

## THE TRANSATLANTIC RELATIONS – CURRENT STATE AND PERSPECTIVES

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***Abstract:** A review of the past three decades reveals that the transatlantic relations are based and have developed on shared values and interests of both sides of the Atlantic. Most of the post-Cold War period was marked by the United States and the European Union's common action and joint support for multilateralism worldwide. Engagement and enlargement defined the 1990s and drew up the globalization era, while the 9/11 attacks brought together the United States and the European Union, along with their partners, in the global fight against terrorism. Starting with 2007 diverse challenges influenced the United States and the European Union re-directing focus on their own agenda. Diverse standpoints during the past years on highly visible topics such as the trade policy, Iran nuclear issue and climate change have pointed to a potential erosion of the transatlantic relations during the term of President Donald Trump. It is important to notice that these developments have occurred in a context marked by the accelerated competition of major international actors, and in particular, the rise of China as a challenger for the United States. The term of President-elect Joe Biden is expected to reset the United States' foreign policy towards multilateralism and common action along with partners worldwide. Consequently, the transatlantic partnership is expected to revive in the following years, as the United States will likely revise its standpoint on several issues of EU – US common interest.*

***Keywords:** United States, European Union, NATO, China, Russia, Iran, Asia-Pacific, Transatlantic Partnership, Transatlantic Declaration, EU Global Strategy, Paris Agreement, Joint Comprehensive Plan of Action, Intermediate-Range Nuclear Forces Treaty, New START, financial crisis, migration, Islamic State, Euroscepticism, Brexit, multilateralism, engagement, enlargement.*

### **1. The transatlantic relations – a retrospective of the past three decades**

A review of the post-Cold War transatlantic relations reveals decades of openness, development and deepness of the transatlantic partnership, based on shared or complementary interests of the United States

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and the European Union. Of late, it becomes noticeable that recent tendencies of changing in the international order affecting both actors trigger an adjustment of their behavior towards the preservation of self-interests at the expense of the common goal.

During the first post-Cold War decade the United States and the European Union were positive and proactive, promoting diversity and multilateral relations worldwide as a step towards the build-up of a solid global system having the United States at its core.

At the end of bipolar world, the United States redefined its foreign policy to take full advantage of its winner position after the Cold War. President Bill Clinton's (term 1993 – 2001) *Democratic Enlargement* doctrine, also known as *The Clinton doctrine*, directed United States action towards two main domains, *engagement and enlargement*, to achieve four strategic objectives: 1) reduce security competition and risk of major conflicts; 2) decrease weapons of mass destruction; 3) stimulate world economy; 4) build-up an international order consistent with American values.<sup>1</sup>

Against this background, the 1990s marked the United States' openness towards Europe, including the states of the former Eastern Bloc, which were encouraged to join the North Atlantic Treaty Organization and the European Union. Due to common values and similar requests and conditions of adherence, joining one of the two international organizations was a facilitator for later joining the other.

During this period, the United States engagement with European states grows in the political, security, and economy domains and significant progress is made in the field of arms control, disarmament and non-proliferation<sup>2</sup>.

During the 1990s, the European Union develops and lays the foundation of its enlargement and consolidation with the aim at

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<sup>1</sup>Julien Zarifian, *U.S. Foreign Policy in the 1990s and 2000s, and the Case of the South Caucasus (Armenia, Azerbaijan, Georgia)*, *The U.S. and the world during the 1990s and the 2000s*, European Journal of American Studies, available at: <https://journals.openedition.org/ejas/11135>, accessed 25 October 2020;

<sup>2</sup> In 1993, the US President George H.W. Bush and the Russian President Boris Yeltsin signed the Strategic Arms Reduction Treaty (START I) which served as the foundation of later bilateral agreement on New START enforced in 2011.

strengthening itself as a global actor. To this end, the *Treaty on European Union*, signed in Maastricht<sup>3</sup>, in 1992, adds two new pillars of cooperation between the member states, i.e. the common foreign and security policy and justice and home affairs. Further, the European Union designed and implemented complex mechanisms to support the development of the economic, financial and trade sectors. The economic growth and competitiveness became priorities on the European Union's agenda.

The common foreign and security policy of the Union became active and strongly anchored in the events in the Balkan and Middle East regions. Moreover, EU's relations with Russia started to improve in 1993.

*The Transatlantic Declaration* signed in 1990 lays the groundwork for the cooperation between the United States and the European Union. Later, the New Transatlantic Agenda<sup>4</sup> launched in 1995 sets up four major domains of common action: 1) promoting peace, development and democracy; 2) response to global challenges; 3) extending world trade and development of economic relations; 4) enhancing transatlantic relations by communication. All four objectives pointed to the major change to come, the globalization that would connect people, institutions, governments and organizations worldwide.

Throughout the 1990s the convergent stance of the United States and the European Union on the strategic realities of the time stands out, as well as the leading role assumed by Washington in imposing and managing the global agenda.

The 9/11 attacks in 2001 caused a swift redirection of the entire Western world's effort in the fight against terrorism under the leadership of the United States. Theatres of operations in Afghanistan and Iraq became focal points of common action for the United States, NATO, the European Union and their partner states eager to join the European and/or the Euro-

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<sup>3</sup>EUR-Lex, *Treaty on European Union*, available at: <https://eur-lex.europa.eu/legal-content/RO/TXT/?uri=CELEX:11992M/TXT>, accessed 5 November 2020;

<sup>4</sup>US Department of State, Archive, *New Transatlantic Agenda: Recent Accomplishments and Future Hopes*, available at: <https://1997-2001.state.gov/regions/eur/eu/megatalk.html>, accessed 22 October 2020;

Atlantic community. In this context, we witness the ample EU and NATO enlargement process adding 12 new member states to the Union and nine to the Alliance.

During this period, the globalization extended to an unprecedented level and the transatlantic cooperation reached its peak. The United States' display of national elements of power made obvious its leading role on the global scene and undeniable the reality of the unipolar international system.

The financial crisis during 2007 – 2009 shook both the United States and the European Union and favored the economic rise of China.

In addition to that, the nuclear program developed by North Korea emerged as a serious threat to the West. Even though the European Union did not perceive a direct threat from China or North Korea, it acted in full solidarity with the US through its standpoint and its actions.

On the hand, for the United States it became obvious that China and North Korea are major potential threats to its interests and its security. The need to address these strategic challenges made the United States under Obama administration increasingly preoccupied by developments in the Asia – Pacific region.

Secondary, Russia and Iran have exploited the Arab Spring's chaos and United States' signs of disengagement in the Middle East to increase their own influence in the region and to consolidate their status of major regional players, thus affecting US' status in the region.

Further, 2010 – 2020 proved to be a period of significant challenges for the European Union and the United States. In 2014, the illegal annexation of Crimea by Russia, followed by the conflict in Eastern Ukraine revealed new threats, both security ones, especially for states along the Eastern Flank of NATO, and political ones, determined by Russia's attempts to reemerge on the international scene as a prominent actor. Furthermore, the illegal annexation of Crimea was and still is an obvious challenge to the international order based on rules.

In this context, NATO launched the adaptation process with concrete operational effects by setting up new Allied structures and increasing military presence on the Eastern Flank of the Alliance. The annual meetings of the heads of states and governments during 2016 – 2019 point out the significant concern and the growing willingness to address the emerging challenges and enhance security in the Euro-Atlantic area.

In its turn, the European Union faced serious difficulties in managing the illegal migration phenomenon and different standpoints of the member states on the issue affected the unity and cohesion within the Union, while the *Euroscepticism* extended in the European political spectrum. The 2016 referendum in Great Britain indicated the will of the British people to leave the EU and thus the difficult negotiation process of the separation known as Brexit began. With Great Britain out of the European Union, France and Germany took up the leading role within the Union.

In the United States, President Barack Obama (term 2009 – 2017) shifted Washington foreign policy towards Asia – Pacific region and initiated the process of closing old files related to Middle East. In 2010, the annihilation of Al-Qaeda leader, Osama bin Laden, provided the context and justification for US' gradual reduction of engagement and military presence in the region. Following the same logic, the Joint Comprehensive Plan of Action with Iran was signed in 2015.

During this period, the United States relations with Israel tended to cool. At the same time, even though on the same page regarding the topics of common interest, the United States and the European Union tend to focus largely on their own priorities.

Starting with 2017, President Donald Trump brought forward on the United States' foreign agenda the economic competition with China, the North Korea nuclear file and increasing tensions with Iran along with United States' withdrawal from the Joint Comprehensive Plan of Action agreed during the previous administration.

It is also of note the boost of the United States' relations with Israel following Washington's decision to move the embassy from Tel Aviv to Jerusalem in 2017.

In relation with the European Union, Trump administration has revealed, for the first time in three decades, visible and significant different standpoints related to major topics.

## 2. Present status of the transatlantic relations

The European Union and the United States have a strong and long-standing Transatlantic Partnership, based on common values and interests worldwide. The past three decades of EU – US common understanding and action proved to be productive and mutual beneficial.

At present, the domains of cooperation cover foreign affairs policy on topics of shared interest such as countering terrorism, security, energy, Russia, Ukraine and the Western Balkans.

From the economic standpoint „the combined economies of the EU and the US still account for almost 50% of global gross domestic product (GDP) and one third of world trade”<sup>5</sup>.

However, during the past years, the transatlantic relations have been the subject of numerous analysis and predictions due to the emergence and extended public emphasize of different views affirmed from both sides of the Atlantic. The trade policy, Iran nuclear file, and global warming are clear examples of the kind that have created the perception of witnessing the erosion of the transatlantic relations.

A particular highlight and public coverage was given to the tense episode regarding the trade relations between the European Union and the United States in 2018. The Union has perceived US’ intention to impose higher tariffs for steel and the threatening remarks on new tariffs on cars as unproductive and unfair, while Trump administration viewed the corrective measures as needed from the perspective of the American people’s interest and consistent with his term’s promise - „*America First!*”

Also, the United States firm standpoint towards the Allies within NATO on meeting the target of 2% of the gross domestic product (GDP) for defence was a sensitive topic for some European Allies, even though the request referred to a pledge (*Defence Investment Pledge*) assumed by the heads of states and governments at the NATO Summit in Wales in 2014.

The extended public coverage of the matter was exploited to induce the idea of potential disengagement of the United States from NATO and European security. Despite this mistaken perception, US’ expenditure on

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<sup>5</sup> Fact Sheets on the European Union, European Parliament, *Transatlantic relations: the USA and Canada*, available at: <https://www.europarl.europa.eu/factsheets/en/sheet/174/-transatlantic-relations-the-usa-and-canada>, accessed 25 October 2020;

Defence within NATO by member states totals almost 70% and US' armed forces have increased their presence and activity in Europe during the past years, including by European Deterrence Initiative<sup>6</sup>.

Related to the energy sector, the United States has stressed the need to reduce dependency on energy imports from Russia, which is the main supplier of the European states, by diversifying sources of energy and multiplication of transport route. On the other hand, the European Union assesses as feasible and profitable North Stream 2, a project connecting Russia with Europe via the Baltic States and Germany, due to the considerable reduction of European energy resources.

The United States withdrawal from the Joint Comprehensive Plan of Action and the Paris Agreement in 2018 represents a clear indication of Trump administration different understanding and view on addressing present challenges from those of the European Union. Both topics bear a particular relevance for the shared values and common action of the EU and US on the international scene. For this reason, US' foreign policy actions increased concern regarding the future approach of the United States and the European Union in facing regional and global challenges.

Great Britain, France and Germany, along with the European Union, as well as Obama administration put significant effort in reaching Iran nuclear deal in 2015 and still consider it the appropriate solution to Iran nuclear issue. At the same time, the European Union regards the agreement on climate change signed in Paris the same year as a global priority. The United States' withdrawal from both agreements has certainly weakened their relevance and reduced their impact in terms of positive results and effects.

At present, the European Union admits: “the transatlantic relationship currently faces significant challenges”<sup>7</sup> referring to “Iran,

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<sup>6</sup> Congressional Research Service, *European Deterrence Initiative: A Budgetary Overview*, 16 June 2020, available at: <https://fas.org/sgp/crs/natsec/IF10946.pdf>, accessed 25 October 2020;

<sup>7</sup> Fact Sheets on the European Union, European Parliament, *Transatlantic relations: the USA and Canada, EU-US foreignpolicyrelations*, available at: <https://www.europarl.europa.eu/>

climate change, tariffs on steel and aluminium, the role of multilateral institutions and the rules-based order”<sup>8</sup>.

In turn, Trump administration was US-centered and therefore driven by a strong pragmatic behavior focused on the achievement of US’ interests and concrete and immediate benefits for the American side in relation with all the other states and international organization, including the European Union and the European states.

Nevertheless, President Donald Trump’s firm attitude and public stance when approaching the international agenda has emphasized the perception of unbalance and divergence between the United States and the European Union, despite the ongoing tight cooperation between the two parties, based on to the engagements assumed in the Transatlantic Partnership.

### **3. What influences present transatlantic relations?**

After the Cold War, the transatlantic relations have grown and got deeper as the United States and the European Union had common interests and complementary objectives. The undisputable unipolar global system pleased both parties and offered the ground to pursue mutual beneficial goals.

Lately, the tendencies of change within the international system seem to set off the instinctive reaction of self-preservation and protection of the individual interests, sometimes at the expense of the common ones, affecting the relation between the parties.

When approaching the topic of the transatlantic relations at present it is important to bear in mind the accelerated dynamics of the international relations. Recent developments on the international scene point out the advanced geopolitical competition of major actors and tendencies to alter the balance of power in particular regions.

By far, the most significant development in international relations with potential to affect severely the players (seen as relevant states, regional and international organizations) and relations amongst them is the economic rise of China and its possible achievement of the super-power position.

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factsheets/en/sheet/174/transatlantic-relations-the-usa-and-canada, accessed 26 October 2020;

<sup>8</sup> Idem.



During the past 20 years, China has impressively evolved in the economic and technologic domains. Over the past two decades, China has attained large access to natural resources in Africa and has invested massively in oil industry in Middle East. Beijing has also launched investments programs in strategic sectors in Europe, and has extended its economic and trade activity in the United States.

Moreover, the technological advance has made China a top competitor on new technologies word market, an advantage that Beijing is attempting to explore to widen its access to the West and build new partnerships with European states.

Economic experts and analysts put China on the second position worldwide, after the United States from the economic point of view, considering the gross domestic product (GDP) of the two countries, and forecast China will outrun the United States in the following decade and will become the first economic power worldwide.

Obviously, the rise of China poses a direct threat to the United States and US' supremacy in international affairs. That is the reason why US' approaches China as a *major problem* that needs to be solved, including by widening the gap between the economies of the two countries. Approaches and management tools may differ from one administration to another. However, the problem still stands and calls for Washington's rapid and effective response.

Moreover, the ongoing Covid-19 crisis and its medium and long-term effects could complicate the relations between China and the United States even more.

Secondary, Russia's regional influence has increased after the annexation of Crimea, affecting the balance of power in the Black Sea region and boosting Moscow's relevance in Middle East. Moreover, the consolidation of the Russian military power and the perpetuation of its assertive behavior in the proximity of the Euro-Atlantic area cause additional difficulties for the United States and require US' consistent engagement in NATO and in the European security.

In august 2019, the United States withdrew from the Intermediate-Range Nuclear Forces (INF) Treaty denouncing Russia's non-compliance

with the agreement. Discharged of INF obligations, the United States may now focus on countering China's nuclear arsenal in the Pacific. At the same time, the cancellation of INF Treaty may lead to the re-lunch of the arms race causing negative effects on security worldwide.

On the other hand, Russia has exploited the reduction of the United States' engagement in the Middle East to gain a relevant role in the regional dynamics. Moscow has offered substantial and consistent support to Assad regime in Syria, increased cooperation with Egypt, and tightened connections to Iran, Teheran being also interested in consolidating its own influence in the region.

All-important, both Iran nuclear issue and North Korea nuclear problem are still matters unsolved after US' withdrawal from the Joint Comprehensive Plan of Action and the failed summit of the United States and North Korea presidents.

In its turn, the European Union focuses on its rise as global actor and attempts to increase its independence of other actors, including the United States and NATO.

Therefore, unlike the United States, the European Union does not perceive China as major and direct threat but rather as a challenge, that requires attention. Part of the European Union's member states participate in the Belt and Road Initiative promoted worldwide by China, but they are reluctant to contracting Chinese companies for 5G technology.

On the other hand, the European Union has remained committed to Iran nuclear deal and climate chance agreement.

During the past years, the European Union was confronted with its own challenges and threats: terrorism, illegal migration, Euroscepticism and Brexit to name the major ones. Except for the common perception of terrorism, we notice diverse views of the US and the EU on the other matters. For the United States the solution for its own illegal migration problem was opposed to that of the EU's and Brexit gained the US a closer friend in Great Britain, while for the European Union was a significant loss. At the same time, the EU and the US faced different manifestations of the domestic political and social polarization.

The appearance and rise of the Islamic State<sup>9</sup> terrorist organization and the *foreign fighters*<sup>10</sup> phenomenon has led to a significant increase of the terrorist threat in Europe, especially in the Western European countries, after 2013. Radicalization and terrorist attacks became more difficult to detect, prevent and counter. Therefore, European states' authorities and European Union as a whole came under a lot of pressure from society in their struggle to mitigate the terrorist threat.

In addition to that, the massive illegal migration from Middle East and North Africa to Europe became a serious problem for the European Union in 2016 as several member states viewed different approaches in addressing the matter and strongly resisted to receiving migrants in their countries, thus affecting the cohesion of the Union.

Challenges related to security, economic dynamic, unemployment rate and the increased difficulty to reach consensus on pressing issues has exposed the European Union to Euroscepticism. The major effect of growing Euroscepticism was the result of the British referendum pointing out the will of British people to leave the EU.

After Brexit, France and Germany grew in prominence within the European Union and assumed the informal leadership of the Union in difficult times, attempting to turn the challenges into opportunities for the Union.

Against this background, in 2016, the European Union adopted the "EU Global Strategy" and by its content, it assumed a prominent role as a global actor, setting up security as the first priority of the Union. In the security and defence sector, the European Union vows to achieve important

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<sup>9</sup> Islamic State terrorist organization also known by the acronym ISIS (Islamic States in Iraq and Syria) and ISIL (Islamic State in Iraq and Levant) or DAESH (the Arabic correspondent of Islamic State in Iraq and Levant's acronym).

<sup>10</sup> Persons from other countries, including European ones, who have joined ISIS in the terrorist campaign in Syria or in other countries affected by war and terrorism during and post-Arab Spring. In numerous cases, after they left Middle East and returned to their home countries they conducted terrorist activities.

progress in equipping, training and organizing forces so that EU to be able to conduct military actions autonomous, if needed.<sup>11</sup>

At the same time, the European Union affirms the will to deepen the cooperation with NATO based on complementarity and synergy of efforts<sup>12</sup>. Acting upon its declared intentions and based on the mutual productive approach of NATO – EU cooperation, the international organizations adopted two common declarations in 2016 and 2018<sup>13</sup>, in the margins of NATO Summits boosting the practical collaboration on matters of common interest such as hybrid threats, cyber security, industry and research and exercises.

All important, “*EU Global Strategy*” states the European Union’s commitment to enhance relations with the United States and Canada.

It is important to note that France and Germany promoted together the project aimed at consolidating the European defence in 2018, and both leaders experienced divergent views with US president related to NATO, due to the Germany’s reluctance to increase the defence budget and France’s assessment on the reduced relevance of the North Atlantic Alliance. However, the disagreeing episodes were left behind and have not affected the transatlantic bond on which NATO is based.

We notice that during the past years both the European Union and the United States have been concerned with their own challenges and have acted upon them as each considered proper.

Thus, despite common geopolitical interests and convergent actions on numerous topics - such as fighting international terrorism, addressing emergent threats, reducing the risk of conflicts, building peace and stability, and promoting the democratic values worldwide - the transatlantic relations during the past years seemed to erode, especially in the course of President Donald Trump’s term at the White House.

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<sup>11</sup> *Global Strategy for European Union’s Foreign and Security Policy – Shared Vision, Common Action: A Stronger Europe*, page 20, available at: [https://eeas.europa.eu/sites/eeas/files/eugs\\_review\\_web\\_0.pdf](https://eeas.europa.eu/sites/eeas/files/eugs_review_web_0.pdf), accessed 22 October 2020;

<sup>12</sup> *Idem*.

<sup>13</sup> European Union External Action, *EU-NATO cooperation*, Factsheets, available at: [https://eeas.europa.eu/headquarters/headquarters-Homepage/28286/eu-nato-cooperation-factsheet\\_en](https://eeas.europa.eu/headquarters/headquarters-Homepage/28286/eu-nato-cooperation-factsheet_en), accessed 24 October 2020;

Diverse perceptions regarding security threats and the means to mitigate them made the European Union and the United States stand firm on their own agenda and put individual interests first, influencing the relation between the two actors to a certain extent.

For the first time in the last three decades, we witness a global crisis, in this case caused by Covid-19, and the United States and the European Union do not share an obvious common response and endeavor in addressing it.

#### **4. Perspectives of the transatlantic relations post-Trump administration**

The 2020 US' presidential elections held in November, even though not finally official validated at present, indicate Joe Biden as President-elect, despite President Donald Trump's claim of victory and his allegations of electoral fraud.

The United States' democratic representatives and their supporters worldwide consider Trump administration responsible for isolating US due to the domestic focused and predominant bilateral approach of the regional and world players on matters of global interest at the expense of multilateral consultations and common solutions, which laid the foundation of United States supremacy for decades.

Secondary, it is assessed that the transatlantic relations' recent tendencies of erosion are the result of Trump administration foreign policy and therefore a revival of the transatlantic partnership is expected during the term of President-elect Joe Biden, who wrote in January 2020 *“As president, I will elevate diplomacy as the United States' principal tool of foreign policy. I will reinvest in the diplomatic corps, which this administration has hollowed out, and put U.S. diplomacy back in the hands of genuine professionals.”*<sup>14</sup>

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<sup>14</sup> Defence One, *Special Report: What if Biden Wins?*, available at: <https://www.defenseone.com/ideas/2020/06/what-if-biden-wins/166559/>, accessed 20 November 2020.

Based on President-elect statements during the presidential campaign, a reset in the United States' foreign policy will occur starting with Joe Biden's takeover of the White House in January 2021. The US' foreign policy approach is going to change and multilateral consultations will dictate the common action needed to address the present global challenges.

These are favorable premises for European Union, considering that EU is directly interested in re-engaging in constructive consultations with the United States. The European Commission President Ursula von der Leyen, in her speech at the annual EU ambassadors' conference, held in November 2020, stated: "*In a changing global landscape, I believe it is time for a new transatlantic agenda fit for today's world [...] and I believe it is Europe who should take the initiative, with an offer to work together with the new administration on areas that can strengthen our bilateral and multilateral partnerships. This should cover everything from security to sustainability, from tech regulation to trade, from leveling the global economic playing field to strengthening global institutions.*"<sup>15</sup>

However, it is not clear how the future US administration will manage the adjustments of what is considered precedent administration's wrong doings.

In the matter of the transatlantic relations, it is likely that the EU – US talks on trade policy will resume in an attempt to reach a mutual beneficial ground to develop further the trade cooperation between the two parties. Even though we can expect some corrections to the present agreement for the benefit of the European Union, the United States will not likely submit to a disadvantageous settlement, having in mind that the US is facing its own economic shortfalls.

Multilateralism, climate change and Iran nuclear issues are topics of common interest and shared approach by the European Union and President-elect Joe Biden, as he often stated that the US should not have withdrawn from the two agreements. Therefore, we can anticipate United States' increased involvement with the international organizations,

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<sup>15</sup> European Commission, *Europe is ready to engage, von der Leyen tells annual EU Ambassadors' Conference*, available at: [https://ec.europa.eu/commission/presscorner/detail/en/AC\\_20\\_2087](https://ec.europa.eu/commission/presscorner/detail/en/AC_20_2087), accessed 21 November 2020.

including the European Union, in addressing global challenges, and its probable return to the World Health Organization and Paris Agreement.

On the other hand, the revival of the Joint Comprehensive Plan of Action with Iran, signed in 2015, might prove difficult to reach having in mind that Iran already acts partially freed of its commitments after US' withdrawal, in 2018, and US – Iran tense relations significantly increased after the assassination of Iranian top general Qasem Soleimani in January 2020. Therefore, re-building Washington – Teheran trust will likely take time and prolonged negotiations. An important variable for the future Iran – US relations will be the Iranian president, after the elections in 2021.

A positive aspect from the European standpoint is that, in its endeavor to reset relations with Iran and reinforce the Iran nuclear agreement or reach a new one, the future US administration will probably retract sanctions for the European states cooperating with Iran.

Given that the threat that China poses to the United States cannot be denied or neglected, China will remain the top priority for the United States. Even though the tense relations between Washington and Beijing might lower during the new US administration, the US – China strategic competition will remain the status-quo regardless the name and political adherence of the United States' president.

There is a tendency to credit a new approach of President-elect Biden in dealing with China in a manner more open to dialog and inclusive in order to prevent additional escalation of the strategic competition between the two parties. However, it remains to be seen which domains will be considered acceptable by both sides for bilateral cooperation and how effective such an approach can prove on medium and long-term.

Nevertheless, in order to reduce China's potential to rise, the United States will need to limit Beijing influence worldwide, including in the European countries. Consequently, European Union and European states will most likely still have to face US' request to decline cooperation with China, especially in the economic sector and 5G technologies.

President-elect Joe Biden will most likely preserve the United States' position and engagement within the North Atlantic Alliance. Even though US' tonality on burden sharing and defence spending will change,

the new administration will probably not abandon these requirements as they lay on a pledge assumed by all NATO members and are beneficial to the United States.

Related to Russia, President-elect Biden will likely continue US' sanctions policy in close coordination with the European Union. President-elect Biden has often stated his intention to respond firmly to the Russian interference in the previous presidential elections and defying the international norms. On the other hand, Joe Biden and staff close to him have indicated the will to cooperate with Russia on arms control treaties to reduce the nuclear arsenal. President-elect Biden will have the opportunity to do so soon after his inauguration, in February 2021, when the New START Treaty<sup>16</sup> will expire and, therefore, he has the occasion to extend it.



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<sup>16</sup> New START stands for Strategic Arms Reduction Treaty, including measures for the further reduction and limitation of strategic offensive arms.



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