# Ireland's EU Council Presidency Must Strengthen EU Resilience, Deepen Partnerships and Deliver Strategic Autonomy Say European Policy Experts

**Brussels, 30 June 2026** - On the eve of Ireland's EU Presidency, members of the Trans European Policy Studies Association (TEPSA) network are calling for a forward-looking agenda for the Presidency that balances openness with resilience, and ambition with credible delivery.

Proposed by leading European policy experts and academics across the TEPSA network, five detailed recommendations have been made:

- **Strategic autonomy** as a positive project that combines economic security and competitiveness with openness to trade and international cooperation.
- **Digital sovereignty** through the reinforcement of Europe's technological strength and democratic values.
- Delivering a **credible EU budget** in advancing negotiations on the EU's next Multiannual Financial Framework (MFF) for 2028–2034.
- Reframing **enlargement** as a strategic investment in Europe's long-term geopolitical resilience.
- 5.Rebuilding **EU and UK co-operation** based on shared priorities.

These recommendations are co-edited by TEPSA Board Members, Pernille Rieker (ARENA – Centre for European Studies) and Erik Jones (Robert Schuman Centre for Advanced Studies), and originally opened discussions at the Irish Pre-Presidency Conference (PPC), Gateway to the Irish Presidency: Leadership in a Changing Europe, which took place in Dublin from 11 to 12 June 2026. There were over 350 attendees during the two-day conference with eight plenary sessions and a keynote address by European Commissioner for Enlargement, Marta Kos. The recording of the session is available to view here.

Speaking about the TEPSA Recommendations to the incoming Presidency, TEPSA Secretary General Jim Cloos said: *"Ireland will take over the chairmanship of the Council of the EU at a key moment for the future of the EU. At our PPC we had the opportunity of presenting our TEPSA Recommendations to the Presidency and to have a very lively debate between practitioners, think tankers and the wider audience about the many challenges the EU faces. The success of the Presidency will be measured by the progress reached on the road towards European strategic autonomy in all its shapes. We are confident about the outcome."*

Alex White, IIEA Director General, added: *"As Ireland assumes the EU Presidency it will need not only to guide policy but to do so by fostering open, inclusive dialogue across member states. These recommendations from the TEPSA network members, and indeed the TEPSA Irish Pre-Presidency Conference held earlier this month at the IIEA, brought together diverse perspectives to help strengthen democratic co-operation and ensure that Ireland's Presidency contributes meaningfully to the European project at a critical moment".*

The Irish PPC was co-organised by TEPSA with the Institute of International and European Affairs (IIEA). It was co-funded by the European Union via TEPSA's ExpressEU project and also part of Future Proofing Europe, an IIEA project supported by the Department of Foreign Affairs and Trade of Ireland.

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**Notes to Editor:**
The TEPSA Recommendations to the Irish Presidency were coordinated by TEPSA Board Members, Erik Jones (Robert Schuman Centre for Advanced Studies) and Pernille Rieker (ARENA – Centre for European Studies), and authored by Niklas Helwig (Finnish Institute of International Affairs), Seamus Allen and Barry Colfer (IIEA), Brigid Laffan (Robert Schuman Centre and European Policy Centre), Giselle Bosse, Miruna Aniculăesei, Imanol Olite Crisol and Tobias Pardoen (Maastricht University).

TEPSA is the first European affairs research network, with a pan-European network comprising 51 leading research institutes in 37 European countries. The organisation aims to bridge the gap between research, policy-making, and citizens.

The IIEA is an independent think tank and policy research institute. It acts as a forum, bringing together stakeholders to discuss issues of Irish, European and international significance. It is a member of the TEPSA network.

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