

Brussels, 8 September 2025

To all Members of the European Parliament

Subject: A federal response to a turbulent autumn—Parliament's leverage on trade, budget and political union

Dear Colleague,

As the new political year opens and in advance of the State of the Union debate, I write on behalf of the **Union of European Federalists (UEF)** to urge the European Parliament to exercise its full constitutional authority at a time of systemic stress and lack of leadership and unity of our Union.

In the last few months, from the Hague to Turnberry, Europe has made a number of concessions to Trump's America on defence and trade that have not been followed by even a minimum of reciprocity. The White House continues to follow Putin's script on Ukraine and refuses to step up pressure in the form of sanctions.

Trump is not our ally, and contracts seem to bind only the opposing party. Instead, Europe's must unite politically and develop its own Common Defence and strategic independence. **Neither Putin nor Trump should set Europe's strategic horizon.** Europe must lead the free world by its own agency.

What we need is:

- **a common European defence** that can act with or without NATO's support;
- **majority voting** in foreign and security policy;
- **own resources** to finance common goods; and
- a **democratic mandate** strengthened through transnational lists and a visible European party system.

Therefore:

1) On the proposed tariff reductions vis-à-vis the United States:

In light of the Scotland/Turnberry framework announced this summer, we ask you to **vote against any legislative act** that would implement **unilateral EU tariff reductions** or other concessions that are not strictly reciprocal and that risk eroding Europe's industrial and technological base. Parliament must not endorse measures that transform strategic interdependence into structural dependency. If the Commission brings forward proposals to operationalise those concessions, scrutiny must be exacting; should reciprocity, legal safeguards and enforceability be insufficient, **reject them**.

2) We call to use Parliament's budgetary powers to activate the Common Defence foreseen in the Lisbon Treaty, unlock Treaty reform, and the introduction of transnational lists in the 2029 elections to the European Parliament.

The European Council has the power to activate our Common Defence (Article 42 TEU) and has yet to respond meaningfully to Parliament's **22 November 2023** proposal to amend the Treaties under **Article 48 TEU**. This is key to end the vetocracy that is eroding democracy and our capacity to act. The said initiative remains the only comprehensive roadmap on the table to endow the Union with effective decision-making and real own resources.

In addition, Council must open negotiations on transnational lists for the 2029 elections. A European democracy needs a genuinely European electoral sphere. Parliament has already set out a legislative initiative for reform of the European Electoral Act, including an **EU-wide constituency with transnational lists**. We ask you to make this a non-negotiable priority in the 2025–2026 interinstitutional agenda: **press the Council to open negotiations immediately** so that the reform can be adopted, ratified and implemented **in time for the next elections**. Parliament should condition its cooperation on the institutional calendar—including budgetary files—on a concrete Council timetable.

We therefore urge you to signal—publicly and unequivocally—that Parliament will **withhold consent to the 2026 EU Budget and the next Multiannual Financial Framework (MFF)** unless the European Council opens a structured response and road-map to Parliament's institutional proposals. Parliament should be prepared, if necessary, to **reject the annual budget**, triggering the provisional-twelfths regime, until the Convention is convened. Leverage exists to be used—responsibly but firmly.

The Parliament is the only EU institution directly legitimised by the citizens. It must therefore be the engine of this transformation—using its powers on **trade, budget, consent and political initiative** to align day-to-day decisions with Europe's long-term strategic purpose.

In closing, we urge you to:

- **Vote against** any one-sided tariff-reduction package vis-à-vis the US that lacks reciprocity and enforceable safeguards;
- **Withhold consent to the next MFF** and, if necessary, **reject the annual budget** until the European Council follows up on Parliament's **22 November 2023 Treaty-reform proposal** and Council open's negotiations on **transnational lists** for 2029.

Europe's credibility will be measured less by speeches than by the choices you make in the coming weeks. The UEF stands ready to support you—in Parliament and in national capitals—in building the pro-European majority Europe needs.

You can find further information in the attached [Ventotene Declaration for European political union and a common defence](#)¹, anchored in democratic legitimacy and the rule of law. These two vectors—geopolitical realism and democratic federalism—must now meet in Parliament's decisions.

Yours sincerely,

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Former Member of the European Parliament

¹ <https://federalists.eu/federalist-library/declaration-for-a-sovereign-and-federal-european-res-publica/>