Atlantic Community & Policy Chats present
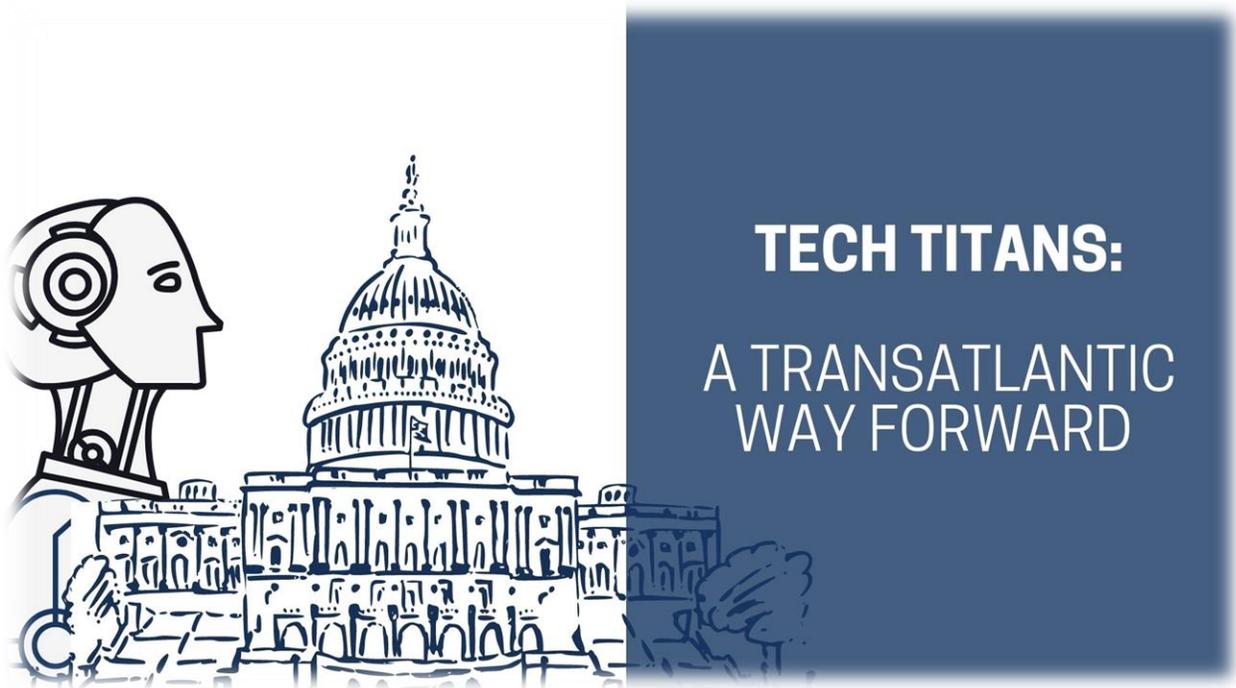
TECH TITANS:

A TRANSATLANTIC WAY FORWARD

Atlantic Community

Policy Chats

Policy Competition

August – September 2021

Online

Register here
Contact us via pc-techtitans@policychats.fr

What Is This Policy Competition About?

The goal of this policy competition is to provide a new generation of thinkers with the opportunity to **present their ideas to key transatlantic decision makers** and receive feedback and recognition. By addressing the challenges posed by the regulation of so-called "**Tech Titans"** such as Apple, Amazon, Google, or Facebook, participants will strengthen their understanding of the complex role played by government and international organizations in a transatlantic topic where a common approach is just the beginning.

In addition to the recognition for the winning proposal, all participants will **gain important skills** such as the ability to analyze issues in their broader economic, social and political contexts while exploring the potential regulatory mechanisms to affect change. Every participant will be imposed with the task of how to write effective and convincing policy memos.

Our policy-competition asks the next generation of leaders to articulate their vision on **how Europe and the US can cooperate** to achieve a new sustainable equilibrium regarding the **regulation of "Big Tech" companies** such as Apple, Facebook, Google, Amazon, and Co. From the perspective of a policy expert, you are asked to advise a government or international organization on the way forward. Possible questions and to consider are whether it is in the US' interest to cooperate more closely with Europe, how we should make sense of the companies' position within the escalating tensions between authoritarian and democratic states, and whether over-regulation could hamper digital growth in the European and US-American economies.

The **three best** policy memos will have a chance at real impact: You present your vision and implementation-steps in a short **pitch** to top government and international organizations representatives.

From **August to September 2021**, we invite students and young professionals from all over the world to submit – singularly or in teams of up to three persons – a policy memo with their ideas of the US-European future on "Tech Titans". Now, it is up to you to show your ideas on how the transatlantic community should deal with the many issues, questions, and opportunities arising. It doesn't matter if you've never created a policy proposal before - we've designed this competition so that you can jump straight in.

Contact us via Email: pc-techtitans@policychats.fr

Register for the event here: To Registration

About the Organizers

Atlantic Community

The Atlantic Community (Atlantische Initiative e.V.) is a Berlin-based NGO determined to strengthen the transatlantic bond by offering a platform for dialogue from the heart of the society.

We go beyond "high politics" and address those affected by global change. Under the motto "Foreign Policy for All", the organization engages civil society, entrepreneurs, (local) stakeholders, and (critical) voices in a transatlantic dialogue. How do transatlantic relations play out in everyday life? Where is room for improvement? What do we expect from the future?

Through this bottom-up process, we want to equip the transatlantic relations for the future.

Website: atlantic-community.org
Twitter: @atlanticcom

Policy Chats Network

Policy Chats is a student-led youth association set up in February 2021 by two students from Bocconi University and Sciences Po.

The association's goal is to bring together public decision makers, professionals, researchers and students from all over the world and from different universities, to deepen national and international public policies. Current student-members come from universities such as Bocconi University, LSE, Sciences Po, Hertie School, UCL, King's College, Durham, Warwick, John Hopkins SAIS, and Syracuse University.

The association seeks to establish partnerships with various institutions on a regional and / or global scale whose activities revolve around the design, evaluation or implementation of public policies.

Website: policychats.org
Twitter: @policychats

The Timeline

The competition will begin on **Monday, 16th August, 8pm CEST**, with an online **introduction event** on the competition and its topic.

Until **Sunday, 22nd August, midnight,** you have time to write and submit your proposal via email (check guidelines for detailed information).

On **Monday, 30th August**, our jury composed of former policy-advisors and policy-makers will announce the best three proposals that will be pitched in front of active senior-decision makers.

Within the same week, you will participate in a **pitch-training workshop** and have about one week time to prepare your presentation.

The **pitch by the Top-3 in front of high-ranking policy-makers** will take place online in the **week of 6th - 10th September**. The precise date is to be announced.

Sunday, 15th August Midnight (CEST)	Registration Deadline.
Monday, 16th August 08:00pm (CEST)	Welcome Event with information on the competition and background on the topic.
Sunday, 22nd August Midnight (CEST)	Deadline to write and submit your policy-memo.
Monday, 30th August Tba.	Decision by the jury on the Top-3 memos who will pitch in front of decision-makers.
Within **Monday, 30th August –** **Friday, 03rd September**	Pitch-Workshop for the winning Top-3.
Within **Monday, 06th September –** **Friday, 10th September**	Pitch in front of high-ranking transatlantic policy-makers.

Introduction to the Topic of "Tech Titans"

Definition: "Tech Titans" describe the major technology companies such as Facebook, Apple, Amazon, Google, and Co. which are defined by major market share, quasi monopolistic power, and large financial capabilities. While regarded as a key for innovation in the 21st century, some fear that those "Tech Titans" may cause more harm than benefit, if no new legislation tames them.

Background: While "Tech Titans" have created a huge number of new jobs, never before known marketing-possibilities, global connectivity, major technologies, and increased productivity, their dominance has also led to a widely shared assessment that they may threaten democratic principles, states' sovereignty, and competitive markets. Examples include so-called "echo chambers" created through social-media algorithms contributing to a society's polarization; an increasing accumulation of vast amounts of personal data in the hands of private actors undermining the citizens' right to self-determination; an increased scramble for power between states and the world's dominating tech companies as the recent legal struggle between Australian media-outlets and Facebook underlined; or acquisitions of possible competitors in early stages increasing the "Tech Titans'" market dominance which allows them to squeeze out competitors and diminish consumer benefit and innovation in the long term.

Problem-Set: How should we deal with these "Tech Titans" in the future? Should they be regulated or even "busted" to break their market power? Is the way forward to set new norms, regulations, and international agreements to limit the companies' power? Or could they become a powerful geopolitical tool of the West in an ever more escalating democratic-autocratic competition? Then, shouldn't we rather foster their growth? Are states still able to regulate "Tech Titans" by themselves? Or is international cooperation needed? If so, in which degree is it possible and beneficial? These and more tough questions touch upon highly complex considerations of data protection, monopoly-regulation, innovation-potential, market-regulation, as well as international competition and cooperation.

Trends: So far, the EU gave their answer by supporting individual data-protection through the comprehensive GDPR and the current development of the Digital Services Act and Digital Markets Act. It acts tough against Google and Facebook in regards of competition-policy. Also the USA have changed their approach towards the "Silicon Valley": Lina Khan, new chairperson of the Federal Trade Commission, prepares for battle. Yet, the approaches vary and the USA and the EU have not always been on the same page. Philosophies about the role of the state vary and so do interests, not only of the governments but also of stakeholders and the individual economies.

Goal: This competition asks you to propose a policy-memo addressing ways of how transatlantic cooperation can achieve a new equilibrium regarding the regulation of "Big Tech" companies. Take into consideration the political context, trends, problems, and interests.

Policy Memo Guidelines

The goal of the policy-competition is to provide a new generation of thinkers with the opportunity to present their ideas to key transatlantic decision makers and receive feedback and recognition. Our level of ambition is to facilitate submissions which provide actionable ideas in a standard policy memo format. To ensure this a jury of former practitioners and experts who have had significant experience in government work volunteer to evaluate submissions.

The policy memo will be written from the perspective of an analyst working for a European or American government, or an international organization (e.g. EU or NATO) involved in transatlantic politics. You are free to represent any expertise (legal, social, economic, etc.) you wish, but your primary concern must be about how EU-US collaboration shapes regulation of Big Tech. You will be asked to provide 2-3 recommendations that should include a multi-stakeholder perspective.

When making the case for addressing the issue, participants should also consider the social, economic, and political ramifications of inaction. While the analyst writing the memo may be attuned to Big Tech regulation as a field, you should remember that you are not an expert in this and may need further information to demonstrate how taking action may align with strategic priorities or may be operationalized on the technical level.

When exploring potential solutions, participants are encouraged to consider:
- Why would the government/international organization become involved in this particular issue (interests, competence, etc.)?
- What tools does the government/international organization have to deal with Tech advantages and/or risks?
- How could a government/international organization work with other stakeholders to advance big tech regulation?
- How do you identify the right stakeholders on the ground to leverage to address this issue?
- What might an appropriate remedy look like in this context?

After an initial screening, successful memos will be shared with our jury composed of former policy-advisors and decision-makers. They will decide which three proposals can finally be pitched in front of active and high profile policy-decision makers of national parliaments, governments, and/or international organizations (to be announced soon).

Evaluation Criteria

The assessment of the policy memo is guided by the following criteria. Each criterion is to be ranked between 1 ("criteria not fulfilled at all") to 5 ("criteria fulfilled with excellence").

	1	2	3	4	5
The importance of the issue and the necessity for a decision to be made was made clear.					
Essential facts and supporting evidence have been presented.					
The argument is coherent and well structured.					
A clear course of action has been laid out.					
The pros and cons of the course of action have been weighed.					
The proposal is realistically implementable.					
The political environment and general context has been assessed and taken into consideration.					
The proposed policy displays an element of originality.					
The language of the memo is correct, precise, and convincing.					
Formal criteria have been held up and the overall layout is orderly.					

Formal Criteria

- The language of the memo is English.
- The policy memo addresses the topic of transatlantic regulation of "Tech Titans" as introduced in this document.
- The memo does not exceed 2 pages including bibliography, graphs, etc. It is advised to keep the net-text length (without graphs, footnotes etc.) at one (1) page.
- A title page highlights the memo's title and the participant's name, email, and date of birth (not included in the above-mentioned page total).
- The title page also includes a reference to the competition (e.g. "Policy Competition by Atlantic Community and Policy Chats").
- The memo is handed in online via pc-techtitans@policychats.fr and as a pdf before the deadline.

Tips for an Effective Policy Memo

An effective policy memo should...

- Be no longer the 1 page (single spaced) – footnotes or references can be on a 2nd page.
- Contain all key information in the first paragraph
- Include the following:
  - Heading
  - Summary
  - Background
  - Issues
  - Options
  - Recommendations
  - Endnotes
  - Avoid technical jargon – but use key words and concepts

When writing a memo, ask yourself...

- What is the main message?
- What do I want the policymaker to remember?
- Are the recommendations feasible? Convincing?
- What are the political risks to the policymaker if the recommendations are followed?

As for the structure, a good policy memo should include a headline, a short summary and background, an issue-analysis, policy options and recommendations, and a conclusion followed by the endnotes..

- Headline
  - To: Name and title
  - From: Your name and affiliation
  - Subject: Tailor the subject to the decision to be made
  - Date: The date when you send it to the policymaker

- The Summary should include:
  - The issue
  - Why a decision is needed
  - What key information is contained in the memo
  - What course of action is recommended

- The background should:
  - Consist of brief, essential points
  - Explain how this issue has evolved or become a concern

- The issues section should include:
  - Key issues to be addressed by the policymaker
  - 1-3 points maximum
  - What position(s) others have on these issues

- The options section should include:
  - Plausible courses of action
  - Pros and cons of each option
  - Risks/potential opposition that might result from choosing an option

- Recommendation
  - What do you want the decision maker to do?
  - Why are you making this particular recommendation?