: Complementing CBAM with a CLEAN TRADE CLUB (CTC)

What is the concrete policy problem you are addressing?
 1) CBAM might not have the intended effect due to the administrative burden of carbon footprint reporting
 2) CBAM might not be accepted by the companies in the countries
 3) CBAM is not enough to reduce emissions and a green transition must be achieved through other means

What is the title of your policy recommendation?
 Putting a carrot on the stick: Complementing CBAM with a CLEAN TRADE CLUB (CTC)

Describe the target group of your policy recommendation and stakeholders it is addressed to:
 - Small and medium enterprises (SMEs)
 - Exporters and importers
 - Governments
 - Industry associations

How does your policy recommendation work?
 1) Use CBAM as a carrot to incentivize companies to reduce emissions
 2) CBAM as a stick to enforce emissions reduction
 3) Clean Trade Club (CTC) as a platform for companies to share best practices and collaborate on reducing emissions

What are the benefits of your policy recommendation (short-term / long-term)?
 Short-term: CBAM as a carrot to incentivize companies to reduce emissions
 Long-term: CTC as a platform for companies to share best practices and collaborate on reducing emissions

What are the potential risks and barriers of your policy recommendation?
 - Administrative burden of carbon footprint reporting
 - Lack of acceptance by companies in the countries
 - CBAM might not be enough to reduce emissions and a green transition must be achieved through other means

What are the next steps to develop this policy recommendation further?
 1) Conduct a feasibility study
 2) Develop a pilot program
 3) Engage with stakeholders

What can Germany and Italy contribute to your policy recommendation?
 - Germany: CBAM as a carrot to incentivize companies to reduce emissions
 - Italy: CTC as a platform for companies to share best practices and collaborate on reducing emissions

What can you contribute to the policy recommendation?
 - SMEs
 - Exporters and importers
 - Governments
 - Industry associations

Put the essence of your recommendation into a Twitter post (280 characters):
 CBAM as a carrot to incentivize companies to reduce emissions. CTC as a platform for companies to share best practices and collaborate on reducing emissions. #ClimateAction

AIR & CLIMATE

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What is the concrete policy problem you are addressing? Incompatibility between EU AI Strategy & EU Climate Goals: energy consumption is high and rising but exact dimensions are unclear.		
What is the title of your policy recommendation? Mandate AI Energy Transparency: The Intelligent Path to Net Zero Digital Future		
Describe the target group of your policy recommendation and stakeholders it is addressed to: EU Commission EU Energy Ministers	How does your policy recommendation work? Tie EU market access to disclosure of energy consumption	What are the benefits of your policy recommendation (short-term / long-term)? Evidence based policy making Facilitate regulation and enable public awareness
What are potential risks and barriers of your policy recommendation? Data manipulation Pressure from Very Long Online Platform (VLOPs)	What are the next steps to develop this policy recommendation further? Concise data collection Design thresholds on energy consumption Design enforcement instruments	What can Germany and Italy contribute to your policy recommendation? Pressure EU Council Preliminary data collection
What can you contribute to the policy recommendation? Vital but virgin field Gap in regulation Urgency for awareness section		
Put the essence of your recommendation into a Twitter post (280 characters) AI consumes energy like a black hole. It is huge, growing, the exact dimensions unknown and jeopardises climate goals. We must know its scope to stay on the course on climate. Further AI companies must disclose their energy impact to access the EU single market.		

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What is the concrete policy problem you are addressing? Growing dependency on AI models that are not compliant with European human rights norms, data protection & transparency standards		
What is the title of your policy recommendation? Fostering European AI Sovereignty by Building a Human Rights-Compliant and Sustainable Innovation Ecosystem		
Describe the target group of your policy recommendation and stakeholders it is addressed to: European and national agencies German and Italian Industries High risk sectors	How does your policy recommendation work? Identify market gaps to develop feasible, competitive, and human-right-compliant AI solution for practical challenges while leveraging opportunities by connecting relevant stakeholders	What are the benefits of your policy recommendation (short-term / long-term)? Lead short in innovation Establish trusted zones Secure & trustworthy AI solutions Sustainable, scalable European standard setting (network effect)
What are potential risks and barriers of your policy recommendation? Insufficient funding External competition Failure to deliver in practice Complex governance + Geopolitics	What are the next steps to develop this policy recommendation further? 1. Establish bilateral framework 2. Call for proposals 3. Develop backup solution using a sandbox approach 4. Build a sustainable complex 5. Monitor/Evaluate/Scale 6. Promote best practice	What can Germany and Italy contribute to your policy recommendation? Italy: organize an national AI legislation, Germany: experience in data protection, Both: industrial purchases with critical mass of data within key sectors.
What can you contribute to the policy recommendation? Development of a positive, risk-aware vision of an AI-based society + Shaping an inclusive + European AI culture + Creating synergies between: SMEs · Big players · Private investors Military actors · Agencies · Academia Municipalities · Civil society		
Put the essence of your recommendation into a Twitter post (280 characters) New German-Italian AI Sandbox launches!!! We're fostering European AI innovation in high-risk sectors, industry & public sector - compliant with the EU AI Act. #AI-Act #DigitalSovereignty #Growth		

December 2025

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About IEP

Since 1959, IEP has been active in the field of European integration as a non-profit organisation. It is one of Germany's leading research institutes on foreign and European policy. IEP works at the intersection of academia, politics, administration, and civic education.

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About the German-Italian Young Leaders Dialogue - Spinelli Forum:

The Spinelli Forum was launched in 2019 at the initiative of the German Federal Foreign Office and the Italian Ministry of Foreign Affairs and International Cooperation. Its fifth edition in 2025 was hosted by the Institut für Europäische Politik (IEP) and the Istituto per gli Studi di Politica Internazionale (ISPI).

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