

Foreign Policy

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"We already speak with conviction and clarity on the major challenges that face us, be they climate change, poverty, conflict or terrorism. We are the biggest provider of humanitarian aid and project funding. We are a superpower economy with half a billion people but are still accused of not punching our weight politically...My job is to make our voice stronger and more unified still. As underlined in the European Security Strategy, the European Union should become a more capable, more coherent and more strategic global actor. I will build on the work that has gone before to achieve that goal."

– Catherine Ashton

EU Foreign Affairs & Security Policy High Representative/European Commission Vice President

The EU and the USA established diplomatic relations as early as 1953, but it was only in November 1990 that the cooperation was formalized for the first time with the Transatlantic Declaration. Since December 1995, the New Transatlantic Agenda (NTA) has provided the foundation for the relationship.

The ambitious agenda of cooperation between the EU and the US is taken forward via constant, intensive dialogue. This dialogue takes place at various levels, from the annual summit meetings between EU and US leaders to technical work at expert level.

Within the framework of the NTA and in line with the Transatlantic Economic Partnership (TEP) launched in 1998, the Transatlantic Economic Council (TEC) was created in 2007 to take forward efforts to boost the transatlantic economy. Together, the EU and the USA have the largest bilateral trade and investment relationship in the world, roughly 40% of world trade and over 60% of world GDP. In keeping with the evolving political and legal personality of the EU, there is active cooperation across a host of sectors: cooperation in justice and home affairs, energy and energy security, environment, science & technology, education & training.

The yearly summits between the Presidents of the European Commission and the European Council and the President of the United States are the apex of an intensive dialogue. The summits are prepared by a group of senior level representatives (SLG) composed of senior officials from the European Commission, the EU Presidency, the Council Secretariat and the US State Department, which has been entrusted to oversee work under the NTA. The SLG meets four to six times a year and prepares reports to summit leaders on achievements and new priorities. It is supported in its work by a task force, which ensures the day-to-day implementation of decisions taken.

Under the EU's Industrialized Countries Instrument for 2007-2013, over €20 million are earmarked for the cooperation with the United States under the 3 focal areas: dialogues, people to people and cooperation. Following an Annual Work Program, tenders or call for proposals for the various instruments (EU Centers of Excellence, people to people actions, dialogues and outreach activities) are published on this website and are opened to EU and US participants.

In recent years, the development of more informal and operational ad hoc contacts have allowed for a more detailed understanding of our respective priorities and policies, provided early warning of potential problems and improved the coordination of policy planning and assistance. The EU and the US have continued to work together in the field of both civilian and military crisis management and conflict prevention. In March 2008, both sides concluded a work plan on crisis management and conflict prevention, setting out the concrete steps to operationalize cooperation in a number of areas, with specific elements on conflict prevention and early warning. Close cooperation continues in stabilization efforts in the Balkans, in particular concerning the EULEX Kosovo rule of law mission.

European Union Delegation, Washington, DC, Staff

USEFUL Links:

European Commission Websites

- EU Foreign Affairs & Security Policy High Representative Catherine Ashton's Website
- European Commission Vice President Catherine Ashton's Website
- European External Action Service (EEAS)
- EU Enlargement Directorate General
- EU Enlargement & European Neighborhood Policy Commissioner & Scaron;tefan Füle
- EU in the World
- EU Delegations
- EU External Relations & Foreign Affairs Portal

Key Issues

- EU/US Relations
- EU Common Foreign and Security Policy (CFSP)
- European Security & Defense Policy (ESDP)
- European Neighborhood Policy
- EU Sanctions
- EU & the Kimberley Process (Conflict Diamonds); Hot Topic
- EU/Russia & Eastern Europe Hot Topic

Overviews

- EU/US Relations Overview (PowerPoint)
- EU Insight: Engaging the World: The EU's Public Diplomacy
- EU Insight: The EU and the United Nations: Multilateral Responses to Global Challenges
- The EU & the US: Global Partners, Global Responsibilities
- EU Focus: European Security and Defense Policy (ESDP): Working for a Safer World
- EU Focus: The EU and Peacekeeping: Promoting Security, Stability, and Democratic Values

- EU Insight: Battling Modern-Day Piracy off the Coast of Somalia: The European Union's Operation Atalanta
- EU Focus: The European Neighborhood Policy: Creating a Ring of Friends Surrounding Europe
- EU Focus: The EU & Latin America/Caribbean
- Asia Hot Topic
- Counterterrorism Hot Topic
- Enlargement Hot Topic
- Human Trafficking Hot Topic
- Mideast Hot Topic
- Visa Waiver Reciprocity Hot Topic
- Enlargement Press Pack
- EU External Relations Activities
- EU Foreign & Security Policy Activities
- EU External Relations Legislative Summaries
- EU Foreign & Security Policy Legislative Summaries
- EU External Relations Legislation
- EU Common Foreign & Security Policy Legislation
- EU Election Observation Missions: European Parliament
- EU Election Observation Missions: EuropeAid
- Publications

Institutions

- Council of the European Union
- Common Foreign & Security Policy (CFSP)
- EU Common Foreign & Security Policy High Representative Javier Solana
- European Security & Defense Policy (ESDP)
- ESDP News
- EU ESDP Operations

- European Defense Agency (EDA)
- EU Institute for Security Studies (ISS-EU)
- EU Satellite Centre (EUSC)
- EU Network & Information Security Agency (ENISA)