**[Opening** slide with title and my name]  
Good afternoon. I hope the coffee was strong, because the topic I want to share with you is not exactly light: *trust* — or rather, what happens when trust breaks down in key relations.

At the EUISS we’re drafting a new project called *“Beyond Broken Trust: Dealing with Deep Uncertainty in Transatlantic Relations.”* And the truth is, few words capture the last eight months of Europe–US relations better than: **broken trust**.

**Diagnosis – what happened?**

[Visual: animated timeline]  
Now, tension in transatlantic ties is nothing new. We saw episodes of it under Bush, Obama, Trump I, even under Biden. But what we are facing in 2025 is of a different order.

First, the new US administration has openly questioned some of the values that Europeans have long taken as the foundation of our partnership: the depth of the transatlantic bond, the mutual benefits of our trade, the support for multilateralism.

Second, **unpredictability** has become the norm. Policies are announced, reversed, then reversed again. Negotiations shift dramatically within days. Decision-making is increasingly confined to the Oval Office, and outcomes seem to depend on presidential mood – and are prone to change.

This deep uncertainty reduces predictability of behaviour. And without predictability, trust between partners collapses.

[Visual: EU facets]

**Examples**   
Think, for instance, of trade: in April Washington imposed tariffs on the EU; the next week, they’re lifted and a negotiation begins; when these appear imminent, the US issued a new letter slapping 30% tariffs. In the end, the agreement of 15%, despite being suboptimal, was the best given the circumstances. But Europeans aren’t sure it will last.

[Visual: EU tariffs timeline]

Or Ukraine: parts of the government wanted to cut all weapons to Ukraine, the week later new weapons the next. Although the US has recently been closer to Ukraine, a new summit with Putin could change everything.

The same applies in defence, climate, China policy, AI. Each swing undermines Europe’s confidence that cooperation will hold.

[Visual: trust across the globe]

And it’s not just Europe. Across the globe, US partners report similar drops in trust: favourable views of the US dropped by more than 10% between 2024 and 2025 among key US partners. Some at the same time as us, others earlier, meaning they may have lessons to share.

**Why it matters**   
This mistrust is Europe’s biggest transatlantic challenge today. The US remains a crucial partner — but cooperation becomes far harder when we cannot rely on consistency.

**Beyond broken trust**

[Visual: the 5 points below – just the parts highlighted]

The threats we share with the US have not disappeared. Cooperation remains necessary in many areas, despite broken trust.

So, how do we go *beyond* broken trust? How do we deal with deep uncertainty? Our preliminary findings suggest five directions:

1. **Stay pragmatic** – focus on areas that can be fruitful when possible, without pushing on the points of friction.
2. **Show persistence** – Europe’s consistency of engagement can signal our seriousness to Washington. We saw it in the form of Ukraine diplomacy: relentless engagement to manage uncertainty.
3. **Prepare for more friction** – Be aware that new conflicts are likely to emerge; don’t take past agreements for granted. Foresight is essential so we are well prepared.
4. **Build autonomy** – in some areas, Europe must be able to act without Washington. And in others, while cooperation continues, building autonomy will help to navigate future tensions.
5. **Don’t act alone** – Many countries are in the same situation as Europe, while others have already learned how to deal with Washington. If Europe wants influence, it must invest seriously in partnerships across the world.

**Closing**

[Visual: the text below

***Beyond Broken Trust: Dealing with deep uncertainty in transatlantic relations***

*EUISS Chaillot Paper*

*Publication date: October 2025*

**Part I: Broken trust across domains**

*Topics covered: European defence, Ukraine reconstruction, China policy, disinformation, big tech, climate diplomacy*

**Part I: Broken trust around the globe**

*Regions covered: Americas, East Asia, Western Balkans, the Gulf, Subsaharan Africa*

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These are the questions we tackle in our forthcoming Chaillot Paper: *“Beyond Broken Trust: Dealing with deep uncertainty in transatlantic relations.”*

We hope you’ll read it, debate it, and above all, help shape the conversation on what Europe can and must do next.

Thank you.