

# A NEW TRANSATLANTIC BARGAIN: AN ACTION PLAN FOR TRANSFORMATION, NOT RESTORATION

Julien Barnes-Dacey, Susi Dennison, Anthony Dworkin, Ellie Geranmayeh, Mark Leonard, Theodore Murphy, Janka Oertel, Nicu Popescu, Tara Varma November 2020

### SUMMARY

- The election of Joe Biden marks a new era in the transatlantic relationship in upholding the liberal international order, America wants a Europe that is a sovereign partner, not a helpless dependent.
- Washington will look to the EU to support the US lead in the Indo-Pacific vis-à-vis China, while also wanting Europe to take more responsibility for security and stability in eastern Europe, the Middle East, and Africa.
- In exchange, the EU and member states should propose a new transatlantic bargain that encompasses cross-cutting global issues such as health policy, trade, security, climate change, and the defence of democracy.
- The Trump years galvanised Europeans' efforts to strengthen their own sovereignty; they now need to agree concrete offers they can make to the new administration.
- This will require nothing less than a fundamental change in mindset for Europeans, who will have to suppress any hankerings for the old order and decide how they will help build it anew.

# INTRODUCTION

With the election of Joe Biden, a sigh of relief arose from the chancelleries of Europe. Many had feared that a second term for Donald Trump would endanger not just the liberal international order but ultimately even the European Union itself.

Biden, on the other hand, offers the prospect of a restoration of a traditional transatlantic relationship. America can return to its role as champion of a liberal international order while Europeans can play a supporting role with diplomacy and soft power.

The only problem with the promise of restoration is that it is a mirage. Within the United States a series of crises – Iraq, the Great Recession, and covid-19 among others – have vastly reduced Americans' appetite to play global policeman. And in the world outside, other powers – China, Russia, Turkey, Iran, Saudi Arabia, Israel, and the United Arab Emirates among others – have begun to fill the void left by Trump's "America First" approach. Much of the architecture of global governance is now bogged down by great power competition or has been hijacked by China and other powers.

Some European Atlanticists have been putting the brakes on Europe's recent moves towards greater self-reliance for fear of upsetting the US or because of fatalism about Europe's own limitations. For the opposite reason, some advocates of European sovereignty may even have secretly wished for a Trump victory on the grounds that it would force Europe (and especially Germany) to finally address the geopolitical issues facing it. Europe has arguably made more progress in building European sovereignty in Trump's four years at the helm than in the Obama, Bush, and Clinton eras combined. In that sense, although Trump stood for everything Europeans oppose, in a way he has been the accidental father of European sovereignty.

It is a paradox that the politicians who are most supportive of a strong transatlantic alliance are also the ones who defend the policies that are most likely to destroy it. The US used to be ambivalent towards European defence and strategic autonomy because it saw the European theatre as an important one and wanted to preserve American primacy in all parts of the world. But, as power has shifted to the east, the White House – across administrations of different political colours – has become keen to devote as much energy, money, and military muscle as possible to the Indo-Pacific. The US is desperate not to get sucked into any more 'forever wars' in the Middle East or get distracted by the politics of eastern Europe and the Balkans. What Biden's most senior advisers appear to fear most is not a stronger Europe that can stand on its own two feet, but a weak one that free-rides on US security provision and diverts attention from America's rivalry with China. Biden's America is looking for a partner, not a collection of needy children that compete for attention but take no responsibility for their own welfare. When he returns to the White House, Biden will want a Europe that brings solutions rather than just problems.

Far-sighted Atlanticists should realise that the challenge today is not about restoring the transatlantic relationship, but about transforming it. An EU that develops strategic sovereignty may not always agree with the US in its approach to key issues. But because of the foundation of shared values and a commitment to the alliance, Europeans and Americans will stand shoulder to shoulder in the end and find ways of managing their differences professionally. Instead of waiting for the new president to tell them what he wants from the relationship, Europeans should show that they can be a grown-up partner and offer him a new transatlantic bargain.

This paper makes concrete suggestions for how Europe can offer such a new transatlantic bargain. It sets out what this bargain could look like in some of the issue-areas and parts of the globe that are most important to the transatlantic agenda. This collection of offers would express European interests and likely appeal to the new American president. The bargain should encompass major cross-cutting problems – from global health, to climate, to the defence of democracy – and be able to address major questions of security and renewal in particular regions of the world, from China to Africa via Europe's near-neighbourhood. After many years of the West doubting its own strength and its own values, Joe Biden's election coincides with the emergence of a Europe that is slowly but determinedly becoming more sovereign. Concerted action by Europe now can dispel these doubts and fortify the global order that Europeans until recently lamented as long gone.



### A 10-POINT ACTION PLAN FOR TRANSATLANTIC TRANSFORMATION

#### HEALTH

The EU should propose a joint campaign on reform of the WHO to increase accountability of that organisation's member states.

#### TRADE

The EU should propose European support to work towards a compromise within the OECD on a digital tax.

#### SECURITY

Europeans should proactively propose a new metric of commitment to transatlantic security.

#### CLIMATE CHANGE

The EU Commission should put forward proposals for a common EU-US carbon border adjustment mechanism.

#### DEMOCRACY AND HUMAN RIGHTS

Europe and the US should work together to define and carry out an agenda of democratic renewal at home and abroad.

### CHINA

Europeans should propose a comprehensive connectivity coalition that provides joint financing and assistance.

#### RUSSIA AND EASTERN NEIGHBOURHOOD

EU partners should complement new German investment in the Three Seas initiative with an offer to Biden to create an Eastern Partnership Security Compact.

#### MIDDLE EAST AND NORTH AFRICA

Europeans should commit greater resources to the Middle East so that the US can downsize its regional military role.

#### AFRICA

Europe should approach the US to establish a common framework on finance, investment, and lending in Africa.

#### STRATEGIC SOVEREIGNTY

Europeans should form a Strategic Sovereignty Task Force and invite each member state to appoint an ambassador-at-large for strategic sovereignty.

# TRANSATLANTIC COOPERATION TO RENEW THE INTERNATIONAL SYSTEM

For Europeans, Trump's disdain for international institutions was one of the most destructive aspects of his foreign policy. Biden has committed to re-engage in international cooperation, and Europeans should welcome this – but they should also recognise that the international system needs renewal rather than merely restoration. A central challenge is how to rethink global cooperation in a world of competing value systems. Biden's win offers the EU and US the chance to work together on a twintrack approach of engaging in global institutions while also pursuing deeper cooperation among likeminded countries.

## **GLOBAL HEALTH**

Global health is a clear priority because of covid-19. Biden will halt the process of US withdrawal from the World Health Organization (WHO), which means the EU and US can work together to reform the institution – both have already put forward complementary plans for reform. If they act together, the EU and US are more likely to succeed in pressing reluctant countries like China to accept the WHO having greater powers to obtain information about emerging diseases and hold countries accountable for their preparedness. It will also be important to increase funding for the WHO, preferably in the form of unrestricted contributions. However, if reforms to the organisation prove difficult, the EU and US could also explore a parallel track of establishing a global health club of countries that commit to deeper inspection and accountability of their public health preparedness in exchange for public health funding and sharing of medical equipment and medicines in future emergencies.

**The offer**: The EU should propose a joint campaign on reform of the WHO to increase accountability of that organisation's member states, including through setting up a universal review process to assess their preparedness for infectious diseases.

### TRADE

On the global trade agenda, the EU can offer to work with the Biden administration to lead reform of the World Trade Organization (WTO) to toughen regulations on industrial subsidies and state-owned enterprises, building on the existing trilateral process comprising the EU, the US, and Japan and reviving the spirit of the 2018 Rose Garden deal between then-European Commission president Jean-Claude Juncker and Trump. As a first step, the EU should ask the US to engage in serious negotiations on the dispute settlement process and to drop its objections to the globally preferred candidate to be the new director-general.

Even beyond WTO reform, trade threatens to be the most divisive issue in EU-US bilateral relations in the Biden administration, as it was in the Trump administration. The Biden team might take a more diplomatic approach and may remove some of the punitive aluminium and steel tariffs imposed on the EU by the Trump administration. But EU-US differences on agricultural goods, privacy, and the role of US tech giants will remain and will continue to sour transatlantic relations.

This is not an issue that the EU and US can ever fully resolve – trade frictions between such large and interdependent economic partners are inevitable and, arguably, a sign of the importance and depth of their economic relationship. A new overarching and all-encompassing free trade agreement, on the model of the Transatlantic Trade and Investment Partnership effort during the Obama administration, would make little sense given the domestic politics on both sides. Instead, Europeans should start by making a proactive effort to lessen the next dispute over trade that might emerge from the European effort to impose a digital tax aimed principally at US tech giants.

Around half of all European OECD countries have implemented or announced plans for a <u>digital</u> <u>services</u> tax. A Biden administration would, like the Trump administration, <u>oppose</u> any tax regime that appears to single out US tech giants. A speedy compromise on this issue could set a better tone in EU-US trade relations and reduce the ferocity of any future disputes.

The EU will be keen to push the US to provide greater privacy protections in the aftermath of the July 2020 European Court of Justice (ECJ) decision to strike down the EU-US privacy shield as insufficient. Satisfying the ECJ will require an enormous shift in US practices on data treatment. Biden has shown willingness to take a more interventionist stance on the regulation of tech giants,

remarking that the US should be <u>"setting standards not unlike the Europeans are doing relative to</u> <u>privacy</u>". US consumers share many of the concerns of Europeans about the tech giants. Such an effort will attract support within the US, but it remains a heavy lift in Congress. Biden would need a compromise on the digital services tax to create the right atmosphere in Congress.

**The offer**: On the global agenda, the EU should agree to move further on reform of the WTO dispute settlement procedure and a joint US-EU effort on state aid – if the US lifts its block on appointments to the appellate body and drops its opposition to the leading candidate for secretary-general. On the bilateral agenda, the EU should propose European support to work towards a compromise within the OECD on a digital tax. This would be in exchange for greater privacy protection both from US tech companies and within the US domestic regulatory apparatus.

## SECURITY

NATO remains roiled by a seemingly perennial burden-sharing debate. The current standard, reaffirmed in 2014, is that all NATO members should spend 2 per cent of their GDP on defence. But this has only led to more arguments. The fundamental issue is that, despite their commitment to this standard, many European NATO member states now feel that the 2 per cent goal is a poor reflection of the modern nature of national security. They believe that defence budget contributions do not capture Europeans' actual contribution to transatlantic security. European NATO states are quietly seeking to <u>reframe their contributions to NATO in non-defence spending terms</u>. It is politically difficult to abandon the 2 per cent target, but, by widening the debate about burden-sharing, both sides can move beyond an empty discussion about symbolism onto a real discussion about how Europeans can take on more responsibility for their security.

The eventual various components of security – such as defence spending, the cost of sanctions, and environmental efforts – would be determined by negotiation. The main effort is to accept that burdensharing measures must capture this wider view of security. But it probably also needs to include a renewed commitment to provide capabilities for European defence in the eastern neighbourhood, and – even more controversially – a willingness to ensure continued American access to the European defence procurement market.

The offer: Europeans should proactively propose a new metric of commitment to transatlantic

security. This would require the US to accept a new, broader burden-sharing concept, but one that would appeal to its priorities in the provision of capabilities and defence procurement.

# CLIMATE CHANGE

As part of its European Green Deal, the EU is proposing to implement a carbon border adjustment mechanism (CBAM) designed to tax imports entering member states based on their carbon content. The measure aims both to encourage other countries to increase their efforts to decarbonise and to protect the competitiveness of European businesses in the face of imports that do not bear similar regulatory burdens. As the president of the European Commission, Ursula von der Leyen, has <u>noted</u>: "There is no point in only reducing greenhouse gas emissions at home, if we increase the import of CO2 from abroad. It is not only a climate issue; it is also an issue of fairness towards our businesses and our workers. We will protect them from unfair competition."

A particularly ambitious proposal by Brussels to the new Biden administration would be to suggest that the EU and US adopt a common carbon border tax regime, forming a sort of low-carbon trade zone. Such an arrangement would help create a level playing field between the EU and US, each one another's largest trading partner; it would prevent each of them ever using retaliatory tariffs against the other; and it would fulfil the Biden administration's ambitions to renew ties with Europe and pursue an ambitious environmental policy that meets European standards for decarbonisation. Finally, and perhaps most importantly, it would allow both sides to leverage their enormous economic power of over 40 per cent of global GDP when taken together. This could help push other countries to adopt similar environmental standards, achieving the dual goal of domestic protection and a greener world economy. Other countries could join the low-carbon trade zone and escape the CBAM as they meet the necessary standards for decarbonisation. There is some reason to think such an idea would be met with serious consideration by Washington. Anthony Blinken, Biden's nominee for secretary of state, has emphasised the importance of leading with Europe on environmental issues. In a recent Chamber of Commerce webinar, he <u>remarked</u> that: "We have a very aggressive plan to move on this internationally — not just rejoining Paris, but also working to get our allies, partners and others to raise their ambitions. I'd like to think that's a place where the U.S. and Europe can lead together." Big polluters, such as Russia and China, which often engage in economic practices Washington regards as unfair, might also be pushed into concessions – environmental or otherwise – by a united carbon tariff regime.

**The offer**: The European Commission should put forward proposals for a common EU-US carbon border adjustment mechanism.

### DEMOCRACY AND HUMAN RIGHTS

The recent divisions between the US and Europe hide a deeper fear that the West has lost a sense of itself as a community. After the end of the cold war, the West became convinced that its system would be the gold standard. As political scientist Ivan Krastev has <u>put it</u>: "Even though the system was rigged, undemocratic governments knew it was important to at least pretend it wasn't ... Even China played along. Until now". The "now" he refers to is the Chinese Communist Party's decision in 2018 to abolish term limits for the president – an action that was followed by Vladimir Putin allowing himself to stay in power until 2036. Authoritarian powers have also extended their reach into new areas, from China's actions suppressing democracy in Hong Kong to Russian disinformation campaigns targeting Europe.

On the other hand, 2021 has the potential for a democratic comeback if the EU and US combine their forces. Biden comes into office committed to putting democracy back at the centre of US foreign policy. He has said that the contest of liberalism and democracy with autocracy defines America's future as well as its past, and has pledged to hold a summit of democracies in his first year. Britain's presidency of the G7 in 2021 offers the chance to follow through on its <u>idea</u> of creating a D10 grouping (comprising the current G7 and Australia, India, and South Korea) to promote democratic standards for the regulation of cyber space, with the potential to expand into other areas.

Democracies will have to face the fact that the rise in populism in their own countries and across the

globe has a variety of origins: anxiety around demographic changes; economic uncertainty and the feeling of being left out of globalisation; and the absence of a societal project that embodies a desirable future for all. A global pro-democracy campaign will also require political leaders to understand the connection between foreign and domestic issues, including by taking action against disinformation and kleptocracy.

**The offer**: The EU and the United Kingdom should jointly propose that the US join the D10 and that Europe and the US work together to define and carry out an agenda of democratic renewal at home and abroad.

# TRANSATLANTIC COOPERATION ON REGIONAL CHALLENGES

### China

Over the course of the last four years, member states across the entire EU have markedly <u>changed</u> <u>their views on China</u>. Most are still willing to seek cooperation where possible, but they have grown increasingly sceptical of the economic benefits of close interaction.

These concerns are shared across the Atlantic. Europeans are ready to work with the US on an economic agenda focusing on China's market-distorting practices, taking a joint lead in setting the standards for new technologies like 5G and green technologies, and increasing the cost for China if it continues to engage in large-scale theft of intellectual property.

Europeans are also now thinking more geostrategically about Asia generally. France, Germany, and the Netherlands have proposed their own Indo-Pacific strategies and taken a greater interest in maintaining the status quo in the Taiwan Strait in the face of increasing Chinese aggression.

The US and EU can profit from this increasingly shared understanding of China by finding a joint approach to the entire spectrum of connectivity issues. The future of 5G and the development of 6G can be driven by joint transatlantic efforts. Many European countries have already decided to block or significantly limit access to 5G network infrastructure for Chinese companies. Even countries like Sweden, usually a champion of investment openness and free trade, <u>decided</u> in October 2020 to ban

Huawei and ZTE from the country's 5G infrastructure. Although this decision is currently being challenged in Swedish courts it still sends an important signal: whether it is human rights, freedom of speech, or the economy, Chinese assertiveness has reduced European openness to China.

**The offer**: Europeans should propose a comprehensive connectivity coalition that provides joint financing and assistance. The transatlantic offers should seek to match the scale of the offer that China makes on trade, digital infrastructure, and economic development to countries around the world through the Belt and Road Initiative and other mechanisms. Europeans and Americans would set common standards on state aid, transparency, and technology. In return, Europeans can offer enhanced support on maritime security and safeguarding the status quo in the <u>Taiwan</u> Strait.

### Russia and the eastern neighbourhood

The EU is much more directly affected by Russia's actions than the US is. European countries are both Russia's biggest energy customers and the states most affected by Russia's aggressive foreign policies, whether in Ukraine or Syria. For that reason, the EU has tried to maintain the space for dialogue even as it acts to deter Russian aggression. Since the 2014 Russian invasion of Ukraine, the EU has largely maintained that balance, as expressed by the fierce web of sanctions it has created to punish Russia for its aggression.

A Biden administration that appears to be more overtly <u>hostile to Russia</u> might threaten this balance if it encourages some member states to adopt a similar stance. To preserve its own unity, the European approach will likely focus on ensuring that the US pursues a balanced dialogue while maintaining and enhancing its security commitment to eastern Europe. The principal early irritant in this effort will be the Nord Stream 2 pipeline project, which has already created deep divisions both within Europe and across the Atlantic. Germany and some other member states support the project because they hope for cheaper gas and a more secure energy transit route from Russia. Some EU members in the east reject it because it denies transit fees to states on the land route, particularly a very financially hard-pressed Ukraine. The Trump administration opposed Nord Stream 2 because it feared that it would increase European energy dependence on Russia and displace American LNG exports to Europe. It <u>threatened</u> secondary sanctions against European companies that are building the pipeline. The creation of both a European and transatlantic consensus on Nord Stream 2 in 2021 stands out as the key step towards maintaining a transatlantic consensus on Russia under the Biden administration.

Working together with the Biden White House on Nord Stream 2 will require the difficult task of forging some degree of prior European consensus. The key is for Germany to become willing to replace the lost transit fees by investing in the Polish-led Three Seas Initiative, which seeks to develop infrastructure throughout eastern Europe.

**The offer:** As part of an effort to take responsibility for European regional security, Germany and its EU partners should complement new German investment in the Three Seas Initiative with an offer to the Biden administration to create an <u>Eastern Partnership Security Compact.</u> That compact would form a European structure for <u>funnelling both European and American security assistance to the EU's eastern neighbourhood.</u> This would offer Eastern Partnership states increased assistance and the Americans an assurance of a stronger western European commitment to European security, freeing up American attention for other problems while maintaining transatlantic unity and vigilance with regard to Russia.

### Middle East and North Africa

The Biden administration is likely to prioritise two key Middle Eastern issues: ending the 'endless wars' and changing course on Iran policy. On the latter, Biden has already outlined his intention to prevent a nuclear-armed Iran, primarily by ensuring the US rejoins the Joint Comprehensive Plan of Action (JCPOA). European countries and the EU have played a significant role in shepherding the agreement through the Trump era. Europeans did so with the hope of preventing US-Iran military escalation and preserving the JCPOA until Washington was willing to engage in serious diplomacy

with Tehran.

Going forward, the future of the JCPOA will largely depend on the appetite in Iran and the US to come back into full compliance with the deal, with Europeans in one sense having already delivered their side of the bargain by keeping the agreement on life support. For Europeans, restoring the JCPOA is a key non-proliferation ambition. They should try to strengthen the prospect of the US re-entering the deal by providing Iran with some of the economic benefits that the US is unlikely to be able to provide because of Congressional politics around this question. Europeans can also facilitate the regional dialogue channels that will be needed during a turbulent transition from the Trump to the Biden administrations, and beyond – including on hard issues such as Iran's regional role – if the JCPOA is to emerge on a more stable basis than in 2015.

Europeans should also think about the Middle East as one component of their broader global partnership with the US. The Biden administration clearly wants to downsize its Middle East role, and Europeans should demonstrate a willingness to pick up some of the slack. Regional stability is much more of an immediate interest for Europe than for America, and the Europeans will be looking for stepped-up US support on other global issues. While they will want a US diplomatic surge on a number of specific issues, such as de-escalating Gulf tensions and ending the Yemen war, the EU and member states should demonstrate a more coherent and assertive European role on other regional crises, making clear that they will not call on America to pick up the pieces in conflicts such as Libya. Europeans can further support such a US rebalancing by putting greater security and stabilisation resources on the table, so that the US can deploy resources to other global areas of shared US-EU interest. This could occur in places like Iraq but also potentially in terms of merging, and a European resourcing of, what are currently two competing US-led and European-led maritime security missions in the Strait of Hormuz.

**The offer**: Europeans should commit greater resources to the Middle East so that the US can downsize its regional military role. This would be in exchange for a US return to the JCPOA, a US diplomatic surge to try to de-escalate regional tensions, and enhanced US global cooperation with the EU in other global arenas.

### Africa

The current African debt crisis, brought on by covid-19, demonstrates the need for a <u>common</u> <u>investment framework</u>

for Africa going forward.

The global mechanism to respond to the debt crisis worldwide, of which Africa comprises a major share, is the G20 Debt Service Suspension Initiative (DSSI). It suffers from the fact that Africa's largest creditors – China and various large private sector actors – do not fully participate in it. Without all creditors acting in unison, there is a risk that increased debt relief from the West meant for Africa simply serves to repay creditors in China and the private sector.

While the G20 labours to strengthen the DSSI by trying to twist China's arm and to get the private sector to fully buy in, as Europe looks ahead it should set its strategic focus on the massive financing asymmetry in Africa between China and the rest. The debt crisis is the symptom; the financing asymmetry the deeper ailment. This asymmetry evolved out of a lack of alternatives for Africa over the last decade. African states needed financing for development, but the only offers they received came from China and the private sector. The West was largely absent.

China's growing financing footprint buys geopolitical influence. In the current Africa debt crisis, the private sector only seeks remuneration for its loans; China, on the other hand, renegotiates debt in return for political favour.

This matters for Europe as Africa grows as a market opportunity. China's commercial model distorts the playing field to Europe's disadvantage. The US and Europe will also compete in Africa, but they share a wish to do so on a level playing field. This creates common cause as regards China in Africa.

**The offer**: Europe should approach the US to establish a common framework on finance, investment, and lending in Africa – an updated set of norms and principles for all external powers to abide by. Co-ownership by Africa is essential to make this feasible, but also for tactical purposes. Once common cause is created among Africa, Europe, and the US, China should also be invited to participate. This will compel China to make a decision: be part of this new consensus or reject not only a US-European initiative, but an African one as well. While this common framework will not magically raise the amount of European and US financing to Chinese levels, it would rein in the unfair advantage that China's murky commercial dealings create.

# CONCLUSION: HOW TO GO ABOUT IT?

Biden's victory is a game-changer for the transatlantic relationship. Rather than treating Europeans

as a problem in a quest to put America first, the new president has signalled a willingness to renew ties with allies and invest in strengthening the global order.

But the election of Biden will not change the long-term geographical shift in American priorities, end the American public's attachment to national sovereignty, or dispel their fear of their country overextending itself. In order to become more effective partners to the US, Europeans need to begin turning their rhetoric about "geopolitical Europe" into joint action. Lots of institutional actors in Europe are pursuing different initiatives around open strategic autonomy, European sovereignty, and the European recovery. They are currently still too disconnected.

For the EU to make this new transatlantic bargain a reality, it needs unity. So far there is disunity, not only about how sovereign Europe should be but also about many of the issues on the transatlantic agenda. It was a good start for EU leaders to send what appeared to be coordinated tweets of congratulation to Biden (with the very unfortunate outlier of the Slovenian prime minister, who had already congratulated Trump). But Europeans should realise that forging their own bilateral relationship with the new US administration will not get them far and will not provide the Americans with the partner they want and need.

If they want to move beyond conceptual debates over what strategic sovereignty or strategic autonomy means, Europeans should form a Strategic Sovereignty Task Force and invite each member state to appoint an ambassador-at-large for strategic sovereignty. One point of this forum would be to inspire greater interaction and discussion about the US between eastern members such as Poland and the Baltic states and Western members, including France in particular. This would take place within the context of the rapidly advancing strategic sovereignty debate and the generally agreed need for more capacity to act.

Such a move would allow Europeans to be able to make more convincing and helpful bargains with the US. Coordinated by the high representative, several small groups of foreign ministers should go to Washington to propose a new transatlantic bargain on the different challenges facing Europe and the world as set out in this paper. This effort would seek to avoid the unseemly bilateral rush to be the first in the door to see a new US administration. Such a spectacle only conveys to the White House an image of European division, dependency, and weakness. All of the ideas put forward here aim to help update European thinking about the transatlantic relationship. They start from a conviction that, in a more multipolar world, the stakes for both sides have changed dramatically.

From the US perspective, the biggest threat to Atlanticism is not European sovereignty but European dependence. The American offer to Europe is fundamentally changing as a result: the US increasingly expects Europeans to take lead responsibility for their own regional security, while following an American lead on how to engage with China.

This is why a revolution in European thinking is so vital. There is a strong parallel between the state of relations across the Atlantic and the debates about covid-19: for both Europe and America, their post-pandemic priority should not be merely to 'reconstruct' the status quo ante – but to use the crisis as an opportunity to fix the things they already knew were broken.

# ABOUT THE AUTHORS

**Julien Barnes-Dacey** is director of the Middle East and North Africa programme at ECFR, where he focuses on European policy towards Syria and the wider Mashreq. He was based in Syria from 2007 to 2011.

**Susi Dennison** is a senior policy fellow at the European Council on Foreign Relations and director of ECFR's European Power programme. In this role, she explores issues relating to strategy, cohesion, and politics to achieve a collective EU foreign and security policy. She led ECFR's European Foreign Policy Scorecard project for five years and, since the beginning of 2019, she has overseen research for ECFR's Unlock project.

<u>Anthony Dworkin</u> is a senior policy fellow at ECFR. He works on North Africa and also on a range of subjects connected to human rights, democracy, and the international order. He is also a visiting lecturer at the Paris School of International Affairs at Sciences Po and was formerly executive director of the Crimes of War Project.

**Ellie Geranmayeh** is deputy director of the Middle East and North Africa programme at ECFR, where she focuses on European policy on Iran. She specialises in European foreign policy in relation to Iran, particularly on the nuclear and regional dossiers and sanctions policy. Prior to this, she was

based at Herbert Smith Freehills LLP after graduating in law from the University of Cambridge.

<u>**Mark Leonard**</u> is co-founder and director of the European Council on Foreign Relations. He is the author of *Why Europe Will Run the 21st Century* and *What Does China Think?*, and the editor of *Connectivity Wars*. He presents ECFR's weekly World in 30 Minutes podcast.

**Theodore Murphy** is the director of the Africa programme at the European Council for Foreign Relations. Murphy managed emergency response missions for Doctors Without Borders, in Afghanistan, Iraq, and Sudan. Murphy has also worked for Amnesty International, for the United Nations, and with the German foreign office.

**Janka Oertel** is director of the Asia programme at the European Council on Foreign Relations. She previously worked as a senior fellow in the Asia programme at the German Marshall Fund of the United States' Berlin office, where she focused on transatlantic China policy, including on emerging technologies, Chinese foreign policy, and security in east Asia. Oertel has published widely on topics related to EU-China relations, US-China relations, security in the Asia-Pacific region, Chinese foreign policy, and 5G.

**Nicu Popescu** is director of the Wider Europe programme at the European Council on Foreign Relations. His topics of focus include EU's relations with Russia and the Eastern Partnership countries. In 2019, Popescu served as minister of foreign affairs and European integration of Moldova. Previously, he worked as a senior analyst at the EU Institute for Security Studies and senior advisor on foreign policy to the prime minister of Moldova.

<u>**Tara Varma**</u> is a policy fellow and head of the Paris office of the European Council on Foreign Relations, where she works on French foreign policy and European and Asian security developments.

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