

GLOBSEC FORUM 2026

(draft topical framework as of March 2026)

GLOBSEC FORUM | 21 – 23 May 2026 | Prague, Czechia

*Hosted under the auspices of the **President of Czechia, Petr Pavel***

The Global Systemic Transformation: 21st-Century Solutions to 21st-Century Challenges

Europe stands at a critical inflection point. Russia's war against Ukraine, an escalating Iran-US-Israel war that has drawn numerous countries across the Middle East into a widening regional conflict, and rising tensions in the Indo-Pacific underscore a global system under profound strain. Institutions designed for a more stable era are increasingly ill-suited to today's challenges, from AI and climate security to hybrid warfare and technological competition. **The international order is not simply evolving; it is fracturing.** In this context, Europe has an opportunity to contribute to the emergence of a new global order by clarifying what it stands for, how it acts, and with whom it partners across the Indo-Pacific, the Middle East, and beyond.

The 21st edition of the GLOBSEC Forum convenes in Prague in 2026 under the theme **“The Global Systemic Transformation”**, addressing a defining question of our time: ***how Europe can play a constructive role in a world marked by fragmentation, power competition, and accelerating risk?*** Over three days, world leaders, innovators, defence chiefs, thought leaders and industry pioneers will move beyond diagnosis to delivery, translating commitments on defence, competitiveness, resilience, and partnerships into concrete action.

Why Prague? For over two decades, the GLOBSEC Forum has served as one of Europe's premier platforms for hard conversations about security and stability. The 21st edition takes place in the heart of Europe, a region that understands viscerally what's at stake when the rules-based order fractures.

GLOBSEC Forum 2026 comes at a moment of reckoning. Allies are increasing defence spending, yet Europe's defence industrial base remains constrained by slow procurement, fragmented markets, and systems built for an era of peace. Ukraine has shown that time is no longer a strategic luxury. Europe now operates in a grey zone between peace and war, and its institutions are struggling to keep pace.

Debates over Europe's technology sovereignty and competitiveness are equally complex and reflect a similar underlying challenge: how to strengthen its capacity to act, industrially, technologically, and regulatorily, while remaining an open and committed partner rather than retreating into isolation or protectionism. This pursuit of open strategic autonomy is not limited to economics: it underpins Europe's broader engagement with the United States and other partners across security, defence, and global cooperation. At the heart of these questions is what a stronger transatlantic relationship should look like. European autonomy need not be a rejection of that bond, but one of its foundations. **The task ahead is to make Europe a more capable and reliable partner for the United States and other like-minded countries.**

At the same time, Europe must confront deeper structural questions. Can flexible formats or a two-speed Europe enhance decision-making? How to ensure enlargement strengthens rather than dilutes cohesion? How does Europe define itself as a strategic actor, as its own sphere of influence rather than a space shaped primarily by others? These debates unfold against a far more dangerous backdrop. Arms-control regimes are eroding, new non-proliferation frameworks are absent, and a security vacuum is emerging in global and regional treaties that once imposed shared restraints. The Iran-US-Israel war has sharpened these concerns further, raising urgent questions about nuclear escalation risks, the future of non-proliferation norms, and the stability of energy and trade routes that Europe depends on. Who sits at the table to address these risks, and on what terms, has become a central strategic issue.

Running in parallel, the **Prague GeoTech Summit** returns for its third edition, serving as a leading platform to explore how fast-moving technologies and new geopolitical pressures are forcing governments and companies to rethink investments, innovation, risk management and the adaptation of alliances and critical infrastructure in an increasingly uncertain era. The Summit expands the discussion beyond the EU and the United States to engage a broader group of like-minded partners. Selected Forum agenda sessions will be integrated into the Summit, complemented by exclusive side events and high-level closed-door formats.

Together, GLOBSEC Forum 2026 and the Prague GeoTech Summit aim to ground ambition in realism and to explore how Europe can strengthen itself in order to be a better partner in a far more uncertain world. Through open and closed-door sessions, GLOBSEC Forum 2026 aims to serve as a catalyst for actionable solutions. The agenda will be structured around five key thematic clusters:

- 1. Securing Europe: Industry, Resilience and Readiness**
- 2. Ukraine's Path Forward**
- 3. Unlocking Europe's GeoTech Edge**
- 4. The Birth of a New Global Order**
- 5. Driving Europe's Competitive Future**

1. Securing Europe: Industry, Resilience and Readiness

The Central Question: How can Europe build the defence it has promised?

Defence spending is rising across Europe, but money alone won't deliver security. The challenge now is industrial: scaling production, fixing supply chains, integrating capabilities, and doing it all fast enough to matter.

European Defence Industry Capacities

- **Supply Chains & Production:** Securing cross-border supply chains, expanding joint procurement, and scaling production capacity to reduce fragmentation and meet urgent readiness needs
- **Institutional Alignment:** Streamlining EU-NATO frameworks, accelerating decision-making, and optimising financial instruments to deliver capabilities at speed
- **Capability Development:** Expanding high-end systems (including Integrated Air and Missile Defence), linking industrial output to operational needs, enhancing space capabilities, and synchronising Member State readiness for near-term deterrence and long-term preparedness

Arctic Security & the Europeisation of NATO

- **Frozen Frontiers:** Addressing Russia's militarisation of the High North, China's Arctic shipping routes, and the strategic implications of U.S. ambitions in Greenland for alliance cohesion and European security
- **Rebalancing the Alliance:** Adapting NATO command structures as the U.S. shifts posture and reducing European dependence on U.S. defence systems
- **Strategic Autonomy:** Defining the political and institutional mechanisms that allow Europe to assume greater responsibility within NATO without fracturing transatlantic unity

Resilience against Hybrid Threats

- **Critical Infrastructure:** Protecting essential services from hybrid attacks, drones, and sabotage through enhanced resilience measures, regulatory frameworks, public-private cooperation, and addressing illicit networks
- **Cybersecurity:** Securing space and ground infrastructure, leveraging AI for detection and response, strengthening EU cyber governance and cross-border coordination, developing deterrence strategies, and enhancing threat intelligence sharing

- **Societal Resilience:** Preparing citizens for crisis response, strengthening democratic systems against foreign influence and information manipulation, and sharing best practices for civic preparedness across borders

Financing European Defence

- Mobilising public funds effectively to address critical capability gaps.
- Attracting private capital to defence innovation and ensuring venture investment is aligned with operational needs and strategic objectives.

2. Ukraine's Path Forward

The Central Question: What does success for Ukraine actually look like and how do we get there?

By May 2026, the trajectory of Russia's war against Ukraine may be clearer. Whether through military outcome, negotiated settlement, or frozen conflict, Ukraine and Europe must define what they will accept and what they won't.

Peace on Terms Ukraine Can Accept

- Assessing the state of diplomatic efforts, identifying redlines for sustainable peace, and exploring how Europe can strengthen Ukraine's negotiating position
- Addressing security guarantees that prevent future Russian aggression and what would Europe's role be in enforcing them
- Examining economic reconstruction as leverage and opportunity

Cooperation of Defence Industries & Innovation

- Deepening Ukrainian-European defence partnerships to accelerate production.
- Supporting technology transfer, joint development, co-production facilities, and maintenance hubs that enable sustainable readiness

Protection of Ukraine's Forcibly Displaced Children

- Prioritising the return of abducted children and establish mechanisms for family reunification and psychosocial rehabilitation

3. Unlocking Europe's GeoTech Edge

The Central Question: How can Europe close the innovation gap before it becomes permanent?

China invests 100s of billions annually in strategic technologies. The U.S. channels unprecedented resources through the CHIPS Act and Inflation Reduction Act. Even with strong foundations for success in the intelligent age, Europe is punching below its weight in the global tech race. Europe risks falling into a dependency trap where it neither produces critical technologies nor controls access to them.

Semiconductors & Critical Raw Materials

- Securing Europe's semiconductor sovereignty and critical raw materials access by addressing manufacturing gaps, reducing dependencies on Asia and Chinese supply concentration, diversifying supply chains through strategic partnerships, and aligning investments with AI, automotive, energy, and defence demand

Digital Defence & Next-Gen Tech

- Accelerating the adoption of AI, autonomous systems, secure cloud, and battlefield networks by embedding dual-use technologies into capability planning, addressing procurement barriers and fragmented demand, creating pathways for startups, and modernising frameworks for rapid, interoperable digital transformation

Digital Competitiveness & Sovereignty

- Closing Europe's digital gap, balancing domestic capabilities with international partnerships, tracking progress against measurable outcomes, and increasing control while maintaining access to cutting-edge global technologies

Europe's Global Partnerships

- Strengthening Europe's digital partnerships with global partners through co-developed infrastructure, AI networks, and credible collaboration that delivers competitive alternatives

4. The Birth of a New Global Order

The Central Question: How does Europe remain relevant at the dawn of a new global order?

The comfortable post-Cold War order is dead. China and Russia coordinate against Western interests and the reshaping of transatlantic relations is well under way. Europe must build new partnerships, adapt old alliances, and accept that it operates in a multipolar world, not the unipolar one it grew comfortable in.

Future of the Global Order

- Defining Europe's interests in a multipolar world and acting as a proactive player rather than an observer
- Strengthening global governance by empowering middle powers and building cooperative institutions
- Reclaiming Europe's strategic relevance through diversified partnerships and strategies such as the EU Global Gateway

Middle East

- Assessing the immediate humanitarian, energy, and security consequences of the Iran-US-Israel war as it draws the wider region into open conflict - including the threat to the Strait of Hormuz and Europe's exposure to prolonged energy and supply chain disruption
- Exploring the political vacuum created by leadership succession in Iran and its implications for regional dynamics and diplomatic engagement
- Examining whether viable diplomatic frameworks still exist for de-escalation, and what the conflict reveals about the limits of multilateral institutions — including UN Security Council paralysis and the erosion of international law as a constraint on state action
- Identifying pathways toward conflict resolution and the conditions necessary for long-term regional stability

Transatlantic Relations

- Analyse the ongoing reshaping of transatlantic relations, mapping EU-U.S. convergence points and forge pragmatic cooperation on trade, diplomacy, defence and AI while navigating growing strategic divergences

Asia & the Global South

- **Geopolitical Dynamics:** Analysing China's rise and Russia-China partnership's impact on European and Indo-Pacific security, evaluating competition scenarios, and shaping policy amid simultaneous Ukraine-Taiwan crises
- **Defence & Security:** Understanding China's defence modernisation effects on NATO planning, assessing influence over Europe's critical infrastructure and technology, and strengthening Indo-Pacific cooperation

EU Global Gateway

- Accelerating infrastructure, climate, and health projects that demonstrate European reliability
- Building trust-based partnerships with Latin America, Africa, and Asia that counter Chinese and Russian influence
- Proving that values-driven development can compete with no-strings-attached authoritarian models

EU Enlargement

- Rethinking enlargement strategy for today's context, assessing the Growth Plan's conditionality and timelines, and addressing Western Balkans instability and foreign interference

5. Driving Europe's Competitive Future

The Central Question: What needs to happen for Europe to grow quickly enough to fund its ambitions?

Security costs money. Technology requires investment. Resilience demands resources. Without economic dynamism, Europe's geopolitical aspirations are fantasies. The challenge: boost competitiveness while managing the Clean and Just transition.

Trade Relations & Global Geoeconomics

- **U.S.-Europe Dynamics:** Evaluating Trumponomics' impact on global trade, protectionism and multilateralism, examining how America First policies affect economic interdependencies, exploring EU's role in shaping trade rules and post-WTO environment, and assessing the power of and effects on the global trading system and capital flows
- **Global Trade & New Alliances:** Analysing how shifting geopolitical and economic priorities are reshaping global partnerships; identifying priority sectors where Europe requires cooperation to maintain competitiveness, and assessing which regions are critical for Europe's strategic alliances

Competitiveness of the EU

- **Europe's Economic Renewal:** Addressing Europe's productivity and competitiveness gap by strengthening the Single Market as an engine of scale, prioritising strategic sectors where Europe must lead while managing dependencies responsibly, and assessing whether current EU tools are agile enough to deliver simplification and visible economic gains swiftly
- **Financing Europe's Goals:** Driving EU capital market integration to support scaleups and competitiveness by aligning Member State regulations, fostering Capital Markets Union and Savings and Investments Union frameworks, identifying steps to boost cross-border investment flows, and mobilising private investment through public-private collaborations to bridge CEE critical infrastructure gaps

Energy & the Clean and Just Transition

- **Energy Security:** Avoiding new dependencies while continuing reduce reliance on Russian fossil fuels in line with EU targets set for 2027, increase European self-sufficiency, and leveraging the transition for competitiveness and resilience
- **Electricity Infrastructure:** Strengthening grids for electrification and renewables, mobilising investment and permitting reforms to close the €584B gap, and enhancing resilience against climate, cyber, and geopolitical shocks
- **Industry:** Aligning the Clean Industrial Deal, Net-Zero Industry Act, and CRM policies with competitiveness, translating policies into industrial opportunities and market leadership, and addressing skills and supply chain gaps
- **Nuclear Energy:** Expanding nuclear capacity amid global competition, overcoming financing and regulatory barriers, and promoting innovation and safe waste management as a low-carbon pillar

Europe's Health Security

- Closing preparedness gaps revealed by COVID-19, strengthening surveillance and rapid response for emerging threats, embedding health security and supply chains as a permanent resilience pillar alongside defence and digital preparedness, and institutionalising crisis lessons