

IN-PERSON EVENT

/FUTURE/ GEOECONOMICS & THE C-SUITE 2026

01 OCTOBER, 2026 | BRUSSELS

HILTON GRAND PLACE

Speakers:



Annika Brack
Head of Global
Political Affairs
Hitachi Energy



David O'Sullivan
EU Sanctions Envoy
**European
Commission**



Cynthia Sanfilippo
President
Tiktok Europe



Michael Grady
Chief Economist and
Chief Investment
Officer
Aviva



Per Norén
CEO
Ovzon



Patricia Bader-Johnston
CEO
Earthberries Capital



Alberto Zilio
Head of European
Government Affairs
Ericsson



Hendrik Bourgeois
SVP Public Policy and
Government Affairs
Mastercard

Who Should Attend:

This event is designed for senior business leaders responsible for strategy, growth, finance, operations, and external engagement, including Business Unit and Division Presidents, CFOs, Strategy Officers, M&A Executives, Investor Relations Executives, Chief Economists, Supply Chain Executives, CMOs and Commercial Heads, Corporate Communications Executives, Public Affairs Executives, and Government and Regulatory Affairs Executives.

30 SEPTEMBER - DAY 1 | HILTON GRAND PLACE

8:00 - 17:00 | Member Only Meetings

Eight of our European Councils will meet in private, in Brussels to work through shared business challenges, exchange concrete solutions, and leave with actionable insights on how peers and senior leaders are responding to major research, economic, and policy developments.

1 OCTOBER - DAY 2 | HILTON GRAND PLACE

8:15 - 9:00 | Registration and Networking Reception

Council members convene in a cross-function networking reception at a central Brussels location.

9:00 - 9:20 | Opening & Welcome

Our Managing Director and ESF Center leader welcome Council Members and other senior executives with a brief overview of TCB's perspective on what's ahead for European business. What are the trends impacting the future of Europe and how do we prepare for sustainable business performance?

SPEAKER



Sara Murray
Managing Director, International
The Conference Board

9:20 - 9:45 | Keynote: Why Assessing Geopolitical Risk Matters for Business and What Companies are Doing to Mitigate it

This session looks at how do you prepare the Board, cascade down the organization, implement contingency plans.

SPEAKERS



Claudio Murri
Event Chair, Council Director,
Public Affairs Executives
The Conference Board



Annika Brack
Head of Global Political Affairs
Hitachi Energy

1 OCTOBER - DAY 2 | HILTON GRAND PLACE

9:45 - 10:10 | Panel: The Future of Trade and Investment System and the Value of Deals and Treaties in a World with Eroded Trust

As global trade systems become less predictable, companies must rethink how they approach cross-border investment and partnerships. This session explores how executives are adapting to shifting rules, weakening multilateral frameworks, and increasing political uncertainty, and what this means for long-term investment decisions.

SPEAKERS



Penelope Naas (Moderator)
Senior Vice President and
Director of the Brussels Office
**The German Marshall Fund
of the United States**



Maria Martin-Prat
Permanent Representative
of the European Union to
the WTO
European Commission



Fergal O'Brien
Executive Director
**Irish Business and
Employers Confederation**

10:10 - 10:35 | Panel: Reorganizing Business for a Multipolar, Fragmented World

As geopolitical fragmentation accelerates, companies are being forced to rethink long-established operating models. This keynote will explore how leading organizations are redesigning supply chains, reassessing investment strategies, and responding to rising protectionist pressures, while balancing resilience, competitiveness, and growth.

Drawing on real-world experience, the session will offer a strategic perspective on how executives are making critical decisions about where to invest, operate, and scale in an increasingly complex and uncertain global environment.

SPEAKER



Henrik Larsen (Moderator)
Director Supply Chain Executives Council
The Conference Board

10:40 - 11:10 | Networking Break

1 OCTOBER - DAY 2 | HILTON GRAND PLACE

CHALLENGE 1 NAVIGATING THROUGH A TURBULENT GEOPOLITICAL ENVIRONMENT

Track I

11:10 – 12:30 | Panel: New Geofinancial Scenarios

Geopolitical factors are reshaping global financial markets. This session explores the financial side of geoeconomics, analyzing how geopolitical objectives interact with new forms of digital finance and affect the global economy.

Panelists will discuss the future of money, the international role of dominant currencies, how different jurisdictions are approaching these issues, and what it all means for Europe.

SPEAKERS



Alejandro Fiorito
(Moderator)
Economist
The Conference Board



Michael Grady
Chief Economist and
Chief Investment Officer
Aviva



Cinzia Alcidi
Senior Research Fellow
Centre for European
Policy Studies



Hendrik Bourgeois
Senior Vice President Public
Policy and Government Affairs
Mastercard

Track II

11:10 – 12:30 | Panel: Challenging the G2 Narrative

The main objective of this session is to explore whether there are alternatives to the perceived inevitable scenario, which depicts the outcome of the current geopolitical tension as a world dominated by two blocks lead by the USA and China, where other countries or regional bodies will have no other choice but to align with either one of these two blocks.

The key themes that will be addressed in this panel are:

- a) China: a force of stabilization or destabilization?
- b) Emerging markets vs. Emerging power brokers (India, Qatar, Saudi Arabia)
- c) Are mature economies doomed? (Japan/ EU)
- d) Does investing in Africa make sense?

SPEAKERS



Prof. Luis Simón (Moderator)
Director of the Centre for
Security Diplomacy and
Strategy
CSDS



Dr. Bharat Vagadia
Executive Director Policy and
Regulatory Affairs
Ooredoo Group



Patricia Bader-Johnston
CEO
Earthberries Capital



Max Zenglein
Economy, Strategy,
and Finance Center
Leader, Asia
The Conference Board

1 OCTOBER - DAY 2 | HILTON GRAND PLACE

12:30 - 13:30 | Networking Lunch

13:30 - 13:50 | Keynote: European Sanctions Strategy

Sanctions have become a central instrument of geopolitical and economic policy, with direct and often immediate implications for business operations. This session will provide insight into the strategic intent, direction of travel, and expected evolution of EU sanctions frameworks.

It will explore how policymakers are balancing political objectives with economic impact, what companies should anticipate in terms of enforcement and scope, and how businesses can better align their compliance and risk strategies with an increasingly complex and dynamic sanctions environment.

SPEAKER



David O'Sullivan
EU Sanctions Envoy
European Commission

13:50 - 13:55 | "Talk and walk" time



1 OCTOBER - DAY 2 | HILTON GRAND PLACE

CHALLENGE 2 OPERATING IN A CONFLICT-DRIVEN ECONOMY

Track I

13:55 – 15:15 | Panel: Civil Defense and How to Navigate as a Business Company in Today's Complex World

This panel explores:

- a) How investment in security and defence can benefit the wider economy
- b) Cybersecurity as a critical business issue
- c) Space as the next battlefield

SPEAKERS



Josephine Edwall Bjorklund (Moderator)
Director Corporate Communications
Strategy Council
The Conference Board



Per Norén
CEO
Ovzon

Track II

13:55 – 15:15 | Panel: Weaponizing Resources or the Bottlenecks that Will Constrain Growth

Interdependence was long seen as a risk-free route to higher productivity and economic growth, but governments are now weaponizing control over commodities, technology and infrastructure.

The panelists will discuss whether this is creating a growing trade-off between productivity and security, particularly for Europe, which is highly globally integrated, has limited natural resources, and is highly dependent on US digital technology.

SPEAKERS



Simon Tilford (Moderator)
Director, Economists and
Strategy Council
The Conference Board



Stephen Burnside
Global Head
Cirium Ascend



Christian Odendhal
European
Economics Editor
The Economist



Eric Peeters
Division CEO
Construction, Group
EC Member
Bekaert

1 OCTOBER - DAY 2 | HILTON GRAND PLACE

15:15 - 15:40 | Break and Back to Plenary

15:40 - 16:00 | Workshop: Report from Breakout Sessions

SPEAKERS



Konstantinos Panitsas
Economist
The Conference Board



Alejandro Fiorito
Economist
The Conference Board



Matei Farcas
Economic Research
Assistant
The Conference Board



Freddie Burder
Associate Director, Member
Engagement, ESF Center
Europe
The Conference Board

16:00 - 16:10 | Member Awards

16:10 - 16:40 | Panel: The Strained Dialogue between Policymakers and Business

As trust between governments and businesses becomes more fragile, companies must navigate increasingly complex and sensitive political environments. This session explores how executives are engaging with policymakers, managing reputational risk, and operating effectively amid growing disconnect.

SPEAKERS



Claudio Murri (Moderator)
Event Chair, Council Director,
Public Affairs Executives
The Conference Board



Alberto Zilio
Head of European
Government Affairs
Ericsson



Cynthia Sanfilippo
President Europe
TikTok

16:40 - 17:10 | Keynote: What to Expect from the US Mid-term Elections Next Month?

Political developments in the United States continue to have global implications for trade, regulation, and economic policy. This session provides a business-focused perspective on potential scenarios and how companies should prepare for policy shifts and continued uncertainty.



1 OCTOBER - DAY 2 | HILTON GRAND PLACE

17:10 - 17:20 | Closing Remarks

The closing session reflects on the key insights from the day, reinforcing the need for resilience, adaptability, and informed decision-making in an increasingly unpredictable global environment.



Claudio Murri (Moderator)
Event Chair, Council Director,
Public Affairs Executives
[The Conference Board](#)



Sara Murray
Managing Director, International
[The Conference Board](#)

17:20 - 17:45 | Networking Cocktail & Close