

# SEC Newgate EU media briefing: Trump returns.

January 20 marked the beginning of Donald Trump's second term as US president. After a chaotic first mandate, Europe knows to expect the unexpected, with the media theorising about different ways Brussels and the capitals can brace for impact. We are in for four action-packed years and much breaking news on the way. If you want your perspective to feature in the media, you must understand what the reporters are up to.

## The media influencers.

### Policy-focused media

POLITICO Europe, Euronews, EURACTIV and MLex have been covering the news in detail from all angles to satisfy their policy-curious readers.

### Top-tier international media

Followed by those inside and outside the EU bubble for more holistic takes, including the Financial Times, the Wall Street Journal and The Economist, with dedicated correspondents in Brussels.

### International wires

Followed and reposted by media and companies globally, like the internationally-minded like Reuters, Bloomberg or AFP, as well as national agencies like Italy's ANSA or Spain's EFE.

### National media

Read mostly by key national influencers. Those believing that the key to power is not to be found in Brussels but rather in the EU capitals will follow the likes of Le Monde, Süddeutsche Zeitung, El Pais or Il Sole 24 Ore.

### Trade media

Industry-focused, they hone in on Trump's return from the narrow angle of dedicated policy streams, like tech, energy or trade. Those include, among many others, Carbon Pulse, ENDS Europe or Borderlex.



1000+  
journalists

60+  
countries  
of origin

**Brussels** is the second global press centre after Washington, D.C. . Brussels media who cover politics and institutional policy developments are closely followed by the policymakers, lobbyists, industry leaders and NGOs in Europe and beyond.

It is a two-way street, as readers often become sources of information and opinion for the journalists.

## How to engage?

If you want to get quoted and land our key messages, you might want to consider developing a media strategy. This will require:

- **Starting early:** You need to build trust and a relationship with the journalists. Reach out to them to introduce yourself, show that you are an expert in your field and demonstrate that your insights will improve their understanding of the topic at hand.
- **Bringing something to the table:** Whether it is a fresh or original point of view on a policy debate, relevant facts and figures or insightful background information, give the reporters something to work with – make it worthwhile for them.
- **Being timely and available:** Journalists work on short deadlines and need to attract their readers with scoops. What can make you a good source is sharing materials (like press releases, quotes or background knowledge) ahead of time and being accessible.

# Main themes & angles.

Trump as a challenge and opportunity for Europe.

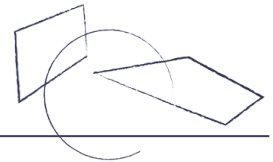
In the European media and beyond, Trump is known as a disruptor. His return is an earthquake for Europe, but the jury is still out whether the dreaded shake will bury the Old Continent, or give it a new impetus to act. [1, 2, 3, 4, 5, 6]

## Political group dynamics.

Trump's reputation precedes him – not just because of his larger-than-life persona, but also his radical moves across different policy streams.

- **Defence:** Trump's America-first approach means that Europe will have to fend for itself on defence more than before, especially when it comes to the war in Ukraine. Trump has also called for NATO members to increase their defence spending from 2% to 5%, a target described as unrealistic even for the biggest military spenders across the EU. [1, 2, 3, 4, 5]
- **Trade:** The EU is bracing for Trump's favourite word: tariffs. A trade war seems almost inevitable considering the returning president's obsession with the EU-US deficit in trade in goods, which he wants to balance by forcing the bloc to buy more LNG from the US. Trump's plans for 60% duties on exports from China, if fulfilled, will also put the EU between a rock and a hard place. [1, 2, 3, 4, 5]
- **Tech:** Facing increasing regulatory burdens and legal fines in Europe, the Big Tech companies are turning to Trump for help. With Elon Musk (an outspoken critic of Brussels' tech policies) as the president's current right-hand man, the future of enforcement is a question mark. [1, 2, 3, 4, 5, 6]
- **Climate:** On his first day back, Trump pulled the US out of the Paris Agreement for the second time, weakening global climate efforts. This puts the EU's climate leadership to the test: it opens the door to work with allies, but could encourage major emitters like BRICS to roll back their climate efforts. Trump is also likely to lash out at the EU's green efforts like CBAM. [1, 2, 3, 4, 5]

## National perspectives.



More than any region, Europe is worried about Trump's return. His transactional realpolitik and unpredictability in foreign affairs is driving the perception that the US is less of an ally to the EU than it was before. This was reaffirmed by the president's comments about Washington buying Greenland in service of US national security, an idea criticised by the European capitals. [1, 2, 3, 4, 5]

### Far-right enabler

While Trump did not invite representatives of the EU executive to his inauguration (in line with the usual protocol), the guest list included some of the key far-right and populist European politicians – including Victor Orbán, Giorgia Meloni, Mateusz Morawiecki and Éric Zemmour. This comes after backlash to Musk's endorsement of German far-right AfD and his fascist salutes during the inauguration speech. [1, 2, 3, 4]

### Meloni, the Trump whisperer

The Italian prime minister is a favourite of both Trump and Musk, despite their differences on Ukraine. The ideological convergence positions her as a bridge between Washington and Brussels. [1, 2, 3, 4, 5]

### Poland to the rescue

The Franco-German leadership vacuum left in the EU also emboldens a more traditional US ally, Poland, to gain favour with Trump. Though the current government is no longer aligned with Trump ideologically, Warsaw offers increased defence spending and cooperation in the energy sector. The May presidential election will shape how this can be achieved. [1, 2, 3, 4]