



Towards a new EU-US Security and Defence Dialogue

8.2.2021



On 27 January, the Subcommittee on Security and Defence and the Delegation for relations with the United States of America (D-US), met with representatives of the EEAS, the German Marshall Fund and the Penn Biden Center, to look into perspectives for a future bilateral transatlantic dialogue in security and defence.

Towards an EU Defence

“Over the past 4 years, we have seen that when the United States loses interest in the transatlantic partnership, the world becomes more dangerous and the threats more imminent and that we can no longer depend solely on the goodwill of our American ally or the outcome of the US elections”, said SEDE Chair Nathalie Loiseau.

“More than ever, we must advance towards greater efforts concerning European defence within the context of a stronger and deeper transatlantic dialogue”, she added.

Strengthening the strategic partnership

SEDE Chair Loiseau welcomed:

- Charles Fries, Deputy Secretary General for Common Security and Defence Policy (CSDP) and crisis response, EEAS;
- Dr. Alexandra de Hoop Scheffer, Director of research for Transatlantic Security and Director of the German Marshall Fund's Paris office;
- Dr. Michael Carpenter, Managing Director of the Penn Biden Center for Diplomacy and Global Engagement.

All speakers underlined the key strategic value the transatlantic partnership plays and urged its strengthening, also in relation to US participation in EU military initiatives and operations.

Sharing Intelligence

Charles Fries underlined the essential US military presence in Europe at a time of rising tensions in our wide neighborhood. He argued that today's challenges required intelligence sharing from both sides.

He recalled that the US welcomed the Council decision on third State participation in Permanent Structured Cooperation projects ([PESCO](#)) and that they will soon take part in an EU crisis management exercise for the first time.

Dialogue is key

Fries explained that the security and defense dialogue with the US could cover the full range of issues, such as relations with China, nonproliferation, and the Iran nuclear deal. Moreover, EU-US cooperation is key in the fight against cyber threats and climate security for a comprehensive transatlantic agenda. He underlined that 2021 is a decisive year to deepen our EU-US cooperation.

A security and defense dialogue is already held with Canada and is being negotiated with Norway.

Challenges ahead

Dr. Alexandra de Hoop Scheffer, Director of research for Transatlantic Security and Director of the German Marshall Fund's Paris office, indicated that four years of Trump administration had definitely changed the EU-US relationship and that the US was more focused on costs than ever before.

As publicly stated, President Biden will follow a foreign policy for the "middle classes". She also referred to the UK withdrawal from the EU, underlining that for the EU it will also have an impact on the EU-US relationship, despite the US role within NATO.

On a less positive note, de Hoop Scheffer underlined that the US is still skeptical towards the EU capacity to implement its defense commitments but that the dialogue could focus more on security issues.

Unconventional threats and strategic autonomy

Managing Director of the Penn Biden Center for Diplomacy and Global Engagement, Dr. Michael Carpenter, insisted on the fact that today US' greatest threats are not missiles but the impact of Covid-19, disinformation, online conspiracy theories, dark money and technology theft.

He stressed that the EU is a partner of first resort for the US in issues like Post-COVID-19 reconstruction, climate change, trade and technology, and democratic resilience. There must be a full agenda on cyberspace and a common effort to promote transparency and accountability of tech platforms.

Regarding strategic autonomy, Dr. Carpenter underlined that the US wishes a more capable EU in order to promote stability. On defence procurements, he said that parallel access to EU defence procurements should be ensured and the work should focus on how to build new capacities through joint ventures.

More information:

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