



# Dangerous times ahead: now is the time to strengthen EU-US relations

by Danuta Huebner MEP and Congressman Jim Costa

**With elections in both the European Union and the United States during 2024, and a geopolitical situation looking like it will get even worse, there is no time for delay in taking actions to deepen the transatlantic relationship.**

As never before, the US and the EU face a daunting array of shared challenges: global climate change, economic competition from China, aggression from Russia, the need for secure technological and energy supply chains, and the transformative consequences of emerging technologies such as 6G, online platforms, quantum, and most revolutionary, artificial intelligence. The EU has already undertaken key initiatives in these areas, which the new European Commission, European Parliament and Council will need to prioritise in terms of both policy and funding, in line with the 2024-2029 Strategic Agenda, soon to be adopted.

Coordinated opposition now exists of China, Russia, Iran and North Korea, which is potentially hugely damaging to Western interests. The recent visit of the Chinese President Xi to Europe, including France, Hungary and Serbia, perfectly illustrated this desire to split the EU. The Russian President seeks to divide the NATO Alliance on a daily basis through his brutal war in Ukraine and interference in democratic elections. As President Macron said in his recent Sorbonne speech, Europe is in mortal danger.

Neither Washington nor Brussels have the resources or the talent to meet these challenges alone. Together they do. NATO has proven invaluable in addressing shared security threats: during the Cold War, in the Balkan Wars, and now more than ever in the wake of Russia’s invasion of Ukraine. The US and EU need a broad commitment to work together to build a stronger platform to successfully deal with the jointly shared issues that lie ahead.

The transatlantic Trade and Technology Council held its 6th meeting recently in Belgium, with EU ministers and US cabinet officers in attendance. The TTC is a productive framework with numerous deliverables.

But transatlantic cooperation requires more commitment at the highest level. Its scope needs widening beyond trade and technology issues, leading to a full strategic dialogue on global geopolitical challenges and how to address them jointly.

At the April 2024 meeting, the Transatlantic Legislators’ Dialogue, gathering both Members of Congress and European Parliament, called “on leaders at all levels in the US and the EU to keep the transatlantic relationship at the forefront of their agendas and to foster stronger ties.” To that end, the legislators concluded: “We strongly recommend to E.U. leaders that in their conclusions of the June European Council, special consideration be given to the strengthening the cooperation and partnership between the E.U., its Member States, and the United States of America.”



Such a step to strengthen the EU-US relationship would be a very important signal, not least to China and Russia at this juncture. It would also show a real commitment to deepening the EU-US relationship for the longer term.

Broad stakeholder engagement will be necessary to ensure the success of deeper EU-US cooperation. The transatlantic business community and civil society engagement will be critical in this effort. Their insights, including on major geopolitical challenges, should feed into the transatlantic dialogue and foster an even stronger joint understanding of the comprehensive answers needed to successfully defend and foster our common goals.

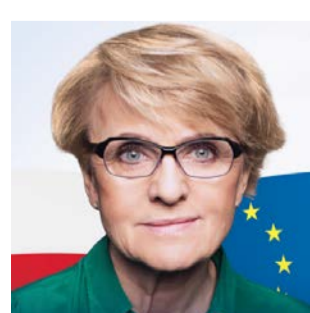
Dialogues involving labour, business, consumers, and environmental stakeholders need newly focused agendas and timely deliverables. And, to ensure that a strengthened platform for the EU-US relationship has broad political support, Congress and the European Parliament must be closely involved from the outset.

We are at a historic moment. It is imperative for the EU, its Member States and the US to exercise responsibility and leadership in world affairs, emphasising the importance of common interest in doing so.

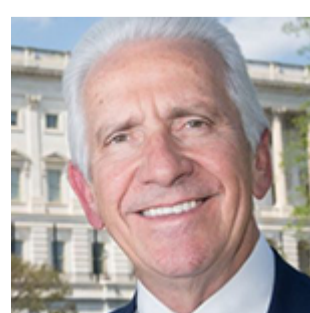
In July, NATO member states, along with European Union leaders, will convene in Washington for a NATO summit. This assemblage of the transatlantic community can also be conducive to enhance the spirit of transatlantic cooperation.

We hope that the July summit will contribute to strengthening the EU-US commitment to develop a new 21st Century Transatlantic Partnership framework needed to intensify our cooperation in the face of security, digital, environmental and strategic challenges facing both Europe and America. The 1990 Transatlantic Declaration that was issued to address post-Cold War challenges, the 1995 New Transatlantic Agenda and the 2021 Joint Transatlantic Agenda provide foundational building blocks for that effort.

The EU and NATO, with 23 members in common, have deepened their cooperation in defense capability, military mobility, and cybersecurity. The upcoming NATO summit provides an opportunity to future-proof the relationship that is built on trust, friendship, and an understanding of the many benefits that it brings to both sides. By future proofing the relationship, we can weather the stormy seas that may lie ahead. At the end of the day, we are the “beacon of light” for human and individual rights that we share in common. This is the foundation that democratic civil societies are built on.



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