

Time for the United States of Europe

USofE

A Humanist Call for European Federation

As the Trump administration upends transatlantic alliances, imposes tariffs, and dismantles the post-war world order, Gerd Leonhard argues that Europe's moment of reckoning has finally — and irreversibly — arrived.



THE EUROPEAN CHOICE

Shaping a human-centred future in the age of AI.





FOR DECADES, WE BELIEVED THE THE FUTURE WAS MADE ELSEWHERE.

We were told the forces shaping tomorrow
were beyond our control. We allowed Silicon
Valley, Wall Street, the U.S. government,
and the NASDAQ to write our destiny.

We accepted that the future simply happens to us.

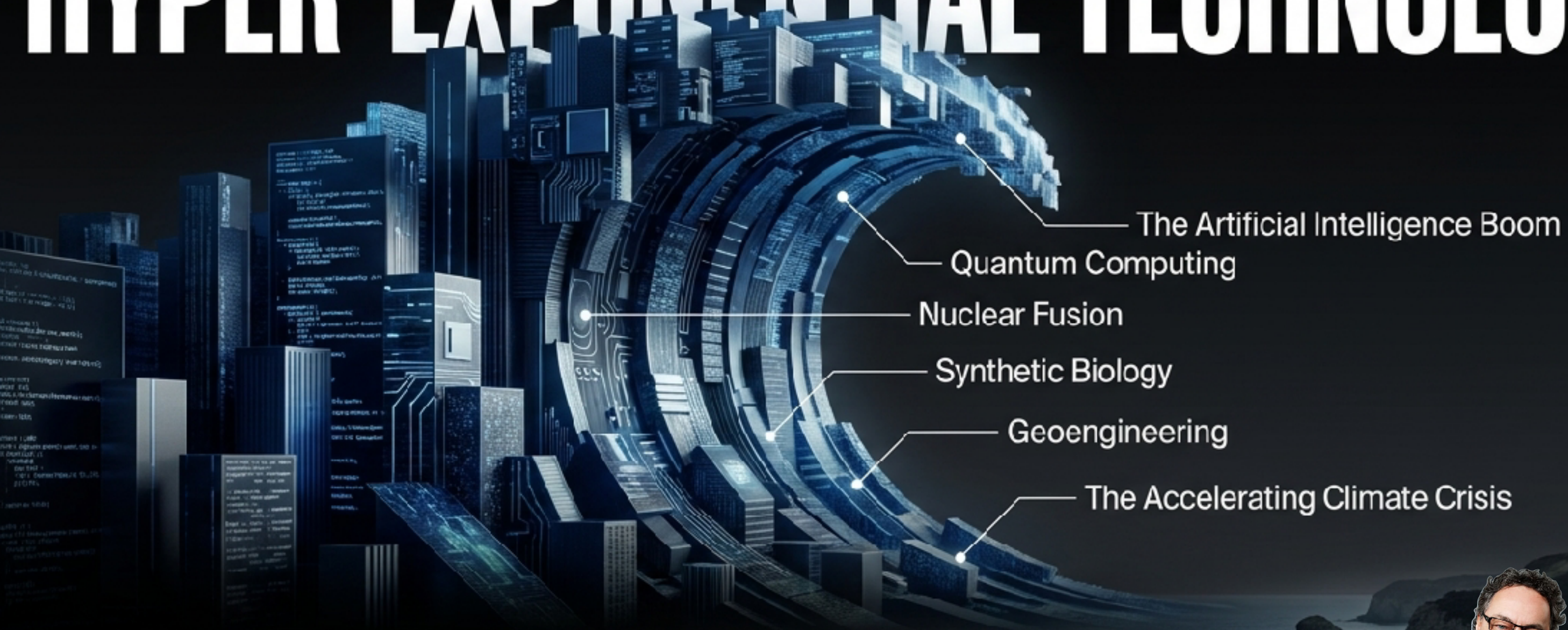


THE FUTURE DOES NOT HAPPEN TO US.

It is something we choose. Every single day.



WE ARE FACING A TSUNAMI OF HYPER-EXPONENTIAL TECHNOLOGIES.



These forces are converging. They will create unprecedented prosperity—or profound instability.



HELL.

**Profound instability
driven by unchecked
algorithmic power
and geopolitical
turbulence.**

THE HELLVEN DILEMMA

HEAVEN.

**Unprecedented
prosperity, shaped
by leaders acting
with courage and
determination.**

**The outcome depends not on the technologies
themselves, but on the wisdom of our choices.**



THE QUESTION IS NO LONGER “WHAT CAN TECHNOLOGY DO?”

By 2030, the arrival of
Super-Intelligence and AGI
means the answer is
“almost everything.”



THE ONLY QUESTION THAT MATTERS IS: WHAT SHOULD IT DO?

A TALE OF TWO FUTURES

The Machine-Optimized World

- **Vision:** Blade Runner. Techno-optimistic, optimized for machines and growth.
- **Goal:** Efficiency, endless consumption, algorithmic power.
- **The US Mindset:** "Live forever and be super-rich."

The Human-Centered World

- **Vision:** Star Trek. Centered on human and planetary flourishing.
- **Goal:** Freedom, purpose, well-being, shared prosperity.
- **The European Mindset:** "Quality of life, aging nicely, sustainability."

What kind of society do we want to build?



OUR SUPERPOWER IS NOT BEING BIGGER, FASTER, OR RICHER.



It is our deeply rooted, collective, humanist DNA. We are naturally slower because we build ecosystems, not just empires. Our strength lies in offering a distinctly human-centered vision grounded in democracy and ethics.

REINVENTING THE ECONOMIC MODEL



**We must transition from an increasingly fragile social capitalism to a future-fit framework.
A future built on the 5Ps, not defined by a single metric of profit.**

THE EUROPEAN ASCENSION: MINDSET & INNOVATION

Step 2: Accelerate Innovation

- Unleash Europe's creators, builders, and innovators while guarding our values.
- Action: Redesign education, taxation, and regulation. Dramatically increase venture capital support.

Step 1: Adopt a Future Mindset

- Become comfortable with uncertainty. Stop relying on past achievements.
- Goal: Create a future that is not only smart, but wise.



THE EUROPEAN ASCENSION: ECONOMY & WORK

AI Core

Step 3: Reinvent Social Capitalism

- Develop a future-fit framework.
- Action: Build truly pan-European capital markets and a pan-European military.

Step 4: Prepare for the Future of Work

- Ensure the wealth generated by automation benefits all citizens across every labor market.
- Mechanisms: Implement Universal Basic Capital and establish a European AI Wealth Fund.



THE EUROPEAN ASCENSION: SOVEREIGNTY & INTEGRATION



Step 6: Complete the European Project

- Move beyond mere coordination.
- Action: Achieve genuine integration to make our voice matter globally.

Step 5: Strengthen European Sovereignty

- We can no longer afford to follow or drift in an era of global tech empires.
- Action: Own our critical domains—Technology, Artificial Intelligence, Energy, Defense, and Strategic Infrastructure.



WE ARE ALREADY BECOMING THE UNITED STATES OF EUROPE.

We are no longer just different countries. It is time to make the vision a reality.



IN 30 YEARS, WE WON'T BE CHINESE OR AMERICAN. WE WILL BE FROM EARTH.



A global consciousness is emerging. When we go to other planets, we must first decide who we are and what is most important to us. We have to solve global problems together.



THE FUTURE IS NOT PREDETERMINED. IT IS A CHOICE.

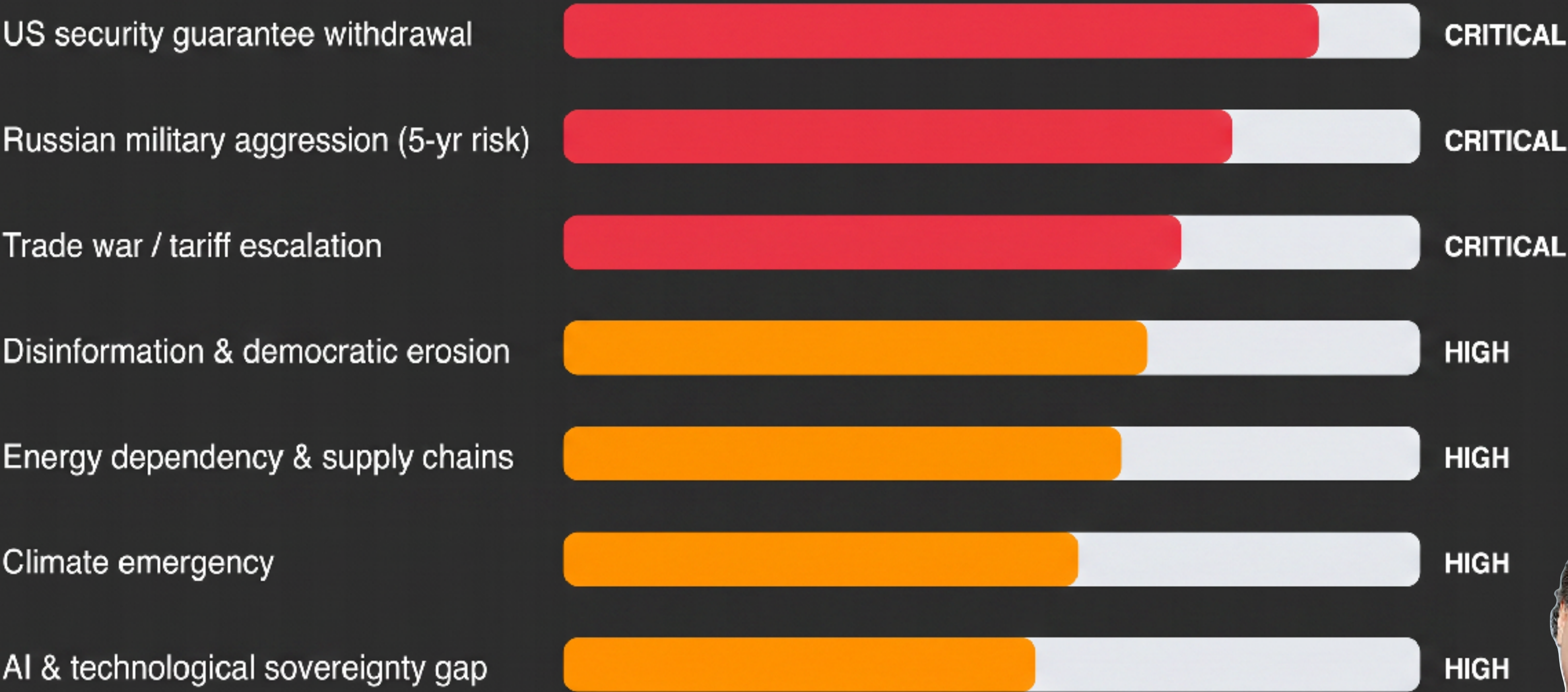
Europe must choose. And it must choose now.

About Gerd Leonhard

Gerd Leonhard is a Futurist, Humanist, author of *Technology vs. Humanity*, filmmaker, and CEO of The Futures Agency in Zürich. He advises governments, Fortune 500 companies, and NGOs on the future of technology, democracy, and human flourishing. His credo: **People, Planet, Purpose, Peace and Prosperity**. Listed among Europe's top 100 most influential people by Wired magazine.



European Threat Landscape — Urgency Assessment



Threat severity ratings are Leonhard's qualitative assessments, corroborated by Bruegel, ECFR, and Carnegie Europe (2025)



The Objections — and Leonhard's Responses



- **National sovereignty will be lost:** Sovereignty is already lost — to markets, algorithms, and geopolitical giants. Federation is not loss of sovereignty; it is the pooling of sovereignty to make it meaningful again.
- **Cultural diversity will be homogenised:** Switzerland runs four national languages and deep cantonal autonomy inside a tight federation. The USofE can and must do the same.
- **Democratic legitimacy deficit:** The EU Parliament must gain full co-legislative power. The solution to the democratic deficit is more democracy — not less integration.
- **It will never happen politically:** Leonhard argues: the simultaneous collapse of the US guarantee, a land war in Europe, and an AI arms race is unprecedented. Now all three are real.



THE CASE FOR USofE

Why deeper federation is now the only logical answer



Leonhard's central argument: in a world of continent-sized superpowers — the US, China, India — individual European nation-states are too small to be sovereign in any meaningful sense. No single EU member can replace the American nuclear umbrella, negotiate trade terms with Beijing as an equal, or fund the AI and semiconductor industries needed to compete with Silicon Valley or Shenzhen. The USofE is not new — Victor Hugo called for it in 1849, Churchill in 1946. But 2025's geopolitical earthquake has transformed it from a federalist dream into a practical necessity.

Six Pillars of a United States of Europe

Common Defence

Joint EU army & command

Single Voice

One foreign policy seat

EU Fiscal Union

Common budget & bonds

Digital Sovereignty

AI, data & chip strategy

Climate Union

Binding green transition

Democratic Reform

End of national vetoes

Each pillar is a domain where fragmented national action has failed — only federal-level authority can deliver the scale required

“Europe has all the ingredients for a great federation — shared values, rule of law, democratic traditions, and the world’s largest single market. What it has lacked is the political will to act as one. That excuse is gone.”



The European Choice: Designing a Human-Centered Future

Europe faces an "Intelligence Revolution" driven by AI, robotics, and quantum computing. Instead of following global technology empires, Europe must choose a path that prioritizes humanist values over more profit, shifting from a "machine-first" to a "human-first" society.

The Human-Centered Path

Star Trek: A world of flourishing and shared prosperity



Strategic Call to Action



Adopt a 'Future Mindset'

Moving beyond past achievements to embrace uncertainty and vice, proactive innovation.

Strengthen European Sovereignty

Building genuine integration across technology, energy, defense, and strategic infrastructure.

Prepare the Future of Work

Exploring Universal Basic Capital and AI Wealth Funds to distribute automated prosperity.

The Machine-Optimized Path



The 5Ps Framework



Perspective Comparison: U.S. vs. Europe

U.S. Perspective		European Perspective
Profit & Power	Primary Goal	Quality & Humanism
Live Forever / Super Rich		Sustainability / Living Well
Individual Growth		Collective Ecosystems
	Tech Vision	
	Social Model	

The "Hellven" Dilemma



Technology alone is neutral, our choices determine if it creates "heaven" or "hell".

A ROADMAP TO THE USofE

Practical steps Leonhard proposes for 2025–2030



Leonhard identifies the sequence of moves most likely to unlock federation from the current institutional deadlock:

1

Emergency Defence Union

France and Germany lead an avant-garde coalition to pool military command, procurement, and nuclear deterrence within the EU treaty framework — without waiting for all 27 members.

2

End the Unanimity Veto

Foreign policy and fiscal decisions must shift to qualified majority voting. One member's veto cannot continue to paralyse 26 others on existential issues.

3

EU Constitutional Convention

Convene a citizens' assembly to draft a genuine federal constitution. The European Parliament's 2023 reform proposal is the starting point.

4

European Digital Sovereignty Act

Pooled investment in European AI, semiconductor fabrication, and data infrastructure. The Chips Act was a start — scale it tenfold.

5

Green & Social Union

Bind climate targets and minimum social standards at the federal level so that no member can undercut neighbours through regulatory arbitrage.

6

Pan-European Political Parties

Fund and empower truly European political parties — not national parties that show up in Brussels for four-year terms. Democracy needs a European demos.



USofE vs. Status Quo — At a Glance



Domain	Status Quo (2025)	United States of Europe
Defence	27 separate budgets, NATO-dependent	Joint EU army, shared nuclear deterrence
Foreign Policy	27 vetoes, paralysed by unanimity	One federal foreign minister, QMV
Trade	EU negotiates, but states undercut	Single federal trade voice & policy
AI & Tech	Fragmented national champions	Continental R&D budget, EU chips
Climate	Binding targets, weak enforcement	Federal climate authority with teeth
Democracy	Democratic deficit, low EP power	Full EP co-legislation, EU constitution



THE VISION

What the USofE could look like by 2035



Leonhard's USofE is not a superstate but a **federal democracy of democracies** — a continent-sized entity that speaks with one voice on defence, trade, AI, and climate while protecting the extraordinary cultural richness that makes Europe Europe. Five founding principles:

Subsidiarity First	Everything that can be done locally stays there. Only what requires continental scale moves to federal level.
Democracy as the Foundation	No technocratic shortcuts. Treaty changes ratified by EP, national parliaments, and citizens' referenda.
People, Planet, Purpose, Prosperity	Leonhard's 5Ps frame constitutional goals — human flourishing and ecological stewardship over GDP maximisation.
Regulated AI — not banned	Europe leads the world in AI ethics. The USofE scales that leadership into geopolitical advantage.
United in Diversity	27 languages, hundreds of cultures, millennia of history — Europe's competitive advantage, not its weakness.

“Europe was built on the ruins of nationalism. The answer to the crisis of 2025 is not to retreat into those ruins — it is to complete the project that Churchill, Spinelli, and Schuman began. The United States of Europe is not a utopia. It is simply the next necessary step.

— Gerd Leonhard, February 2025

