

EU-USA Relations

The European Union has a long history of cooperation with the United States of America (USA/US). In 1947, following the Second World War, the European Recovery Programme (the Marshall Plan) was announced by US Secretary of State, George Marshall. It distributed \$13 billion of US aid to 16 European countries, and encouraged European cooperation.

Diplomatic relations were established as early as 1953 when the first US observers were sent to the European Coal and Steel Community (ECSC), the predecessor of the EU, and the first US diplomatic mission was sent to the ECSC in 1956. In 1962, US President Kennedy called for a 'Declaration of Interdependence' between Europe and America. Then, in 1990, the USA-EU *Transatlantic Declaration* established regular summit and ministerial meetings, while the 1995 *New Transatlantic Agenda* and the EU-USA *Joint Action Plan* provided a framework for responding to global problems.

In terms of trade, an EU-USA summit adopted the *Transatlantic Economic Partnership* in 1998, beginning negotiations to remove tariff barriers on certain areas of trade, including services, and intellectual property.

Today, the EU and the USA are also bound up in several other international organisations, including the North Atlantic Treaty Organisation (NATO), founded in 1949, which consists of the USA and Canada plus 26 European countries (mainly, but not exclusively EU states). A key feature of NATO is a 'mutual defence' clause: if one country is attacked, the others will come to its defence.

Levels of EU-US Cooperation

Economic: the *Transatlantic Economic Council* was created in 2007 to boost transatlantic economic growth. The Council is co-chaired by an EU and a US official and is responsible for suggesting common regulations in various industries. The EU and US are each other's biggest trade and investment partners. Trade links are very important for both economies; EU-USA exchanges make up nearly a third of world trade flows, 49% of the world's GDP, and account for approximately 15 million jobs worldwide.

Peace and stability: as global powers, the EU and the USA have a responsibility to promote global peace and stability in conflict zones. The EU and the USA have cooperated in conflict areas before (often through NATO), including in the Balkans and Africa. The EU also negotiates and advises on security issues at the UN, although it does not have voting rights in the Security Council or General Assembly.

Poverty: the EU and USA provide almost 80% of global development aid, which gives them major responsibilities in developing countries.

Security: intensive discussions have taken place since the 9/11 terrorist attacks in the USA, the 11-M bombings in Madrid and the 7/7 attacks in London to strengthen EU-USA cooperation on counter-terrorism and domestic security, including the sharing of electronic data. In 2009, when US President Barack Obama sought to close the notorious Guantanamo Bay prison camp, several EU nations agreed to accept released inmates.

Disagreements

Human Rights: there were many disagreements between the USA and EU during George Bush's Presidency of the USA (2001-09), particularly over the Guantanamo Bay prison camp, which was criticised for committing human rights abuses. Nonetheless, EU states were implicated in the

controversy when it emerged in 2005 that several EU countries had allowed 'extraordinary renditions' - US planes carrying terror suspects destined for torture crossed EU states' airspace with the authorities' knowledge.

Agriculture and Trade: there is a long-running dispute between the EU and USA over Genetically Modified (GM) food. More than 90% of all soya produced in the USA is now GM. In May 2003, the USA, along with Argentina and Canada, made a formal complaint to the World Trade Organisation (WTO) about the EU's ban on approving GM crops and food. The EU said its ban was based on the 'precautionary principle' but the USA argued there was no scientific justification for it. The WTO ruled that the ban was illegal in 2006, but 6 EU states — Austria, Hungary, France, Greece, Germany and Luxembourg — still refused to allow GM maize. In March 2010, the EU allowed GM potatoes to be produced in the EU for the first time. However, this did not fully settle the issue, so the EU proposed to solve the issue by allowing member states to decide for themselves whether to allow GM crops to be grown within their territory, thus allowing anti-GM states to opt-out of allowing GM crop cultivation.

Foreign Policy: the US-led Iraq war, which began in 2003, was a deeply contentious issue that divided members of the EU - some member states, including the UK, Spain and Italy, supported the invasion (the 'coalition of the willing'), whereas France and Germany led a number of countries that opposed it. The EU and US continue to cooperate on a wide range of foreign policy issues, including the Arab Spring, the Middle East Peace Process, Pakistan and Afghanistan.

Environment: the USA attracted criticism from the EU when US President George Bush withdrew his country's support for the *Kyoto Protocol*, an international agreement that set targets to reduce carbon emissions. President Bush argued that the targets would damage the US economy and be ineffective since the reductions did not include developing countries such as China and India. In April 2009, US President Barack Obama signalled a change when he said the USA was now 'ready to lead' on climate change. Furthermore, at the annual EU-USA summit in November 2009, the two parties established an EU-USA Energy Council to increase co-operation on climate change.

Quotes

'In many ways Europe and the US display different mentalities, different ways of looking at the world.' John Marcus, BBC, June 2008.

'The USA has been a stalwart supporter of integration between the nations of Europe, which is today embodied in the European Union.' EU Commission Delegation to the US, 2006.

'Who do you call to speak to Europe?' US Secretary of State, Henry Kissinger.

Links

- http://ec.europa.eu/external_relations/us/index_en.htm
- <http://useu.usmission.gov/>