

Eu-SPRI Conference 9-11 June 2027, The Hague, The Netherlands



Call for Tracks and Special Sessions

In 2027 the TNO VECTOR Centre for Societal Innovation and Strategy celebrates its 5th anniversary by hosting the Eu-SPRI Annual Conference. The conference will take place in the facilities of Leiden University at the Windhaven Campus in the Hague from 9 to 11 June 2027. It will be preceded by the 5th Anniversary of the TNO VECTOR Symposium and the EU-SPRI Early Career Event on 8 June. The VECTOR Symposium is oriented to host dialogues with policymakers on innovation-related issues. This offers an opportunity for conference participants to meet and discuss Dutch policymakers dealing with innovation policy and strategy during the afternoon of June 8th.

The Eu-SPRI2027 conference theme is **Stepping up innovation while balancing values, endogenous capabilities, and geopolitical risks**. We are now welcoming researchers and practitioners to submit proposals for tracks and special (stand-alone) sessions.

Conference Overarching Theme

The global order is changing before our eyes. Great powers are vying for influence, conflicts are straining international relations, and the struggle for resources, trade routes, territory and technology leadership is extending from land to sea—and even into space. European policy is steering hard to face the new reality of a world in flux where geopolitical power is strongly influenced by technology and innovation power.

During the last 15 years Europe focused largely on creating capabilities, industrial and innovation leadership and a regulatory framework to face the grand societal challenges. This was intended to create solutions that would be brought to the world creating new technologies and new value chains underpinned by global innovation networks. This vision, inspired by a long-term future of Europe, was called into question by recent influential policy reports that indicated that Europe has starkly fall behind in several key competitive fields. This has been compounded with the recent military conflicts at Europe's eastern border and in the Middle East, the efforts to dominate supply chains and use them as levers for geopolitical power, and the contestation of well-established alliances, to just mention the most salient factors. That brings to the forefront critical European dependencies in areas such as energy, digital technologies and services, defence and security. This new reality calls for strengthening sovereignty, autonomy, competitiveness and resilience across several domains that support social life and economic activity in Europe. Such challenges require to balance the long-term vision of a democratic, inclusive and sustainable Europe with short terms actions that support security and competitiveness.

There is broad agreement that innovation of all kinds is to play a major role in bringing about change on institutional structures, culture, economic organisation and technological capabilities. But pacing up innovation requires not only increasing investments in R&D or accelerating technological progress.

It also needs reconsidering the direction, organisation and governance of innovation processes, the capabilities needed, and the values and interest that change is expected to serve. Europe faces a set of interdependent tensions, while pursuing technological sovereignty and strategic autonomy. Innovation policy must consider the benefits of international cooperation, open innovation and global value chains. Likewise, further developing endogenous technological, institutional and organisational capabilities requires engaging diverse actors with conflicting values, and applying new approaches to policy coordination, experimentation and learning.

These tensions pose fundamental questions on the current capacity of existing innovation systems and policy frameworks to face an increasingly uncertain and contested global context. They also challenge established assumptions about the relationships between technological progress, economic competitiveness and societal well-being. Addressing them calls for a new understanding of how innovation emerges and diffuses, how actors and institutions can best develop new capabilities, how transformative change can be steered, and how the systemic risks and opportunities of emerging technologies can be governed.

Against this context, the conference invites contributions examining how science, technology and innovation policy research can help Europe and other regions navigate these challenges. Particular attention is given to the relationships between innovation, competitiveness and strategic autonomy; the dynamics of innovation ecosystems and endogenous capability development; transformative and mission-oriented innovation policies; the governance of emerging technologies and their societal implications; and new analytical approaches, methods and evidence for informing science, technology and innovation policy.

The overarching theme of the conference, ***Stepping up innovation while balancing values, endogenous capabilities, and geopolitical risks***, provides a common framework for exploring these questions. It invites critical reflection on how innovation can be accelerated and directed while navigating competing societal objectives, strengthening the capacities of organisations, regions and nations to innovate, and responding to the uncertainties and risks arising from geopolitical and technological change.

Conference themes

Innovation, Strategic Autonomy and Global Challenges: This theme aims to address how science, technology and innovation policies reconcile economic competitiveness, geopolitical security, environmental sustainability and societal well-being. Topics examples:

- European technological sovereignty
- Critical supply chains and control points
- R&I investment gaps
- Green, digital and defence technologies
- Dual-use innovation
- Competing societal values
- Global risks and uncertainty

Innovation Ecosystems, Knowledge Dynamics and Societal Transformation: This theme is geared to explore the role played by actors, institutions, networks and knowledge processes shaping innovation, and how these influence societal transformations at organisational, regional and international levels. Topics examples:

- Innovation ecosystem actors
- Knowledge creation processes

- Social and technical entrepreneurship
- Social innovation
- Citizen participation
- Organisational capabilities
- Regional innovation systems
- New forms of competition

Transformative Innovation Policy, Missions and Transitions: This theme aims to explore the design and implementation of transformative and mission-oriented policies addressing complex societal challenges, including the difficulties of moving from policy ambitions to systemic change. Topics examples:

- Mission-oriented innovation policy
- Sustainability transitions and policy mixes
- Behavioural additionality
- Socio-technical roadmaps
- Scaling innovation
- Normative and positive policy approaches
- Monitoring, evaluation and policy learning

Governing Emerging Technologies and Digital Transformation: This theme addresses the governance of rapidly evolving technologies, with particular attention to artificial intelligence, regulation, technological risks and the changing relationship between innovation, work and society. Contributions to other technology areas are also welcome. Topics examples:

- AI governance and systemic risks
- Digital regulatory frameworks; cybersecurity
- Digital markets and competition
- AI and automation impact on employment and workforce transitions
- Dual-use technology governance
- Regulatory sandboxes.

New Frontiers in Innovation Policy Research, Methods and Evidence: The theme focuses on advancing the theoretical, methodological and empirical foundations of science, technology and innovation policy research, including new opportunities created by digitalisation and AI. Topics examples:

- Analytical frameworks
- Measurement and indicators
- Digital empirical methods
- Experimental policy evaluation
- AI-assisted research
- Science-policy interfaces
- Participatory research
- Policy dialogues and co-creation

The range of topics included above is wide, these derive from traditional and emerging topics related to the main conference theme. As there might be blind spots, in addition to proposals on this range of topics, we will also consider other relevant suggestions for tracks addressing interdisciplinary dimensions related to policy and governance in the field of knowledge creation and innovation.

Details for Tracks and Special Sessions Preparation

We are inviting proposals for Tracks and Special Sessions addressing any of the issues mentioned in the **Conference Theme** description presented above. The tracks proposed shall consider the following:

- "Tracks" will be composed by several sessions with paper presentations and discussion formats.
- The tracks will address specific topics of interest to the EU-SPRI community.
- Track convenors will be responsible for organising the review of submissions and managing the track sessions. We expect tracks to attract papers for at least one session and can include contributions from organisers.
- "Special Sessions" will include debates, roundtables and policy dialogues as well as other types of session formats that do not involve formal paper presentation.
- To ensure wide and inclusive participation we will strive to apply a restriction of one presentation per person.

Proposals should not exceed 800 words including the title, organisers' details, description of the topic to be addressed and its relevance for the conference. Selected tracks and their descriptions will be included in the Conference Call for Papers. The conference organisers may propose merging track proposals to track convenors. Proposals for Special Sessions should include a description of the proposed format and participants.

We would like to emphasize that tracks/sessions with external guests' participations must be confirmed very early to have any chance of being held at all. In our experience, appointments with guests cannot be made at short notice. Only proposals with clear information about guests will seem plausible to us

Submission of Tracks and Special Sessions proposals

Please submit your proposal **by 18 December 2026** at the latest. Please note that **this deadline will not be extended**. The link to upload your proposed track or special session will be open as of 28th October 2026 in the conference website ([Call for Contributions - EU-SPRI](#)). Tracks organisers will be notified of the acceptance of their proposals prior to the opening of the Call for Papers. We expect the call for papers to be issued by late January 2027.

If you require assistance with the submission of your proposal, please do not hesitate to contact us at euspri2027@tno.nl. Please use the subject line: Assistance Track Proposal