

# **Transatlantic Relations in a New Era**

## **The Next Generation's Approach**

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## Foreword

The Atlantische Initiative's fellowship and exchange program "Atlantic Expedition" aims to modernize the German-American partnership by empowering young leaders from a wide variety of professional, regional and cultural backgrounds. The Atlantic Expedition promotes interdisciplinary collaboration with online workshops and study trips to Hamburg, Dresden, Berlin, Chicago and Houston.

A diverse group of 30 US and German fellows qualified for the first expedition through an essay competition. Then they debated the state of transatlantic relations, common challenges, the foundations of the German-American partnership, and the entire European-US agenda, but they also brainstormed policy recommendations in online working groups. Afterwards they travelled together to Hamburg, Dresden and Berlin to discuss their ideas with political, military, and economic decision-makers, experts, NGO- and opinion leaders. This paper is the result of this intensive online and offline process and has been co-written by all 30 fellows.

Another group of 30 fellows for the second expedition to Houston and Chicago will build on this work and create an Atlantic Action Plan, which will be presented in Berlin in spring 2018.

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## 1. Introduction: A New Narrative for the 21st Century

While the Marshall Plan remains a touchstone for German-American relations, the value of the transatlantic relationship is no longer as obvious or unassailable as it once was. A new narrative for the transatlantic relationship is needed to address transnational challenges such as the growing importance of emerging economies, an increasingly multipolar world order, and the struggle of legitimacy and representation within democratic societies.

We are the first 30 Atlantic Expedition fellows, who collaborated in eight working groups and travelled together to Hamburg, Dresden and Berlin to meet political, military, and economic decision-makers, experts and NGO leaders in February and March 2017. We propose an incremental approach to trade in light of growing discontent with past agreements. Though comprehensive trade agreements are becoming less popular in both the United States and Europe, opportunities to reform the process while making achievable gains to promote trade are possible. Comprehensive approaches to climate change also remain susceptible to criticism and a lack of coordination. Yet, the increased involvement of regional and local governments, as well as business and non-profits, allow for opportunities to make meaningful gains despite international disagreement on the path forward.

Many of the challenges to the transatlantic relationships could also be resolved through bridging the cultural and political gaps that exist both among nations and within the body politic of individual nations. Leveraging technology to forge closer relationships among the population at large promotes a deeper understanding of our shared goals and values. Moreover, many startups, private entities, and local actors are using new technology to build better cities and foster economic opportunity. Learning from the best practices found on both sides of the Atlantic will enable change despite the obstacle currently present in the modern era. Such an approach results in greater cooperation in response to the refugee crisis. While national governments struggle to shape policy to respond to the crisis, local actors can develop strategies to effectively balance security concerns with the humanitarian response.

International security rightfully remains an issue of paramount concern among transatlantic partners. Nationalist tendencies to emphasize accountability of national leaders to the people they serve do not need to conflict with the broader goal of international stability. NATO, despite its shortcomings, remains a valuable tool for responding to international threats in the post-cold war era, and simple reforms could strengthen its capabilities.

Establishing a new narrative and reinvigorating the transatlantic partnership requires new avenues and modes of cooperation which are outlined in the policy recommendations included in this memo. Specific areas of cooperation include the digital economy and technology; trade; energy and climate; defense and military; and education policy. For cooperation to endure, current and future trends must be taken into account and addressed in this new narrative. The areas of cooperation and specific recommendations outlined in this memo are informed by the following trends, which have been incorporated into our framework for future cooperation.

## ***Transatlantic Trends***

**Proliferation of stakeholders and diffusion of power:** Compared to the period of the founding of the modern German-American relationship after 1945, more stakeholders now sit at the table. The postwar period was characterized largely by the actions of nation states, some multinational corporations, and multilateral organizations initiated by the US and supported by Germany. Today a wide range of stakeholders, including technology firms, non-governmental organizations (NGO), transnational movements, and even individuals, with the help of modern communications technology, can play a significant role in transatlantic relations. The proliferation of stakeholders holds true in both the public and private sectors, and can be seen in the myriad influences on domestic policy and the range of international actors.

**Grassroots action:** Related to the proliferation of stakeholders, the increasing agency of local and sub-national political, economic, and social actors enables new avenues for policy cooperation and innovation. Cities, towns, counties, and states are working together through sub-national organizations, while grassroots initiatives have shown the power and potential of distributed action and activity.

**Digitalization:** From technology and economic development to communication and socialization, digitalization has implications for how economies are structured, how citizens interact amongst themselves and with their governments, and how modern society is organized. Moreover, while technology firms and start-ups are a potent economic force in both societies, digitalization is also changing how traditional industries like energy and manufacturing operate.

**Populism:** While technology has the potential to knit the globe closer together, the downsides of globalization and free trade have created a backlash in many western democratic societies. This has resulted in anti-free trade sentiments and a potential challenge to the free market principles and trade the transatlantic relationship was founded upon. Meanwhile rising populism on both the left and the right sides of the political spectrum are a symptom of dissatisfaction with the representativeness of political institutions and changing economic realities in the twenty-first century.

## ***Looking Forward***

Each of the policy recommendations this paper makes for modernizing, and thereby strengthening, the transatlantic relationship in the 21st century has been shaped and influenced by the trends mentioned above. While the policy areas outlined below are important and distinctive in their own right, they are also connected. These trends transform traditional distinctions between policy areas and sectors and necessitate interdisciplinary approaches and cross-cutting solutions.

## **2. An Incremental and Inclusive Approach to TTIP**

Free trade has done much to advance the cause of human flourishing and improve the lives of people around the globe. The historical cooperation between Europe and North America in advancing free trade, economic opportunity, and open markets not only serves to connect our nations, but has been a force for good across the globe. It is important, therefore, to continue working toward improving our economic relationship to advance transatlantic opportunities and build a peaceful international community.

### ***An Incremental Approach under a Common Framework***

The goal of a comprehensive trade agreement between the US and the European Union (EU) should be maintained as a cornerstone of the transatlantic partnership. However, rather than advocating for a single large trade deal, we favor an incremental approach under a common framework. This approach should be reflected both in the negotiation process as well as the setup of the agreement that TTIP – or whatever the name of its next iteration may be – extends far beyond traditional bilateral trade agreements. The debates surrounding TTIP have shown that for any such agreement, there are a variety of legitimate concerns and a wide range stakeholder needs that must be addressed.

Under the proposed incremental approach, the parties would as a first step conclude a framework agreement which would, in addition to serving as a sort of “TTIP light” by slashing or eliminating the tariffs that still exist, establish common principles, processes, and structures for the negotiation of technical sub-agreements. These separate technical sub-agreements would address the more significant regulatory (or non-tariff) barriers on an industry-by-industry (or subject-by-subject) basis. These sub-agreements would eliminate horse-trading of regulatory standards (which were one of the major criticisms levelled against TTIP). This incremental approach allows the parties to build up consensus more rapidly.

For industries where full regulatory convergence seems out of reach or prohibitively costly for small businesses in the short run, the parties should strive for mutual recognition. This may even serve as the general approach, particularly in areas of first-time cooperation. The barriers to trade will effectively be removed, while the democratic responsibility will be left with each partner state, preempting the concern that TTIP might undermine the democratic process and serve as a platform for the interests of big business.

Last, but not least, an incremental approach offers the flexibility both to respond to new developments and findings as well as to easily expand the agreement to other areas connected to trade, such as digitalization, privacy, or even common efforts to fight tax evasion. The new agreement would provide the foundations for a comprehensive trade agreement, as well as one that is “living,” or evolving along with the markets.

### ***A New and More Inclusive Narrative***

In the face of growing anti-trade sentiments on both sides of the Atlantic, the proponents of free trade need a new and more inclusive narrative to market any future

comprehensive trade deal between the US and the EU. The narrative should be comprised of both factual as well as emotional arguments.

Each agreement should be justified based on its own merits. Broad narratives of prosperity and the benefits of free trade are unlikely to appeal to skeptics. They also do not reflect that one of the major benefits of a comprehensive US/EU trade agreement lies in setting democratically agreed upon standards. Rather than favoring multinationals that already are able to export, it is small companies that would benefit the most from increased regulatory convergence. In this way, a comprehensive trade agreement could not only boost jobs and growth for the wider public in affected nations, but also bring about increased competition for multinationals.

To win over skeptics' hearts, the agreement could be pitched as a first step towards "taking back control" of the globalized economy. Based on common values, partners bound by a special historical relationship would undertake to shape the world economy in line with their core values of the rule of law, human rights, free enterprise, and the responsibilities that come with it.

Such a narrative may call for a new name, so that it might be unencumbered by the baggage of the heated battles surrounding TTIP.

### ***Commitment to an Evidence-based Review***

The parties should commit to an evidence-based review of any agreement concluded under the new framework. For there to be an open public dialogue, the transatlantic partners must pro-actively assess the impacts of their actions and publish the results. Furthermore, the respective governments should unilaterally commit to establishing trade adjustment programs for workers and industries that are shown to be adversely affected by the agreement during the review process. Ultimately, the review may even serve to trigger a renegotiation (including, in the worst case, a suspension) of any sub-agreement that is shown to bring about imbalances that are unacceptable to one party. This process of review and modulation would be facilitated by the proposed modular approach.

### **3. Bridging the Atlantic: Towards a New Education Agenda**

According to the Organization for Economic Cooperation and Development (OECD), on both sides of the Atlantic there is a 55% or higher chance that a 25 to 44-year-old whose parents passed tertiary education will achieve the same level of education, while less than 10% of children from low-educated families with a migration background reach that level. To make education more inclusive, we propose three recommendations that promote transatlantic learning and address a broad spectrum of both traditional and non-traditional stakeholders in a changing economy.

#### ***Prioritize Digital Education and Exchange***

Educational landscapes in the EU and the US fail to harness the full potential of digital information and communication technologies (ICTs). We recommend creating an online platform accessible to educational institutions at all levels that allows students and teachers to collaborate. Such a platform may be co-managed by NGOs working on transatlantic issues and would be oriented towards low-cost, equitable access through sponsorship from the Department/Ministry of Education, government grants, and corporations. Citing the example of language learning, the platform will allow students to interact with native speakers via video calls or messages. We see the platform as a convenient model for increasing mutual understanding and peer-to-peer level learning.

Our recommendation goes further than existing educational online initiatives by proposing a platform that becomes entrenched in the education system with a rich multi-channel environment, combining online collaboration with potential in-person exchanges and a transatlantic network for students.

The learning platform should be set up to cover materials of different subjects from elementary to university education, while exploring topics of global context such as, identities and relationships, fairness and development, and globalization and sustainability. As the depth of the material increases and students become more engaged in specialized areas, the platform allows them to connect with learners across the Atlantic with shared and divergent interests, resulting in expanded horizons for both parties. Initial communication will be cultivated within the classroom and could expand independently via social media channels, allowing students to forge friendships outside of the classroom. We recommend further incentivizing training in language and intercultural skills by offering bilingual subject training and encouraging its use in these social exchanges.

In-person exchange, which deepens bonds and creates a sense of belonging and solidarity, should be incentivized through active participation in the virtual exchange. A scholarship program could ease the burden for selected students across regions and socio-economic groups. Another key component of the success of this program will be engagement with educators. Opportunities for physical exchange should be extended to educators who have demonstrated commitment to integrating the program into their work in the classroom.

### ***Establish a Transatlantic Curriculum***

For many citizens, international organizations exist only as abstractions. The perceived distance of these organizations leads to feelings of alienation and disapproval towards them. To counter this trend and to create a more informed public, we propose the creation of a transatlantic curriculum.

Within this curriculum, students will have the opportunity to learn about and represent their national views while being challenged by increased exposure to the perspectives of individuals from different countries. This curriculum should cover three areas:

- History and development of international treaties and organizations (i.e., the UN and the EU). Properly contextualizing the events that led to the creation of these organizations serves to justify their existence in a specific historical moment, conveys the continuing relevance of the work they do, and contributes to a better sense of how they operate and might be best used or modified to confront modern challenges.
- Deep divisions in each society that run along similar fault lines of race, gender, and class. These issues could be discussed in the attempt to find common ground and shed light on the difficulties of integration and empowerment, while emphasizing solutions for political cohesion.
- Civic education should teach media literacy to equip students with the ability to identify fake news and an appreciation of pluralism. We see added value in being combined with our previously described online platform. For example, in a unit studying news media, students might opt to track a certain issue in their own and foreign press. They could then use the online platform to hear from other students tracking the same issue in an EU country, thereby learning about the ways events are presented in different media sources across the globe.

The curriculum would be implemented as an optional added course for students in US middle and high schools and German “gymnasiale Oberstufen.” It would be developed by a third party NGO and ideally be supported through the Department/Ministries of Education. The course would be taught in English and upon completion, students would receive an internationally-recognized certificate for their efforts.

### ***Set up a Working Class Exchange Program***

To broaden the spectrum of groups that participate in the transatlantic dialog, we propose to establish a transatlantic working class exchange program. First, it targets a stakeholder group that is traditionally underrepresented in transatlantic relations and that has, to some extent, expressed discontent with traditional politics. By involving this group in the transatlantic exchange, we seek to complement the well-entrenched exchanges at the level of higher education and create a comprehensive initiative to rebuild faith in our institutions and strengthen our historic ties. Second, by choosing workers from multinational companies, we aim to leverage existing infrastructures to ensure the exchange will be efficiently organized while keeping costs to a minimum.

We envision intra-company application and selection processes. German workers would then spend stints of four to six weeks at an American site and vice versa. A designated local “buddy” would help with job-related and cultural matters to foster a seamless transition. The buddy system ensures the continuity of the exchange by fostering personal friendships. Adaptation to the new environment would additionally be facilitated through pre-program orientation, consisting of seminars to prepare for the challenges ahead. Similarly, post-program evaluation would guarantee that participants reflect on their experience and share newly gained knowledge with their fellow workers at home.

Finally, the programs would carry incentives for both participating workers and corporate leadership. Companies will be able to enhance their human resources. Workers will gain insight into other technologies and work processes that can prove a valuable asset upon return, potentially advancing their careers in the process. Further, the international exchange promises to combat parochialism and broaden employees’ understanding of the world around them. Participants are likely to act as multipliers, sharing their experiences with families and friends. Lastly, participation in such an exchange would likely cultivate loyalty to the company, which pays dividends for the employer over the long term.

In short: By investing in their workers’ professional skills and instilling intercultural understanding, companies invest not only in their human capital but also in society’s ability to deal with global change.

Innovative advances in education are key drivers of deeper transatlantic relations. Our proposal offers expansion of the promise of education along the lines of methods, content and stakeholders. Capitalizing on the opportunities of digitalization, we combine traditional in-person exchange with virtual learning platforms. This integrated methodical approach is joined with a transatlantic curriculum that covers political, historical, and social topics in both the US and Europe. Such a comprehensive education system broadens the base of transatlantic stakeholders, thus increasing social mobility, particularly through the inclusion of workers. Overall, the proposal promises to empower a generation to understand the importance of transatlantic cooperation and transform into a transnational workforce.

#### **4. Toward a Decentralized Framework for Climate Engagement**

Following the Paris Agreement, climate commitments must be backed by concrete action. Meeting the obligations under the Agreement will require effective and innovative policy solutions and transformation in the energy sector and beyond. The US and Germany, as climate leaders and policy pioneers, are at the forefront of these efforts and should expand cooperation beyond the federal level to include states, cities, local actors, and private sector-stakeholders on both sides. In addition to the benefits of expanded cooperation, the Trump Administration's climate skepticism, preference for fossil fuels, and Cabinet appointments make sub-national engagement a necessity. This will not only provide a path forward toward combatting climate change, but will help broaden and modernize the transatlantic relationship, expanding cooperation beyond traditional sectors and opening additional opportunities for bilateral and multilateral engagement.

German policymakers should reach out to US stakeholders at the state and local level and engage with the private sector, research communities, and NGOs to foster an inclusive energy transition, share best practices, and develop a policy toolbox. Cities can be a key driver of change, as illustrated by the work being done through the Rockefeller 100 Resilient Cities, C40 Cities, and the World Mayors Council on Climate Change, while California, with its commitment to climate mitigation, and Texas, with its success in renewable integration and grid expansion, could be complementary cooperation partners.

##### ***Fostering an Inclusive Energy Transition***

A persuasive climate policy must acknowledge the social, economic, and political dimensions of the energy transition and strive to ameliorate the negative side effects and extending benefits to those in the system. As populist political movements in the US and Germany express working class grievances (including the coal mining communities in the US, which lost 10,000 jobs in 2015), understanding and managing these concerns and side effects is crucial. Policymakers on both sides of the Atlantic should recognize that the transition to a low-carbon future will cause change (and upheaval) and transformation throughout the economy. Far from being limited to the energy sector, transport, manufacturing, housing, urban development, and many related fields will be impacted.

Mitigating the downsides of such a transition and amplifying its positive side effects are key aspects of the energy transition. To support communities in transition, smart incentives and tax breaks could help encourage investment in former fossil fuel and manufacturing communities. Policies can incentivize clean technology companies to hire former fossil fuel employees or locate their sites in towns or states with a history of coal production. Policymakers should also work with the private sector to design job (re-)training programs for workers seeking to transition from the fossil to the renewables sector and rethinking how best to prepare workers for jobs in sustainability and clean technology.

In addition to managing the economic upheaval brought by energy sector transformation and broader changes required to meet the 2-degree target,

policymakers should focus on the positive economic impacts of climate protection. Increased investment in renewable energy offers the potential to create hundreds of thousands of jobs, while investments in a more modern and efficient energy system can yield energy savings for businesses and consumers and reduce energy bills. Political narratives should emphasize the benefits of an energy transition to consumers and business owners and provide a positive vision rooted in concrete data to counter climate skepticism.

### ***Sharing Expertise at Home and Abroad***

While falling renewable energy costs have made the energy transition viable, challenges still remain. Modernizing electric grids and integrating intermittent renewables is a particular challenge in which several US states, including Texas and California, have developed deep expertise. German cooperation with state partners could facilitate the exchange of best practices, critical for Germany as it struggles with grid expansion and loop flows. Both countries are struggling to address the transportation sector, including the integration of e-mobility architecture (for clean and efficient transport like electric vehicles). Stakeholder engagement between Germany, with its globally recognized automotive sector, and US states with various e-mobility strategies could provide an opportunity to discuss policy models and foster cooperation between industry and policymakers.

Countries outside of the US and Germany are struggling to provide reliable and affordable energy while meeting sustainability goals and intended Nationally Determined Contributions (NDCs) commitments. Many emerging economies and developing countries are interested in creating more sustainable energy systems, but lack expertise or capacity in designing policies and regulations, technology development and deployment, and managing the transition. Germany and the US have the opportunity to leverage their shared expertise and leadership by providing technical and financial support and sharing best practices. Experts from both sides should work together to create a policy toolbox outlining best practices and policy options to tackle climate change adaptation and mitigation. This toolbox would provide a range of options for policymakers in countries with differing developmental levels and resource profiles, allowing them to draw on the collective expertise in Germany and the US while pursuing solutions tailored to their needs.

As part of the toolbox, interested countries could apply for assistance from US-German partners. This assistance would not be purely financial, but would range from expert visits or exchanges to discuss policy options and implementation to conferences with interested private sector actors. This could include peer-to-peer exchange, expert visits, and creation of public and private sector networks between the US, Germany, and interested emerging economies. Such initiatives could be developed at relatively little cost, potentially with funding from businesses or NGOs. Universities could also serve as a key link in this exchange, bringing climate scientists and energy sector researchers from emerging economies to the US or Germany to research technological and policy solutions.

Broadening both the concept of assistance and the stakeholders involved would enable US participation even if federal climate action--and funding--is not forthcoming. The development of a toolbox and assistance programs could also help bridge the gap in the debate over differentiated responsibility, allowing the US and Germany to provide assistance (financial, technical, knowledge transfer, etc.) to developing countries and shoulder their share of climate responsibility.

## 5. Transatlantic Security: Improving Burden-Sharing

Despite the current trends toward nationalism and retrenchment in both the US and Europe, policymakers should continue to give transatlantic security cooperation the utmost priority. The security challenges the Alliance faces can only be successfully confronted if the US and Europe continue and deepen their cooperation. While NATO has inefficiencies and shortcomings in specific policy areas, Americans and Europeans should recognize its value as the cornerstone of not just regional, but also global peace, security, and stability. To this end, we recommend that NATO members: (1) Meet the 2% spending target by 2024; (2) Develop a burden sharing score as a more robust metric; (3) Address weaknesses in systems for electronic warfare, as well as further develop cyber capabilities; (4) Continue to support and expand the recent defensive troop deployments to NATO's eastern borders. Additionally, decision-makers on both sides of the Atlantic should keep in mind that security cannot only be viewed through the traditional lens of deterring and countering threats. A holistic approach to security should include investing in efforts to curb climate change and proactively helping other governments address the causes of migration.

### ***Meeting the 2% Spending Target by 2024***

Burden-sharing has been a recurring and contentious issue among NATO member-states since the inception of the Alliance. The issue resurfaced with renewed intensity following President Trump's criticism of countries that do not meet the 2% GDP contribution target. In 2006, Alliance members set a target to spend 2% of their GDP on defense and reaffirmed this commitment at the 2014 NATO Wales summit, with countries that failed to meet this target committing to work towards it by 2024. The US should be patient as its allies work towards this goal. It is unrealistic for countries currently spending around 1% on defense to reach 2% within a year or two. This would be politically infeasible and such a drastic increase might not be effectively spent on areas that actually enhance Alliance security. To address America's concerns realistically, NATO members should increase their defense budgets each year for the next seven years. Doing so is important not only to signal a commitment to the Alliance but also to invest in capabilities to provide for the common defense.

### ***Develop a Burden Sharing Score***

In the long term, we recommend that NATO develop a burden sharing score. This score will serve as a comprehensive measure for countries' contribution to the Alliance and ease the over-reliance on monetary contributions as the only means of contributing to NATO. This score would account for: contributions to ongoing missions, response and leadership in new crises, and thwarting terror plots, among other factors that member states can decide to include. It is unlikely that all Alliance members will meet the 2% spending goal by 2024; these countries might however be contributing in other ways that enhance the Alliance's collective security goal and it is important to have a metric that reflects these contributions as well.

### ***Enhance Cyber Capabilities to Counter Emerging Threats***

The military conflicts in Ukraine and Syria, as well as the hacking and subsequent leaking of emails during the 2016 US presidential election, have demonstrated the serious threat posed by cyber warfare. The hackings showed that American systems were vulnerable and other NATO members might be targeted next. NATO therefore needs to increase investment in cyber capabilities in order to anticipate and counter existing and future threats. In the short term, the Alliance should ensure that member states' critical infrastructure, especially communications equipment, is well protected against cyber attacks. NATO should increase personnel tasked specifically with protecting and responding to cyber attacks on member states. Furthermore, it should establish a team that only focuses on preventing and countering cyber threats from Russia.

### ***Expand Troops to Deter Russian Revanchism***

With Vladimir Putin testing the strength of the NATO alliance, the US and Europe must stand firmly against Russian revanchism. Positioning NATO troops in Poland and the Baltic states is an important deterrent against Russian aggression. Recent troop movements to countries which share borders with Russia sends a clear signal that NATO is prepared to defend its Eastern allies. Despite President Trump's campaign rhetoric about Russia, the Administration should continue to support strengthening the allied rotational troop presence in Estonia, Latvia, Lithuania, and Poland. NATO's European members should embolden support for this enhanced forward presence, which is intended to keep the peace. Placing troops in defensive positions to be able to quickly respond to Russian attacks is a move of defense and deterrence—not provocation or aggression.

## 6. Sharing Standards on Development, Refugee, and Integration

The recent migration crisis has brought longstanding tensions in Europe's immigration and integration policies to the forefront. This is compounded by a concern in Europe and the US that hosting refugees and migrants from fragile and conflict-afflicted states in the Middle East and North Africa increase domestic security risks and that such persons are not easily integrated into existing socioeconomic and political systems. We believe the US and Europe need to develop a holistic approach toward their development, migration, and integration policies, as success in each field is interlinked. More effective aid can help to address the root causes conflict and fragility, reducing the pressures of forced migration at the source. At the same time, more open, inclusive, and integrative policies at home serve to buttress our credibility as a value-based community, making our efforts to address global security challenges more effective.

### ***Development Cooperation: Coordination and Financing for a more Effective Aid System***

Successful development cooperation goes back to the origins of the transatlantic partnership. The legacy of the Marshall Plan allows Europe and the US to act from a position of economic strength; today, the US and Europe are the world's two largest donors in development and humanitarian aid, and are generally at the forefront of international efforts to respond to humanitarian crises. However, both the US and Europe often do not invest the necessary resources and attention to prevention. Both parties should be committed to meeting the 0.7% of GDP development aid target for OECD countries. But even small, continuous investments in development projects – when carried out effectively – can help to address some of the root causes of conflict, political violence, migration, and other challenges. This will be less painful and costly than dealing with the fallout of major international crises after the fact.

However, one of the major bottlenecks of effective developmental assistance in fragile and conflict-affected states has been the lack of coordination among different actors. Over the short term, the American and European aid agencies should improve their coordination mechanisms, to more systematically and formally improve synergies in their activities, while reducing programmatic and funding overlap, duplication, and competition. This needs to take place at the level of in-country actors in embassies and delegations, but should mature into more coordinated policies between US and EU at an international level. As this coordination matures, a joint comprehensive review of the development system should be carried out – including a reexamination of some of the orthodoxies of the development sector. For instance, regulations that lead to a “move the money around or budgets will be cut” mentality must be avoided. Over the long term, more sustained pooling of resources should take place. For instance, a joint trust fund can be established to provide a self-sustaining source of development finance. The differential remaining in the fund can be invested productively in the economy, prioritizing businesses involved in the green energy transformation or

providing services to those in need. National ownership, rigorous policy research, and independent evaluation mechanisms should guide transatlantic efforts.

### ***Organizational Partnership for Refugee Asylum and Protection***

The massive flow of refugees from the Middle East and North Africa over recent years has tested the capacity and willingness of the US and EU member states to keep their doors open to refugees. A sustainable balance between competing policy objectives, including humanitarian aid and burden-sharing, remains to be found. We propose several measures to increase fairness, efficiency, sustainability, and legitimacy of the current system.

Emergency situations like the 2015 refugee crisis make short-term burden-sharing measures inevitable. The subnational actors affected most by the admittance of refugees need to be included in decision-making and diplomatic efforts between the US, the EU and UNHCR should continue to fight traffickers as well as reach agreements on resettling refugees. Sharing expertise and best practices could also be used to increase the transparency and coherence of the asylum application procedure, thereby preventing a populist backlash, while at the same time ensuring equitable protection for asylum seekers.

All transatlantic partners must be held accountable for reducing “push factors” of forced migration by improving employment of refugees as well as standards in camps, particularly in Eastern Africa and Syria’s neighboring states. For this aim, securing the financing of UNHCR and investing in research and pilot projects is vital. Over the long term and with respect to probable climate-refugee scenarios, we support an equitable transatlantic solution and propose pooling resources, a regulated asylum system, and a humanitarian visa based on criteria of vulnerability.

### ***Empowering NGOs and Local Communities toward Effective Integration***

The steady flow of immigrants into the US and Europe is an inevitable and positive tenet of contemporary society in these regions. There must be systematic and consistent initiatives to successfully integrate migrant (including refugee) populations to stop culture-based polarization in western countries. The surge of immigrants into Germany should force the country to critically reexamine its integration practices. The US may have a long history of successful integration but this threatens to be undone by the Trump Administration.

Many key innovations in integration resources are from or will require non-governmental actors. Two services essential for integration are employment support and language skill courses. NGOs, usually not-for-profit, organize language courses and are key to softening anti-immigrant attitudes in local communities. The US non-profit sector has better organizational and funding structures than in Germany. Successful American NGOs in integration work should be committed to sharing best practices and partnering with German non-profits. Also, German and US public funding for integration should be increasingly tailored towards NGOs as they have greater operational flexibility and empower local actors to take part in the integration process.

The most successful integration initiatives are not top-down but bottom-up. Therefore, we believe municipal governments in both the US and Germany should exercise broad discretion with respect to integration policies. This includes starting private sponsorship programs for refugees, offering incentives to companies for hiring underrepresented migrant populations, and providing a cultural education curriculum. This local approach to integration ensures that the community most responsible for making migrant groups feel welcomed is an active participant in the ground-level process. Both the US and Germany have failed to be consistently transparent and communicative in describing how schools, religious institutions, and the private sector must locally engage migrant populations for successful integration.

## 7. Technology as the Driver for Transatlantic Collaboration

The US and EU face many similar challenges in the digital age which affect both the business sector and society as a whole. We see this moment as a chance to shift the focus of the transatlantic relationship toward greater collaboration and proactive problem-solving, which will also help to address domestic issues on each side of the Atlantic. Both parties can benefit if their cooperation embraces learning-based collaboration and the realization that their goals, values, and societies are more intertwined than ever. We are promoting a transatlantic technology infrastructure that will enable industries to innovate and grow internationally in lock-step with both users and governments.

### ***Smart Sister Cities: A Classic Partnership in a New Era***

While the US and EU have many values in common, there are significant cultural differences with respect to the adoption of technologies. The US embraces new technologies with excitement, while Europe prioritizes caution and careful testing. Therefore, we recommend an update to the very successful “Sister Cities” program, growing them into “smart” trial tech cities and retaining their mission of cultural exchange while testing new innovations in a controlled and intentional environment.

While the recent experiences of tech start-ups provide a motivation for changing policies, the opportunity to test new technologies will benefit numerous industries. Innovations in green technology, energy, transportation, infrastructure, and agriculture could all be jointly tested on both sides of the Atlantic without regulatory obstruction while building relationships and confidence in those markets. For example, new drones and adaptations of the technology could be tested in rural areas, where safety risks are lower, permits and exceptions are easier to obtain, and innovations can bring much needed economic stimulus. Subsequent regulation can then be based on real events and experiences, which should appeal to governments and companies alike.

The program is by no means compulsory; instead we envision a voluntary step which brings multiple stakeholder groups together. Governments, academic institutions, and communities would all benefit from the unique opportunity to share lessons through public-private partnership, and test runs will create best practices and regulations based in concrete empirical evidence. When complete, successful projects will create a path to responsibly expanding innovations regionally and nationally while retaining trust. Ultimately, the cities selected for participation will become national leaders - connecting their citizens to the world and providing them with unique access to new technologies, improvements to infrastructure, business growth, and tourism opportunities. In summary, business, society, and politics will continuously work together and influence each other in this partnership.

### ***Smart Regions: Implementing New Technologies to Foster Growth and Discovery***

The growing technology industry, anchored by universities providing intellectual capital as well as research and development expertise, contributes over 7% of US GDP as

well a combined 8% of GDP in major G-20 countries. Growth prospects in the technology economy are promising for job creation, as new business services facilitate the entry of small and medium sized businesses, which create the majority of new jobs. However, remaining competitive in the tech arena presents a significant challenge, as other governments are investing heavily in innovation.

Forward thinking cities, such as Amsterdam and Kansas City, Missouri, have taken critical first steps to implement innovations and foster growth, uniting infrastructure with information technologies to increase efficiency. US and EU governments can collaboratively advance these concepts by establishing “smart states” and regions around them. By supporting public-private partnerships through critical investments in infrastructure and by building on the successes of smart cities, newly proven technologies, such as drones and smart grids, can be broadly implemented. This will bring innovation into rural and rust-belt areas and position smart cities as the capitals of growing economic hubs. This connectivity will broadly benefit US and EU corporations, rural communities, and consumers, while improving transatlantic relations through mutual investment and a more educated and skilled workforce. Although investments in infrastructure are expensive, costs will be offset by increased efficiency, economic growth, and effective public-private partnerships.

### ***Smart Diplomacy: Reinvesting in Science to Build Integrated Relationships***

The current instability in institutions on each side of the Atlantic has put many programs, specifically scientific initiatives, at financial risk. Now more than ever, cooperation in scientific research is vital to the transatlantic relationship, with academic institutions and individual researchers providing stable, thoughtful international leadership. For example, despite tensions between the US and Russia, cooperation on the International Space Station continues. Long before the resumption of US – Cuba relations, scientific exchanges on public health and vaccinations took place above the political fray. Scientific diplomacy has long been a cornerstone of foreign policy. We propose a model of transatlantic sub-national engagement between users, local governments, scientists/researchers, and companies to revitalize scientific diplomacy in the 21st century.

Just as many EU and non-EU member states came together in 1954 to create the European Organization for Nuclear Research (CERN), modern opportunities exist for transatlantic actors to cooperate on scientific initiatives. Horizon 2020 provides a framework for research exchange and nourishes innovation through direct funding – offering a best practice example which can be replicated or expanded to a transatlantic scale. Transatlantic actors face many common challenges, from climate change to cybersecurity, and jointly exploring new technologies in these areas can form a core of cooperation to 2030 and beyond. A modernized “Sister Cities” program can serve as the bridge within this framework to promote scientific cooperation and social exchange.

We also recommend expanding cooperation to students and practitioners in various fields in the mold of CERN and through transatlantic exchanges as described in Section 3 Bridging the Atlantic: Towards a New Education Agenda of this memo. Such

initiatives would help to broaden and diversify the actors that actively participate in the transatlantic partnership, and should aim at promoting professional skills, scientific exchange, and language proficiency, which is lacking in the current EU apprenticeship exchange program. These new partnerships will generate tremendous value through developing talent. Participants in corporate-sponsored programs gain access to real-world learning and a fast-track to professional careers, corporate sponsors gain an avenue to engage talent and develop transatlantic workforces through a rich exchange and transatlantic partnership. Ultimately, these initiatives will raise the profile of science diplomacy, creating a forum for thought and analysis and initiating bilateral projects.

## 8. Conclusion

This paper has put forth policy recommendations that frame a new narrative for transatlantic relations. Fellows from both sides of the Atlantic were selected to represent both professional and regional diversity of their respective countries as well as held worldviews from across the political spectrum. The shared passion for modernizing, reinvigorating and improving transatlantic relations led to detailed and innovative recommendations across different fields of policy. The Marshall Plan was definitive for the US-Germany partnership over 60 years ago, but now a more dynamic and varied partnership is needed. Federal governments should no longer be viewed as the sole source for action and solutions both because of the current administration in the US and a continued power shift towards NGOs and local actors. Engagement at the subnational level is ever more critical.

Our team embraces this shift because cooperation between non-governmental and local actors can provide innovative solutions to age-old problems. In energy, partnerships in the research community and industry can foster quicker transitions to renewable energy. In technology, US-German sister cities can have “smart” objectives of testing cutting edge products. In education, private institutions can develop a digital international curriculum that enhances learning on both sides of the Atlantic. And for integration efforts, community centers and grassroots organizations can share best practices to improve language acquisition and citizenship rates.

This paper advocates for widening the demographics that benefit from transatlantic relations. Multinational corporations and high level government officials should not be the focal points of US-German cooperation. In the economic sphere, we emphasize how small businesses benefit from a US-EU trade agreement. We also understand the need to combat populism in both regions through promoting exchange programs among working class people, especially in the energy sector.

We understand the global implications of the transatlantic relationship. High trade standards and greater security-development coordination between the US and EU would greatly influence other nations. Ultimately, however, we see individuals as having a definitive role in the future of transatlantic relations. In this digital age, individuals have more resources than ever to connect with their counterparts across the Atlantic. Individual citizens of the US, Germany and across Europe can easily request that the local government they pay taxes to, the company they regularly consume from, or the non-profit they volunteer with, seek out partnerships with Western counterparts in order to realize our common goals of international democracy, security and prosperity.

We hope our thoughts are found to be useful. They are meant to lead to both discussion and action. Our mission to inspire passion for and improve transatlantic relations will never be fully accomplished, but will remain a constant, exciting work in progress.

## Appendix: Acknowledgments, Authors and Supporters

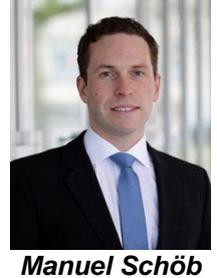
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