

THE INTEGRATION OF THE TRANSATLANTIC MARKET AFTER THE COLD WAR

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Keywords

Specific concepts/variables were used during the current research in order to define and describe Europeans and Americans perspective on matters of politics, trade, security and defense, energy, environmental sustainability or cultural policies. We include here multilateralism, unilateralism, bilateralism, soft power, hard power, hegemonic actor, shared Western values, European integration, strategic autonomy, defense identity, permanent structured cooperation, security architecture, (EU-NATO) complementarity, collective defense, strategic competition, geopolitical triangle (EU-China-US), free market, mutual recognition (of standards), harmonization process, climate neutrality, biological crisis, renewable energy, energy dependency, cultural goods, creative industries, “cultural exception” and cultural diplomacy.

Overview

The topic of the integration of the transatlantic market after the Cold War is a very complex one, depicting many common interests and challenges, pros and cons, individual perceptions and also shared Western democratic values. It is a topic of contemporary debate that challenges even by the multiple perspectives it can be approached from.

Comparable to other economic and geographical areas, the transatlantic market has had and it will continue to bear an extraordinary potential to develop the two societies involved in their entirety as well as boosting their negotiation power at international level.

The main interrogations guiding the research focus on the following aspects:

1. What are the main pillars/policies supporting/distorting a positive trend of the transatlantic relation regarding politics, ideology, trade, energy, environment, culture?
2. To what extent can Romania influence the evolution of the EU-US relation in the future, as both a pro-European and pro-American country?
3. What are the best case, the most probable case and the worst case scenarios regarding future cooperation between the EU and the US?

This research has used the *market* concept in order to denominate initiatives of cooperation/the exchange of goods and services between Europe and North America in various fields of common interest (commercial, strategic, energetic and cultural).

The research methodology included both qualitative and quantitative instruments.

Qualitatively speaking, we have focused on political discourse analysis, secondary data analysis (applied to books, scientific and newspaper articles, EU official documents, joint EU-US/NATO declarations etc.) and comparative historical analysis. Another substantial input to the research qualitative methodology consists of semi-structured interviews that we have conducted with professionals in relevant fields and diplomatic personnel.

Quantitatively speaking, we have conducted an opinion survey among the Romanian population (the majority of respondents), other European countries' respondents and a number of people from the USA and Canada. Respondents were selected from various fields of activity/study (including European Studies and International Relations, Diplomacy, Military, Sociology, History, Economy, Finances-Banking, Geography, Journalism, Pedagogy, Psychology, IT), they are of different ages (between 18-72), both from the urban (mostly) and the rural areas, both women and men. Respondents from Romania were selected from different regions of the country.

Additionally, we have used statistical data available (mainly from Eurostat, Statista, ECFR, GMFUS-Transatlantic Trends) to compare and contrast social or macroeconomic trends as part of the evolution of the transatlantic cooperation from 1990 until present.

The first chapter, entitled "Configuration of the transatlantic relation-an overview", provided a necessary contextualization of the topic from a historic and geopolitical perspective.

Contemporary International Relations display an interesting ambivalence, in the sense that peace, stability and cohesion co-exist with instability and (new types of) warfare. This inevitably marks continuity with the past, but we cannot overlook the change agents represented by globalization, the technological advancement, resurgence of nationalist tendencies or the proliferation of terrorism.

The Western world as a strategic concept emerged out of the alliance between the United States of America and Western Europe. The United States intervention in the First World War established Washington as a power in Europe and then the trend has shifted mostly towards disengagement during the inter-war period, and it was only disrupted by the US entry into the Second World War as an Allied power.

NATO became the most relevant institutional framework in the field of security and defense, preventing hegemonic ambitions of any continental power that could have challenged the post-war European order. The Cold War has nevertheless marked a disruption between East-Central Europe and the US, as totalitarian regimes were taking shape in the new

communist countries. Ties were limited and maintained on a bilateral basis, intensified mainly after 1970 in the case of Romania.

The fall of the Berlin Wall has been a turning point in the ideological orientation of Eastern Europe. However, ex-communist states embarked on the transition process developed at different paces, according to their own internal environment. Transition implied four distinct dimensions: liberalization, democratization, Occidentalization/Europeanization and integration.

The Transatlantic Declaration on EC–US Relations, dating from 1990, has offered a long–term perspective for partnership, acknowledging that transatlantic solidarity is essential to ensure long-lasting peace and liberty, to developing prosperous, free market economies and rebuild a post–war divided continent.

Post-Cold War transatlantic relations evolved on two dimensions: the continued US presence in Europe and the emancipation of European states and gradual strengthening of the EU integration process, as to cover a complex set of capabilities and competences, including in the field of defense.

Nowadays, there is a trend to frame transatlantic relations from both an integrative and a dividing perspective. While some scholars discuss the concept of “transatlantic community” as having surpassed the symbolic “need of the moment” enabling them to act together, others believe that, in spite of a number of divergences at policy level, societies on the two sides of the Atlantic have rather converged because of economic integration encompassed by the wider process of globalization.

The second chapter, entitled “Power politics, symbolic values and ideologies in the transatlantic community”, analyzed the political incentive for cooperation as it appeared in the EU leaders’ discourses on transatlantic engagement.

We distinguished between individual principles and a common set of Western values. Differences were identified between European institutionalism, (“cherry-picking”, alliance-based) multilateralism, soft power model, “unity in diversity” and secularism and the American unilateralism, exceptionalism, hard power model, hegemonic tendencies and spirituality, a messianic mission to intervene abroad.

Despite divergent tendencies in European and American foreign policy principles visible in the American (mostly) unilateral versus European multilateral approaches, the two powers share significant political and ideological values acting as a catalyst for change in the post-Cold War international system. Democracy, freedom, the rule of law, respect for human rights

were all part of “the legacy of the West”, opposing the communist credo, going beyond the transatlantic nature of the relationship.

The Transatlantic Declaration on EC-US relations has signaled the consolidation of the “transatlantic community” paradigm, instead of a basic EU-US cooperation relation.

The political factor was considered a strong pillar to support economic progress.

Post-1990 European political discourse has underlined growing support for EU integration as well as the undeniable potential of this process to reinforce the overall transatlantic relation, as the two anchors were considered to be complementary.

The third chapter, “The evolution of the economic dimension within the transatlantic market relation”, underlined that Post-Cold War transatlantic economic relations (influenced by transformations occurring from the abolition of communist regimes in Europe and the globalization of international economic interactions) have confirmed the significant degree of interdependence and integration between Europe and North America’s market economies.

EU-US economic cooperation has been on an ascendant curve in the post-Cold War period, stimulated by a series of joint initiatives, such as the Transatlantic Declaration (1990), the Transatlantic Business Dialogue, The Joint Action Plan, the New Transatlantic Agenda (1995), The Transatlantic Economic Partnership (1998), The Bonn Declaration (1999) or The Positive Economic Agenda (2002). EU-US summits represented the institutional framework to discuss economic issues.

The global economic recession and, more recently, mutually waged trade wars between the two blocks (and the long-term consequences of the current pandemic) coupled with each other’s rapprochement to China have posed important challenges to the future of transatlantic economic (commercial) relations.

Removal of tariff barriers has been constantly argued for in bilateral trade negotiations. Over the years, the EU continued to stay firm on agriculture and protecting consumers’ safety. It was the same case during the overly ambitious TTIP talks (started in July 2013), that didn’t reach an agreement, facing many counterarguments from policy-makers and the combative NGO sector, on issues like toxic chemicals exposure, the risk of contamination with genetically modified organisms, provisions enabling multinational corporations to sue European states, the so-called Investor State Dispute Settlement (ISDS) – or the lack of transparency during the negotiation process.

The fourth chapter, metaphorically entitled “An energetic transatlantic environment”, concluded that, in the wake of global (climate) challenges, transatlantic cooperation on energy and environment is significantly needed in the present, as it has been for decades. The EU and

the US account for the two greatest energy consumers at global level and they do share the responsibility to react with a joint approach to constantly growing challenges on energy security. Bilateral agreements and high-level EU-US forums have tried to shape the two partners' strategic directions and impose concrete action plans to address the evolution of climate and sustainable energy trends.

However, approaches diverge, as the US has withdrawn from the Paris Agreement on Climate Change and it prefers to act unilaterally, whereas the EU promotes the spirit of multilateralism in combating climate threats and it is accumulating a growing ambition to become the first climate-neutral continent by 2050, an objective developing under the umbrella of the recent European Green Deal, as presented by the von der Leyen Commission.

Concerning exchanges on the transatlantic energy market, LNG trade has increased in the last period subjected to our research, supported by bilateral political contacts (Presidents' Jean-Claude Juncker-Donald Trump joint meeting in 2018). Also, cross-border pipeline interconnection projects are seen with mutual satisfaction by Europeans (Romanians included) and Americans, as long as they can act as viable means to provide alternative sources of exploitation and routes for transport and thus to reduce Europe's dependency on the Russian gas supply.

The fifth chapter, "Opportunities and challenges to modern security arrangements: the evolution of transatlantic cooperation for a global engagement", explored the evolution of the EU-US security and defense cooperation in the post-Cold War era. Research on this field has shown that the Western European Union continued to represent the defense arm of the EU after 1990 and its point of contact with NATO until its institutional architecture and competencies were transferred to the EU.

We have so far observed a gradual ambition of European leaders to develop a European Defense and Security Identity (later transformed into the Common Foreign and Security Policy) - meant to both consolidate EU's own military capabilities and to strengthen the European pillar within NATO -, as well as an EU strategic autonomy, especially on the wave of unpredictability spurred by the US current administration.

Nevertheless, NATO remained the most credible international format of transatlantic cooperation in the fields of security and defense. Its relevance as a defensive political and military organization is a fact in the post-Cold War period, as it was able to identify, frame and adapt to the newly emerging threats of the XXIst century. It can, however, improve its efficiency in the future, by investing more in the credibility of defense, as our research has shown.

The sixth chapter, entitled “Transatlantic cultural relations and higher education exchange programmes. The power of cultural diplomacy”, investigated a “soft power” topic, i.e. the particular EU and US approaches and policies in the field of cultural goods and services, as well as their joint commitment to support a transatlantic community of cultural values and added value through higher education experiences that could further strengthen bilateral ties within the overall EU-US relationship (i.e. the practice of cultural diplomacy).

Generally speaking, cultural stereotypes about Europeans and Americans will continue to exist, but study mobilities are a good opportunity to experience each other’s values and to adjust perceptions on both sides. They can help building bridges across cultures in the EU and the US.

Educational and cultural programs, transatlantic cultural diplomacy affairs – as a soft power instrument – can certainly contribute to the strengthening of EU-US bilateral ties, stimulating the appetite for bilateral cooperation in other fields too.

Transatlantic trade in cultural goods should be further stimulated and the artistic and creative industries should be supported more in the future.

The seventh chapter introduced the case study: “Romania- a strategic pillar within the Euro-Atlantic community. Specific contributions and benefits”. From a balanced perspective, it follows both the impact that Romania’s integration into the Euro-Atlantic institutional structures has had on the country’s modernization process and Romania’s specific (sectorial) contribution to the development and consolidation of the transatlantic relation as well as its potential to maximize it further.

Romania’s integration into the Euro-Atlantic structures has significantly contributed to the country’s process of modernization in the post-communist period, which is still ongoing. It has also brought an important input in bilateral Romania-EU and Romania-US relations. Nevertheless, the impact that Romania can have to influence the overall transatlantic relation remains limited and it can be particularized to specific sectors.

Support can be exercised in the energy field, as Romania is an important geostrategic actor in the Black Sea region, bearing significant gas resources and a favorable geographic position. Moreover, Romania can be a stronger voice on matters of security and defense, as a both an EU and NATO member, with a pro-European and pro-American attitude and a promoter of Western democratic values.

The country’s role as a contributor to NATO-EU complementarity should increase in the future and the B9 dialogue platform is expected to offer some enhanced support in this sense.

The eighth chapter presents the analysis and interpretation of data collected as part of the quantitative and qualitative research. It develops on the results of the opinion survey conducted among the Romanian, other EU countries and the American/Canadian population (267 respondents in total).

According to our opinion survey, most people responded that market economy was the driving principle within the EU-US relation in the post-Cold War period. The EU remains a soft power actor in people's perception, with the potential to become a hard power on the medium term. The majority of the people surveyed appreciated that the EU's internal development has contributed enough to a stronger transatlantic relation. Euro-Atlantic cooperation in the fields of economy and defense were the two main reasons evoked regarding joint transatlantic commitment.

Europeans (Romanians included) considered that EU-US cooperation within NATO is still necessary enough today, while most Americans felt it is extremely necessary. Respondents have nevertheless agreed that NATO can take further steps to improve its efficiency in attaining political and defensive military goals in the future.

Most people said that Romania has contributed enough to the Alliance's collective efforts but opinions on whether it can be an important voice, capable of influencing the future of the EU-US relation were split between affirmative and negative, sometimes with very tight scores.

Barack Obama was considered by far the most popular US leader in the EU. There is optimism among European (Romanian included) and American citizens that transatlantic relations can be revived, if there will be mutual concessions (a trade agreement is concluded) or if the US will have another president and if both Europeans and Americans avoid intensifying bilateral contacts with and let themselves (ideologically) influenced by other international actors (possibly China).

Based on the theoretical support and the empirical data available as a result of the qualitative and quantitative methodology, the present doctoral research investigated three potential scenarios regarding the future of the transatlantic relation: *the best case scenario*, *the most probable scenario* and *the worst case scenario*.

In *the best case scenario*, we would see the US embracing European multilateralism, and there will be EU-US joint effort to preserve Western, liberal, democratic values. Particularly, transatlantic ties would be bound by a comprehensive trade agreement (with lessons learned from the CETA Agreement), and NATO's reform would mean further investing in the

credibility of defense, adaptation to new emerging threats, the assurance of a homogeneous territorial defense.

The most probable scenario though, would imply the EU continuous development of strategic autonomy, a limited (possibly delayed because of COVID-19 economic impact) transatlantic trade agreement and NATO's continuous importance and involvement in a post-Cold War, post-Brexit Europe (EU) as its military (hard) power still prevails over Europeans' capacity to protect in this field.

The worst case scenario took into consideration the loss of Western hegemony in Central and Eastern Europe, growingly influential anti-Americanist trends in Europe, increasingly popular Pro-Russian/illiberal/euroskeptic trends in the EU, a hegemonic Chinese (ideological) expansion through permissive commercial and investment mechanisms, detrimental to the consolidation of EU-US partnership relation, and the failure of Europeans and Americans to agree on common rules and procedures and to conclude a mutually satisfactory trade agreement (similar to CETA).

The concluding chapter provided formulation of concrete answers to the research questions in the Introduction; it reiterates qualitative and quantitative results in brief, the envisioned scenarios regarding the future of the transatlantic relation, the relevant methodological aspects and it presents proposals for future research in the field.

We strongly believe that further research on the evolution of the transatlantic relations should definitely approach EU-US IT&C cooperation in the last decades, as more and more types of threats in the form of cyber warfare are resorted to by perpetrators and, in many cases, cyber security as well as cyber diplomacy becomes the trend rather than the exception.

Also, for a more relevant conclusion when extrapolated to a specific geographical region, we consider it would be sensitive that the opinion survey initiated by the current research project is developed in order to cover a wider audience, both in Romania, other European countries and the US/Canada.