EU PUBLIC DIPLOMACY IN THE U.S.
Setting the Tone for the Future of Transatlantic Relations?

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Abstract

This thesis is both an attempt to fill the gap in academic literature on EU public diplomacy activities in the U.S. as well as an attempt to determine how EU public diplomacy reflects the state of transatlantic relations. The link between public diplomacy, EU public diplomacy, and transatlantic affairs is at the heart of this study, which endeavors to determine whether and if so how EU public diplomacy strategies in the U.S. have adapted to recent challenges to transatlantic relations, such as diverging security interests or conflicting policies in trade and climate. An in-depth analysis of the EU Delegation to the U.S.’ public diplomacy activities reveals the rising importance of cultural and exchange diplomacy as vector through which the EU is attempting to create a long-lasting relationship with the U.S. public to outlast higher level political differences. The biggest challenges to the EU’s ability to build this dialogue are that of reach and listening. In terms of the reach, the EU still struggles to establish contact with audiences outside of the coastal and metropolitan areas and elite populations. The EU delegation’s activities, concentrated in Washington D.C., are not as networked or grassroots oriented as they need to be to fulfill their objectives of awareness-raising and trust-building. In terms of listening, research and data on U.S. audiences perceptions’ of the EU, its policies, and its activities within the United States is limited. The EU delegation’s inclusion of that knowledge into its strategies is also limited, which results in public diplomacy activities of limited impact.