

Foreword

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I very much welcome this special issue of the *European Foreign Affairs Review* at this important juncture of the EU-US relationship. I welcome the debate on the values shared across the Atlantic and the role of soft power.

Europe and the United States have a strong relationship that is both broad and deep. This relationship is based on consensual and mutual values that have evolved over the last seventy years. We have painstakingly preserved these values and promoted them around the world. While our relationship is facing a number of challenges, I do not think that the EU-US values agenda is any less shared, or that the ties of our relationship have become fragile as argued in the special issue. However, I absolutely agree that the future of the relationship requires greater focus on 'soft power' and that the role of academic, cultural and scientific bodies in fostering a greater sense of shared interests will be key.

Maintaining and enhancing our dialogue at all levels of our relationship is not a lost cause. Far from it. While we may not agree on everything, the principles that have governed the transatlantic strategic alliance were founded on peace, prosperity, human rights and respect for the rule of law. Our mutually beneficial values are as valid today as they were in the days following World War II.

Together, we have been economic partners and allies committed to each other's security. Our combined soft power has shaped the modern world and the institutions we rely on for stability and order. The three pillars of soft power identified in the special issue, namely culture, science and higher education, are indeed very important factors in our relationship.

Europe and the United States have long established programmes that bring Americans and Europeans together – 'Getting to Know Europe', Horizon 2020 and Erasmus+ to name a few. I firmly believe that the true strength of the transatlantic relationship needs to be better ingrained in our citizens. The importance of academics, artists, students, scientists, professionals, policy makers and influencers to engage, share and learn from each other is irrefutable. The ongoing

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strength and relevance of the transatlantic relationship, and the ability to maximize our soft power starts with people-to-people exchanges.

People-to-people contacts and shared experiences have cemented the shared values which bind Europeans and Americans together. Youth exchanges in particular. At present, more than half the 325,000 US students who study abroad each year do so in Europe. It is for our generation to reinforce and remind people of the fundamental nature of the transatlantic relationship, and in the rapidly changing world we now inhabit, reinvent the relationship for a new generation, especially in the context of the demographic changes in the US itself. We can no longer rely on the traditional ties of family and heritage to guarantee a sense of shared destiny. We need to make African Americans and Asian Americans as aware of the importance of our ties as Americans of European descent.

As Commission President Juncker said in a speech he delivered in the summer of 2018 while visiting Washington, D.C., *'At a time when tensions might feel strained, it is more important than ever for ... people on both sides of the Atlantic to learn about the power of our past and about the importance of our relationship in upholding peace, democracy, and freedom around the world.'*

This special issue makes an important contribution towards that objective.