

Transatlantic cooperation: it's in the UK's interest for the US and the EU to forge a strong relationship on the basis of TTIP

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*The Transatlantic Trade Investment and Partnership deal, otherwise known as TTIP, offers the EU and the US the opportunity to secure much needed economic growth and reinvigorate the transatlantic alliance. **Robert Heslop** writes that a comprehensive TTIP would ensure that the EU and US remain at the centre of the global economy, at a time when rising powers seek to challenge the current international order.*



It is because of the opportunities stemming from TTIP the UK must not only remain in the EU but also play a leading role in securing a successful and comprehensive deal between the US and the EU. Instead of flirting with a Brexit the UK should be the key player in not only securing TTIP, but also in easing many of the fears European citizens have about the deal, which has so far been conducted in a shroud of secrecy and controversy.

The supporters of TTIP believe the completion of the deal would bring about great economic benefits for the UK and the rest of the EU. The UK government estimates that if TTIP were to be concluded, breaking down the last barriers of trade between the EU and the US, [the UK economy](#) could benefit as much as £10 billion and the overall EU economy could benefit £100 billion. At a time of record unemployment in the EU, fuelling euro-sceptic parties on the left and right, the mainstream politicians hope is that the economic benefits of TTIP will reduce the potency of these insurgency parties and restore citizen's faith in the European project.

During the EU referendum debate, much discussion has and will continue to be focused on whether or not the UK could secure better trade deals acting alone. Indeed the *Brexiters* are adamant that once the UK is free from the shackles of EU red tape and regulation, it will walk into the sunset conducting favourable trade deals with all nations.

The TTIP negotiations show just how wrong they are. The fact the EU is able to operate with such clout as a trade actor in the international system is because of the combined GDP and volume of 500m relatively wealthy citizens of the member states. The UK would be in a much weaker bargaining position acting alone. If the UK were to leave the EU, reaching a separate deal with the US would not happen easily, if at all. "I think it's absolutely clear that Britain has a greater voice at the trade table being part of the EU, being part of a larger economic entity," Michael Froman [told Reuters](#), adding that EU membership gives Britain more leverage in negotiations. "We're not particularly in the market for FTAs with individual countries. We're building platforms ... that other countries can join over time." If Britain left the EU, Froman [said](#), it would face the same tariffs and trade barriers as other countries outside the US free trade network. Those advocating for a Brexit based on the grounds the UK would be able to pursue a flexible mercantilist foreign policy must challenge the view put forward by Froman.



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Whilst securing economic growth is understandably the most pressing concern for the EU's beleaguered leaders, and desperately sought after by unemployed Europeans, one must also look at the global ramifications if TTIP were to be secured. TTIP could become the economic equivalent of NATO. For if the EU and US economies were to become more integrated, better connected and more successful, we could witness the strengthening of the transatlantic alliance.

At a time when the US is concerned and indeed openly critical about European NATO member states unwillingness to contribute to the alliance, the TTIP deal could restore US [confidence](#) in the EU. Although the US is justifiably aggrieved at having to pay for Europe's security, the EU has serious and justified misgivings about the US. The revelations in 2014 that the NSA had been spying on the EU mission in the UN and Washington, as well as targeting Germany, caused major uproar. US-EU relations reached a nadir not seen since the strife over the Iraq War in 2003.

TTIP offers the opportunity to restore a weakened transatlantic alliance. At a time of international instability caused by a *revanchist* Russia, the rise of radical Islam in the MENA, the perils of climate change and many other factors, it is in the partner's interest to strengthen the transatlantic alliance. Finalising TTIP would signal to the world that the US and the EU are resolved to do just that. It is in the UK's national interest for the U.S. and the EU to have a relationship that is cordial, respectful and above all strong enough to overcome the challenges I have just described. Because of this the UK must remain at the heart of the European Union using its influence in Brussels and Washington to forge this relationship.

The rise of the so-called BRICs is challenging the liberal social and economic order that the US and EU have forged and overwhelmingly benefitted from. The conclusion of TTIP, once the fears over the impact any deal could have on public service provisions are allayed, should cement the EU and US at the very heart of the global economy. This will tremendously benefit EU citizens and reinvigorate the transatlantic alliance. It would be reckless and illogical for the UK to leave the EU when this opportunity has presented itself.

This blog represents the views of the author and not those of BrexitVote, nor the LSE.

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