

Transatlantic Trends 2008

On Friday 12 September, **Ron Asmus**, Executive Director of the German Marshall Fund Transatlantic Centre in Brussels, came to 'Sociëteit de Witte' in The Hague to present the results of '**Transatlantic Trends 2008**'. This annual public opinion survey examines American and European attitudes towards transatlantic relations and global challenges.

The general trends, further results and the statistics supporting the trends can be viewed on www.transatlantictrends.org.

Some highlights of the trends in the Netherlands were:

- A rise of sentiment that the partnership between the United States and the European Union should become closer. 26% of respondents support this statement, as opposed to 19% in 2006.
- The highest ranking in Europe with regard to favorability rating for both presidential candidates Obama and McCain. 85% of the Dutch respondents view Obama favorably, compared to 33% who have a positive view of McCain.
- A top 3 ranking among the European countries with the highest support for EU leadership (81%).
- With 68% high up on the list of European countries in which the citizens prefer to address threats in partnership with the United States.
- No. 3 ranking for the highest approval in Europe for increasing support for democratic forces inside Russia (75%).
- With 79% the second highest approval rate for providing security assistance to neighboring democracies of Russia.

On the subject of the NATO mission in Afghanistan, the Dutch score a No. 1 ranking for the highest support for:

- contributing troops (82%).
- sharing in the financial costs of a NATO military action (82%).
- conducting combat operations against the Taliban (69%).

Everything added up, support for transatlantic relations in the Netherlands seems to have increased in the course of 2007-2008.

Finally, it should be noted that the opinion surveys were conducted in June 2008, hence before the Russian-Georgian conflict. Any changes in attitude towards Russia or NATO on account of this conflict will appear in next year's Transatlantic Trends.

Wietske Stans