



## TAE Newsletter – May 2026

### Taxpayers Association of Europe (TAE)

Dear Members, Partners and Colleagues,  
Dear Tax Fighters!

Europe is currently facing fundamental debates on competitiveness, fiscal sovereignty, regulation and the future balance between Brussels and the Member States.

With its current proposals for the EU's next medium-term financial framework for 2028–2034, the European Commission is seeking a system of funding that is less dependent on the member states and thus greater control over the budget. The proposals for EU own resources – in other words, new and additional taxes at EU level – will not only be at the expense of national governments' revenues; they will undoubtedly lead to greater tax burdens on citizens and businesses. Furthermore, the Commission is proposing further authorisations for EU borrowing.

As the European Commission is simultaneously attempting to assume more and more powers, the nation states face a massive loss of sovereignty.

These are issues that we at the taxpayers' association should address, in our responsibility towards taxpayers, the state and society at both European and national levels. For this is about nothing less than our future and that of our children and future generations.

The Taxpayers Association of Europe (TAE) has intensified its activities in Brussels and across Europe in order to strengthen the voice of taxpayers in these discussions.

Despite limited financial resources, TAE continues to professionalise its structures, expand its political network and increase its visibility within the European institutions. We are grateful for the strong support from our member organisations and partners.

Below you will find a concise overview of our recent activities, statements, campaigns and upcoming initiatives.

#### **TAE Internal**

The Taxpayers Association of Europe (TAE) is working to raise its profile in Brussels and to establish itself as a valued partner in political dialogue. Despite very limited financial resources, we are steadily professionalising our structures.

We extend our special thanks to all member associations, whose membership fees make our work possible in the first place. Particular gratitude goes to the Bavarian Taxpayers' Association, which supports us not only financially but, above all, by providing personnel. Since April, we have also set up an internship position in Brussels with its own email address ([secretariat@taxpayers-europe.org](mailto:secretariat@taxpayers-europe.org)), which will give us additional organisational support going forward.

Our Brussels office manages the TAE's LinkedIn presence, while deputy Secretary General Kerstin Kellis, based in Munich, oversees our Facebook content. Secretary-General Dr Horst Heitz heads the Brussels office, establishes contacts with political decision-makers, organises background briefings, maintains and continually expands



our European network, and is available to assist our members in Brussels whenever needed. President Michael Jäger is in Brussels or Strasbourg at least once or twice a month for face-to-face meetings. These trips incur hardly any costs for the TAE, as they are organised through the Bavarian Taxpayers' Association and our wider network.

We are already seeing our first successes: we have been invited by the European Parliament, the Committee of the Regions, the European Economic and Social Committee and specialist organisations to provide statements and take part in events. The TAE also receives valuable support from Eric Beißwenger, Bavaria's European Affairs Minister, who advances our causes through the Bavarian Representation in Brussels and his own network.

We wish to underline the importance of cooperation between national taxpayers' organisations and think tanks. Developments in Brussels clearly show that problems can no longer be solved at national level alone. National policy is increasingly shaped by Brussels – whether through regulations, bureaucracy or taxes – making closer cooperation and a lively exchange of ideas all the more essential. To represent the interests of our national European member organisations as effectively as possible, we need to share views and know-how. We therefore want to involve all associations more closely in our work and to intensify communication and dialogue. There is no need to travel to Brussels in person; almost all important matters can be discussed online. At the same time, all members and partners are, of course, warmly welcome to make use of our office in Brussels.

## **Yes, to a Smart “European Preference” – no to Symbolic Politics and Protectionism, 6. February 2026**

TAE supported the discussion on strengthening Europe's industrial resilience while warning against protectionism and symbolic industrial policy.

*The organisation stressed that Europe's competitiveness must be based on:*

- Innovation
- Research
- Skills
- SMEs
- Open markets
- Reduced bureaucracy.

Moreover, TAE warned that poorly designed “European preference” mechanisms could increase costs, distort markets and trigger international trade retaliation.

**Link to the press release:**

<https://www.taxpayers-europe.org/information/press/159-tae-yes-to-a-smart-european-preference-no-to-symbolic-politics-and-protectionism.html>



## Launch of “Stop EU Taxes”, 19. February 2026

The campaign [Stop EU TAXES](#) was launched in February 2026; over 2,000 decision-makers have already downloaded the supporter certificates.

The campaign opposes new EU taxes, permanent EU own resources and the transformation of temporary joint debt mechanisms into a permanent fiscal union.

TAE stresses that taxation requires direct democratic legitimacy through national parliaments and warns against a gradual transfer of fiscal sovereignty to Brussels. Particular criticism focuses on proposals such as the planned EU corporate levy CORE and the expansion of EU own resources within the next Multiannual Financial Framework (MFF).

**STOP EU TAXES.  
STOP EU DEBT.**

The media in Brussels have picked up on this story. One of the most prominent reports on the subject appeared in Politico.

In a major opinion article, our President Michael Jäger compares the growing fiscal ambitions of the EU with a gradual shift of power away from the Member States. The article argues that subsidiarity, democratic accountability and national fiscal sovereignty must remain core principles of the European project.

The contribution emphasises that European integration must remain based on democratic consent and constitutional balance rather than institutional expansion through permanent EU revenue mechanisms.

### Link to the article:

<https://www.politico.eu/sponsored-content/david-and-goliath-in-brussels/>

## Working Group on Competitiveness, Finance, and Taxes (CFT) Online Meeting 24 February 2026

The meeting was chaired by **MEP Markus Ferber**. The following topics were discussed:

### Role of Small and Local Banks in SME Financing

In his opening remarks, Mr Ferber emphasised that Europe remains a predominantly bank-based economy, with SMEs relying mainly on bank loans and credit lines rather than capital markets. He highlighted the distinct role of small and locally rooted banks due to their in-depth knowledge of regional economies and long-standing client relationships. This proximity allows for more accurate risk assessment and faster, more flexible lending decisions. Preserving a diverse banking ecosystem was considered essential for reliable SME access to finance.

### Proportionality and Complexity of EU Banking Regulation

Participants highlighted the growing complexity of EU banking regulation and its disproportionate impact on smaller banks. Whilst post-crisis reforms strengthened stability, reporting and compliance requirements were seen as generating high fixed costs. The one-size-fits-all application of Basel standards was criticised, and greater proportionality was called for.



### **Competitiveness and Regulatory Simplification**

A shift at EU level towards competitiveness and regulatory simplification was noted. Current initiatives, including competitiveness consultations and legislative “omnibus” packages, were viewed as opportunities to reduce administrative burdens. Simplification was framed as a competitiveness measure rather than deregulation.

### **Capital Markets and the “28th Regime”**

The limits of bank financing for research-intensive and high-risk sectors were discussed, particularly in comparison with the US. Whilst capital markets and risk capital are important for innovative SMEs, access remains fragmented across the EU. Expectations for the “28th regime” and the Savings and Investment Union were cautious, with progress expected to be incremental.

### **ESG, Taxonomy, and Access to Finance**

ESG requirements and the EU taxonomy were discussed as factors influencing SME financing. Whilst not seen as a direct barrier, inconsistencies in taxonomy classifications were criticised, particularly where suppliers to green industries are not classified as green. A pragmatic, risk-based approach was advocated.

### **Taxation, Costs, and Investment Capacity**

Participants raised concerns about cumulative financial burdens on companies, including instruments that function economically like taxes. Measures such as emissions trading systems were seen as reducing capital available for investment and increasing bureaucracy. The need to reassess cumulative regulatory and fiscal burdens was emphasised.

## **EU Environmental Omnibus, 12. March 2026 / EU Omnibus Legislation**

TAE welcomed the EU Environmental Omnibus as a first acknowledgement by the European Commission that Green Deal regulation has become excessively complex and burdensome.

TAE welcomed that this Omnibus reduces reporting obligations and removes around 80% of companies from the scope of some ESG rules, the fundamental regulatory architecture remains intact.

It is and remains important to scrutinise the European Commission’s legislative proposals. The idea of reducing bureaucracy by consolidating EU legislation in the form of **EU Omnibus Legislation** is sound, but current experience shows that, on the whole, the bureaucratic burden has unfortunately not decreased.

TAE continues to call for a broader reduction of bureaucratic burdens and more globally competitive sustainability regulation.

#### **Link to the statement:**

<https://www.taxpayers-europe.org/information/press/164-tae-statement-on-the-eu-environment-omnibus.html>



## The Leipzig Thesis – 10 TAE Demands for Europe, 14<sup>th</sup> March 2026 For a freer, leaner and growth-friendly Europe

Europe needs less bureaucracy, sound finances and greater confidence in the power of the market economy. Prosperity is not created by an endless stream of new programmes and regulations, but through innovation, competition and personal responsibility.

That is why the TAE is calling for a return to the central principle of Europe's founding fathers: subsidiarity – making decisions where they can best be made.

At the Milei Conference in Leipzig, TAE presented ten core demands for a freer, leaner and more growth-oriented Europe. These included the following:

- 1. Europe Needs Fewer Bureaucrats – Not More**  
The European Commission should be streamlined. Europe must significantly reduce bureaucracy for businesses, citizens and public administrations.
- 2. No EU Taxes Through the Back Door**  
Tax sovereignty belongs to national parliaments. TAE rejects new EU taxes such as the proposed EU corporate levy CORE or the misuse of national taxes as EU own resources.
- 3. No Debt Union**  
Joint debt instruments such as NextGenerationEU must remain temporary exceptions. Those who decide on spending must also bear responsibility and liability.
- 4. Limit Spending Instead of Expanding Budgets**  
Europe does not need ever-larger budgets, but better prioritisation and greater efficiency.
- 5. Clearly Limit EU Financing**  
The EU budget should continue to be financed mainly through contributions from Member States. The ceiling should not exceed 1.4% of EU Gross National Income.
- 6. No Legislation Without Impact Assessment**  
Before new EU regulations are adopted, transparent and independent impact assessments and cost analyses must be carried out.
- 7. EU Funds Only with Clear Conditionality**  
EU taxpayers' money should only flow to countries that respect the rule of law and European values.
- 8. Finally Remove Barriers to Competitiveness**  
Europe needs a simpler tax and regulatory system. Bureaucracy and excessive reporting obligations must be reduced consistently.
- 9. Technological Neutrality Instead of Ideology**  
Europe must protect competitiveness and jobs through innovation rather than bans, excessive CO<sub>2</sub> charges or deindustrialisation policies.
- 10. Yes to the Digital Euro – But Cash Must Remain**  
A digital euro must not replace cash or crowd out private payment providers. Cash remains an essential element of freedom and privacy.

**Link to complete statement:**

<https://www.taxpayers-europe.org/information/press/166-for-a-freer-leaner-and-growth-friendly-europe.html>



## EU Equal Pay and Pay Transparency Directive, 12<sup>th</sup> April 2026

TAE sharply criticised the EU Equal Pay and Pay Transparency Directive as a major new bureaucratic burden for European businesses.

The association warned about:

- increased reporting obligations,
- higher legal uncertainty,
- rising compliance costs,
- extensive documentation requirements,
- and the weakening of performance-based remuneration systems.

TAE called for suspension, revision and substantial simplification of the directive, arguing that Europe needs less micromanagement and more trust in market-based solutions.

### Link to the statement:

<https://www.taxpayers-europe.org/information/press/167-eu-equal-pay-and-pay-transparency-directive-cut-red-tape-not-create-new-burdens.html>

## Tobacco Taxes and the Illegal Market, 13. April 2026

According to the Euromonitor International Report 2026, TAE warned that excessive tobacco taxation increasingly fuels illegal production and smuggling within the EU.

The report highlights:

- €19.4 billion in lost tax revenues in 2024,
- rapidly growing counterfeit cigarette production,
- and the increasing role of organised crime in illegal manufacturing within Europe.

TAE concluded that excise duties on products such as tobacco are not suitable as stable EU own resources and warned against further excessive tax increases.

### Link to the EIR Report:

<https://www.pmi.com/content/dam/pmicom/global/docs/itp/emi-pmi-counterfeit-cigarettes-in-the-eu-full-report-2026.pdf>

## Presentation of TAE Certificates, 14–16<sup>th</sup> April 2026 in Brussels

TAE Honorary President Rolf von Hohenhau and President Michael Jäger presented honorary certificates in Brussels to policy-makers who have shown particular commitment to the interests of taxpayers.

The award recipients:

- **Moritz Körner** – Honoured for commitment to transparency, budgetary oversight, and the responsible use of public funds, thereby strengthening accountability and sound fiscal policy for European taxpayers.
- **Pehr Granfalk** – Recognised for outstanding work through his role in the European Committee of Regions (CoR), ensuring that European policies reflect economic reality and serve the interests of taxpayers, citizens, and businesses.
- **Marie-Therese Ettmayer (Head of EU Representation, Austrian Federal Economic Chamber)** – Awarded for a significant contribution to a fact-based and balanced policy debate in Brussels, strengthening the voice of SMEs across Europe in the interests of taxpayers and economic reality.



- **Sandra Parthie (President, The Employers' Group – Group 1) –** Recognised for the Group's outstanding contribution to integrating economic expertise into European policymaking, strengthening the interests of taxpayers and significantly improving framework conditions for SMEs.

## **No EU Excess Profit Tax, 23rd April 2026**

TAE welcomed the European Commission's decision not to pursue an EU-wide excess profit tax.

TAE warned that such taxes would undermine investment security, create legal uncertainty and weaken Europe's competitiveness. Member States were urged not to introduce unilateral national excess profit taxes.

### **Link to the press release:**

<https://www.taxpayers-europe.org/information/press/162-clear-rejection-from-brussels-no-eu-excess-profit-tax-member-states-should-follow-this-course.html>

## **28–30<sup>th</sup> April 2026, Budapest, meeting at the European Youth Centre**

At the European Youth Centre in Budapest, Michael Jäger represented the TAE in discussions on “Intergenerational Economy: How Europe could use experience to strengthen entrepreneurship and boost innovation and competitiveness”.

The debate centred on incentives – from both the state and the private sector, to preserve knowledge and businesses, drive innovation, and encourage people to become entrepreneurs and take risks, rather than simply seeking employment as an employee. From a taxpayers' perspective, it is essential that the state does everything possible to ease the burden on businesses and the self-employed, notably by reducing bureaucracy and keeping taxes and levies low.

It is equally important to recognise that such measures should apply to all businesses, not only to the start-ups the EU is now seeking to promote through the EU Inc.

### **Link to the statement:**

<https://www.taxpayers-europe.org/information/press/165-intergenerational-economy-how-europe-could-use-experience.html>

## **7<sup>th</sup> May 2026, Working Breakfast, European Parliament Brussels on Resilient Housing Markets for a Competitive Europe**

In our statement on “Resilient housing markets for a competitive Europe”, we emphasised that the housing issue in Europe is primarily a supply problem, not merely a question of prices. We warned against increasing regulation of the housing market at EU level, pointing out that measures such as rent caps, excessive bureaucracy or restrictions on short-term rentals can deter investment and slow down housing construction. Rather than ever more interventions, Europe needs greater planning certainty, fewer regulatory hurdles and targeted local solutions in line with the principle of subsidiarity. Transparency and data sharing are useful – but new housing can only be created through investment.

TAE addressed the importance of intergenerational entrepreneurship, innovation and competitiveness in Europe.



The statement focused on:

- reducing bureaucracy,
- improving access to capital,
- facilitating business succession,
- strengthening SMEs,
- lowering tax burdens,
- and creating better conditions for entrepreneurs across all generations.

TAE stressed that Europe must improve framework conditions for all businesses, not only start-ups, while maintaining incentives for investment and risk-taking.

**Link to the discussion paper:**

<https://www.taxpayers-europe.org/information/press/168-tae-resilient-housing-markets-for-a-competitive-europe.html>

## **Financing the EU Multiannual Financial Framework (MFF) 2028–2034 Protecting Fiscal Sovereignty and Preventing a European Tax Union**

In light of the ongoing negotiations on the next EU Multiannual Financial Framework (MFF) 2028–2034, the Taxpayers Association of Europe (TAE) warns against the gradual transformation of the European Union into a fiscal union with its own permanent tax sovereignty.

TAE supports a strong and financially stable European Union. However, the organisation believes that EU financing should continue to be based primarily on contributions from Member States linked to Gross National Income (GNI), rather than through the creation of permanent EU own resources and new EU-level taxes.

### **Key Concerns Raised by TAE**

TAE warns that the planned expansion of EU own resources could gradually weaken the fiscal responsibility and democratic control exercised by national parliaments. According to the organisation, taxation requires direct democratic legitimacy and accountability at national level.

TAE also criticises the proposed expansion of the EU budget and warns that a permanent EU revenue system could eventually pave the way for further EU-level debt and deeper fiscal integration without sufficient democratic oversight.

Particular criticism is directed at the proposed EU corporate levy CORE (“Corporate Resource for Europe”). Since CORE would reportedly be linked to company turnover rather than profitability, TAE warns that businesses could be taxed regardless of their actual financial performance, potentially resulting in a form of substance taxation that disproportionately harms low-margin companies.

TAE also highlights the instability of proposed EU revenue sources. Revenues from emissions trading or consumption-related levies may fluctuate due to economic downturns, changing consumer behaviour or shifts towards illegal markets. The organisation points to the growing illicit tobacco market in France as a warning example of excessive taxation undermining both legal markets and state revenues.

Furthermore, TAE warns of geopolitical and economic risks linked to protectionist EU taxes and levies. Countries such as the United States and China may respond with



countermeasures, potentially escalating trade conflicts and increasing costs for European companies and consumers alike.

### **EU Own Resources Currently Under Discussion**

- Revenues from the EU Emissions Trading System (ETS)
- Carbon Border Adjustment Mechanism (CBAM)
- Levies linked to electronic waste
- Tobacco-related EU own resources (TEDOR)
- Turnover related EU corporate levy CORE (Corporate Resource for Europe)
- Digital EU levies and taxes on digital transactions discussed within the European Parliament

### **TAE calls for**

- preserving national fiscal sovereignty,
- maintaining democratic budgetary control through national parliaments,
- avoiding permanent EU debt mechanisms,
- strengthening subsidiarity,
- improving efficiency and prioritisation within the EU budget,
- reducing bureaucracy,
- and focusing EU spending on areas with clear European added value.

According to TAE, sustainable economic growth — rather than new taxes — remains the most reliable foundation for stable public finances in Europe.

## **Ongoing TAE campaigns**

- **Stop EU Taxes:**  
The campaign was launched in February 2026; over 2,000 decision-makers have already downloaded the supporter certificates. In May we will send letters to Members of the European Parliament to inform them of our campaign and request their support.
- Follow up of a Background discussion by President Michael Jäger as part of a business delegation trip by the Bavarian Economic Advisory Council on 4 March 2026 with EU Commission President Ursula von der Leyen on the topic of the MFF. In May we will send a letter to Commission President regarding the MFF.
- May/June 2026 Letter to all heads of government and finance ministers of the EU Member States. The aim is to stop the European Commission's plan to levy EU own resources and incur joint debt.

## **TAE Calendar Preview 2026**

- **23 June 2026 TAE Round Table, Brussels**  
Hybrid event in Brussels and online  
2.00 pm – 3.00 pm TAE Board Meeting (Members of the Board only)  
3.00 pm – 4.30 pm TAE Round Table (Members, Observers and invited Guests)  
The aim of the meeting is to facilitate an exchange between organisations and provide a briefing on current issues. The agenda will be sent out in a separate email in early June. Please let us know your preferred topics by 8 June 2026.
- **1 July 2026, Press conference on the MFF in Brussels**  
TAE press conference on the Multiannual Financial Framework (MFF) 2028–2034 with MEP Markus Ferber, Bavarian Minister for European Affairs Eric Beißwenger



and a representative of the European Commission at the Representation of the Free State of Bavaria to the EU.

- **3 and 4 November 2026, TAE General Assembly and Round Table in Brussels**

As part of the meeting, we are also planning a working breakfast at the European Parliament

**3 November 2026**

- 3.00 pm – 4.45 pm TAE General Assembly
- 5.00 pm – 6.00 pm Digital event with the European Economic Senate
- 6.30 pm TAE Working Dinner

**4 November 2026**

- 8.30 am – 9.00 am Working Breakfast at the European Parliament
- 9.30 am – 11.30 am Guided tour of the EP, background discussions
- 12.00 End of meeting

## TAE Workshop

In addition, TAE is planning a marketing workshop in collaboration with the German Taxpayers' Association, which is scheduled to take place in Berlin or Munich in the third quarter of 2026. We aim to showcase successful campaigns, initiatives, techniques and activities from individual organisations, thereby providing inspiration and ideas for your day-to-day work. For instance, at the German Taxpayers' Association, we are working intensively on lead generation and digital marketing strategies to attract supporters, members and donors, as well as measures to improve retention, to name just one example.

## European Institute for Public Finance (EIPF) of the Taxpayers Association of Europe

We have received notification from the relevant tax office that the EIPF has been recognised as a charitable organisation. This now provides the official means to solicit donations for the institute and issue donation receipts.

The aim is now to produce independent studies in the field of taxation and finance with a European focus as part of Bachelor's and Master's theses.

To this end, we are seeking an academic partnership with Saxony-Anhalt University of Applied Sciences at its Bernburg campus. Our scientific director at the EIPF Dr. Richard Beyer is a lecturer in taxation there and has established contact on our behalf. On 9 May, TAE President Michael Jäger presented the EIPF at a symposium on the digitalisation of tax law. The partnership is due to be formalised in a contract by the second quarter of 2026. The partnership involves no costs for us.

The EIPF website and social media presence are due to be up and running by the third quarter at the latest.



## TAE Website and Contact Details

We ask all taxpayer organisations, **members and observers** to please check your contact details and inform us of any changes.

We want to be able to keep you informed and ensure you can be contacted regarding enquiries from the media or people within our network.

And most importantly, we want to be able to inform you about upcoming events and send you invitations from our cooperation partners.

### Link to the list of Taxpayers' Associations

<https://www.taxpayers-europe.org/about-us/tax-fighters.html>

Please send your change requests to our Deputy Secretary General, Kerstin Kellis:

[Kerstin.Kellis@Taxpayers-europe.org](mailto:Kerstin.Kellis@Taxpayers-europe.org)

Brussels/Munich, 19 May 2026

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