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**Room to Maneuver: What a Harris-Walz  
Win Would Mean for Europe**  
*Sudha David-Wilp*

# Room to Maneuver: What a Harris-Walz Win Would Mean for Europe

**By Sudha David-Wilp | August 16, 2024**

*A potential Harris-Walz victory in the upcoming US presidential election would offer breathing space for Europe to strengthen its defense capabilities and adjust to new realities within the transatlantic relationship.*

The de facto end of the Biden administration this summer coincided with ample good will and a concrete policy decision that emphasized the strength of the transatlantic partnership. The announcement that American long-range missiles would be stationed in Germany in 2026 signaled Washington's commitment to Europe's security architecture. At the same time, thanks to close coordination with European partners, President Biden was able to secure the release of journalist Evan Gershkovich and other political prisoners in Russia.

Undoubtedly, there would be a certain degree of continuity from the Biden administration to a Kamala Harris presidency in terms of ideals, actions, and advisors. But Europe is not under any illusion that a White House win for the Dems would mean that the United States would provide for all the continent's security needs and reverse its industrial policies.

The US electorate, along with policymakers on both sides of the aisle, is seeking restraint and prioritization when it comes to military interventions abroad. Understanding this undercurrent, President Biden pulled out of Afghanistan and has carefully calibrated his support for Ukraine.

In line with Biden, Vice President Kamala Harris has voiced her belief in a rules-based international order. But President Biden seems to represent the last of a generation to uphold traditional American foreign policy when it comes to the Euro-Atlantic. The Pentagon has categorized China as a "pacing challenge" that requires a shift of more attention toward the Indo Pacific. As a result, Europe would have to shoulder more of the responsibility for supporting Ukraine and can position itself as a genuine force multiplier in maintaining liberal internationalism together with Washington.

Europe should use the time during a potential Harris administration to accelerate defense coordination among willing European partners to increase military stockpiles and develop European deep precision strike capabilities. In addition to deterrence, Brussels' aim to keep the EU competitive is crucial. The bipartisan US consensus to protect and enhance American manufacturing and technology will not abate anytime soon. Instead of hand-wringing over the Biden-Harris Inflation Reduction Act's spillover effects across the Atlantic, the EU can work in concert with the United States to protect supply chains from economic weaponization on the part of actors such as China and pool more capital and research at home to engender innovation in fields such as industrial AI or green energy.

President Harris would not disrupt the transatlantic relationship, but her foreign policy focus would naturally turn to China first as well as to addressing immediate crises in the Middle East and at the US southern border—topics that have more relevance within American domestic politics.

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**About the Author**

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