

**Statement of Mark Gitenstein,
Nominee for Representative of the United States
to the European Union,
Submitted to the Senate Foreign Relations Committee
September 28, 2021**

Chairman Menendez, Ranking Member Risch, and distinguished Members of the Committee:

I am deeply honored by President Biden's nomination to be U.S. Ambassador to the European Union.

If confirmed, serving as this nation's Ambassador to the EU would culminate my work with the President beginning with our days together as young men when I joined his Senate staff in the 1970s, to four decades later in my recent work as U.S. Ambassador to Romania during the Obama-Biden Administration.

First, I want to acknowledge my family's role in making my appearance here possible: my late parents and grandparents taught me that patriotism and my Jewish faith are the guideposts of my actions; my sisters taught me that independent, intelligent women are the light of the world; my children and grandchildren prove that our future is bright because the next generation is undaunted by the many challenges we face. Most of all, my wife, Libby – my partner and the love of my life – who still believes in me, especially at those moments when a touch on the shoulder and a word of reassurance are essential.

I grew up in Alabama and graduated from high school in Birmingham when the United States was confronting its own crisis in democracy during the 1960s. As I pursued my undergraduate degree in history from Duke, I watched with awe and pride as the civil rights movement gained its footing against Bull Connor and George Wallace. In my summers, I worked for reform-minded politicians in Alabama and in the Justice Department's Civil Rights Division, acting in my home state to

dismantle segregated schools. I came to understand in a very vivid way how a strong Constitution and civil rights protections can bring democratic and republican principles to the rule of law in a recalcitrant locale.

This experience drove my passion as Ambassador in Romania to help the EU strengthen democracy and free markets in Romania and taught me how, in 21st-century Europe, the EU continues to hold dear its founding documents and values. I know firsthand how the United States, working with multilateral and regional organizations, especially the EU, can strengthen democracy, build free markets, and act as a bulwark against autocracy. If confirmed, I promise to carry forward those values and principles both at the U.S. Mission to the EU and to the work of the EU itself.

One other aspect of my biography is also relevant. My father's family was Moldovan and Romanian, and my mother's Polish and Austrian. Going to the EU, like serving in Bucharest, is a return to my family's roots. I do so with great humility, recognizing that we have as much to learn from Europeans and the EU, as they do from us.

If confirmed, my top goal will be revitalizing and raising the level of ambition in the U.S.-EU relationship and supporting the deep and ongoing cooperation between the United States and EU at all levels, including between the Congress and the European Parliament.

I will work to advance the agenda President Biden and his EU counterparts set at the June 2021 U.S.-EU summit. This includes working together to end the COVID-19 pandemic and prepare for future global health challenges; protecting our planet and fostering green growth; strengthening our trade, investment, and technological cooperation; and building a more democratic, peaceful, and secure world. The U.S.-EU Trade and Technology Council meeting taking place tomorrow in Pittsburgh and our joint pledge earlier this month to reduce global methane emissions are two perfect examples of the kind of

values-driven, future-focused cooperation with the EU that I would prioritize as ambassador, if confirmed.

In a very real sense, both the EU and the United States are evolving, dynamic experiments in democracy. Both seek to form a “more perfect union.” While at different stages, neither side is finished with its work. I can think of no greater privilege than to be part of what President Biden calls the challenge of our generation: proving that democracy and strong independent institutions are the best form of governance. They are, indeed, the shortest and surest route to the “pursuit of happiness.”

I know from my experience in Romania that serving as ambassador is a great challenge, but also one of the best jobs in government. If confirmed, I will use that position to strengthen U.S.-EU relations and support the Administration’s foreign policy in the interests of the American people.

Thank you, and I look forward to answering your questions.