

Report

“Transatlantic Relations and the Challenges of Globalisation”

*24-25 October 2003
Schengen, Luxembourg*

Abstract

The Luxembourg Group, in association with the Luxembourg Institute for European and International Studies (LIEIS), held a conference on “Transatlantic Relations and the Challenges of Globalisation” on 24-25 October 2003 in Schengen, Luxembourg. This conference was the first in a series of three international colloquia on ‘International Cooperation and Conflict in the Post-September 11 World’. In the framework of this project, further conferences will be held on “The United Nations and Nation States in a Globalising World” in Washington D.C., scheduled for Spring 2004, and on “Humanitarian Assistance in Armed Conflict” in Geneva, scheduled for Summer 2004. This series of conferences is placed under the **High Patronage of H.R.H. the Grand Duke of Luxembourg**, who initiated the project and opened the Schengen meeting.



The Schengen conference was [funded by nine key economic actors from Luxembourg](#), namely Arcelor; Banque et Caisse d’Epargne de l’Etat Luxembourg; Banque Générale du Luxembourg; Banque de Luxembourg; Cargolux; Dexia Banque Internationale à Luxembourg; European Fund Administration; Kredietbank Luxembourg; SES Global.

Approximately 70 participants attended this first conference, both scholars and political and economic actors from more than 10 countries.

In the course of five discussion sessions and on the basis of presentations, the conference dealt with **four major topics**:

1. the historical and systemic analysis of the evolution of transatlantic relations
2. the nature and scope of current security issues and threats, as well as the possibilities of transatlantic responses
3. the various economic challenges in the context of globalisation and the consequences of contrasting policy responses across the Atlantic
4. the role of domestic politics and policies and the possible implications of a ‘values gap’ in transatlantic relations

There was wide agreement among participants that the transatlantic relations have been, and will continue to be, at the centre of the international system. The transatlantic relations are more solid than the recent crisis in the context of the Iraq War might suggest and there is enormous scope for mutually and globally beneficial cooperation. This is because the challenges posed by globalisation and by the new geo-political situation have greatly increased the potential for military, political and economic cooperation.

But it was also stressed that the transatlantic relations cannot be taken for granted and that major changes are required on both sides of the Atlantic to overcome the recent rift and to consolidate and enhance the scale and depth of cooperation. Disagreement revolved around the nature of the necessary reforms and on the prospect for improved and widened cooperation between the USA and Europe. More specifically, there were differences with respect to

- i. the actual economic and military weight of the USA
- ii. the possible evolution of the EU in the wake of Eastern enlargement
- iii. the future role and importance of NATO with view to the potential creation of an EU common security and defence policy and capability
- iv. the kind of economic reforms to be undertaken by both the USA and Europe
- v. the existence and the nature of a ‘values gap’ and the importance of domestic politics and policies in shaping foreign and defence policies

I. Europe’s Responsibility in the Transatlantic Relations and as a Global Actor

The opening session focused on Europe’s responses to some of the main changes in the recent history of international relations. These changes were described by **Jean-François Rischard**, Vice President for Europe of the World Bank, in his opening address as a ‘crisis of complexity’ in an increasingly challenging world. Among others, they include:

- the demographic explosion of the world population
- insufficient economic growth
- the events of 11 September and thereafter, especially the change of the US foreign policy stance



These (as well as other) phenomena put considerable strain on the capacity to manage political, economic and social affairs as well as on the conditions for policy-making. The speed and brutality of change has provoked a differential in national responses, which increases uncertainty and volatility.

On the whole, Europe’s response to these changes has been found wanting. Europe’s relative and

absolute weakness is apparent and calls for reflection on possible strategies to counter current tendencies and to raise Europe's role and influence on the world stage. Three 'damage-limitation' and three 'high-leverage' tracks were put forward for discussion.

The three 'damage-limitation' tracks are

(1) unavoidable economic reforms:

- a) in the face of
 - a falling proportion of Europe's economy in the world economy
 - a growth and productivity differential vis-à-vis the USA of approximately 50%
 - the failure to implement the Lisbon Agenda
- b) national reform efforts that are too little too late
- c) negotiate and implement a catching-up programme to the Lisbon Agenda that sets out indispensable structural reforms
- d) back up this programme by an information campaign and a fast-track programme for accession countries to leap-frog economic development and focus on building a knowledge-based economy

(2) security and defence policy:

- a) the failure to set up an operative Eurocorps puts strains on NATO and exaggerates demands on the USA, creating a transatlantic imbalance that is psychologically unhealthy
- b) enhance military spending, including on R&D, not to compete with, or oppose, the USA but to remain compatible with US equipment and to complement US capability

(3) foreign policy

- a) abolish the ineffective rotating EU presidency and pool resources of EU institutions abroad (why maintain separate Council and Commission representations in Washington?)
- b) supplement Convention reforms in several directions:
 - give future EU foreign representative power to speak on behalf of member-states
 - stress commonalities, not disagreements
 - create networks of permanent consultation and cooperation between national foreign ministries
 - promote the best European candidates in international organisations

The three 'high-leverage' tracks are:

(1) healing the transatlantic rift before it becomes a chasm by focusing on what binds the USA and Europe together

- a) liberal society
- b) principle of precaution

(2) encouraging Europe to take the lead on global 'problem-solving'

- a) addressing 20 or so urgent global problems:
 - 1/3 environmental problems

- 1/3 bio-technological problems
 - 1/3 economic issues (including AIDS, poverty and inequality)
- b) all these problems require some new global rules and institutions, since both international treaties and the UN are incapable of dealing with them promptly and adequately
 - c) one possibility is to set up a G20 with changing composition, introduce tripartite participation and strengthen information and policy networks
- (3) **enhancing Europe's involvement in the Middle East**, especially by providing urgently needed economic assistance and the perspective of medium- and long-term economic cooperation and integration

The discussion on these proposals focused on four issues:

- A) the need to supplement all economic analyses and policies with a political and cultural perspective in order to take account of specificities (the importance of religion in the Middle East and in the 'war against terror')
- B) the nature of the predominant economic model, its strengths but also its weaknesses (e.g. lack of investment for productive purposes and in human resources), and the possibilities for wider reforms (e.g. curtailing speculative activities and providing incentives and opportunities for investment and employment)
- C) the meaning – and reality – of the 'principle of precaution', especially in the face of current US policies (the doctrine of pre-emption and the rejection of the Kyoto Protocol) and the EU's failure to push for changes in Europe and elsewhere on these and related issues
- D) Europe's actual capability in the area of common foreign, security and defence policies (the 'Solana Paper') and the reforms and progress enshrined in the new constitution

II. Transatlantic Relations in the World System: from the 20th to the 21st Century

The first discussion session dealt with the past, present and future of the transatlantic relations and some of the implications of the recent divisions for national, international and global politics and



policies. Professor **David Calleo** (SAIS, Washington) was the lead speaker of a panel that included Lydie Polfer, Minister of Foreign Affairs of Luxembourg, Professor Jussi Hanhimäki (IUHEI), Professor Lothar Rühl (University of Cologne) and Jim Cloos,



Director of the General Secretariat of the Council of the EU.

Calleo argued that in the past the transatlantic relations were largely based on mutual necessity. This is certainly true for the duration of the Cold War, when there was 'a deep complementarity of goals, interests and perspectives between the US and the major states of Western Europe', united by

the threat of a common enemy – the USSR. Neither the USA nor Europe could afford to lose the other as ally in the confrontation of the two blocs. Most participants shared the conviction that the transatlantic alliance was also mutually beneficial, enabling Europe to overcome centuries of bloody conflict, permitting the USA to strengthen its geo-political position vis-à-vis the Soviet Union and granting both the benefits of political, economic and commercial cooperation.

But there was disagreement on the extent of common values and political goals, e.g. the status and importance of NATO for US strategic planning. Some argued that neither the threat of Islamic fundamentalism nor that of global terrorism constitutes a common enemy, which makes any shared transatlantic approach to the creation of a new world order unlikely. This goes back to the ‘strategic dissonance’ that reigns across the Atlantic, i.e. a discord over geo-political fundamentals, which is mutually disadvantageous (lack of legitimacy and effectiveness of US intervention and increase in European divisions). Others contended that the fundamental values that unite the USA and Europe are more important than the differences and that the transatlantic strategic partnership will continue to structure the international system, not least because it is grounded in complementarity (‘soft’ and ‘hard power’), mutual interest (intervention) and a common cultural space.

These two positions rest on different readings of the history of transatlantic relations and give rise to different predictions and policy recommendations. It was argued that after the end of the Cold War, the USA and Europe diverged on the fundamental nature of the new international order – unilateralism or multilateralism. Owing to dissimilar historical experiences and different strategic preferences, the USA opted for a unilateralist stance, while Europe sought to promote a multilateral project. The point is that there is now no longer a system based on a global balance of power and checks and balances. Instead, the USA seeks both economic and military supremacy, whereas Europe envisions a multilateral multipolar world composed of a number of important players, perhaps with the USA as an international *primus inter pares*. It was stressed by a number of participants that these divergent tendencies did not arise in the aftermath of 11 September 2001, but that they go back to the end of the Cold War and were accentuated by the events after the attacks on the World Trade Center.

Another argument was that it is crucial to distinguish between multilateralism and multipolarity: the former marks the international system since 1945 (GATT [now WTO], UN, NATO), while the latter has never existed. In the words of one participant, to equate one with the other is ‘historically wrong, logically untenable and without any future’. The point is to distinguish between uni- and multilateralism and between generalisation and differentiation.

Unilateralism and generalisation apply to the USA, which has recently tended to present the war against terror as a global threat posed by a single enemy and to confuse very different objectives and problems by amalgamating the question of terrorism, WMD and the conflict in the Middle East. Multilateralism and differentiation tend to be associated with Europe, which has argued that the last thing to do is to unify disparate enemies and that unilateralism and generalisation create more problems than they solve.

Moreover, multilateralism and multipolarity can be opposed to one another, as illustrated by the WTO summit in Cancún. But multilateralism is not simply an option; it requires at least two pre-conditions:

- a) several real poles of power (China, Russia, India, perhaps Japan and, not least, the EU)
- b) institutions guaranteeing a global balance of power, backed up by multilateral cooperation, e.g. strategic partnerships between the EU on the one hand, and Russia and China on the other

Other than the issue of multilateralism, the question is whether the divergent trends between the USA and Europe will – indeed can – be stopped and reversed, and how transatlantic relations can be restored and reconfigured. Again, there was disagreement on this question. For some, the current order is highly unstable but unlikely to be replaced by any alternative. US economic power is threatened by domestic self-inflicted economic problems (above all, the double deficit and the increasing dependency on foreign savings). The point is that, unlike during the Cold War when finance and investment in the US dollar were forthcoming, now the USA faces a highly unstable world economy where volatile capital operates on infinitesimally small margins of profit and the monopoly of the US dollar has been replaced by a global competition with the Euro.

US military power is similarly fragile and vulnerable to new threats. The fragility is not only due to domestic policy consideration, but also due to the perspective of an ‘imperial overstretch’ and the possible loss of military effectiveness. The USA is also vulnerable to the ‘Law of Asymmetrical Deterrence’, which, in contrast to nuclear mutual deterrence, means that there is a greater inducement for other countries to acquire equalizing weapons – a new race to rearmament. Unilateralism also carries the danger of losing precious allies and therefore of an even more unequal burden-sharing. Increasing intervention on the basis of pre-emption also greatly raises the costs of ‘nation-building’ and, if it fails, raises the spectre of ‘trading rogue states for failed states’. Finally, unilateralism is singularly inapt to fight and defeat global terrorism, because terrorism is asymmetrical warfare, i.e. the costs of combating terrorism exceed by far the costs of mounting it. As such and in virtue of its potential ubiquity, terrorism requires a multi-pronged global approach.

Notwithstanding the disagreement on the economic and military situation of the USA, the reality of unilateralism and on the depth of the transatlantic divergence, participants shared the conviction that both sides need to change their positions if the transatlantic rift is to be overcome. The USA needs to revise its current strategy, including its communication. Europe needs to ‘bring something useful to the party’, because power is grounded in actual real attraction and purposefulness, and not simply a function of perception. More specifically, four principles for a renewed transatlantic strategic partnership were set out:

- i. the USA and Europe should be allies and partners as such (not ‘let the mission define the company’ and not ‘who’s not with us is against us’)
- ii. fair burden-sharing, which is not confined to military spending but also to ‘nation-building’
- iii. real foreign policy objectives that exceed the war against terror
- iv. effective multilateralism, especially within the UN

There were also calls for a new type of balance of power, grounded in a constitution that is enforced by US leadership and also binds and circumscribes US power. This could complement urgently required reforms of the UN Security Council and the ongoing transformation of NATO. Most participants said that failure to restore and extend the transatlantic relations would entail more uncertainty and instability. Some went as far as saying that such failure could lead to a situation where both sides defeat each other. Europe could obstruct US interventions and jeopardise successful ‘nation-building’. And the USA could seek to undermine European efforts to unite and to constitute some military capability.

III. Current Security Issues, Threats and Transatlantic Responses

The second session highlighted some of the main security challenges for the transatlantic alliance and discussed whether and how these have been met and what remains to be done, especially in terms of the relations between the EU and NATO.



Professor **Daniel Hamilton** (SAIS, Washington) was the lead speaker for that session and the panel included Günther Altenburg, Deputy Secretary General for Political Affairs, Nato, François Heisbourg, Director of the Fondation pour la Recherche Stratégique, Paris, and Professor Urs Luterbacher (IUHEI).

If it is true to say that the decade from 9 November 1989 to 11 September 2001 marks a transition from the Cold War order to a new international order, then the question is what type of order is actually emerging and what type of order the transatlantic alliance is – and should be – promoting. It was argued that instead of reducing the issue to the policies of the current Bush administration, it would be more constructive to combine the opportunities of 9 November 1989 with the challenges of 11 September 2001. Daniel Hamilton focused on **three such challenges**:

(1) ‘win the peace as well as the war’

- a) both preventive diplomacy and post-conflict coordinated reconstruction: a new impetus to ‘nation-building’
- b) the question of military intervention in international law must be resolved
- c) correcting the stark imbalance between defence expenditure and spending on reconstruction (currently, US \$ 400 billion vs. US \$ 15 billion for reconstruction in Iraq)
- d) a ‘civilian capacity offensive’: create a robust civilian rapid response capacity to match and complement NATO’s rapid reaction force

(2) transformation of the Greater Middle East

- a) ark from the Maghreb countries via Israel and Palestine to Iran and Afghanistan
- b) renewed efforts to implement the road map for peace
- c) coordinate policy on Iran
- d) long-term perspective on engagement and development: institution-building

(3) ‘transatlantic homeland security’: coordinate civil protection activities

- a) effective protection requires cooperation among allies

- b) this, in turn, requires agreement on the underlying strategy: a comprehensive effort to reduce vulnerability in the USA, a focus on contingency arrangement for emergency scenarios following specific threats in Europe
- c) law enforcement and bio-terrorism as a 'first-order strategic threat to the Euro-Atlantic community' should be priority areas of enhanced coordination and cooperation

The discussions focused on four related questions:

A. the role of NATO

- i. there has never been a 'golden age' of the transatlantic alliance
- ii. 'power vs. paradise' à la Kagan does not capture the complexity of transatlantic relations
- iii. important changes and transformations have already taken place
 - the debate on 'out-of-area' interventions has been resolved: Afghanistan is the latest example, where 'NATO has helped the USA out of a mess'
 - a EU-NATO strategic cooperation is already in place (e.g. Macedonia, Kosovo)
 - there are considerable efforts to create and consolidate strategic partnerships with geo-political heavyweights like Russia and Turkey the potential of NATO casts doubt on the *raison d'être* of the recent Tervuren initiative on the part of some EU member-states

B. the reality of US military power and US strategic priorities

- i. the USA is the only superpower but not a hegemon and prone to 'overstretch':
 - no-one was convinced about the necessity to intervene in Iraq other than those who already believed in it
 - by Spring 2004, the USA might not be able to maintain 120,000 troops in Iraq
- ii. Europe has ceased to be US strategic priority
- iii. the US is neither purely isolationist nor ubiquitously interventionist

C. in the face of the changing context of international geo-politics:

- i. China is the emerging rival and so is Russia, albeit to a lesser extent
- ii. neither are copying the US approach, let alone the US way of life: emergence of alternatives or even counter-models
- iii. global terrorism is a new phenomenon and is not be equated with state terrorism
- iv. Kosovo in 1999 and Iraq in 2003 mark 'one-off' scenarios:
 - neither the USA nor Europe will want to repeat these experiences
 - collateral damage was enormous, both in military and diplomatic terms

The transatlantic alliance is and remains the stepping stone for international cooperation and globalisation:

- a) if there is transatlantic agreement, the USA and Europe are a force of progress
- b) if not, both act as a brake on change and transformation

IV. Economic Challenges

The third session dealt with the core economic challenges facing the USA and Europe, including domestic economic problems and reforms, as well as global economic questions and possible

solutions. The panel included: **Lionel Barber**, Chief Editor US Edition of the Financial Times, New York, who addressed the macroeconomic challenges confronting the world economy; Professor Patrick Messerlin (Institut d'Etudes Politiques de Paris) who dealt with trade issues; Professor Damien Neven (IUHEI) who focused on competition policy and Professor Ernesto Hernandez-Cata (SAIS, Washington) who emphasized the plight of the poorest countries.

It was argued that the current economic situation gives rise to transatlantic tensions. Whereas US growth stands at approximately 3.5% per year, growth in the Eurozone is inferior to 2%. In the USA

as elsewhere, there is a widespread perception that Europe is a low-growth, high-unemployment area and that it is the sole responsibility of the EU to solve these problems. It was also argued that Europe's poor economic performance has been caused by an absence or lack of structural reforms, especially in Germany (now the 'sick man of Europe') and in France, where the path of reform has been 'too little too late'.



The illusion was to think that the Euro would entail adjustments and transformations without the need for national action plans. The Euro has been a considerable success, but it can only ever be a necessary – never a sufficient – condition for economic growth. Another area of policy failure is the demographic development (falling birth rates, ageing population, decline in the active population) and the ensuing economic problems, in particular the pension system.

But this bleak outlook should not detract from similarly serious economic challenges in the USA. Although there is currently a certain economic momentum building up, important questions remain:

- a) is the current economic path sustained and sustainable?
- b) is the USA witnessing jobless or even 'job-loss' economic growth?
- c) how to square free-market rhetoric and policies in some sectors with increased protectionism in others?
- d) the main problem is the explosion of the budget and trade deficits:
 - there is currently a highly unstable equilibrium
 - a loss of confidence in the US \$ could provoke nothing less than a collapse of the US economy and therefore of the world economy

It was argued that there is at the same time cause for transatlantic conflict and reason to cooperate. Scope for conflict arises in connection with questions of competition (e.g. Microsoft) and the formation of international cartels. There is still a wide gap between the US and the European regulatory regimes. The USA and Europe also have different and diverging economic and commercial interests (e.g. national agriculture and steel industry). But there is sufficient reason to promote cooperation:

- a) China could prove to be the main economic competitor for both the USA and Europe

- b) the failure to conclude the Doha Round of the WTO is a shared responsibility and there is a common interest to re-launch negotiations
- c) hard core cartels pose problems and justify new common rules, including international accounting standards and a regulatory control of globally operating audit firms
- d) increasing global economic disparities require concerted efforts to promote economic development and help more countries to join the group of countries known as ‘globalisers’, which grow at more than 5% per year

These common challenges call forth some sort of cooperative work-sharing, especially at a time where there is a genuine window of opportunity to restore and extend transatlantic relations

V. Domestic Politics and the ‘Values Gap’ in Transatlantic Relations

The last session addressed the question of whether there is a ‘values gap’ between the USA and Europe and how this is related to domestic politics and policies. The lead speaker was Professor **Richard Crockatt** (University of East Anglia). The panelists included: Lotte Leicht, Director of



Human Rights Watch in Brussels, on human right issues; Professor Richard Pells (University of Texas at Austin) on cultural differences between the two sides of the Atlantic; and Professor David Sylvan (IUHEI) on the need to focus on policy rather than value differences. Discussions also focused on the implications and on potential policy solutions. Closing remarks were made by **Jean-Claude Juncker**, Prime Minister of Luxembourg.



There was disagreement on the nature and the reality of a ‘values gap’ in transatlantic relations. One argument was that there are clear cultural differences between the USA and Europe, which underscore the existence of such a gap.

Among these differences there are:

- 1) **the way of life**, widely thought to differ sharply across the Atlantic
- 2) **the meaning and status of nationality and civilisation**: in the USA, there is an increasing tendency to equate the American nation and cause with that of the world
The ‘war on terror is the world’s fight, civilisation’s fight’ (George W. Bush)
- 3) **the nature of domestic politics and policies**: while in the USA, foreign policy is largely dictated by domestic policy considerations, the same is not true of Europe

According to this argument, these differences warrant a cultural perspective and analysis, including the application of Huntington’s thesis of a ‘clash of civilisations’. More specifically, the following phenomena can be observed:

- a) after the end of the Cold War and in the wake of the events of 11 September, the USA has displayed tendencies to accentuate ‘Americanness’ and to exaggerate the sense of the American nation as unique, exceptional and bestowed with a universal mission
- b) ‘much of Anti-Americanism is a response to this heightened civilisation-consciousness and the political and military actions which are prompted by it’

In the face of these phenomena, there are at least three questions:

- i. what does it mean to frame foreign policy according to the sole prism of the ‘war on terror’?
- ii. how do the USA and Europe conceive and pursue the goals of freedom and democracy?
- iii. how seriously should a cultural perspective be taken and how to apply it to the question of transatlantic relations?

In a similar vein, it can be argued that the political culture does indeed determine whether and under what circumstances transatlantic relations will improve and Europe will become a global player. One possibility is that a substantial increase in military spending and fundamental structural reforms are simply not desired by a majority of European electors and that the sheer costs of both these changes will be met with refusal. If this happened, then Europe would not raise its international profile and the USA would not consider Europe to be a ‘first-order’ strategic ally and partner.

But there was profound disagreement on the nature of the ‘values gap’. One argument was to say that there are no fundamental differences in values, but crucial differences in the application of human rights, in particular the mechanisms and channels of enforcement of basic liberties. While Europe has signed and ratified the overwhelming majority of international treaties and agreements (most recently the creation of the international criminal court [ICC]), the USA has for some time now taken a very different stance:

- i. the USA has signed – but not ratified – a number of international treaties, chief among them the 1st protocol to the four Geneva conventions on war
- ii. the USA has refused to sign – or withdrawn signature from – a number of international treaties, namely the treaty creating the ICC and the Kyoto Protocol
- iii. the current US administration has bullied many countries into accepting bilateral agreements on the immunity of US citizens, exempting them from any prosecution and extradition and therefore undermining fatally the operation of the ICC
- iv. the current US administration has also repeatedly violated international law and universally recognised human rights, most recently in Afghanistan, Iraq and in Guantanamo Bay
- v. the current US administration has also changed the terms of debate (disagreement is now disloyalty and treason) and the rules of engagement in the case of war, although the conventions on war are the best to be had, including for the protection of soldiers and civilians alike

It was also argued that this stance should call forth reflections on the fundamental societal model of the USA. Are not the policies of the current administration diametrically opposed to the American tradition of civil liberties and therefore a threat to the domestic political culture? Should not the current unilateral trend be a worry to all Americans who believe in multilateralism? More fundamentally, is there not a case to reconsider Western strategies to impose one and the same political and economic model on very different cultures?

Other participants argued that the ‘values gap’ is simply of no consequence to policy-making and that it is preferable to focus on policy differences. This is because there are three problems with the argument that the ‘values gap’ impacts on policy-making:

(1) specification problem:

- i. how to define values?
- ii. which values? one fixed set of values or changing values?

(2) aggregation problem:

- i. even if there was one value or one set of values, who is concerned?
- ii. at what level does a 'value gap' apply? Does it not hold even between close advisers of one President on one side of the Atlantic (Powell vs. Rumsfeld, Rice vs. Cheney)?

(3) mapping problem: there is a 'values gap', so what?

- i. one and the same policy measure can be motivated by a host of different values
- ii. how to identify and disentangle these different values?

In this line, it was argued that there is not so much a 'values gap' across the Atlantic as within Europe and among European governments. In recent times two changes have occurred that have cast a shadow on transatlantic relations: first, the practice of pre-emption has been elevated into a doctrine and, secondly, there is dissent on the tone and the presentation of policies. But the fundamental values and goals remain unchanged. If at all, it is up to the Europeans to realign themselves with the new geo-political order. After all, before, during and after the Iraq war, divisions have persisted between European countries, not primarily between Europe and the USA, which could count on the support of many European allies, old and new alike.

But a number of participants took a different perspective. One argument was that the current US administration has transformed unilaterally the 'rules of the game' and that the responsibility for the rift cannot be attributed solely to the 'Old Europe' in general and France in particular. Another argument was to say that any 'values gap' across the Atlantic is not a tragedy and that it can – and should – lead to debate and discussions, both between the USA and Europe and within the EU. Given the might of US economic and military power, it is the EU that has to overcome internal divisions and produce a common project, which could be the basis for a renewed and changed transatlantic alliance and which might be able to induce policy changes on the other side of the Atlantic.

Adrian Pabst
LIEIS
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