

Opening Testimony for Andrew Puzder
Nominee for U.S. Ambassador to the European Union
Senate Foreign Relations Committee
June 10, 2025

Chairman Risch, Ranking Member Shaheen, and distinguished Members of the Senate Foreign Relations Committee, thank you for the opportunity to appear before you as President Trump's nominee to be the United States Ambassador to the European Union. I'm immensely honored by the confidence President Trump and Secretary Rubio have placed in me. I'm also very grateful for the support of my wife Deanna, my six children, and my six grandchildren. Thank you for the joy you bring to my life.

Today, I remember my parents who encouraged me to dream big and always said I could be whatever I wanted to be if I put in the work. I grew up in a working-class home in Cleveland, Ohio and became the first member of my family to graduate from college.

My parents didn't have the money to send me to college or law school. But thankfully, I grew up in a country that provided a path for me to work my way through college and law school while supporting my young family. Our great country has given me tremendous opportunities, and, if confirmed, I will give America my best. I would employ the principles that made me successful as an attorney and in business to make our nation safer, stronger, and more prosperous for the good of the American people.

During my time as CEO of CKE Restaurants, a position my Slovakian grandparents would never have imagined I could achieve, I saw firsthand the great talent and potential of the American workforce and how functioning free markets create jobs and opportunity while increasing wages for working-class Americans.

I consider it a particularly special honor that President Trump nominated me as Ambassador to the EU, America's largest trading partner, and our nation's top counterterrorism partner for over twenty years. As Secretary Rubio said,

“America First does not mean America Only.” Our U.S.-EU relationship is incredibly consequential for American security and prosperity. Every international relationship should advance America’s best interests, and our transatlantic relationship is no exception.

In this respect, there are three lines of effort that I’d like to touch on today because they’re critical to making the United States safer, stronger and more prosperous.

First, as President Trump has said, trade with the EU and its member states must be fair, free, and reciprocal to promote American prosperity. If confirmed, I’ll work to ensure that transatlantic commerce serves the economic interests of the American people.

The United States should be the EU’s economic partner of choice in every sector. The U.S.-EU trade relationship holds immense potential, but, as President Trump has made abundantly clear, this potential can be unleashed only if the EU market is more open to buying American goods and services. If confirmed, I’ll work to expand U.S. exports.

Second, I’ll advocate for an EU market where American companies are free to thrive without the weight of excessive regulations, red tape, and taxes. For far too long, American companies have been unfairly targeted by EU regulators and penalized for their success. This is particularly true with respect to American tech companies, which are the envy of the world, leading the way on innovation.

Third, global peace is essential for American safety and prosperity. Commerce prospers where peace abounds.

This is why President Trump and Secretary Rubio are urging the EU to invest more in defense. Europe must be up to the task of defending itself. If confirmed, I’ll advocate for a Europe that assumes a greater role in its defense fostering peace and international security.

In closing, I'm proof that the American dream is alive and well. My path to success was made possible only by the support of my family and the free-market capitalism our great country offers. Free markets are the proven path to prosperity and have lifted billions of people out of extreme poverty across the globe over the past 200 years, including my family, which has deep roots across the European continent.

America can further grow those opportunities if our transatlantic relationship advances America's interests. Thanks to President Trump's America First foreign policy, the United States is now positioned to enjoy an economic resurgence.

Fair and robust transatlantic trade, bolstered by peace in Europe, will advance, preserve and strengthen American prosperity and security. If confirmed, I'll bring the same determination I brought to my business career to the cause of ensuring that our transatlantic relationship works for the American people. I've heard very positive things about the staff of the U.S. Mission to the EU in Brussels and, if confirmed, I look forward to meeting and working with every one of them.

Thank you for the opportunity to share my American story with this esteemed committee. I look forward to taking your questions.