

THE POL ICY PRIS M

YOUR QUARTERLY TRANSATLANTIC LEGISLATIVE NEWS
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INTRO

In this edition of The Policy Prism, we'll give you a quick rundown of the Trade and Technology Council, a brief snapshot of what's been happening on the Hill, Europe's approach to preserving media freedom and the history of climate activism in the transatlantic relationship.

Happy reading!

THE BIG ISSUE



A TRANSATLANTIC BREAKTHROUGH? THE TRADE & TECHNOLOGY COUNCIL

Global leaders met in Pittsburgh, PA this past September to inaugurate the first meeting of the US-EU Trade and Technology Council (TTC). The goal of the Council is to deepen transatlantic ties in the areas of technology, the economy and trade. Four of the 10 working groups created will focus on developing an integrated transatlantic economy:

- **Working Group Three** focuses on secure supply chains. Advancing supply chain security is a transatlantic priority. Opting to focus on sectors promoting the green and digital transformations, this working group seeks to increase supply chain resilience and diversification by increasing exchange and communication between the US and the EU.
- **Working Group Seven** focuses on export controls and has an important security component that emphasizes multilateralism as an effective tool in coordinating a transparent, rules-based global trading system.
- **Working Group Eight** focuses on investment screening. In their joint-statement, the US and the EU reaffirmed the importance of having foreign investors, while ensuring that the proper security measures are in place on both sides of the Atlantic. This working group will exchange information on investment trends that could affect national security.
- **Working Group Ten** focuses on global trade challenges, including issues that range from trade and labor laws to consulting external stakeholders.

China joined the largest trade bloc in 2020, which accounts for over 30 percent of the world's GDP, after signing a trade deal with Iran and entering the Regional Comprehensive

Economic Partnership. With China controlling a large portion of the global supply chain, countries are becoming more protective and are attempting to shift trade away from a Sino-centric focus. Without calling out China directly, the TTC wants to promote transatlantic cooperation that would counterbalance Chinese influence.

The success of these working groups will depend on learning from past mistakes. The TTC is not the first of its kind: Before this council was the 1995 New Transatlantic Agenda, the 1998 Transatlantic Economic Partnership, the 2007 Transatlantic Economic Council, and the most recent iteration—the Transatlantic Trade and Investment Partnership. Viewing these new working groups as a revival of an important economic partnership will be crucial in setting the tone for the transatlantic relationship.

The end of the Trump-era steel and aluminum import tariffs is another important development. President Biden and Ursula Von der Leyen, President of the European Commission, jointly released a statement establishing a “green” steel deal, embarking on a new era of transatlantic investment that links economic investments and trade with a greener economy.

For an analysis of the technology side of the summit, look for our forthcoming newsletter: Hidden Layers: Your Quarterly Transatlantic Technology News, which explores the technological challenges the transatlantic relationship faces today.

HAPPENING ON THE HILL



CHOOSING TO BUILD BACK BETTER

Democrats have been busy at work negotiating the details of their proposed Build Back Better Framework, reducing the original \$3.5 trillion proposal to a \$1.75 trillion framework. Internal politics between the moderate and progressive wings of the party have proved a difficult obstacle for Democrats to work through.

First, it's important to identify what has been prioritized in the most recent version of the Framework, released October 28, 2021. Childcare, climate change, health care, strengthening the middle class and reforming immigration are all included in this ambitious legislative initiative.

President Biden is pushing for universal pre-K and childcare, which would cost \$400 billion. More than \$555 billion has been allocated to climate issues. The Framework calls for additional funds to be allocated as follows: \$320 billion for clean energy tax credits, \$110 billion in investments for clean energy technology and \$105 billion for extreme weather, community pollution and developing a Civilian Climate Corps- a proposal in the Green New Deal put forward by Representative Ocasio Cortez and Senator Markey. Affordable health care will be pushed as well as expanded access to higher education. The framework lays several additional initiatives that show the Democratic party has prioritized climate and providing a social safety net.

How to pay for this bill has been at the center of the discussion. Senator Krysten Sinema of Arizona opposes raising tax rates for high income earners and corporations. Senator Joe Manchin opposes the billionaire tax on capital gains of the super-wealthy. Without the support of these two Democratic lawmakers, progress toward passing the package has slowed. President Biden has settled, in his

most recent proposal, on a mix of corporate and individual revenue raising measures he feels confident will pass.

The other focus has been on the Bipartisan Infrastructure Investment and Jobs Act, pushed through the Senate in August and passed in the House in early November after months of deliberation. With progressive Democrats threatening to oppose the act unless they obtained a vote on the Build Back Better Framework at the same time, many were surprised of the vote passing. The legislation provides \$1.2 trillion in funding for infrastructure, making it one of the largest federal investments in public transit, clean drinking water and rail transport- a pillar to the Biden administration's domestic agenda. The passing of the act leaves many wondering if the Build Back Better Framework will accomplish the same success.

What has the EU been doing?

The EU has taken a leading role in curbing the climate crisis through infrastructure development with its European Green Deal. In a recent statement released by President Biden, European Commission President Ursula von der Leyen, and UK Prime Minister Boris Johnson, the three leaders endorsed five principles related to infrastructure development. These include infrastructure initiatives that simultaneously combat the climate challenge and advance prosperity with "green jobs."

To read on about various infrastructure initiatives the US and the EU have been pursuing, check out the July edition of: *The Policy Prism: Your Quarterly Transatlantic Legislative News*.

STRASBOURG SPOTLIGHT



PROTECTING PILLARS OF DEMOCRACY

The Maltese anti-corruption journalist Daphne Caruana Galizia, nicknamed the “one woman WikiLeaks,” was assassinated in 2017. A public inquiry found the state responsible for her death. According to the inquiry’s report, the state failed to recognize that Galizia’s life was in danger, and did not take the steps necessary to protect her. This widely publicized case does not exist in a vacuum; in 2020 alone, there were more than 900 attacks on journalists in the EU.

President Ursula von der Leyen announced in her September 2021 State of the Union speech that the EU had put forward recommendations to ensure the safety of journalists and other media professionals. The European Commission adopted a Recommendation on the protection, safety and empowerment of journalists, which urges member states to use the legal mechanisms in place to prosecute those who threaten journalists. The recommendations include increased training for law enforcement to ensure the safety of journalists and media professionals during demonstrations, where they were most frequently attacked in 2020.

The EU’s recommendations provided a new impetus to protect journalists from being silenced by defamation and libel suits. In October 2021 the European Parliament pushed proposals for measures that would counteract the threat posed by Strategic Lawsuits Against Public Participation (SLAPPs) to the media, NGOs and general civil society. SLAPPs have become an effective mechanism because the financially struggling media industry often chooses to kill a story rather than spending millions of dollars in legal fees.

The comprehensive Media Freedom Act is scheduled for release in the fall of 2022. With these initiatives calling

for increased transparency, the EU could position itself as a model for media protection.

What has the US been doing?

In the US, the states have been most active in implementing measures to increase media protection. In 2008 the State of New York passed its Libel Terrorism Protection Act, also known as “Rachel’s Law,” which protects American journalists from foreign libel verdicts. The law, marked as a “trail blazer” piece of legislation, makes verdicts in defamation suits brought in foreign countries against New York State residents unenforceable in the US. Policy makers would do well in referring to successfully implemented legislation such as this when working to limit threats freedom of the press, which is a key pillar of democracy.

To discover another alarming trend in the media world, watch: Russian Disinformation Pinballs Around the Globe

HISTORY IN THE PRESENT



CLIMATE ACTIVISM & THE TRANSATLANTIC RELATIONSHIP

With world leaders having recently united at COP26, pursuing international policies to limit global warming, it is important to reflect on transatlantic activists who helped bring about the change we are seeing unfold on the international stage.

For in-depth analysis from a number of transatlantic thinkers on the issue of climate change, read more at [Green Ideas-Incentivizing Innovation: Sustainable Solutions](#).

Rachel Carson, known as the mother of the environmental movement, made history in 1962 with her groundbreaking book “Silent Spring,” in which she documented the horrific effects of pesticides. “Silent Spring” led to a ban on their use and raised awareness of climate change in the US, bringing about the modern environmental movement. In 2006, Discover Magazine included “Silent Spring” in its list of the 25 Greatest Science Books of All Time.

Today’s world-famous climate activists include Sweden’s Greta Thunberg, who has found her place alongside Rachel Carson. Thunberg’s Fridays for Future movement sparked international debate and protest that raised awareness globally, leading to policy debate and change at the highest levels. Greta’s efforts inspired a number of activists—like Xiye Bastida, who became one of the lead organizers of the Fridays for Future Youth Climate Strikes in New York City. On the same day that COP26 held a youth and public empowerment session focused on motivating younger generations to climate action, Greta led a Fridays for Future protest. Glasgow’s streets were filled with over 10,000 schoolchildren demanding that the leaders gathered there produce real, meaningful change.

The transatlantic relationship has a crucial role in championing the fight against climate change, a phenomenon that sees no border. Climate activists like Greta Thunberg and those she inspired to join the fight will be important as the green transition moves forward.