

“Back to constructive cooperation”

Interview with Sudha David-Wilp, Senior Transatlantic Fellow and Deputy Director of the German Marshall Fund Berlin Office

In November, Joe Biden reached the 270 electoral votes needed to claim victory in the 2020 presidential election. During the last weeks, Biden already announced several political projects and named some of his administration’s members. So AmCham Germany talked with US politics expert, Sudha David-Wilp, Senior Transatlantic Fellow and Deputy Director of the German Marshall Fund Berlin Office, about Joe Biden’s expected economic and trade policy, the revitalization of the transatlantic relationship and how the US and Germany can work together to deal with common challenges.

Many experts assume that the transatlantic atmosphere will improve under Joe Biden. On November 9, 2020, immediately after Biden's election, the EU has imposed new punitive tariffs on American products. Doesn't this show that the old conflicts will remain for now?

The tariffs are a legacy of the strained relationship between the outgoing administration and Europe. One of President-elect Biden’s immediate goals is to spur economic recovery in light of the Corona pandemic, and he will need Europe to help the cause. The EU and the US economies account together for about half of global GDP, and reversing the tariffs would be a good way to kick-start growth. There are certainly sticking points in the relationship, but there is strong will on both sides of the Atlantic to get back to constructive cooperation.

One of Joe Biden's first official acts could be for the US to rejoin the Paris Climate Agreement. Would that already be a breakthrough for international climate policy?

Rejoining the Paris Agreement and reactivating membership in the WHO are signals that the United States wants to be a responsible actor within the framework of multilateralism. Biden also has support from Republicans when it comes to strengthening NATO. President-elect Biden is keen to assure allies that the US is back to being a dependable partner.

A German and an American business have jointly developed a vaccine against the Corona virus. What do you expect for global economy now? Where will Biden leave the most significant traces in economic policy?

The partnership between BioNTech and Pfizer is a blueprint in transatlantic collaboration for finding solutions to global challenges. There will be other pandemics and it is also imperative to work on other topics such as climate change and artificial intelligence. The new US administration will be open to furthering transatlantic trade, but has vowed to protect and benefit the middle class with its policies.

When analyzing the current developments in global economy we also have to take China’s rising economic power into consideration. How can or should Germany and the US work together in developing a joint China strategy?

China will continue to either divide us or offer an opportunity for real mutual benefit. The Biden administration will recognize the need to work with Europe on making sure China stays within the bounds of the rules-based international order, but will have redlines with Europe when it comes to 5G and the protection of sensitive industries. Moreover, the United States and Europe should be allies in confronting China regarding human rights abuse and its subversion of democracy.

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