

Nine-Country Poll Finds Europeans and Americans Desire Closer Relations

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Transatlantic Cooperation Seen as Inadequate on Issues from Poverty to Climate Change to Immigration

British Council-Sponsored Research Finds Widespread Agreement on Priorities for Cooperation

[Full Report \(PDF\)](#)



A poll of seven European countries, Canada, and the United States finds widespread support for closer relations between Europe and the United States. However, currently, cooperation between Europe and North America is seen as largely ineffective and overall transatlantic feelings are fairly cool, especially on the side of the Europeans. Yet Americans, Canadians and Europeans hold surprising consensus on the issues of greatest importance for their countries to address together.

(Photo: European Parliament)

The poll was sponsored by the British Council, the UK's international cultural relations organization, as part of the Transatlantic Network 2020 program, designed to foster greater dialogue and problem-solving among emerging leaders in North America and Europe. The poll was developed and analyzed by GlobeScan together with the Program on International Policy Attitudes. The poll was conducted between 7 January and 22 January 2008. Sample size in most countries was 500, with larger samples in the United States (2,001) and United Kingdom (1,019) giving the findings a margin of error of plus or minus 3-4.5 percent.

Americans overwhelmingly favor closer relations with Europe (91%). On average among all European countries polled, 62 percent favor closer European-American relations. This includes large majorities of Poles (77%), Germans (75%), Irish (70%), and Spaniards (67%). More modest majorities of Turks (53%) and Britons (51%) favor closer relations. The one exception is the French. Only a minority (39%) of the French favor closer relations, while a modest majority (53%) is opposed. Most Canadians (61%) favor closer European-American relations as well.

Steven Kull, director of PIPA commented, "Clearly Europeans and Americans are looking for a thaw in what has been a wintry period in transatlantic relations. On both sides of the Atlantic there seems to be a view that the US and the EU--the powers with the greatest resources in the world-- need to work together to address global problems."

Asked how effectively Europe and North America are working together on nine different areas, people give a generally negative assessment. On average majorities give negative assessments of such cooperation in eradicating poverty (65%), combating climate change (58%), managing international migration and immigration (53%). In just one area is there a predominantly positive view. On business and trade half 47% give a positive rating. Views lean negative for cooperation in conducting effective peacekeeping missions, protecting human rights, fighting global terrorism, and linking educational institutions and individuals. Views are mixed but lean positive on transatlantic cooperation to fight killer diseases such as HIV/AIDS and malaria.

Americans perceive relations between Europe and the United State as closer than Europeans do. On average Americans characterize their views of Europeans as cooler than a friend but warmer than a casual acquaintance. On average Europeans characterize their relation with Americans as cooler than a casual acquaintance but warmer than someone you pass on the street. The Europeans who characterize relations with the US most warmly are the Irish (2.8) and the British (2.8). All others feel cooler than a casual acquaintance towards the US--Germans (3.1), Polish (3.1), Spanish (3.4), French (3.5) and Turks (3.8).

Americans give the EU quite positive ratings. Asked to assess its overall influence in the world 57% say that the EU has a positive influence, while just 20 percent say the EU is having a negative influence.

Americans' assessments of specific European countries vary quite dramatically. The UK gets the most positive rating with 72% saying that its influence is positive (more than the 64% of Americans who give the United States a positive rating). Germany is also well regarded with 62 percent saying it is positive. Americans have more lukewarm views of France (48% positive, 31% negative, 15% neutral), Spain (47% positive, 16% negative, 26% neutral) and Poland (41% positive, 15% negative, 30% neutral). Views of Turkey lean slightly negative (29% positive, 35% negative, 23% neutral).

European views of the US are considerably cooler than Americans views of the EU. Asked to rate US influence overall 48% of Europeans give a negative rating and just 42% give a positive rating. Those with the largest number giving a positive rating are Poland (58%), France (53%) and Britain (49%). Those with the largest number giving a negative rating are Germany (64%), Turkey (55%), and Spain (52%). Canadians are also predominantly negative (55%).

Europeans and Canadians give the EU extremely positive ratings. Asked to assess its overall influence, 68% of the whole sample give positive ratings. Extremely large majorities give positive ratings in Poland (80%), Spain (80%), Ireland (67%), and France

(74%). Only one country has just a plurality--Turkey with 47% positive and 33% negative.

Americans are quite positive about the overall influence of the US (64% positive), but divided about its influence on the issue most important to them (45% positive, 44% negative).

North Americans and Europeans show a remarkable level of consensus about which global issues are the most important to be addressed through greater transatlantic cooperation. Large numbers agree about the importance of environmental issues, including climate change, pollution and natural disasters. This was the most widely cited issue in the United States, Canada and five of the seven European countries. The only exceptions were the French and Turks who rated it third most important.

The second most frequently mentioned issue of importance was war and conflict. In the United States and Canada it received the second highest rating, as it did in the UK, Germany, Turkey and Ireland.