# TRANSWORLD

## THE TRANSATLANTIC RELATIONSHIP AND THE FUTURE GLOBAL GOVERNANCE

What is the direction of EU and US democracy promotion and can we talk about a transatlantic democracy promotion? This paper addresses these questions from the perspective of transatlantic security communities and argues that joint transatlantic

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democracy promotion is still embryonic. However, at the same time there are clear indications of converging identities and interests with regard to strategies and instruments of democracy promotion, which could result in meaningful transatlantic partnership in challenging situations.

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## Introduction

Barack Obama's first victory in the US presidential elections in 2008 and his distancing from Bush's tendency of exporting democracy by force led to increased expectations for transatlantic convergence on the matter. Combined with the European Union's (EU) increased democracy promotion efforts, this may have fuelled suggestions that the two powers are moving towards an enduring partnership, at least within the field of democracy promotion. The ongoing talks over the Transatlantic Trade and Investment Partnership (TTIP) have provided the appearance of an ever stronger transatlantic alliance. However, after a period of "Obamania" (Alcaro 2012), Europe seems to have fallen out of love with President Obama (Lister 2013). Revelations about surveillance activities in Europe conducted by the US National Security Agency (NSA) have led to widespread disappointment about the transatlantic relationship, particularly in Germany (Bohnsack and Rzepka 2014). In addition, the entire democracy promotion venture seems to be in trouble. Twenty-eight countries have registered a decline in democratic performance in the last eight consecutive years (Freedom House 2013), the newly elected president of Egypt has been overthrown by the military, and the largest democracy promoter – the United States Agency for International Development (USAID) – has been expelled from Russia (McChesney et al. 2012) and Bolivia (Al Jazeera 2013). It is against this background of the transatlantic relationship that this paper asks:

- whether US and EU democracy promotion efforts have moved toward convergence and/or cooperation in recent years;
- what this tells us about the state of the transatlantic security community; and
- finally, what challenges transatlantic democracy promotion faces.

The objective of the Transworld project has been to identify the state of the transatlantic relationship in specific domains and whether it moves towards structural divergence (structural drift), structural convergence (enduring partnership), or contingent convergence/divergence (functional relationship; see Tocci and Alcaro 2012). This paper discusses whether there is any prospect of cooperation or partnership within democracy promotion. Two individual contributions on these issues within the Transworld project have already demonstrated that

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in adjusting their policies of democracy promotion, the EU and the US have responded to different types of triggers (Babayan and Viviani 2013, Babayan 2013). While the EU is more prone to adjust its policies due to external developments, such as the Arab Spring, the US mostly reacts to internal developments, such as national security issues or changes in presidency. In addition, substantial discursive and practical adjustments to US and EU approaches to democracy promotion have led to increasing structural convergence. However, the question of whether such structural convergence necessarily translates into an enduring partnership remains open.

Through application of the theoretical framework of security communities, the paper argues that the notions of convergence and partnership have to be differentiated. Even if the EU and the US are unlikely to drift apart due to a history of common security frameworks and other common foreign policy objectives, they are still short of a genuine partnership, at least in the area of democracy promotion. While we observe increased convergence in US and EU democracy promotion policies, there is very little policy coordination and cooperation between the two, as the recent events in Ukraine have shown. In other words, policy convergence does not lead to partnership and cooperation. In many cases, the US and the EU try to foster democracy in target countries, but they rarely coordinate their action. The analysis, however, shows that cooperation is possible but so far it has required major external pushes.

This lack of cooperation is indicative of broader trends in the transatlantic security community. On the one hand, there is still a sufficient common interest in democracy promotion, often balanced by a shared preference for domestic stability in target countries. The common value basis of the transatlantic community seems to be intact, as the elite survey conducted in the framework of Transworld attests (Isernia and Basile 2014). On the other hand, these common interests and collective identities have not led to institutional frameworks for sustained cooperation on the ground in target countries. At best, the US and the EU mutually neglect each other. At worst, their lack of coordination can lead to inefficient and ineffective democracy promotion on the ground. The following sections elaborate on these arguments and present empirical evidence.

This paper proceeds as follows. We start by discussing the differences between convergence and partnership within the theoretical framework of security communities. We then go through the indicators (Risse 2012) for a security community – the "four Is" (interests, identity, interdependence, and institutions)[1] – applied to democracy promotion by the US and the EU. The analysis encompasses an overview of European and American democracy promotion in light of the mentioned factors, with closer attention to the events of 2013, where the previous two Transworld contributions (Babayan and Viviani 2013, Babayan 2013) have left off. The timeframe covers the aftermath of the Arab Spring, which despite dubious democratisation outcomes, became a wake-up call for the EU's democracy promotion. In addition, the timeframe coincides with the mid-term of Obama's presidency and allows for a closer analysis of his policies and their outcomes. The timeframe also covers the establishment and initial activities of the EU's European Endowment for Democracy (EED) in January 2013 and enhanced activities within its Eastern Partnership (EaP) initiative, which, among other activities, also "promotes democracy" (EEAS 2014) in six countries: Armenia, Azerbaijan, Belarus, Georgia, Moldova, and Ukraine.

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1 In this paper, however, we do not address the third I, interdependence, since it is not applicable to democracy promotion.

# 1. Transatlantic Democracy Promotion through the Prism of Security Communities

In policy talks and analyses such terms as partnership, cooperation, alliance, and sometimes convergence are used effortlessly and abundantly. Whether or not EU and US policies toward democracy promotion converge can be analysed with regard to goals, means, and action patterns. This has been done in the course of this project, with the research demonstrating gradual convergence of rhetorical goals and action patterns, and growing emulation of means, especially in terms of EU democracy promotion (Babayan and Viviani 2013, Babayan 2013). However, convergence and cooperation/partnership are not the same and need to be separated within a more straightforward framework of analysing transatlantic relations. We have argued elsewhere (Risse 2012) that the transatlantic relationship can be conceptualised as a security community defined, in Karl Deutsch's terms, as "the attainment, within a territory, of a 'sense of community' and of institutions and practices strong enough to assure, for a long time, dependable expectations of 'peaceful change' among its population" (Deutsch et al. 1957:5-6, see also Risse-Kappen 1995, Adler and Barnett 1998). The state of a security community can be measured with regard to four indicators, the "four Is": 1) the degree of common *interests*; 2) a sense of collective *identity*; 3) the level of *interdependencies*; and 4) the presence or absence of joint *institutions* to deal with cooperation problems.

Transworld postulates that if all or most EU and US goals, means, and action patterns are either shared or compatible, the enduring partnership hypothesis would be validated. Viewed from a security community perspective, the validity of this supposition merits further examination, particularly if we distinguish between identities and interests, on the one hand, and joint institutions to ensure enduring cooperation, on the other. To put it differently: the four indicators of a security community presuppose differences in outlook.

This is exactly what we observe with regard to US and EU democracy promotion. While we observe growing convergence in US and EU efforts at democracy promotion, this does not lead to increasing cooperation and partnership, either in general or in target states. Put in the abovementioned terms, convergence is increasingly observable with regard to common interests and identities. However, the absence of joint institutions to deal with democracy promotion issues indicates lack of partnership. We find little coordination and almost no cooperation between the two in the various target countries. More often than not, initial mutual negligence characterises transatlantic relations with regard to democracy promotion. Interviews in the South Caucasus countries (Babayan 2014) with democracy promoters have shown that at least up until the late 2000s the US and the EU limited their coordination to brief annual meetings, rather than in-depth discussion and sharing of experiences. As another example, the EU and the US have implemented similar policies in the Middle East and North Africa (MENA): the Middle East Partnership Initiative, the Broader Middle East and North Africa Partnership Initiative by the US, and the Euro-Mediterranean Partnership, Union for Mediterranean, and European Neighbourhood Policy (ENP) by the EU. However, their rhetoric and approaches have underlined that their policies cannot be really harmonised. In some cases, such as MENA, this inability to cooperate has been more visible, since the EU dismissed US approaches claiming that Europe had "a greater appreciation" for the region and its problems (Cofman Wittes and Youngs 2009:16).

Thus, in line with previous research touching upon EU and US cooperation (Cofman Wittes and Youngs 2009, Babayan 2014), we have not evidenced cooperation between the EU and the US on specific projects. In addition, only 21% of US and 13% of EU leaders surveyed by Transworld think that the EU and the US should cooperate in democracy promotion (Isernia and Basile 2014:28). Yet, especially in countries congested with international

actors, democracy promotion should be closely coordinated among promoters to avoid duplication or contradictory strategies. In contrast, promoters often hastily design democracy promotion programmes (Pishchikova 2011) without consideration of domestic conditions, thus leading to one-size-fits-all approaches or approaches that may not match local needs. This may not only negatively affect the quality of a democracy promotion project itself but also decrease its potential influence on the overall level of democracy in a given country. Yet, cooperation or at least coordination may have the potential of "ensuring policy coherence and efficient use of resources" (Füle 2014), especially if the promoters have deep knowledge or long experience in the particular regions, as claimed by the EU in MENA. Past or existing cooperation between these promoters and other organisations may serve as an example or a starting point for transatlantic cooperation. For example, occasional cooperation on specific projects among USAID implementers in the South Caucasus (Trail 2009) has ensured the accomplishment of programmatic objectives. As an NGO specialising inter alia in media development and a long-time USAID implementer, the International Research and Exchanges Board (IREX) cooperated with the International Foundation for Electoral Systems (IFES) on one of its projects on elections coverage in Armenia and Georgia in 2007-08. Since IFES specialises in electoral aid, its expertise was important for achieving IREX's objective of "balanced elections coverage" by local targeted media (Trail 2009:10). Similarly, before the establishment of the EED such cooperation, especially in media development, was in place between the EU and other European governmental organisations, e.g., the Council of Europe (CoE). Within its EIDHR framework, the EU partially funded several projects aimed at ensuring independence of the media in the South Caucasus and Moldova during the 2000s and early 2010s.

Despite a lack of specific transatlantic cooperation on democracy promotion, our findings document policy convergence between the US and the EU. This convergence entails foreign policy goals, instruments, and action patterns. The Obama administration has followed the mood of the US public and adopted a low-profile approach to democracy promotion. Public opinion polls in the US have recorded a declining support for "promoting democracy in other nations" – from 29% in 2001 to 24% in 2005, 21% in 2009, and 18% in 2013 (Drake 2013). At the same time the EU has revamped its democracy promotion rhetoric and introduced a new policy buzz-term: "deep democracy" (European Commission and HR 2011). Rhetorical convergence has also been visible through US and EU statements on a much-criticised preference for stability over democracy in some authoritarian countries that are friendly or in countries that are of economic or security importance. A few years ago Obama argued that the "status quo is not sustainable" in societies that provide the "illusion of stability" instead of respecting human rights (Obama 2011), while the European Commissioner for Enlargement and the ENP Štefan Füle (2011) admitted that the EU has "focused too much on stability at the expense of other objectives and, more problematic, at the expense of our [the EU's] values." This denunciation of stability over democracy was in line with public opinion: in 2013 58% of surveyed Europeans and 47% of surveyed Americans believed that democracy is more important than stability (GMF 2013). Thus, subdued rhetoric on democracy promotion by the Obama administration in comparison to the Bush years and the EU's expressed intention of promoting democracy have bridged this particular gap between the promoters. The following sections will elaborate whether action has matched pro-democracy rhetoric.

Convergence on the behavioural level has occurred mainly due to more active engagement of the EU in democracy promotion and its attempts to broaden the range of its activities. While the US is still more inclined to promote civil society organisations than the EU, which continues to be rather state-centric, the newly founded EED is likely to close the gap. Though sometimes perceived as "wishful thinking" (Leininger and Richter 2012), and slightly more often as "great expectations" (Řiháčková 2013), the EED has been conceived as the grand turn towards civil society within EU democracy promotion. Following its slogan of "Supporting the Unsupported," as of June 2014 the EED has funded 101 civil society initiatives in the countries included in the ENP framework.

Moreover, as discussed in the following sections, the EU and the US also converge in their foreign policy actions that are pertinent to democracy promotion. The belated reactions to the Arab Spring (Börzel et al. 2014) and lackadaisical approach to human rights violations in China or Saudi Arabia are cases in point. Finally, both the US and the EU have responded similarly to challenges posed by non-democratic regional powers such as Russia or China (Babayan and Risse 2015).

If we observe transatlantic convergence on democracy promotion, but little cooperation, what does this tell us about the nature of the US-EU relationship and the state of the transatlantic security community? In the following section we discuss what our findings on democracy promotion tell us about the state of three of the four Is (interests, identities, institutions) and whether there is a transatlantic democracy promotion community.

## 2. Interests and Identities

The NSA turmoil and related US-Germany espionage allegations (Smale 2014, Paterson 2014) support an earlier argument that the sense of community within the transatlantic relationship might be shakier than is often assumed (Risse 2012:10). Nevertheless, no matter how shaky the transatlantic relationship may be, democracy promotion policies of the EU and the US derive from similar rationales: stabilising their neighbourhoods and providing security of borders or pursuing international trade (Johnson 2002). These converging interests, especially in trade, were also emphasised by US support for the EU's Deep and Comprehensive Free Trade Agreements (DCFTA) with the latter's neighbourhood partners. In June 2014, Georgia, Moldova, and Ukraine signed EU association agreements reiterating their commitment to further economic and political development under the guidance of the EU. To prepare target countries for signing association agreements, the US offered additional funding to Moldova through rule of law programmes (US Dept of State 2013) and claimed to have contributed to Georgia's reorientation of "its trade towards Western markets" (Nuland 2013). Reactions to the events in Ukraine, largely viewed as pro-democracy protests, and subsequent sanctions imposed on individual Russian officials and companies, have also pointed to converging transatlantic interests. These actions are in line with the opinion of 61% US and 49% EU surveyed elites that economic sanctions can be "slightly effective" when promoting democracy. Twenty-nine percent of surveyed US and 39% of surveyed EU elites believe that economic sanctions can be "extremely effective" (Isernia and Basile 2014:53). However, on a slightly different note, converging interests and actions were also visible from EU and US reluctance to sanction strategically important Russian companies, such as Gazprom, which supplies energy to the EU, or Rosoboronexport, which supplies military helicopters to US allies (US Dept of Defense 2014, RIA Novosti 2014a and 2014b).

This pattern of targeted but cautious sanctions is not surprising, given the absence of pressure on countries not implementing democratic reforms but important for strategic interests. Differentiated treatment of Belarus and Azerbaijan by both the EU and the US is one of the most vivid examples of the unevenly applied pressure (Babayan and Huber 2012), even voiced by EU member states and US officials (US Mission to EU 2009). In Freedom House language, both Azerbaijan and Belarus are consolidated authoritarian regimes where elections are regularly rigged and human rights violated. Belarus, void of any attractive natural resources, has received sets of sanctions and reprimands (Council of the EU 2013, US Dept of Treasury 2014). Yet, Azerbaijan has received only occasional mild criticism given its energy resources, important for the EU's energy diversification plans (Kobzova and Alieva 2012, Weiss 2014) and geographic location, important for US operations in Afghanistan (Associated Press 2010).

Democracy promoters are also likely to prefer stability over democracy in (usually friendly) authoritarian countries, where democratic practices may wield outcomes unanticipated by promoters – e.g., the electoral victory of Hamas in Palestine in 2006 (Hovdenak 2009, Eeckelaert 2013) or the Muslim Brotherhood in Egypt in 2012. Some went so far as to call this preference a "stability syndrome" (Powel 2009). This preference for stability over democracy has been especially visible in the countries of MENA, where a plethora of US and EU policies, which included democracy promotion, could not achieve any meaningful democratic change (Durac 2009, Darbouche and Zoubir 2009). It was this preference that was particularly harshly criticised in the aftermath of the Arab Spring, and partially brought about increased rhetorical and behavioural convergence in transatlantic democracy promotion. As discussed below, both the EU and the US have attempted to distance themselves from this preference for stability and emphasise their identities as committed champions of democracy.

While some questions have remained open, there has been no doubt that through its discursive and practical adjustments, the EU undertook a reinvention of its democracy promotion identity as "reluctant debutante" (Emerson et al. 2005). Before High Representative Catherine Ashton mentioned in 2011 the EU's intentions of advancing "deep democracy" (Ashton 2011), the EU largely distanced itself from employing such terms as democracy promotion, opting for more a neutral "good governance." Leaving its democracy promotion identity fluid, the EU has not promoted any particular institutional model of democracy, rather focusing on separate components (Munck and Verkuilen 2002, Dahl 1998) of liberal democracy (European Commission 2006). At the same time, by equating democracy and human rights to universal values and "public goods," the EU has confirmed its intentions to vigorously promote both democracy and human rights (European Commission 2010:5). In addition, 41% of surveyed EU political elites "somewhat agreed" while 34% "strongly agreed" that democracy should be promoted even if the policies of target countries may oppose EU policies (Isernia and Basile 2014:48-50). The Arab Spring, on its own turn, has induced the EU to attempt to "revolutionise" the ENP and admit that previously it had focused almost exclusively on stability.

In accordance with its image as "freedom fighter" and often as means to achieve security, stability, and prosperity for the entire world (US Dept of State 2009), the US has been expected "to assertively advocate the promotion of liberal-democratic values" (Poppe et al. 2013:52). In a show of resolve to project democracy, 76% of surveyed US elites (as compared to 45% of European elites) believe that under some conditions war is necessary to obtain justice (Isernia and Basile 2014:29). Even if such rhetoric has been subdued under Obama, his vision of the American leadership and exceptionalism does not drastically differ from his that of his predecessors (Obama 2007a and 2007b). In addition, 62% of surveyed US political elites "somewhat agreed" while 12% "strongly agreed" that democracy should be promoted even if the policies of target countries may oppose US policies (Isernia and Basile 2014:48-50). Of course, such prioritising of democracy over stability came after the Arab Spring protests had clearly toppled long-term US partners in economic and security matters, and the initial ambivalence (Carothers 2011) had become no longer justifiable.

These rather stable pro-democracy transatlantic identities form the basis of converging interests. To begin with, value orientations toward democracy are constitutive for both the US and the EU, and these orientations have not shifted much (Isernia and Basile 2014). Moreover, the elite survey conducted within the Transworld project documents divisions within perceptions of human rights and democracy promotion *within* Europe but underlines growing convergence among EU and US respondents. It seems that European perceptions are influenced by global events, which have had particularly severe repercussions in some countries: the implications of the financial crisis in Greece have cast doubt not only on the concept of promoting democracy abroad but also on its development and consolidation within the EU. While, on average, European elites (opinion leaders, politicians, and business persons) prioritise social rights (35% of respondents), 40% of their US counterparts

highlight the importance of civil rights. Germany is the only surveyed European country that stands out with its clear preference for civil rights at 54% (Isernia and Basile 2014:46-47). Indicating the realisation that elections do not necessarily mean democracy, only 32% of US respondents as opposed to 61% of EU respondents consider electoral aid as useful. Weary of the military interventions of the 2000s, only 28% of EU elites and 18% of US elites say that the use of force can be "extremely effective" in democracy promotion. In comparison 50% of EU respondents and 40% of US respondents think that capacity-building is extremely effective (Isernia and Basile 2014:52-53).

These data on elite perceptions are partially corroborated by mass public opinion surveys in Europe and the US, which appear to show growing reluctance to use military force for humanitarian purposes on either side of the Atlantic. Fifty-seven percent of surveyed Americans believe that the use of force "creates more hatred that leads to more terrorism" (Pew Research Center 2014:64). The reluctance towards the use of force chimes with the growing isolationist inclinations of the US population. Sixty percent of the surveyed Americans believe that the US "should pay less attention to problems overseas and concentrate on [domestic] problems," while according to 40% of respondents US involvement makes global problems worse (Pew Research Center 2014:61-62). In Europe, a statistical analysis of attitudes toward democracy promotion shows that citizens with high professional skills and education levels tend to back active democracy assistance (Faust and Garcia 2013). In Europe, however, highly educated citizens oppose the use of military means to further democracy: their support for democracy promotion decreases substantially when the use of force is contemplated. However, similar to diverging opinion groups within the US – conservatives, liberals, or lefts according to Pew Research Center – the attitudes in the EU also differ according to member states, making the EU's proactive involvement in events more cumbersome. For example, UK citizens would more readily use force for the sake of democracy promotion than German citizens (Faust and Garcia 2013).

Thus, the aftermath of the Arab Spring has emphasised the democracy promotion identities of the EU and the US. However, a pro-democracy identity does not always match with other interests. Stability is still prioritised over democracy and human rights whenever the inevitable turmoil in democratising countries threatens security interests of the US and the EU in the particular region of the world. Moreover, the mismatch between the "pro-democratic identities" and interests of the US and the EU has brought about diverging responses to the crisis in Ukraine, which has received solid political backing by the transatlantic partners, and the Arab Spring where stability has mostly trumped democracy objectives. However, even in the case of a relatively tougher stance on Russia, violation of international and democratic norms has been overshadowed by business interests, particularly in Germany (Karnitschnig 2014) and the US (McGregor 2014), while a group of EU members led by Italy has opposed tougher sanctions (Oliver et al. 2014). The case of Egypt is also a telling example of the clash between identities and interests, where democratically administered elections did not receive the expected transatlantic approval due to the election of the Muslim Brotherhood and an Islamic president, perceived as "incompatible with democracy" (Dempsey 2012, Hamid 2014). Following the military coup which ousted president Mohamed Morsi, the US froze "a significant part of nonessential military aid to Egypt" in October 2013 (Gearan and Wilson 2013), and then unfroze it in June 2014 (BBC 2014) despite lack of progress in democracy or human rights. If the US cut parts of its aid due to the coup, the EU maintained the same amount (Pawlak and O'Donnell 2013), trying not to look awkward or as if it was backing Morsi. Even some EU officials view the EU's muted approach to Egypt's renewed authoritarianism as a fallback into the "stability syndrome" and call for an improved focus on democracy and human rights (Schaake 2014).

In general, however, we conclude that there is a sufficiently large basis of common interests and identities in the transatlantic security community with regard to democracy promotion. However, as argued above, this does

not lead to sustained cooperation and partnership, and democracy promotion does not entail institutionalised cooperation, as we show in the following section.

# 3. Institutions

One of the questions of this paper is: has convergence of EU and US democracy promotion approaches produced any common institutional structures or meaningful cooperation? This section argues that even if there is a degree of institutional emulation between the two, democracy promotion still lacks transatlantic institutions. While both the EU and the US have signed a number of partnership agreements with other countries, and the US with individual EU members, there is hardly any truly transatlantic agreement for democracy promotion. US promotion of democracy through its own long-established institutions and agencies has proceeded simultaneously with the European attempts at further institutionalisation and revision of its numerous regional policies. The reinvigoration of the European Instrument for Democracy and Human Rights and the establishment of the EED further institutionalised democracy promotion in the EU itself. The establishment of the EED has also pointed to the growing convergence between EU and US strategies, and the broadening of the EU's democracy promotion competencies.

It has also been evident that whenever the regional interests of the EU and the US converge, they express support for each other's specific policies and institutions. Considering its own democracy promotion in Central and Eastern Europe as "wildly successful," the US has in part attributed that success to its support for the EU's enlargement (Rosenblum 2011). It has also voiced support for the EU's EaP and has reportedly "been aligning future U.S. assistance with that of the EU" (Nuland 2013). The US has apparently viewed the EaP as "a step toward […] growing prosperity and deepening democracy" (Nuland 2013). For its part the EU, especially its newer members, has also looked up to the US democracy promotion, and its latest instrument, the EED, is "named after and inspired by the US National Endowment for Democracy (NED)" (Škoba 2013:1). Thus, the multitude of policies and agencies within both US and EU structures indicate that democracy promotion has been domestically institutionalised. However, mutual emulation and guidance have not yet resulted in a transatlantic structure for democracy promotion.

This paper also argues that the EU and the US occasionally cooperate. Yet, their cooperation stems from a shared sense of emergency rather than shared interests and even less so converging identities. The crises in Ukraine and to some extent Libya demonstrate that the EU and the US coordinate their actions and cooperate within democracy promotion when they face imminent economic or security crises. Even if Libya is not a democracy promotion case per se, the unifying feature of crises is underlined also by the fact that the EU and the US can effectively coordinate and cooperate within existing institutions, in this case NATO. As holds true for the entire Arab Spring, the intervention in Libya might have not had a lasting positive effect on democratisation (Hehir 2013, Kuperman 2013b) and is regarded by some as a "flawed narrative" of success (Kuperman 2013a). Nevertheless, the fact that the EU and the US could quickly respond to what was perceived as a crisis, indicates the potential for cooperation.

If the crisis in Ukraine has demonstrated anything – besides Russia's unapologetic bending of international norms – it is that the EU and the US can perform coordinated action when they want to, when such action is of crucial importance, and that they can cooperate within the frameworks of already established institutions. Due to Armenia's sudden turn towards the Russian-led Eurasian Customs Union (RFE/RL 2013, Bildt 2013) and Ukraine's initial rejection of the EU association agreements, some have argued that the entire idea of the EaP

was "in doubt" (Morris 2013). In response to the crisis of the European project the US stepped up its assistance not only to Ukraine but also to Georgia and Moldova, the other two partners within the EaP (RFE/RL 2014a). Even if not specifically addressing democracy promotion, US pledged an additional 8 million dollar to Moldova and 5 million dollar to Georgia, which already benefits from funding from the US Millennium Challenges Corporation (Tarnoff 2014:31-32). The coordinated action in regard to the crisis in Ukraine has helped to guide it to the signing of the association agreement in June 2014, amidst armed clashes and calls for ceasefire between Ukrainian troops and pro-Russia separatists (Smith-Park and Eshchenko 2014, Wagstyl 2014). These coordinated actions included assistance in the organisation of elections (US Embassy Kyiv 2014) and further commitment of 1.6 billion euro of macro-financial assistance by the EU and 61 million dollar of combined aid package including 5 million dollar for "defensive security assistance" (White House 2014). The Ukraine crisis has not only induced the US to reconfirm its support to the EU's enlargement and its initiatives in the neighbourhood, the crisis also underlined that the US was ready to "require adjustments to planned uses" of FY2015 assistance budget since the US had "re-focused many of our [US] assistance programs and instituted others to support Georgia, Moldova and Ukraine" (Rosenblum 2014:2, 6).

However, these crises also demonstrated the lack of cooperation or transatlantic institutions to deal with routine democracy promotion when not facing imminent security or economic threats. While this may seem not to reflect transatlantic identities and interests, it is not surprising given marginal support for cooperation in democracy promotion by EU and US elites. In line with the current pattern of occasional cooperation in case of imminent crises, the surveyed elites think that "policies in this [democracy promotion] area should be decided by international organizations such as the UN, the G20 or the IMF" (Isernia and Basile 2014b: 25-26). Fifty-six percent of surveyed US and 62% of EU elites support this statement (Isernia and Basile 2014b: 27-29). While the reasons for the unwillingness of these elites to envisage transatlantic cooperation within democracy promotion lie beyond the scope of this paper, further inquiries should be made into this discrepancy between converging identities and interests and unsupportive vision of the elites.

## Conclusions: Challenges to Democracy Promotion

We see convergence of identities and interests with regard to democracy promotion in the transatlantic community. This convergence, which pertains particularly to the increased strategies and instruments of the EU that foster civil society organisations, has however been more inadvertent than due to systematic coordination between the US and the EU. There is no institutionalised coordination and cooperation between the US and the EU in general and on the ground in target countries. Transatlantic cooperation with regard to democracy promotion seems to be confined to crisis situations such as the one experienced in Ukraine. In addition, the EU and the US continue to prioritise stability over democracy, as the case of the Arab Spring showed. In other words, while converging identities and interests help the EU and the US to come together in times of crisis, those are not the drivers of cooperation. The transatlantic security community with regard to democracy promotion still lacks institutions and has not moved to an enduring partnership despite joint identities and common interests.

While the US has subdued its democracy promotion rhetoric, the chances of it yielding its global leadership in democracy promotion are minimal. Even if, according to public opinion polls, the US population inclines towards isolationism (Pew Research Center 2014), the US administration seems determined to continue its global engagement, believing that "people [outside of the US] depend on American leadership to make a difference" (Kerry 2014). That said, more coordination with the EU is feasible.

We also argue that pro-democracy identity still yields to specific security and economic interests, despite the statements to the opposite. Despite long-standing commitment to democracy and human rights, analysis of both EU and US actions has shown that promotion of democracy and insistence on the observation of human rights has been a rhetorical priority, but it has often yielded to other interests, mainly security. In addition, despite the convergence of identities and interests, there is so far no evidence for common democracy and human rights promotion institutions as is the case in the security domain. Thus, while there is undoubtedly a transatlantic security community, there is so far no transatlantic democracy promotion community.

While the EU and the US are unlikely to drift apart inasmuch as their approaches to democracy promotion are concerned, at least in the short term there seem to be no prospects of a meaningful partnership. In the current state of affairs, *ad hoc* cooperation is the most likely course of action in transatlantic support for democracy, as has been the case in their responses to the Libya or Ukraine crises. This adherence to crisis-reaction also underlines the ubiquitous double standards or "stability vs. democracy" debate. Both EU and US elites are unenthusiastic about democracy promotion resulting in electoral empowerment of Islamic fundamentalist leaders (Isernia and Basile 2014:48-49). This is likely caused by perceived connection between fundamentalism and terrorism. However, while the fight against terrorism was virtually equivalent to the promotion of democracy by the Bush administration, terrorism features sparingly in the list of challenges of both US and EU elite survey respondents, yielding higher positions to economic development in undemocratic countries and ethnic conflicts (Isernia and Basile 2014). Only 13% of US and 22% of EU political elites consider terrorism as a challenge to democracy promotion. While 50% of US political elites have indicated the level of "economic development of undemocratic countries" as the main challenge to democracy promotion, just 29% of EU political elites agreed with this assessment (Isernia and Basile 2014a:47-48).

Even if not mentioned by either European or American elites surveyed in the Transworld project, challenges posed to democracy promotion by some authoritarian actors may diminish the effectiveness of democracy promotion and should be addressed by the EU and the US. In addition, emerging scholarly research shows that even if falling short of autocracy promotion some authoritarian countries often counteract democracy promotion (Burnell and Schlumberger 2010, Vanderhill 2012, Babayan 2014, Babayan and Risse 2015). Such counteraction to democracy promotion may constitute actions that directly challenge democracy promotion policy on the ground or that advance an alternative vision to the championed idea of liberal democracy. The case of Russia's actions in Ukraine and in other post-Soviet countries is among the most telling examples of such counteraction to democracy promotion. Whether successful or not, Russia has devised the Eurasian Customs Union as an arrangement incompatible with EU-offered DCFTA (Füle 2013). A number of import bans on products from Georgia, Moldova, and Ukraine, and close cooperation with Georgian and Moldovan breakaway regions, as well as Ukrainian separatists, have also aimed to "minimize the impact of [...] new ties with the EU" (RFE/RL 2014b). In exactly such situations, potential partnership with other democracy promoters may result in enhanced effectiveness and circumvention of the barriers erected by other authoritarian actors or local governments.

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## The Project

In an era of global flux, emerging powers and growing interconnectedness, transatlantic relations appear to have lost their bearings. As the international system fragments into different constellations of state and non-state powers across different policy domains, the US and the EU can no longer claim exclusive leadership in global governance. Traditional paradigms to understand the transatlantic relationship are thus wanting. A new approach is needed to pinpoint the direction transatlantic relations are taking. TRANSWORLD provides such an approach by a) ascertaining, differentiating among four policy domains (economic, security, environment, and human rights/democracy), whether transatlantic relations are drifting apart, adapting along an ad hoc cooperation-based pattern, or evolving into a different but resilient special partnership; b) assessing the role of a re-defined transatlantic relationship in the global governance architecture; c) providing tested policy recommendations on how the US and the EU could best cooperate to enhance the viability, effectiveness, and accountability of governance structures.

## Consortium

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