

50th Anniversary events

Programmes overview

Please kindly note that the scheduling and timings are subject to change.



Thursday 7 May 2026

Opening Ceremony | *By invitation only*

The European University Institute (EUI) welcomed its first 70 researchers in 1976. Over the past five decades, it has grown into a thriving community shaping Europe's future through bold, (inter)disciplinary research and teaching, and public engagement. This anniversary is a chance to celebrate the people and ideas that have made the EUI a pillar of European scholarship and dialogue. We look back on our history and achievements, and we look ahead to lay foundations for the future of the social sciences and humanities and their capacity to create public value.

Location: Zubin Mehta Hall, Teatro del Maggio Musicale Fiorentino

09:00 – 10:30	<i>Arrivals and registration</i> <i>EUI stands will be in the foyer of the Teatro del Maggio Musicale Fiorentino</i>
Master of Ceremonies: Maria Tadeo , Head of EU News and Correspondent, Euronews	
10:30 – 11:00	Interactive activities
11:00 – 11:30	Institutional welcome and speech “EUI 2076: 50 years ahead”
11:30 – 12:00	Keynote address by a high-level personality
12:00 – 13:00	An audience with the Presidents of the European Union
13:00 – 13:10	Closing

Ministerial Summit | *By invitation only*

“Universities for the future. Higher education and research in re-imagining Europe”

A closed-door summit of the highest political profile. Delegates and Ministers of Education and Research, alongside selected Foreign Ministers from the Institute's 24 Contracting States and European Commissioners, gather to discuss the role of universities in securing Europe's future amidst a multitude of pressing issues. The Ministerial Summit continues with the spring session of the EUI's High Council Meeting in which the delegates of the 24 member states and representatives of the European institutions meet to discuss items relating to the EUI's governance and strategic development.

Location: Badia Fiesolana, EUI

Beyond the EUI: 50 years of alumni engagement | *Public event with registration*

The EUI Alumni Forum will begin with a welcome coffee and tea, offering participants an opportunity to gather and reconnect. This will be followed by the EUI Alumni Association Conference, providing a space for reflection and exchange on alumni engagement. After a short break, the afternoon will continue with the Development and External Relations Service (DEXT) Alumni Keynote addresses. The programme will conclude with a guided visit of OPEN, the exhibition at palazzo Buontalenti ahead of its official opening.

Location: Rosa Parks Meeting Room (BTC539), Palazzo Buontalenti, EUI

14:00 – 18:00	EUI Alumni Association Annual Conference and guided preview of the OPEN exhibition
18:00 – 20:00	EUI Alumni podium

OPEN: Contemporary art exhibition at Palazzo Buontalenti | *Public event with registration*

OPEN: A new civic space for art and science is a unique contemporary art exhibition celebrating the 50th anniversary of the European University Institute. Opening for the very first time to the city of Florence, the newly renovated spaces of Palazzo Buontalenti will be transformed into a vibrant civic space where contemporary art meets academic research. Curated by Sergio Risaliti and Stefania Rispoli and inspired by the academic research of Johanna Gautier-Morin, the exhibition features work by an exceptional lineup of contemporary artists: Agnieszka Polska, Berinde De Bruyckere, Eglé Budvytyté, Elena Mazzi, Leone Contini, and Riccardo Previdi.

Location: Palazzo Buontalenti, EUI (Entrance: Via Cavour 57 | Exit: Via Cavour 53)

20:00	Doors open and welcome reception Guests are welcomed into the wonderful Buontalenti Courtyard for a reception featuring local food and drinks provided by our partners. The evening begins with an immersive atmosphere,
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	featuring architectural projections on the historic facades directed by Vincenzo Capalbo and Sergio Risaliti, and a sound garden broadcasting the Inno alla Pace by Maestro Andrea Portera, accompanied by the opening words of Padre Bernardo, Abbott of San Miniato al Monte.
21:00 <i>tbc</i>	Official ribbon-cutting The official inauguration ceremony takes place with local authorities, EUI Governance, artists, curators, and the Agenzia del Demanio. Following the ceremony, the authorities and the delegation will rejoin the rest of the public in the Buontalenti Courtyard.
21:30 <i>tbc</i>	A Florentine welcome All present guests will gather in the central courtyard to be greeted by the traditional Florentine Chiarine and Sbandieratori (flag-throwers), coordinated by the Ceremonial Office of Palazzo Vecchio.
22:30	"The fountain of governance" An immersive 15-minute theatrical performance by EUI scholars. Staged around the central fountain, the play creatively blends history and modern politics, featuring an engaging dialogue between Lorenzo de' Medici and a modern Technocrat, with dynamic interactions among the audience.

Friday 8 May 2026

EUIdeas: The power of knowledge | *Public event with registration*

The Power of Knowledge will be the guiding theme of this anniversary: a coherent set of conversations that opens the Institute to the world, and that contributes to Reimagining Europe by identifying how knowledge can help renew Europe's institutions, strengthen cohesion, and orient collective choices in uncertain times.

Inspired by the major crises and structural challenges of our time, democracy, the rule of law, humanitarian emergencies, environmental issues, crisis of experts, academic freedom, transformations in law and governance, the 50th anniversary will be more than a celebration of our past: it will foster a festival-like atmosphere and a sense of participation of attendees, while looking ahead to the future role of universities as key institutions for research, digital transformation, academic freedom, public trust and evolving societal expectations, showing how universities, and the EUI in particular, can deploy knowledge to illuminate problems, inform public debate, and contribute intellectually to the future of our societies.

Location: Badia Fiesolana, EUI

08:00 – 09:30	<i>Registration, walk-in and welcome coffee</i>		
09:30 – 10:30 Refectory	Keynote lecture "Academic freedom: Rights, resilience and responsibilities 50 years on" Siofra O'Leary , Visiting Professor, College of Europe, and Former President, European Court of Human Rights, EUI Alumna Joseph H. H. Weiler , European Union Jean Monnet Chair, New York University School of Law, and Senior Fellow, Harvard (10 minutes)		
10:40 – 11:40	Refectory	Theatre	Sala Buonsanti
	The power of embodied knowledge: Reimagining peace and justice through a reenactment This session revisits the idea of "no peace without justice," central to European foreign policy in the late 1990s–2010s. Participants will reenact elements of a real ICC case to experience how peace and justice interact. Reflections on Ukraine, Gaza, Sudan, and Venezuela will highlight the challenges and prospects of pursuing justice in a geopolitically contested world.	Strategic knowledge: European security in a turbulent world Europe faces a turbulent geopolitical landscape marked by great-power tensions, weakened multilateral institutions, and global threats. As the old security order collapses, decisions made now will shape the future for decades. This roundtable examines power, knowledge, and security: who holds power, how hard and soft power interact, how escalation can be avoided, and how science diplomacy can operate amid critical technologies and contested institutions.	European history changes everything – A power of knowledge quiz The panel examines the central role of history in the EUI's founding vision and in today's European debates. Historians and researchers will engage the audience in a quiz-style discussion on how narratives of WWII, the Cold War, fascism and anti-fascism, empires and revolutions shape current politics. The interactive activity explores how Europe's past is used to understand present, contest the idea of Europe itself, and influence our sense of the future.
11:40 – 12:10	<i>Break</i>		
12:10 – 13:10	Refectory	Theatre	Sala Buonsanti
	Who decides on our climate? The power of	The European social model: Knowledge for a new era	The power of culture in reimagining Europe

	<p>knowledge in environmental governance</p> <p>This debate examines whether expert knowledge should guide or limit democratic decision-making in climate and energy governance. Although climate science, modelling, law, and policy expertise drive climate action, knowledge alone does not equal power and remains entangled with politics and social legitimacy. The session explores how expertise is produced, contested, and used in shaping Europe's climate transition.</p>	<p>President Trump's hard-right shift has exposed the deep crisis of the rules-based global order, pushing the EU to rethink sovereignty in trade, finance, technology, and especially security. This session examines Europe's longstanding effort to balance prosperity, democracy, and social cohesion amid geopolitical turmoil, ageing societies, and technological change. It explores whether Europe can forge a new compromise between economic integration and welfare legitimacy.</p>	<p>This conversation explores the role of culture in shaping Europe's future and its place in the university of tomorrow. While culture is often invoked as a unifying force, academic research shows its broader artistic, economic, sociopolitical, and geopolitical value—yet it remains marginal in long-term R&D debates. Speakers will drive a discussion on cultural policy, identity, and the EU's global role, followed by an interactive debate.</p>
13:10 – 14:30	<i>Lunch</i>		
14:30 – 15:20 Refectory	<p>Plenary session: “Neither mirrors nor models? Universities and contemporary society” Roxana Mînzatu, Executive Vice-President for Social Rights and Skills, Quality Jobs and Preparedness, European Commission</p>		
15:30 – 16:30	<p>Refectory</p> <p>The power of evidence for policy</p> <p>In a conversational format, the session examines how knowledge is translated, what evidence literacy is required, and how academic perspectives align with EU institutional practice, with input from an EU official. Examples span institutional science-for-policy work, academic policy advice, co-creation of data-driven tools.</p>	<p>Theatre</p> <p>Knowledge at the border: Rethinking migration governance in a changing Europe</p> <p>This session presents three research contributions on borders and security, access to rights, and refuge and protection. Speakers will offer interactive reflections suited to a non-specialist audience.</p>	<p>Sala Buonsanti</p> <p>Citizen power: How research shapes European democracy</p> <p>This debate critically examines the “power of knowledge” by exploring how recent EUI work on transnational democracy shapes our ability to imagine a “citizen-powered Europe.” Participants will share their individual and collective insights, questioning how action-research can meaningfully contribute to democratic renewal and resilience across European societies.</p>
	16:30 – 17:00	<i>Break</i>	
17:00 - 18:00	<p>Refectory</p> <p>Empowering diplomats: The power of Ideas in negotiations</p> <p>This session explores how diplomats generate and use actionable ideas even without hard power, drawing on practices within the UN, EU, and Red Cross systems. How diplomatic knowledge grows through education and field experience? How academic concepts can empower diplomats? How field-driven insights reshape research? The session highlights how transformative ideas can meaningfully support vulnerable populations in crises.</p>	<p>Theatre</p> <p>The future of the transatlantic relationship: Knowledge, power and strategic autonomy</p> <p>An unpredictable United States (US) administration, wars at the borders of the European Union (EU), and (unprecedented) instrumentalization of defense for domestic purposes have put the question of Transatlantic and European security back to the top of the political agenda. Politicians, pundits, and broader publics draw very different lessons from these dynamics. During this event, American and European youth debate the various stakes, as well as hopes and fears they associate with the future political developments in the realm of security.</p>	<p>Sala Buonsanti</p> <p>AI and the future of knowledge</p> <p>AI and the Future of Knowledge is an interactive debate on the future of academic knowledge in the context of the 50th anniversary of the EUI. Building on an innovative approach, it will tackle specific claims (propositions) which are always approached from two conflicting perspectives. The audience then continuously votes on which proposition they think is right.</p>
	18:10 – 19:00 Refectory	<p>Closing plenary and closing remarks “Europe 2076” – Organised by EUI Researchers</p> <p>The researcher-led closing plenary Europe 2076 draws on the insights emerging from the day's parallel sessions to offer a collective, forward-looking reflection on the role of knowledge in shaping Europe's next 50 years. Conceived as a generational conversation to mark the EUI's</p>	

	50th anniversary, the session moves beyond prediction to ask what institutional and intellectual conditions will be needed for Europe to remain democratic, legitimate, and resilient. Structured around a limited set of guiding questions - on universities, research infrastructures, academic freedom, and the future of the European project - it combines a short video, an open plenary discussion, and a symbolic participatory element, with the aim of distilling the day's conversations into clear, collective insights to carry forward.
19:00 – 22:00	<i>Tasting of local products</i>
19:30 – 20:00	<i>Performance by EUI Choir</i>

Saturday 9 May 2026

Open Day

To mark Europe Day and celebrate the European University Institute's 50th anniversary, the Historical Archives opens its doors to the public on 9 May 2026 for its annual Open Day. Visitors can join guided tours of the villa, gardens, and archival deposits, discovering the history of the Salviati residence and the records of European integration preserved in Florence. The programme features document readings, audiovisual presentations, an exhibit from the SAGA sustainable archives project, historical reenactments, musical performances by ensembles from the Scuola di Musica di Fiesole and the Accademia del Maggio Musicale Fiorentino, plus circus and storytelling activities and entertainment for all ages.

Location: Villa Salviati, EUI

Entry is free; tour registration is required prior the event through the FAI website, available from mid-April.

Access: Pedestrian access only at the gates on Via Bolognese 156 and Via Faentina 261. A shuttle service will run from the AT bus stop 'Fermata Salviati FS' to the Villa. Visitors bearing a disabled parking permit may enter the car park at Via Salviati 3b.

Additional activities

	<p><u>Organised by the Department of Economics and the Department of History</u> "Circolazione dei saperi. Tra storia, scienza ed economia" Evento in collaborazione with Museo Galileo <i>Location: Museo Galileo, Sala Righini Bonelli (Piazza dei Giudici 1, 50122 Firenze FI)</i></p> <p>In occasione del cinquantesimo anniversario dell'Istituto Universitario Europeo, un evento interdisciplinare per discutere l'evoluzione e la circolazione dei saperi tra storia, scienza ed economia, con interventi di docenti dei Dipartimenti di Storia e di Economia dell'EUI e di ricercatrici del Museo Galileo. L'evento si terrà in lingua italiana. Ingresso libero fino a esaurimento posti; prenotazione consigliata. Per informazioni e prenotazioni: info@museogalileo.it</p>
14:30 – 17:30	<p><u>Programme:</u> Saluti istituzionali</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Roberto Ferrari (Museo Galileo) - Fabrizia Mealli (EUI) <p>Interventi:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Francesco Drago (EUI), "Scienza e inquisizione nell'Europa della prima età moderna" - Giancarlo Casale (EUI), "L'Europa e gli europei secondo il primo mappamondo a stampa in turco ottomano (1559)" - Giorgio Riello (EUI), "Conoscere le merci, viaggiare per il mondo: il mercante fiorentino Francesco Carletti, c. 1573-1636" - Maddalena Napolitani (Museo Galileo), Zoe Lauri (Museo Galileo), "Risorse e territori nazionali: l'École des Mines di Parigi come laboratorio europeo tra sfide materiali e culturali" - Barbara Rossi (EUI), "Una prospettiva storica sul comportamento dei tassi di interesse nei secoli: 1311-2024" <p>Intervento conclusivo e dibattito</p>
	<p><u>Organised by the Department of Political and Social Sciences</u> SPS Hike <i>Location: Villa Demidoff (Parco Mediceo di Pratolino)</i></p>