



## CENTER FOR THE STUDY OF THE PRESIDENCY AND CONGRESS

*STRENGTHENING MULTI-LATERAL LEADERSHIP: A EUROPEAN EXCHANGE PROGRAM*  
FALL CONFERENCE – NOVEMBER 17-21, 2008

The first session of CSPC's new initiative on transatlantic relations, *Strengthening Multi-Lateral Leadership: A European Exchange Program*, took place from November 17 to 21, 2008. The program participants, 14 exceptional young leaders (ages 30-40) from positions of policy planning in European governments or in the policy-research community, spent one week in Washington, DC, meeting with experts involved in this and past Presidential transitions in order to better understand the challenges and processes of the period and explore avenues for European and U.S. cooperation. Program participants make up a diverse group, hailing from 12 countries and representing Embassies in DC, Foreign Ministries overseas, international newspapers and the United Nations.

Participants convened for an orientation session on Monday the 17th at the Center's offices, where



they were introduced to each other and members of the Center's staff. CSPC President David Abshire spoke to the assembled group on the Center's *Strengthening America's Future*



*Initiative*, which is advising the Obama transition team on the critical challenges facing the nation. On Monday afternoon, the



group joined former ambassadors to numerous countries in Europe as well as academics and policymakers who work on various topics related to transatlantic relations. In a session held at the Atlantic Council of the United States and led by Fred Kempe and Marc Leland, they discussed the future of U.S.-European relations and touched on topics including policy on Iraq, human rights, NATO and the European Union. The evening concluded with a dinner at the Meridian International Center, where program participants spoke with Ambassador Stuart Holliday on the transatlantic relationship.

Tuesday began with a session at the German Marshall Fund (GMF) with Thomas McLarty, former White House Chief of Staff, who discussed the Clinton transition. Lunch with Craig Kennedy and Karen Donfried, President and Vice President of the GMF, respectively, was accompanied by a lively discussion on European perceptions of President-elect Obama. The second conference day concluded with a technical session on the transition at the career civil servant level, an often-overlooked aspect of the transition process, especially in the international media.

On Wednesday, program participants assembled on Capitol Hill to meet with former Senator Bill Brock and Congressional scholars Thomas Mann of the Brookings Institution and Norman Ornstein of the American Enterprise Institute to discuss the transition process on the Hill. Following a tour of the Capitol, participants gathered with Randy Henning of the Peterson Institute for International Economics to discuss the global financial situation and possible policy reactions to it.

Thursday's panels focused on specific policy issues confronting the incoming Obama Administration and the transatlantic relationship. Thomas Kirlin, Vice President of Operations at the Center, and Susan Ruth, of Cambridge Energy Research Associates, examined energy and environmental policy, one of the leading topics on the transatlantic agenda. Then, Ambassadors

Thomas Pickering and Craig Kelly discussed the State Department's transition process and the future of U.S. foreign policy in the new Administration. Lastly, a panel on the Department of Homeland Security's (DHS) first transition was conducted by Job Henning of the Project on National Security Reform, Tiffany Lightbourn of the DHS Presidential Transition Team, and John Magaw, formerly of the U.S. Secret Service and Federal Emergency Management Agency.

The conference concluded on Friday with a meeting with representatives from the Delegation of the European Union to the United States before a farewell luncheon.

The European Exchange Program participants and speakers universally praised the program as timely, informative, and well-organized. Participants particularly expressed a greater appreciation for the unique challenges of the American Presidential transition, as well as an enhanced understanding of why the process is so lengthy in comparison to most European transitions of government.

Further praise for the program centered on its networking aspects. Many Embassy employees remain within their own sphere in Washington, making a program like this one, which convenes members of many international foreign services, very valuable. In addition, the program forged



contacts between the transition experts and the representatives of

Embassies and Foreign Ministries, providing a wider base for communication and understanding during this potentially confusing time and for the future.

In March of 2009, participants will return to Washington, DC, for another session to evaluate the progression of the transition through the first 100 days of the Obama Administration. During this second visit, they will meet again with many of the individuals from their first trip, allowing them to build on previous discussions and evaluate changing American political dynamics as well as to follow up on the policy projections made in November.



The Center has received funding for the European Exchange Program from the Luso-American Foundation, the Stuart Family Foundation, and the Tulsa Community Foundation, as well as several private donors, and is seeking further funding to sponsor each participant.

For more information on this initiative, please contact Emily Shaftel, Coordinator of the European Exchange Program, at [EShaftel@thePresidency.org](mailto:EShaftel@thePresidency.org) or (202) 872-9800.