



June 2021

Changes to US trade and foreign policy during Donald Trump's presidency created numerous challenges for the EU's policies and for transatlantic relations. The new US administration under President Joe Biden has already adopted a more cooperative approach to the EU, and strongly reiterated the return of US support for multilateralism. On his first day in the White House, on 20 January 2021, President Biden re-joined the [Paris Agreement](#) and cancelled the US [withdrawal from the WHO](#). Nevertheless challenges remain, for example with regard to WTO reform and digital taxation. On 4 March 2021, the EU and the US suspended tariffs relating to the [Airbus-Boeing dispute](#) for four months while holding talks. On 24 March 2021, US Secretary of State Anthony Blinken delivered a speech on '[alliances and partnerships](#)' during his visit to Brussels, and on 23 April 2021 President Biden held his [leaders' summit on climate](#), with EU participation. This topical digest, produced for Members of the European Parliament, presents EPRS publications discussing various aspects of transatlantic relations and US governance.

EU-US RELATIONS

[Harnessing the new momentum in transatlantic relations: Potential areas for common action during the Biden presidency](#)

In-depth analysis by Tania Latici, Suzana Anghel, Piotr Bakowski, Meenakshi Fernandes, Liselotte Jensen, Matthew Parry and Marcin Szczepanski, June 2021

This study focuses on three main topics that are at the top of the transatlantic policy agenda. First, it explores pathways towards a transatlantic green deal by looking at climate action, trade and climate diplomacy. Second, aspects related to the social fabric of transatlantic societies are analysed through the lens of violent extremism, the rule of law and technological disruptions. Third, prospects are examined for crisis-proofing the transatlantic space by engaging with the areas of defence, health security and multilateralism.

[G7 summit, June 2021: Asserting democratic values in the post-crisis context](#)

Briefing by Ionel Zamfir, June 2021

The G7 Summit on 11-13 June 2021 under the UK presidency was expected to mark a return to strong global cooperation among the world's major democracies after a one-year break caused by the pandemic. Key issues to be discussed by the world's major economies included accelerating the end of the coronavirus crisis, and ensuring a resilient, equitable and sustainable recovery. The US initiative to set a minimum global corporate tax could make history for the Group, representing a major change in the international taxation system.

[The emerging contours of President Biden's foreign policy](#)

Briefing by Matthew Parry, June 2021

The Biden administration's policy papers, positions and statements identify two broad priorities that guide its foreign policy: first, 'building back better' on a global scale, in pursuit of the same imperative at home. Second, working with allies to counter the threats to US interests posed by authoritarian rivals such as China and Russia, while working tactically with those same rivals on shared challenges.

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[Prospects for the 2021 NATO leaders' meeting](#)

'At a glance' note by Tania Latici, June 2021

An in-person NATO summit of heads of state or government is scheduled to take place in Brussels on 14 June 2021. Highly anticipated, as part of United States President Joe Biden's first overseas visit, the summit is expected to outline NATO's strategic direction in the decade ahead. The NATO 2030 agenda will be debated, and forward-looking discussions about long-term threats and challenges to Euro-Atlantic security and defence are expected.

[President Biden's leaders' summit on climate](#)

'At a glance' note by Liselotte Jensen and Matthew Parry, May 2021

The summit, one of a number of events leading up to the (delayed) 26th United Nations Climate Change Conference of the Parties (COP26) in November 2021, prompted several other countries to pledge new targets. The EU has welcomed the new US targets, but questions remain about their level of ambition and feasibility.

[NATO looks to the 2030s](#)

'At a glance' note by Tania Latici, March 2021

Launched by the Secretary General of the North Atlantic Treaty Organization (NATO), Jens Stoltenberg, in June 2020, the NATO 2030 process aims to generate recommendations on ways to strengthen and adapt the alliance. NATO created a marketplace of ideas with inputs from stakeholders, to inform the revision of its guiding strategic policy document, the 'strategic concept'.

[A new US President in the White House, Chapter 10 in Ten issues to watch in 2021](#)

In-depth analysis by Etienne Bassot, January 2021

For the EU, the prospect of a new administration, as well as the President-elect's open support of the EU, spurred hopes of a renewed transatlantic agenda. However, geopolitical and domestic pressures may still limit the space for cooperation on issues such as trade and digital regulation.

[US foreign policy after the 2020 Presidential election: Issues for the European Union](#)

Briefing by Elena Lazarou and Jana Titievskaia with Cecilia Handeland, December 2020

While foreign policy under the Biden administration is expected to depart from some of the key tenets of President Trump's foreign policy, experts also point to a high possibility of continuity in areas such as trade and relations with China. However, on climate change, multilateral cooperation and support for NATO, expectations are high regarding a potential return to deep levels of transatlantic consensus and cooperation.

[EU-US dispute over civil aircraft subsidies](#)

'At a glance' note by Jana Titievskaia, November 2020

A short background to the long-lasting WTO dispute, including tariffs, countermeasures and retaliation.

[Understanding EU-NATO cooperation: Theory and practice](#)

Briefing by Tania Latici, October 2020

While the pandemic has tested the resilience of EU-NATO cooperation, being met with coordination and a robust crisis response, questions remain regarding the way forward. The need to clarify the relationship between the EU and NATO's mutual defence clauses has become apparent. The materialisation of the EU's strategic sovereignty ambitions, not least through multiple defence cooperation initiatives, will also be a test.

[On the path to 'strategic autonomy': the EU in an evolving geopolitical environment](#)

Study by Suzana Anghel et al, September 2020

The argument most often invoked against the pursuit of 'strategic autonomy' is its potential to lead to the

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duplication of NATO, or to weaken the transatlantic link. In recent years, there has however been less resistance to the concept on both sides of the Atlantic, reflecting awareness that a more 'strategically autonomous' EU in defence would in fact strengthen NATO, by sharing the burden of transatlantic security.

[The future of multilateralism and strategic partnerships](#)

Briefing by Elena Lazarou, September 2020

As coronavirus leaves parts of the world more fragile and vulnerable, it also precipitates the need for a reformed multilateral system that is 'fit for purpose' and able to address the challenges of the future. New practices to enrich multilateralism will be important for the further development of international cooperation.

[The CJEU judgment in the Schrems II case](#)

'At a glance' note by Hendrik Mildebrath, September 2020

In its July 2020 Schrems II judgment, the Court of Justice of the European Union (CJEU) declared the European Commission's Privacy Shield Decision invalid on account of invasive US surveillance programmes, thereby making transfers of personal data on the basis of the Privacy Shield Decision illegal. Furthermore, the Court stipulated stricter requirements for the transfer of personal data based on standard contract clauses (SCCs).

[Economic focus: the international role of the euro](#) by Carla Stamegna, pp. 55-76 in the *Economic and Budgetary Outlook for the European Union 2020, January 2020*

The section gives an overview of how the euro has developed as a global currency since its introduction in 1999, while exploring the underlying dynamics and the evolving structure of the international monetary system. After examining where the euro stands at present and what the implications are of further development of its international role, attention is paid to the way this role relates to the ECB's monetary policy. The section ends with an examination of policies supporting the euro's international role.

[US: Economic indicators and trade with the EU](#)

Infographic by Györgyi Macsai and Giulio Sabbati, June 2021

The EU and US economies account for about half the entire world's GDP, and for nearly a third of world trade flows. This Infographic provides essential data on trade between the EU and US.

[The end of the INF Treaty? A pillar of European security architecture at risk](#)

Briefing by Beatrix Immenkamp, February 2019

The INF Treaty put an end to the cold-war missile crisis between Moscow and Washington that lasted from 1978 to 1985. It was a landmark nuclear-arms control treaty between the US and the former Union of Soviet Socialist Republics that eliminated and prohibited ground-launched intermediate ballistic and cruise missiles with ranges between 500 and 5 500 km. In 2019, the Treaty's future was in the balance.

[America's transatlantic security guarantee: European Deterrence Initiative](#)

Briefing by Tania Latici, July 2018

The European Deterrence Initiative (EDI) is a US military programme supporting the activities of the US military and its allies in Europe. Activities under the EDI include training of forces, multinational military exercises and development of military equipment and capabilities.

[EU-US trade and investment relations: Effects on tax evasion, money laundering and tax transparency](#)

In-depth analysis by Isabelle Ioannides, March 2017

This study analyses EU-US trade and investment relations to assess whether and, if so, to what extent these relations have impacted on issues related to tax evasion, money laundering and tax transparency. Challenges

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remain on questions of beneficial ownership, cross-border exchange of information, privacy issues, and designated nonfinancial businesses and professions.

FEATURES OF US GOVERNMENT

[The principles of equality and non-discrimination, a comparative law perspective: United States of America](#)

Study by the Comparative Law Library Unit, March 2021

This study provides a brief history of the evolution of the principles of equality and non-discrimination developed in United States federal law and major events that furthered the development of the principles. It provides a detailed review of relevant constitutional, statutory, and case law with respect to these principles.

[Trump's disinformation 'megaphone' – Consequences, first lessons and outlook](#)

Briefing by Naja Bentzen, February 2021

The US presidential election and its aftermath saw domestic disinformation emerging as a more immediate threat than disinformation by third countries. While political violence has been the most tangible physical effect of manipulative information, corrosive conspiracy theories have moved from the fringes to the heart of political debate, normalising extremist rhetoric. At the same time, recent developments have confirmed that the lines between domestic and foreign attempts to undermine democracy are increasingly blurred.

[The role of the Electoral College in US presidential elections](#)

Briefing by Andrej Auersperger-Matić and Matthew Parry, November 2020

The Electoral College is a temporary body established every four years in conjunction with the federal elections, with the task of electing the President and Vice-President of the United States. Article II, Section 1 of the US Constitution (1787), as modified by the 12th Amendment (1804), provides the constitutional framework for the process, which is supplemented by federal and state laws, and political party rules.

[Understanding US Presidential elections](#)

Briefing by Matthew Parry and Carmen-Cristina Cîrlig, October 2020

Because the US President is simultaneously head of state, head of government and commander-in-chief, the presidential elections are a hugely important part of American political life. Although millions of Americans vote in presidential elections every four years, the President is not directly elected by the people. Citizens elect the members of the Electoral College, who then cast their votes for the President and Vice-President.

[Coronavirus in the 'Disunited States of America'](#)

'At a glance' note by Naja Bentzen, October 2020

The coronavirus crisis has boosted environmental factors that can increase radicalisation, while at the same time intensifying the spread of conspiracy theories that can have a similar effect. The accelerated 'truth decay' and the partisan polarisation of the debate about the handling of the continued surge in Covid-19 cases and deaths will likely further undermine trust in institutions.

[Ratification of international treaties, a comparative law perspective from the United States of America](#)

Study by the Comparative Law Library Unit, July 2020

This study describes relevant constitutional, statutory, and other legal provisions with respect to the making and ratification of treaties, as well as legal provisions relating to the making of executive agreements, which also constitute binding international obligations of the United States. The study also discusses the approach to

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international law taken by the US legal system, and the position of treaties and executive agreements within the hierarchy of US laws.

United States: Export Control Reform Act (ECRA)

Briefing by Elena Lazarou, November 2019

In 2018 the United States of America introduced the Export Control Reform Act (ECRA), aiming to restrict the export of emerging and foundational technologies potentially used for civilian and military purposes ('dual use technologies') not having been subject to export control in the past.

Freedom of expression, a comparative law perspective – The United States

Study by the Comparative Law Library Unit, October 2019

This study analyses the legislation in force, the most relevant case law, and the concept of freedom of expression with its current and prospective limits. The legislative foundation for freedom of expression law in the US is grounded in the First Amendment to the Constitution. Based on this text, the Supreme Court has created the freedom of expression doctrinal framework by which lower courts and other branches of government are bound. Unlike other jurisdictions, the US grants broad freedom of expression protections based largely on the idea that 'good' speech will prevail over 'bad' speech in the open market.

The right to respect for private life: Digital challenges, a comparative-law perspective – The United States

Study by the Comparative Law Library Unit, October 2019

This study analyses the legislation in force, the most relevant case law and the nature of the right to respect for private life. Unlike jurisdictions that have adopted an omnibus approach to privacy protection, the US takes a sectoral approach to regulating privacy.

US presidential executive action

Briefing by Micaela Del Monte, March 2017

Executive orders (EOs) and memoranda raise questions, including what actions the President may legally and unilaterally take, for what purposes the President may use his executive authority, and what he can actually do without passing through Congress.

How Congress and President shape US foreign policy

Briefing by Micaela Del Monte and Elena Lazarou, March 2017

This briefing explores the powers conferred to the Congress to conclude international agreements, to regulate commerce with foreign nations, to use military force and to declare war. It also explains how Congress performs its oversight – or 'watchdog' – functions with regard to foreign policy, the tools at its disposal, and the role of committees in the process.

The incoming US Congress's powers to overturn regulations of the previous administration

'At a glance' note by Micaela Del Monte, January 2017

Congress can introduce and pass legislation that modifies regulations made by agencies. However, passing new legislation can be cumbersome, and the opposition can delay action. As an alternative, under certain circumstances and within a specific timeframe, Congress can use an expedited procedure, laid down in the 1996 Congressional Review Act (CRA), to overturn federal regulations passed by an outgoing administration.

Oversight of the US executive – The Congressional experience and its lessons for the EU

In-depth analysis by Cornelia Klugman, November 2016

This analysis presents the results of original research into the US system of oversight, based on a series of

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interviews with policy practitioners, including members of Congress, assistants to members of both houses of Congress, and people working in the US administration, think tanks and academia.

FURTHER READING

[The Biden challenge in foreign policy](#)

What Think Tanks are Thinking, Marcin Grajewski, March 2021

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