



# Program

# TOCQUEVILLE CONVERSATIONS

7<sup>th</sup> edition

27th and 28th of June 2025

## ***EUROPE'S MOMENT***

*Between the MAGA revolution and Russian revisionism*

Château de Tocqueville, Cotentin, Normandy



## The seventh round of the Tocqueville Conversations is taking place against a stormy backdrop within our democracies and within the international system.

Never before has our Tocqueville initiative seemed as meaningful as today.

Putin's war continues to rage in Ukraine, and the destabilization of Europe remains a long-term objective. Meanwhile, the American Superpower seems tired and willing to partially retreat. The entire set of alliances that made the West strong is being turned upside down by a Trump revolution that seeks to renegotiate the terms of Globalization in favor of the US worker, while questioning the burden of world leadership.

A slow unravelling of the "Pax Americana" had been underway for years. But this time, it's a more radical change of the world as we have known it, with the United States being tempted to withdraw from its role as guarantor of the international order built since 1945. Behind the slogan "America First" stands an American administration, that seems intent to revert, in the name of national interests, to a mixture of isolationism, nationalism and imperial mercantilism. Is that actually the case?

At the same time, the new American leadership has started to put significant pressure on its allies, legitimately pressing them to take more responsibility for their defense, but also delivering a striking criticism of "liberal Europe". The transatlantic relationship is deeply shaken. How far will this go? Will the current rapprochement taking shape between Putin's dictatorship and Trump's United States, lead to the de facto sacrifice of Ukraine as a sovereign state? And will the West survive it? Will Europe step up in time? And might there be some positive outcomes from Trump's attempt to solve America's crisis by resetting the world order?

There are deep seated roots behind Trump's spectacular comeback to power in 2025. His victory was a clear rejection of the model of globalization and the identity politics revolution defended (or tacitly accepted) by the American elites. The rejection of "the system" that fuels this revolt reveals an acute crisis of confidence that has been brewing for years, as we have discussed in our previous Conversations. His "America first" project, meant to reinvigorated American industry and reestablish secure borders, has received a clear mandate from the people.

# Tocqueville Conversations

The extreme left ideology known as wokism has also been resoundingly rejected. But the American conservative counter-revolution, meant to correct the very real errors of previous administrations, is in danger of morphing into a self-destructive revolutionary catharsis which could threaten the mediating institutions and the checks and balances that Tocqueville saw as essential to a healthy democracy. Will the Trumpist revolution, which is unfolding both at home and abroad, also encourage revisionist powers dreaming of overturning the status quo, such as Putin's Russia and Xi's China, up to now kept in check by American deterrence? All are important questions that one cannot ignore. In this volatile context, Europe, caught between Russia's revisionism and the potential loss of American security guarantees, has an appointment with History. Hitherto unpopular, the idea of an autonomous European defense, advocated by France since General De Gaulle, now rallies, at least rhetorically, most of the continent's nations, and even beyond. With America's retreat from its world role, Europeans are realizing that it is now up to them, independently of what happens in America, to stand up forcefully for the security of the continent, while reviving their commitment to citizenship and their nations. As Trump and his predecessors have asked more and more insistently, Europe must build its own hard power. But it must also uphold the fundamental principles of the Free world – freedom, truth, rule of law - and help Ukraine to survive as an independent democracy. Whatever Trump's impact on history, Europe must deliver now, on this urgent matter.

How can we explain the American metamorphosis? What are the deep-rooted political and ideological forces behind it ? Will they gain track in Europe, where similar democratic crises of trust are plaguing our societies? Why has Trumpist America decided that conservatism can no longer go hand in hand with Post WWII liberalism, is America on its way to emulating Viktor Orban's "illiberal democracy"? Might America be furtively renouncing the checks and balances of its founding project? Or are there deep resources with the American regime that will make illiberal democracy unworkable there? What part do the major tech oligarchs play in the new dynamic of American politics and with what consequences? Will the Trumpist American experiment destabilize Europe or will Europe find enough internal cohesion to build a future of its own devising? While Putin still has Ukraine in his sights and is waging a hybrid war against the West, what kind of threat does Russia pose to our democracies? What concrete steps should Europe take to rearm quickly and become capable of defending our continent and values? How should Europeans respond from an economical, technological, military and political perspective? And how can we support Ukraine, the strongest bulwark against Putin?

Last year, we called on citizens to wake up. Today, it's up to both our politicians and our societies to show boldness, inventiveness and leadership in rearming and renewing our democracies.



Laure Mandeville

Jean-Guillaume de Tocqueville

A handwritten signature in blue ink, appearing to read 'Laure Mandeville'. The signature is fluid and cursive, with a long horizontal stroke extending from the bottom.

A handwritten signature in blue ink, appearing to read 'JG de Tocqueville'. The signature is stylized and cursive, with a prominent 'J' and 'G'.

Friday,  
June 27<sup>th</sup>

# EUROPE FACING A NEW WORLD

10:30 – 11h00

## Welcome

**Jean-Guillaume de Tocqueville**, President of the Tocqueville Foundation  
**Laure Mandeville**, Senior Reporter, Le Figaro  
**Hervé Morin**, President of the Normandie Region

11h00 – 11h30

## Conversations Opening

**Mirjana Spoljaric**, President of the International Committee of the Red Cross (ICRC)

11h30 – 11h50

## Keynote speaker

**Michel Barnier**, Former French Prime Minister

11h50 – 13h00

## Panel 1 - Europe and the end of the Pax Americana

*A new world is emerging, marked by Russian and Chinese revisionism, and a Trumpist geopolitical earthquake that is shaking the transatlantic relationship and other traditional democratic alliances, while seeking to develop a new relationship with Russia, in spite of its brutal aggression against Ukraine.*

*What set of actions, retreats and strategic blunders got us into this geopolitical revolution? What will be the scope and significance of this major shake-up? What consequences will it have for the future of NATO and Article 5? What will be left of the transatlantic relationship? Are we going to see the beginnings of a new Yalta? How can we read the “American First” foreign policy and its impact on Europe? Is it a 19th-century version of national imperialism, with a return to spheres of influence, a purely transactional and mercantilist national egoism that implies a renunciation of America's role as world policeman and defender of democratic values? Will China and Russia reap the rewards of this resounding retreat, if it is confirmed?*

**Moderator: Jean Sylvestre Mongrenier**, Research Fellow at the Thomas More Institute and Associate Professor of Geography and Geopolitics

**Rajmund Andrzejczak**, Former Chief of the General Staff of the Polish Armed Forces

**Nicolas Baverez**, Historian, economist, and essayist

**Douglas Lute**, Lt. Gen. (Ret.), Former Ambassador to Nato, USA

**Dan Twining**, President of the International Republican Institute

13h00 – 14h15

## Lunch



14h15– 14h20

## Address from Elissa Slotkin, US Senator

14h20 – 15h30

## Panel 2 - Where is Trump taking America?

*This panel will aim to explain the political and ideological origins of the American metamorphosis: What does Trump want? And beyond Trump, what are the deep roots of this American revolution? What were the processes and mistakes that drove the American people to choose Trump as their champion against the political elites?*

*Beyond the national-conservative pendulum aimed at thwarting the woke revolution and the effects of globalization, could the United States go off the democratic rails? Are we witnessing a MAGA movement likely to destroy the American political system and the international system of which America was the pivot?*

*And if so, why? Are we headed, as some assert, for an “Orbanization” or worse, a “Putinization” of America (the coarse language, the disdain for truth, the brutality of methods, the questioning of judicial and media checks and balances...). Or is it something else?*

**Moderator: Laure Mandeville**, senior reporter at Le Figaro

**Mathieu Bock Côté**, Essayist and editorialist at CNews

**Donna Brazile**, Former Chair of the Democratic National Committee

**Christopher Caldwell**, Journalist and Essayist

**Joshua Mitchell**, Professor of Political Theory, Georgetown University

15h30 – 15h50

## Keynote speaker

**Benjamin Haddad**, Minister for European Affairs of France

15h50 – 16h15

## 4 questions to Chris Coons, US Senator

16h15 – 17h30

## Panel 3 - Putin, Xi, and other threats facing Europe?

*We will discuss the imperial and criminal nature of the Russian regime and Putin’s hybrid war to destabilize European democracies and instrumentalize their divisions. The nature of the China-Russia relationship and China’s policy towards Europe, the anti-Western coalition which aligns Moscow Beijing, Teheran and Pyongyang, as well as the mysterious connections between Russian and Islamic messianism will be examined.*

**Moderator: Jacques Rupnik**, French political scientist

**Anne Marie Brady**, Professor of Political Science at the University of Canterbury, New Zealand

**Oleg Dunda**, Member of Parliament, Ukraine

**Bernard Emié**, Former head of DGSE, France

**Benjamin Haddad**, Minister for European Affairs of France

17h30 – 18h00

## Break

18h00 – 19h00

## Panel 4- Musk, the Tech oligarchy and the impact on Europe

*For the last two decades, the Tech world has played an increasingly central role in America. The increasing pace of technological breakthroughs has accelerated the trend, but with Trump's second presidency, the shift has become seismic. A significant part of the Tech oligarchs has migrated to the right and taken on a direct role in Trumpian politics, shaking up the whole political system as well as the geopolitical chess-board. We will look at their goals, the extent of their role on "planet Trump" and the ideological dynamics behind this group : Libertarianism, post-democratic temptation (Dark Enlightenment), technological hubris.. We will look into the Trump Musk quarrel and the underlying contradictions between the Maga movement and the Tech oligarchs, as well as the Tech's own divisions*

**Moderator: Jeff Gedmin**, President of Middle Eastern Broadcasting Networks

**Pascal Bruckner**, French public intellectual and essayist

**Joel Kotkin**, Professor at Chapman University, USA

**Mathias Risse**, Director of the Carr-Ryan Center for Human Rights, Harvard University

19h00 – 20h00

## Panel 5 - The future of European security and International Law: the test of Ukraine

*The security and the legal foundations of our continent (and the world) are at stake in Ukraine. Will law prevail or will might make right? How can we help defend and rebuild Ukraine, so that it becomes an integral part of the European project and a cornerstone of European defense against revisionist Russia? Can there be real peace without justice in Ukraine? Why is the question of Russia's war crimes so important? Can we think through this question of law, in relation to the Middle Eastern conflict?*

**Moderator: Constantin Sigov**, Professor of philosophy, Mohyla Academy, Ukraine

**Andrea Bianchi**, Professor of international law at the Graduate Institute of International and Development studies, Switzerland

**Pavel Fischer**, President of the Committee of Foreign Affairs of the Senate, Czech Republic

**Oleksandra Matviichuk**, Nobel Peace Prize, Human rights lawyer, Center for Civil Liberties, Ukraine

**Kenneth Roth** Professor and former executive director of Human Rights Watch

20h00 – 22h00

## Dinner

Saturday,  
June 28<sup>th</sup>

09h00- 09h30

# EUROPE : THE URGENCY TO ACT

## Keynote speaker

**Axel Fortin-Larivière**, Vice-President Manche Department

**Andrius Kubilius**, Commissioner Defense and Space, European Commission

09h30- 10h45

## Panel 1 - What Europe do we want?

### The question of power and values

*What is Europe? What does it want to be and to defend? What system of values and borders? What should we change to take over the defense of our continent and support Ukraine? How should we redefine our relationships? What future for Nato? How to articulate the geopolitical question and the internal challenges? Will we be able to defend our civilization, mores and democratic model if our political crises persist? Can our Christian roots be of help to rebuild our "liquid" societies? How do we answer the key challenges of mass immigration which destabilizes European societies and seems likely to trigger a massive Trump like populist earthquake if it is not addressed more effectively?*

**Keynote speaker:** **Bernard Cazeneuve** Former French Prime Minister

**Moderator:** **Nicolas Tenzer**, Writer, professor and President of CERAP (Center for Study and Reflection on Political Action)

**Bernard Cazeneuve**, Former French Prime Minister

**Dominique Moïsi**, Geopolitical Analyst, Special Adviser at the French Institute of International Relations

**Vincent Montagne**, CEO, Media Participations

**Konrad Szymanski**, Former Minister for European Affairs of Poland

10h45- 11h15

## Break

11h15- 12h15

## Panel 2 - Building up Europe's industrial and technological power

*In 20 years, Europe's GDP per capita, which used to roughly equal America's, is now about 40% smaller. Among the 10 major Technological giants in terms of market capitalization, 9 are American, and none is European. What is needed to counter this trend and recover economic growth and dynamism? What major reforms will be needed to spur innovation and bring industrial vigor to Europe? What strategic response to Trump's tariffs and China's aggressive commercial policies? In which way should Geopolitics force us to rethink our industrial and economic policies? How do we reconcile competitiveness and the climate transition?*

**Moderator:** **Bertille Bayart**, Columnist, Le Figaro

**Pierre André de Chalendar**, CEO Institut de l'Entreprise

**Declan Ganley**, CEO, Rivada Networks

**Augustin de Romanet**, Chairman, Paris Europlace, Former CEO, Aéroports de Paris

12h15- 13h30

## Lunch

13h30- 14h45

### Panel 3 - Rearming Europe: Blueprint for an autonomous European defense

*Rearming Europe in the unfavorable economic context of the American tariff war and Europe's falling out with the United States is a major challenge. Can Europeans overcome their divisions to take actions? Can we build up a plan around the four cornerstones required to build an autonomous, effective and efficient defense industry: singular choices in the main weapons systems; industrial defense policy; financing the new effort; recruitment and civil infrastructure. How can we manage our dependence on the USA without putting ourselves at risk? Is NATO still the preferred framework for the defense of Europe and support of Ukraine? How do we reconnect European citizens to the key responsibility of defending their countries?*

**Moderator: Marc De Vos**, Co-CEO of Itinera Institute (Brussels), author and geopolitical strategy consultant

**Robbie Boyd**, Board member DSRB (Defense Security and Resilience bank), Brigadier-General (Ret.), Senior Fellow RUSI

**Andrius Kubilius**, Commissioner Defense and Space, European Commission

**Kajsa Ollongren**, former Minister of Defense, Netherlands

**Edward Stringer**, Advisor to the UK government, Senior Fellow at Policy Exchange, Air Marshal (Ret.), UK

14h45- 16h00

### Panel 4 – The roots of the Western Crisis and the future of European conservatism

*What are the roots of the populist rebellions sweeping the West? And where will the wind turn now, after Trump's second victory? National conservatives and national populists, who are gaining momentum across the West, are divided over how to respond to Russia's aggression in Ukraine and the Trump phenomenon. Some, like Viktor Orbán, advocate betting on Putin, whom they see as an ally in the fight against Islamism and the excesses of liberalism. They view Trump as a source of inspiration. Giorgia Meloni has embraced the Ukrainian cause while engaging in dialogue with MAGA America. Germany's CDU and France's Les Républicains (LR) advocate for a firm stance toward both Putin and Islamist extremism. Beyond Trump and Putin, the future of European conservatism is a hot topic for Europe, as national and far-right parties gain ground, even though the EPP remains the largest political force in the European Parliament.*

**Moderator: Katja Gentinetta** Political philosopher and advisor

**Alexandre Devecchio**, Editor in chief, Le Figaro

**Jean Pierre Le Goff**, Sociologist and public intellectual

**Sven Simon**, German Member of the European Parliament

**Jean Yarbrough**, Professor of social sciences, Tocqueville scholar, Bowdoin college

16h00- 16h30

### Conclusion:

**Philippe Gelie**, Deputy Editor of Le Figaro in charge of international affairs  
**Feedback on the Conversations from two students**