

# 2024 and Beyond: How to Future-proof the Transatlantic Alliance



**Danielle Piatkiewicz**  
**Hugo Blewett-Mundy**

## About the Transatlantic Policy Forum

Transatlantic Policy Forum (TAPF) is a closed-door summit for decision-makers and opinion-formers co-organised by EUROPEUM Institute for European Policy with partners. TAPF has been held in Prague every Autumn since 2018 under the auspices of the Ministry of Foreign Affairs of the Czech Republic.

## Summary

In their analysis, researchers Danielle Piatkiewicz and Hugo Blewett-Mundy delve into the most recent obstacles confronting transatlantic security, particularly within the backdrop of Russia's war against Ukraine. They emphasize the imperative of addressing geopolitical challenges while simultaneously striving for strategic independence in economic and energy matters, all the while preserving the common democratic principles that unite these allies. The paper also anticipates the upcoming hurdles in 2024, including a significant election year and the necessity for the transatlantic relationship to fortify its determination for the future.

## Introduction

To date, the United States and Europe have effectively maintained a robust consensus and unity in their approach to the ongoing Russian war of aggression against Ukraine, a major contemporary geopolitical challenge. Nonetheless, as the Israel-Hamas war continues to escalate, the transatlantic resolve will be tested once again. While conflict persists in the European neighbourhood, signs of support fatigue and financial limitations are emerging on both sides of the Atlantic. This situation is prompting EU Member States, particularly those in Central and Eastern Europe (CEE), to persist in their efforts to seek assistance.

This background paper seeks to understand and identify additional areas of convergence and conflict among the transatlantic partners. It delves into their joint efforts to navigate a Europe entangled in conflict, with a particular focus on supporting Ukraine's victory, which is intrinsically linked to establishing security assurances for Central and Eastern Europe. In addition, it will examine the diverse perspectives regarding economic resilience amidst China's growing influence, which encompasses finding common ground in areas, such as the future of Technology and Trade Cooperation and energy resilience enhancement.

Furthermore, the paper offers insights into how the transatlantic relationship can be fortified as we enter a tumultuous 2024 and super election year, with a special emphasis on the pivotal role that Central and Eastern Europe can play. It underscores the importance of confronting geopolitical challenges facing the rules-based global order and the EU taking a central role, while concurrently pursuing strategic economic and energy autonomy and upholding the shared democratic values that bind these allies together.

In essence, what measures can be taken to ensure the long-term resilience of transatlantic relations and prevent a recurrence of the significant challenges faced in 2016, which posed a major obstacle to the future of this alliance?

## All Is Well on the Transatlantic Front?

On October 20, 2023, President Biden hosted President of the European Council Charles Michel and European Commission President Ursula von der Leyen at the White House.<sup>1</sup> During the meeting, the US and EU leaders reviewed and reaffirmed their commitment to transatlantic cooperation. While official statements highlighted renewed dedication to Ukraine, the reinforcement of multilateralism, international cooperation, and shared values of democracy, human rights, and the rule of law, the discussions were significantly influenced by persistent trade tensions between allies, particularly relating to China, and the mixed messages surrounding the Israel-Hamas war.

The Summit highlights only the latest disagreements between the allies, many of which have already been seen in rhetoric among politicians gearing up for the slew of elections in 2024. While the European Parliament elections will likely deliver no big surprises that would shake the core of the transatlantic relations, the US presidential elections in which Trump and Biden could potentially square off once again – raises concerns that the US will withdraw from many of its commitments established during Biden’s tenure, including support for Ukraine, NATO defence spending, the Technology and Trade Cooperation (TTC), and climate and energy goals, just to name a few.

Recent elections held in Central Europe reveal fractures within the EU that may disrupt the bloc’s ability to cooperate with the US, particularly on Ukraine. Robert Fico, who is set to return as Slovakia’s prime minister under a coalition government after winning the election in September, pledged to end his country’s military support to Ukraine and criticised the European Union’s sanctions on Russia.<sup>2</sup> Poland, on the other hand, has seen an abrupt shift in political power. Former European Council President Donald Tusk is expected to return to office as Poland’s Prime Minister under a new coalition formed of Civic Coalition, the Third Way, and The Left. The pro-European stance of this new government means that Poland is in a strong position to build on its standing as one of the staunchest supporters of Ukraine inside the EU.

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<sup>1</sup> <https://www.consilium.europa.eu/en/meetings/international-summit/2023/10/20/>

<sup>2</sup> <https://www.france24.com/en/europe/20231011-slovakia-s-populist-fico-signs-coalition-deal-with-far-right-parties>

The recent Slovak and Polish elections highlight the right-left dichotomy within the CEE region and what the political landscape has experienced across the US and Europe. These concerns stress the importance of leadership as the lack of transatlantic unity only empowers the authoritarianism of Vladimir Putin's Russia and Xi Jinping's China. The transatlantic relationship needs to bolster and double down on the fundamental values that bind US-EU relations, with the aim to achieve predictability and define common interests. Essentially, the relationship needs to be able to weather the impact of an US anti-EU or NATO leader. This is an area where the EU can be proactive. The future course of European strategic autonomy, a key pillar of Ursula von der Leyen's mandate as European Commission President, will be crucial to alleviating pressure on the US as Europe's primary security provider since 1945.

## Guardians of the Atlantic: Exploring Transatlantic Security

It is well known that Russia's decision to launch its full-scale invasion of Ukraine in February 2022 shattered the illusion held since the end of the Cold War that East-West cooperation can build lasting security in Europe. Instead, Russia's President, Vladimir Putin, has exploited areas of weakness within the international system to undermine the postwar order and reinforce his worldview that stability cannot be achieved without an assertive Russian state.

At the NATO Vilnius Summit in July, Allied members agreed on "significant measures to further enhance NATO's deterrence and defence posture in all domains, including strengthening forward defences and the Alliance's ability to rapidly reinforce any Ally that comes under threat."<sup>3</sup> According to the German Marshall Fund 2023 Transatlantic Trends report, all

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countries surveyed, except for Germany, had majorities backing the offer of NATO membership to Ukraine.<sup>4</sup> Public support for Ukraine has been particularly strong in CEE, and governments from the region have started to encourage the private sector to play a leading role in Ukraine's postwar reconstruction. For example, the Czech Republic has pledged to spend 500m Crowns (USD23.5m)

<sup>3</sup> [https://www.nato.int/cps/en/natohq/official\\_texts\\_217320.htm](https://www.nato.int/cps/en/natohq/official_texts_217320.htm)

<sup>4</sup> [https://www.gmfus.org/sites/default/files/2023-09/TT2023\\_digital-2.pdf](https://www.gmfus.org/sites/default/files/2023-09/TT2023_digital-2.pdf)

each year through till 2025 to enable firms to sign contracts with Ukrainian officials via regional trade missions.<sup>5</sup>

On security guarantees for Ukraine, the G7 launched negotiations with Kyiv at the Vilnius Summit to formalise military and economic support for Ukraine through bilateral commitments and arrangements. NATO Allies agreed to extend an invitation to Ukraine to join the Alliance ‘when Allies agree and conditions are met,’<sup>6</sup> but fell short of providing a timeframe for accession. High Representative of the EU Josep Borrell reiterated the EU’s long-term commitment to supporting Ukraine and Ukraine’s EU accession at an unprecedented meeting of EU foreign ministers in Kyiv in October.<sup>7</sup> Meanwhile, Germany, the largest EU economy, unveiled a fresh support package for Ukraine of up to €1bn (USD1.1bn), which covers air defence, weapons, and ground vehicles.<sup>8</sup> US support for Ukraine, however, faces uncertainty. The failure of House Republicans to elect a new Speaker after the removal of Kevin McCarthy in October means that White House plans for additional US military aid cannot be considered for approval.<sup>9</sup>

Doubt over the extent to which the largest provider of arms to Ukraine can continue its support comes amid growing external pressures in the European neighbourhood. Hopes for a negotiated settlement on the status of the post-Soviet breakaway region of Nagorno-Karabakh evaporated after Azerbaijan launched a fresh assault on the long-disputed enclave. Similarly, the Israeli–Palestinian peace process faces collapse as Israel prepares for a ground operation in Gaza in response to the recent attacks by Hamas. In the Western Balkans, recent tensions point towards an escalation between Kosovo and Serbia as Serbian President Aleksandar Vucic sought Russia’s support following an attack in an ethnic Serbian-majority region of northern Kosovo.<sup>10</sup> There is a risk that Russia’s full-scale invasion of Ukraine has set a dangerous new precedent where the sovereignty of states can be violated by force and with impunity, which

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<sup>5</sup> <https://www.reuters.com/world/europe/central-europe-firms-stake-positions-ukraine-reconstruction-race-2023-05-25/>

<sup>6</sup> [https://www.nato.int/cps/en/natohq/official\\_texts\\_217320.htm?selectedLocale=en](https://www.nato.int/cps/en/natohq/official_texts_217320.htm?selectedLocale=en)

<sup>7</sup> <https://ecfr.eu/publication/sustain-and-prosper-how-europeans-can-support-ukraine/>

<sup>8</sup> <https://www.rferl.org/a/ukraine-german-defense-aid-1-billion/32631802.html>

<sup>9</sup> <https://www.ft.com/content/15ac82e9-eeab-4ec8-9988-69b279d710fe>

<sup>10</sup> <https://www.politico.eu/article/serbian-president-aleksandar-vucic-turns-to-russia-amid-rising-tensions-with-kosovo/>

leaves Taiwan and the East and South China Seas increasingly vulnerable to China's regional ambitions.

While new threats arise across the regional security landscape, it is critical to remind the US and the EU that Russia's war of aggression against Ukraine remains hot. With the war approaching another winter, Russia continues to shell Ukrainian civilian and critical infrastructure while simultaneously spreading disinformation that states the West has become distracted as a result of other priorities, like the escalation of the Israeli-Hamas conflict.<sup>11</sup> The EU and the US

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should therefore formulate a joint long-term strategy for Ukraine that terminates the historical cycle of Russian aggression, particularly as the Ukrainian counter-offensive reaches a critical stage. Additionally, as EU member states, especially those in the CEE region, continue to bolster their security capabilities, it is essential to revisit the discussion concerning the preservation of European strategic autonomy. This reevaluation should aim to harmonize with, rather than rival, the US, while also preparing for the possibility of any future US withdrawal from Europe.

## Steering Clear of the Next Climate and Energy Crisis

While the US and the EU rank as the world's second- and third-largest greenhouse gas emitters – both have maintained a commitment towards tackling the climate and energy crisis. US and EU goals extend beyond merely cutting their own emissions; they involve collaborating with international allies, especially other major economies, to elevate global climate objectives. Nevertheless, addressing climate and energy issues collectively has proven to be a substantial challenge due to a combination of internal and external economic concerns, energy security issues, and political will, which have posed as obstacles to realizing the 2030 climate and energy framework.

Despite these challenges, several recent strides have placed the US and EU on the right path.

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<sup>11</sup> <https://africa.businessinsider.com/politics/the-kremlins-propaganda-machine-will-likely-use-the-conflict-in-israel-to-undermine/ngef3g6>

In September, Climate Week NYC was held in partnership with the United Nations General Assembly, where positive steps were taken, including the International Energy Agency's (IEA) update on its Net Zero Roadmap,<sup>12</sup> which aims to triple renewables and double energy efficiency to reduce fossil fuel use by two-thirds by 2035.<sup>13</sup>

However, as COP28 in Dubai takes place next month, countries will try to close the gap between commitments to cut greenhouse gas emissions to date, and what is required to fulfil the aims of the Paris climate agreement.<sup>14</sup> A recent report by the U.N. Framework Convention on Climate Change raised concerns that the goals will not be met in time and calls for signatories to ramp up clean energy production, phasing out all unabated fossil fuels and battling deforestation.<sup>15</sup>

One of the factors impeding progress on these pledges is the disruption caused by energy demands and shortages resulting from the ongoing war against Ukraine. The surge in fuel prices within the EU has been directly attributed to Russia's unwarranted and unjustified aggression against its neighbour, a situation that has also raised apprehensions about the security of energy supply.<sup>16</sup> This includes phasing out dependence on Russian fossil fuels and finding alternative solutions.

To achieve energy resilience, the US has now become the world's largest liquefied natural gas (LNG) exporter thanks to projects established before the war to diversify reliance on fossil fuels. The Biden administration has "pushed ahead with sweeping climate legislation designed to break decades of western dependence on fossil fuels."<sup>17</sup> For Europe, "renewed demand for US gas is translating into more contracts for future supply."<sup>18</sup> However, this boosts some

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<sup>12</sup> <https://www.iea.org/reports/net-zero-roadmap-a-global-pathway-to-keep-the-15-0c-goal-in-reach>

<sup>13</sup> <https://www.iea.org/news/urgent-action-to-cut-methane-emissions-from-fossil-fuel-operations-essential-to-achieve-global-climate-targets>

<sup>14</sup> <https://unfccc.int/process-and-meetings/the-paris-agreement>

<sup>15</sup> <https://www.politico.eu/article/paris-agreement-goals-failed-climate-change-global-warming-united-nations-climate-review/>

<sup>16</sup> <https://www.consilium.europa.eu/en/policies/eu-response-ukraine-invasion/impact-of-russia-s-invasion-of-ukraine-on-the-markets-eu-response/#:~:text=people%20and%20goods-,Energy%20prices%20and%20security%20of%20supply,the%20security%20of%20energy%20supply.>

<sup>17</sup> <https://www.ft.com/content/ce0a9ec8-8ce4-48c4-b473-54ae1131ea3b>

<sup>18</sup> <https://www.ft.com/content/ce0a9ec8-8ce4-48c4-b473-54ae1131ea3b>



concerns around the climate impact of more fossil fuel projects — given Europe’s ultimate priority is to boost renewable energy supplies and accelerate decarbonization.<sup>19</sup>

Another thorny issue has been the US’s Inflation Reduction Act (IRA)<sup>20</sup> signed into action in 2022 by President Biden which aims to lower inflation by removing purchasing power and consumer costs to drive the global clean energy economy forward. While seen as a positive step forward for the US, “the IRA is being criticized for its outright 'Buy American' provisions.”<sup>21</sup> Primarily, there’s fear around EU exports and relocation of businesses to the US in order to take advantage. In response, the EU has adapted its “legislative proposals of the Green Deal Industrial Plan, but it also relies upon the Recovery and Resilience Facility's dedicated climate subsidies to offset the IRA's effects on the EU economy.”<sup>22</sup>

The EU remains committed towards furthering their climate and energy objectives as outlined in the European Green Deal, which aims to transform the EU into a modern, resource-efficient, and competitive economy. Meanwhile, under the Biden administration, initiatives like the IRA and the Green Climate Fund, which gives developing countries aid in taking stronger climate action, have been introduced. As the COP28 approaches, the US and the EU will need to continue the momentum towards addressing climate-related challenges and continue to implement policies that complement rather than compete.

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## Navigating the Risks of De-Risking with China

On the similar vein of ‘complement and not compete’, the US and EU continue to navigate the challenging relationship vis-a-vis China. Balancing the fine line of fostering friendlier ties with China has become more difficult after the outbreak of war against Ukraine as China continues to take a passive position on Russia’s aggression and not condemn its unjust actions.

<sup>19</sup> <https://www.ft.com/content/ce0a9ec8-8ce4-48c4-b473-54ae1131ea3b>

<sup>20</sup> <https://www.whitehouse.gov/cleanenergy/inflation-reduction-act-guidebook/#:~:text=The%20Inflation%20Reduction%20Act%20specifies,mode%20or%20condition%2C%20low%20or>

<sup>21</sup> [https://www.europarl.europa.eu/thinktank/en/document/IPOL\\_IDA\(2023\)740087](https://www.europarl.europa.eu/thinktank/en/document/IPOL_IDA(2023)740087)

<sup>22</sup> [https://www.europarl.europa.eu/thinktank/en/document/IPOL\\_IDA\(2023\)740087](https://www.europarl.europa.eu/thinktank/en/document/IPOL_IDA(2023)740087)

The EU, for instance, has acknowledged the significance of establishing supply chains that are both resilient and sustainable. The European Commission has initiated measures to encourage the growth of European Value Chains (EVCs) within key industries, aiming to bolster European industrial self-sufficiency and facilitate the transition to environmentally friendly practices.

This includes diversifying supply chains and prioritizing strategic partnerships, particularly with allies in the Indo-Pacific region. Outlined in the recent 2023 EU-Indo Pacific strategy,<sup>23</sup> the EU looks to develop interconnectivity with Indo-Pacific partners, with whom it faces similar challenges. Through the EU Global Gateway initiative, the EU's response, and efforts to counter Beijing's trade and investment scheme, the Belt and Road initiative, the EU aims at reducing worldwide investment disparity. The initiative commits to mobilizing €300 billion in public and private funds by 2027 to support EU infrastructure projects abroad.<sup>24</sup>

The US, on the other hand, has taken a “de-risking” approach, which entails “mitigating the vulnerabilities posed by deep economic ties between the United States and China.”<sup>25</sup> Specifically, the US intends to lead on areas such as technology innovation, slow the progress of the Chinese military, and reduce dependence on China for critical goods. De-risking also entails diverting and establishing closer ties with allies, including the EU.

Jointly, the US and the EU have made a proactive step forward in countering economic pressures and supply shortages from China in the form of the Critical Materials Agreement (CMA). The CMA aims to “foster EU-US supply chains in critical raw materials needed in the production of electric vehicle batteries.”<sup>26</sup> This contributes to the European Commission’s Green Deal objectives via the Critical Raw Materials Act, which was adopted in June 2023.

As US and EU’s stance on China evolve, the transatlantic partnership stands to benefit from enhanced collaboration, not only with each other but also with democratic allies in the Indo-Pacific, bolstering security and economic ties in the region.

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<sup>23</sup> [https://www.eeas.europa.eu/eeas/eu-indo-pacific-strategy\\_en](https://www.eeas.europa.eu/eeas/eu-indo-pacific-strategy_en)

<sup>24</sup> [https://commission.europa.eu/strategy-and-policy/priorities-2019-2024/stronger-europe-world/global-gateway\\_en](https://commission.europa.eu/strategy-and-policy/priorities-2019-2024/stronger-europe-world/global-gateway_en)

<sup>25</sup> <https://foreignpolicy.com/2023/08/23/derisking-us-china-biden-decoupling-technology-supply-chains-semiconductors-chips-ira-trade/>

<sup>26</sup> [https://ec.europa.eu/commission/presscorner/detail/en/IP\\_23\\_3214](https://ec.europa.eu/commission/presscorner/detail/en/IP_23_3214)

## The Tale of Transatlantic Trade and Technology

After taking office, Joe Biden immediately sought to repair the damage that his predecessor had done to EU-US relations. The US and the EU found in trade and technology an area of policy where both sides could renew their partnership following the turbulence of the Trump administration. This led to the creation of the EU-US Trade and Technology Council (TTC). The TTC's stated objectives were to 1) ensure that trade and technology serve EU and US societies and economies, while upholding common values; 2) strengthen EU and US technological and industrial leadership; and 3) expand bilateral trade and investment.<sup>27</sup>

The TTC has become one of the most important pillars of transatlantic cooperation, particularly as new threats start to emerge in cybersecurity, artificial intelligence (AI), and disinformation. In December 2022, the process of establishing joint AI standards took a significant step forward after the TTC released the Joint Roadmap for Trustworthy AI and Risk Management.<sup>28</sup> The Roadmap serves as a platform for which the EU and the US could cooperate on international standardisation and promote trustworthy AI based on democratic values and human rights.

Despite the contrasting positions of the EU and the US on the IRA, the transatlantic partnership has found common ground on economic and energy resilience. The joint document conclusions at the TTC's fourth summit in May highlighted how trade policy could accelerate the transition to a net zero economy. In particular, the document committed to identifying critical sectors for the green transition and publishing a joint catalogue on best practices on green public procurement.<sup>29</sup>

At the recent US-EU Summit, continued commitments towards TTC were reiterated, in particular, the need to diversify supply chains and the Transatlantic Initiative on Sustainable Trade, which focuses on "facilitating mutually beneficial trade across the Atlantic of products and technologies that underpin the transition to a climate-neutral economy."

Trade with China, however, remains an issue where the EU and the US are having difficulty seeing eye-to-eye. In recent years, China has become a key trading partner for the EU as

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<sup>27</sup> [https://commission.europa.eu/strategy-and-policy/priorities-2019-2024/stronger-europe-world/eu-us-trade-and-technology-council\\_en](https://commission.europa.eu/strategy-and-policy/priorities-2019-2024/stronger-europe-world/eu-us-trade-and-technology-council_en)

<sup>28</sup> <https://digital-strategy.ec.europa.eu/en/library/ttc-joint-roadmap-trustworthy-ai-and-risk-management>

<sup>29</sup> <https://www.euractiv.com/section/industrial-strategy/news/sustainable-trade-emerging-tech-to-top-next-transatlantic-summits-agenda/>

European companies look to invest in the world's second-largest economy. European Commission President Ursula von der Leyen told the World Economic Forum in Davos this year that the EU wants to 'de-risk' but not 'de-couple' from China.<sup>30</sup> However, the EU is under growing pressure from the US to adopt a tougher stance towards Beijing. The US has cracked down on the sale of advanced technologies to China, with the EU starting to follow similar measures. In September, the EU introduced an anti-subsidy investigation into electric vehicles and restrictions on chipmaking equipment.<sup>31</sup>

The impacts of China's trade activities are increasingly influencing transatlantic dynamics but, as long as the US and EU remain strong trading partners, the two need to continue to coordinate through initiatives like the TTC, while striving to preserve competitiveness.

## Truth vs. Fiction: Battle against Mis/Disinformation

As referenced before, disinformation is one of the most complex threats facing the international rules-based order. Russia's full-scale invasion of Ukraine is not only limited to the battlefield, but involves a wider information war designed to erode trust in democratic institutions, societies, and the free press.

Since 2014, the US and its allies have responded to this challenge by pursuing counter-disinformation. The State Department established the Global Engagement Center in 2016 to coordinate US counterterrorism messaging to foreign audiences.<sup>32</sup> More recently, the US signed a Memorandum of Understanding with Bulgaria, which 'provides a strong foundation for both countries to work together against the spread of disinformation and media manipulation, which is an emerging threat to Central and Eastern Europe.'<sup>33</sup>

The EU has taken strides as a global leader in tech regulation, with more wide-ranging pieces of legislation, including an Action Plan Against Disinformation<sup>34</sup> and the Rapid Alert System.<sup>35</sup>

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<sup>30</sup> <https://www.reuters.com/world/eu-must-seek-de-risk-rather-than-decouple-china-von-der-leyen-2023-01-17/>

<sup>31</sup> <https://www.ft.com/content/60b305f7-96ba-49c2-9c82-38e40593234a>

<sup>32</sup> <https://www.state.gov/bureaus-offices/under-secretary-for-public-diplomacy-and-public-affairs/global-engagement-center/>

<sup>33</sup> <https://www.state.gov/u-s-and-bulgaria-to-collaborate-on-combatting-disinformation/>

<sup>34</sup> [https://commission.europa.eu/publications/action-plan-disinformation-commission-contribution-european-council-13-14-december-2018\\_en](https://commission.europa.eu/publications/action-plan-disinformation-commission-contribution-european-council-13-14-december-2018_en)

<sup>35</sup> [https://www.eeas.europa.eu/sites/default/files/ras\\_factsheet\\_march\\_2019\\_0.pdf](https://www.eeas.europa.eu/sites/default/files/ras_factsheet_march_2019_0.pdf)

In September, the EU introduced new laws to curb the power of six big tech companies, including Apple, Google, and Amazon, in an effort to regulate how such firms make money and how their consumers access these services. Under the Digital Markets Act, the European Commission will have the mandate to conduct market investigations and design remedies if

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companies fall out of line.<sup>36</sup> For example, the EU is currently investigating X (formerly known as Twitter) over the possible spread of terrorist and violent content after Hamas launched its attack on Israel.<sup>37</sup> Additionally, the European Economic and Social Committee launched its first event on fighting disinformation this year, which convened prominent civil society figures and highlighted the need for a bottom-up approach with a strong civil society network on the ground.<sup>38</sup>

The threat of disinformation extends to within Europe as support for far-right groups with pro-Russian views surge in strategically important EU member states, most notably Germany and Slovakia (which borders Ukraine). The Alternative for Germany (AfD) made significant gains in the recent German regional elections,<sup>39</sup> while Robert Fico returned to office as Slovakia's prime minister after pledging to end his country's military support for Ukraine.<sup>40</sup>

Unchecked disinformation continues to pose as a severe threat towards the upcoming 2024 electoral cycle in the United States, European Parliament, and globally with elections in India, Taiwan, and Indonesia on the horizon. Steps have already been taken, including the EU's AI Act, which aims to significantly bolster regulations on the development and use of artificial intelligence.<sup>41</sup> For the first time, the single market will have a common set of rules to protect consumers and their fundamental rights online, improve transparency and accountability, and

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<sup>36</sup> [https://digital-markets-act.ec.europa.eu/index\\_en](https://digital-markets-act.ec.europa.eu/index_en)

<sup>37</sup> <https://www.bbc.com/news/technology-67097020>

<sup>38</sup> <https://www.eesc.europa.eu/en/news-media/press-releases/strong-civil-society-and-independent-media-are-firewall-against-disinformation>

<sup>39</sup> <https://www.ft.com/content/d7e95c24-e1a2-49c9-989d-069e7530eaa8>

<sup>40</sup> <https://www.politico.eu/article/slovakia-robert-fico-elections-as-prime-minister/>

<sup>41</sup> <https://www.europarl.europa.eu/news/en/headlines/society/20230601STO93804/eu-ai-act-first-regulation-on-artificial-intelligence>

boost competitiveness under the Digital Services Act.<sup>42</sup> Finally, a revised Code of Practice on Disinformation was introduced in 2022, which committed the EU to take action in several areas, including demonetising the dissemination of disinformation and ensuring the transparency of political advertising.<sup>43</sup> But civil society and tech companies have a critical role to play in countering disinformation, which should be further utilized.

## 2024 and beyond

Looking ahead towards 2024, the transatlantic relationship will be tested and redefined in the face of evolving global dynamics and mounting domestic challenges. It is crucial to uphold robust cooperation, not only between the US and the EU, but also among democratic allies, particularly in the Indo-Pacific region. If not, the transatlantic relationship stands to be weakened and further exploited by autocratic players seeking to undermine the rules-based order.

By working together on advancing the below recommendations, the transatlantic allies can persist in their efforts to counter these challenges while future-proofing the relationship.

- The transatlantic relationship needs to bolster and double down on fundamental values that bind US-EU relations, aim to achieve predictability, and define common interests. Essentially, the relationship needs to be able to weather the impact of anti-US, anti-EU, or anti-NATO leaders. This is an area where the EU can step in as a strong leader as the bloc starts to develop the concept of strategic autonomy following shifts in US foreign policy and Russia's war against Ukraine.
- The EU and the US will need to formulate a long-term strategy for Ukraine that ends the historical cycle of Russian aggression as the Ukrainian counter-offensive reaches a critical stage. Additionally, as EU member states, especially those in the CEE region, continue to bolster their security capabilities, it is essential to revisit the discussion

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<sup>42</sup> [https://commission.europa.eu/strategy-and-policy/priorities-2019-2024/europe-fit-digital-age/digital-services-act-ensuring-safe-and-accountable-online-environment\\_en#what-are-the-key-goals-of-the-digital-services-act](https://commission.europa.eu/strategy-and-policy/priorities-2019-2024/europe-fit-digital-age/digital-services-act-ensuring-safe-and-accountable-online-environment_en#what-are-the-key-goals-of-the-digital-services-act)

<sup>43</sup> <https://digital-strategy.ec.europa.eu/en/policies/code-practice-disinformation#:~:text=The Code will strengthen the,challenges related to such techniques.>

concerning the preservation of European strategic autonomy. This reevaluation should aim to harmonize with, rather than rival, the US, while also preparing for the possibility of any future US withdrawal from Europe.

- As the COP28 approaches, the US and EU will need to continue the momentum in addressing climate related challenges and continue to implement policies to “complement and not compete”.
- As the US's and EU's respective stances on China evolve, the transatlantic partnership stands to benefit in the future from enhancing collaboration, not only with each other, but also with democratic allies in the Indo-Pacific, bolstering security and economic ties in the region.
- The impacts of China's trade activities are increasingly influencing transatlantic dynamics but as long as the US and EU remain strong trading partners, the two need to continue to coordinate through initiatives like the TTC while striving to preserve competitiveness.
- We urgently need to align US and EU policies, especially in the run-up to the upcoming election year, to combat the increasing spread of false information, particularly regarding Ukraine and the recent Israel-Hamas war. Additionally, civil society and tech companies must play a crucial role in countering misinformation, and we should make better use of their capabilities for this purpose.

## About the authors:

Danielle Piatkiewicz is a research fellow at EUROPEUM focusing on issues around Transatlantic and Central and Eastern European foreign and security relations, democracy promotion and NATO. She is also a Deputy Chief Operating Officer for the Alliance of Democracies Foundation and Founder of DEP Consulting. Previously, she was a senior program coordinator for The German Marshall Fund of the United States' (GMF) Asia and the Future of Geopolitics programs (Washington, DC). Before that, she worked on GMF's Wider Atlantic program in Brussels and program intern in Warsaw. Before joining GMF, she worked for the European Institute of Peace in Brussels (EIP). She holds a M.A. in international and political studies with a concentration in transatlantic studies from Jagiellonian University in Krakow, Poland. She received her B.A. in political science with an emphasis in international relations and a minor in German studies from the University of California, Santa Barbara (UCSB).

Hugo Blewett-Mundy is a Non-Resident Fellow at EUROPEUM Institute for European Policy in Prague. His research interests are EU relations with Ukraine, Moldova, and the Western Balkans, focusing on the implications of corruption and state capture for democratic, economic, and security resilience. He is also a regular contributor for the online journal of the Center for European Policy Analysis (CEPA) in Washington, DC. In addition to his work as a commentator, Hugo advises on UK policy towards Russia and Eastern Europe for a member of the Foreign Affairs Select Committee in the UK Parliament. Hugo holds an M.A. in Russian and Post-Soviet Politics from the UCL School of Slavonic and East European Studies and a B.A. in Politics and Central and East European Studies from the University of Glasgow.