

Policy Research Alert

FROM FLASH-IT, A DISSEMINATION PROJECT RELATING EUROPEAN POLICY PRIORITIES TO EU-FUNDED RESEARCH IN SOCIO-ECONOMIC SCIENCES AND HUMANITIES

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Transatlantic Elites: Of One Mind?

A new transatlantic survey shows influential people in Europe and the US have convergent views on big global issues, yet important differences remain. Economic priorities are only partially aligned, and business leaders on both sides of the Atlantic see the world rather differently than their counterparts in politics, media and academia.

Pooling data from interviews with over 1,900 influential individuals in seven countries (The United States, France, Germany, Greece, Italy, Poland and the United Kingdom), the TRANSWORLD Elites Survey¹ confirmed a large degree of like-mindedness among representatives of key sectors in the EU and US. However, it found attitudes diverge on important details that could have far-reaching global implications. For example, on the topic of international security the initial results show that while people of influence in the US and EU share a generally cooperative view, they see their regions moving in increasingly independent directions. Moreover, a disconnect is evident between business elites and representatives of other influential sectors on both sides of the Atlantic. Preliminary findings of the survey include:

- The US wants a stronger EU in order to “share the burden” of its hegemonic role in the protection of world security. The EU, on the other hand, seems more willing to assume an independent role in global governance.
- Business leaders on both sides of the Atlantic perceive China as an economic threat. Elites in the US also sees a threat in China’s military power.
- While leaders are generally supportive of increased transatlantic trade and investment, enthusiasm in the business sector is only lukewarm.
- The views of business elites are closer to the masses, but they tend to be different from those of politicians and opinion leaders (media, think tanks and academics). The differences of opinion cover topics ranging from Chinese economic power and the use of force to the merits of the Euro and the Transatlantic Trade and Investment Partnership (TTIP).

The TRANSWORLD project² is investigating whether transatlantic partners are trending toward cooperation or drifting apart on world issues. The consortium is working towards an assessment of policy proposals for the future development of transatlantic relations.

¹ Survey carried out between September 2013 and 31 January 2014. Publication of results expected in 2014.

² TRANSWORLD: Transatlantic Relations and the future of Global Governance <<http://www.transworld-fp7.eu>>