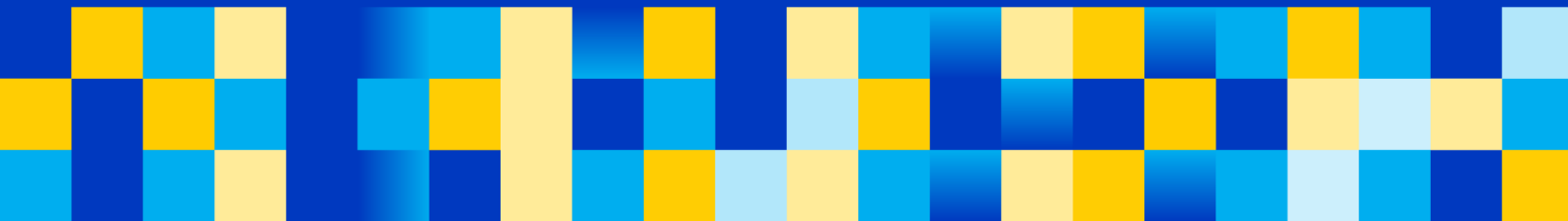


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LEADERS
SUMMIT 2025

FREEDOM

ON THE

OFFENSIVE



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ALLIANCE OF LIBERALS AND
DEMOCRATS FOR EUROPE

DEMOCRATS
EUROPEAN DEMOCRATIC PARTY

FREEDOM ON THE OFFENSIVE

It is the best of times, it is the worst of times. We have never been wealthier and healthier in human history. And yet it feels like we have never been so anxious and frustrated. Populists have decided to fan the flames of discontent. We, Liberals and Democrats, have decided to hold our heads high and embrace our heritage.

The rules-based order we live in is the product of liberal democracies, pluralistic societies and humanist philosophies. And it is working. Today, in Europe, the risk of falling into extreme poverty is low. Our life span keeps on increasing. Equality between men and women has made progress. It is no longer a crime to believe in something or love someone. We have had peace among Europeans for an unprecedented amount of time.

That doesn't mean things are perfect. Far from it. Just have a look at the war of aggression in Ukraine, the situation in Georgia, Moldova, Belarus or the illiberal backslidings in Hungary, Slovakia and Poland. But we are proud of the liberal and democratic recipes that got us where we are. Our ideas are valid, more than ever. Freedom must go on the offensive.

Freedom to Act

We believe Europeans should be free to decide for themselves. Europe has been dependant for too long. For its security. For its energy provision. For its industrial development. We are not free if we cannot fend for ourselves. We are not free if someone can turn the tap or pull the plug on us. The current geopolitical context is uncertain but it is an opportunity to get our freedom back. We do not plea for isolationism but for autonomy.

We commit to develop a true European Defence Union and build a European defence industry, with a "buy EU first" principle at its core, and whilst respecting the constitutional identities of Member States. We commit to support the ambitious and timely NATO defence spending target. We commit to end all Russian fossil fuels imports. We commit to master our own forms of AI and promote a humanistic approach of our digital future, different from the predatory US version or the autocratic Chinese version.

We also commit to reform the way our institutions work and get rid of the plague of unanimity. Our capacity to act as Europeans cannot be hampered by a single Member States playing its own interest - or that of foreign powers - against the interest of the EU as a whole. We're a democracy, not a vetocracy.

Freedom to Choose

We believe Europeans should be free to choose, always. Pluralism and democracy are taken for granted. We must protect media freedom, the independence of courts, civic participation, and the rule of law across Europe. And we believe all Europeans should be free to choose. Populists claim to speak for "the People" but they mainly defend their own version of it. They take your rights away and give privileges to their own clients.



We commit to end the impunity of Viktor Orban. Article 7 of the treaties must be activated. Now. And the actions of Robert Fico must also be scrutinised under the same procedure. EU funds going to autocrats and their cronies must be frozen. We commit to fight for your rights, whoever you are, whoever you love, whatever the colour of your skin or religion. We commit to establish the EU Democracy Shield to counter foreign interferences. The fight for freedom is a global one. We commit to keep on building partnerships with countries sharing our liberal democratic values and structure the cooperation between democratic forces beyond the EU. Canada, Iceland, Norway, UK, let join forces.

Freedom to Grow

We believe Europeans should be free to prosper. We have said it so many times and we will say it time and again but the European single market must be strengthened. Cultivating our freedom to trade among Europeans is like cultivating a relationship: it is a constant effort. We also believe Europeans should be free to grow intellectually. We must cherish our cultural diversity and give all a fair chance through education. We must preserve academic freedom in Europe and become a haven for researchers threatened by anti-science beliefs, especially those targeted by the climate-scepticism of Donald Trump. Finally, we believe the next generation of Europeans should be free to grow too. Not constrained by our action today. Not burdened by excessive debts. Not choked by pollution. Free to grow.

We commit to regain Europe's competitive edge. We commit to the fast implementation of the Draghi report. We commit to simplify the lives of people and business. Simplification is the surest and fastest way to the green and digital transition of our economy. If what is good for us in the long run means bureaucratic nonsense then the transition will fail. We cannot let that happen. Investment matters too and the EU budget must play its role. The next EU budget shouldn't be a reflection of our past but a springboard for our future. Our next long-term budget should be agile, balanced and impactful.

Liberal democracy works. It has a proven record. When free people work freely together, all have an opportunity to prosper. When European countries work closely together, they can take their future in their own hands. European unification has done so much for freedom in the past. It is the most successful liberal-democratic project in history. It can achieve even more.

