For state officials, knowing what lies around the corner is half the challenge, and the CSG Policy & Research team is committed to providing key insights and analysis on emerging issues the policy spectrum to state officials. Each year, CSG policy experts take a look at the top issues facing states across in education, energy and environment, fiscal and economic development, federal affairs, health, international affairs, interstate compacts, transportation and infrastructure, and workforce development.

Here’s a look at the most important topics on states’ international affairs agendas in 2017.

» **Macroeconomic Impacts of Policy**
In its *General Assessment of the Macroeconomic Situation*, the Organization for Economic Cooperation and Development, or OECD, warned that “worsening protectionism and the threat of trade retaliation could offset much of the (president’s proposed) fiscal initiatives’ impact on domestic and global growth.” Overall, the OECD estimates that President Donald Trump’s proposed stimulus plans could boost the United States’ gross domestic product by around 4 percent in 2017 and 8 percent in 2018 through infrastructure investment and tax and regulatory reform, a promising sign for state revenues. Rising national and global GDP would have similar positive impacts on state tax revenue and budgets. But this potential growth could be upset by protectionist macroeconomic policy, which could disrupt global trade, supply chains, services and stability.

» **Trade**
2017 will be a critical year for shaping the future of global trade. The U.K. will negotiate its departure from the EU, Trump has promised to renegotiate NAFTA as well as take actions in response to Chinese currency manipulation, and China is set to push the Regional Comprehensive Economic Partnership agreement across Asia in the vacuum left by the Trans-Pacific Partnership, or TPP. These issues will shape state efforts to grow their economies through trade and the development of the new state-federal coordination plans on trade promotion.

» **National Security**
One of the critical areas where international and state policies intersect is national security. This ranges from providing state services and support to citizens deployed abroad in the armed services and their families at home to protecting against cyberattacks that not only impact critical infrastructure but also state records and personally identifiable information. Another area that could significantly impact states is a potential round of military base realignment and closure, or BRAC. While this has not happened since 2005, the new presidential administration’s proposed spending plans and tax cuts could necessitate a new round of BRAC.

» **Global Conflicts**
While global conflicts may seem distant to state policy, they often have significant impacts on the states. As conflicts around the world continue, or come to a conclusion, states also will see changes in the arrival of refugees, the establishment of friendly democracies with which to engage, or the emergence of failed states that can become breeding grounds for security threats. In addition to the commonly discussed conflicts in the Middle East and Eurasia, states bear significant social and security impacts from the drug wars raging in Central and South America.

» **Global Health**
As state health officials have seen over the past decades, new global health challenges are emerging constantly. While 2016 marked the final containment of the West African Ebola outbreak, it also brought the new threat of the Zika virus to North and South America. In 2017, states will likely find the emergence of new, or resurgence of old, health threats, which will require effective collaboration with national and international partners to combat.

Andy Karellas leads The Council of State Governments’ efforts in monitoring federal and international activity and advocating the interests of states to members of Congress, federal agencies, nongovernmental agencies and other stakeholders. He directs the CSG Intergovernmental Affairs Committee, the International Committee and the CSG Legal Task Force, which monitors the activities of the U.S. Supreme Court. Prior to joining CSG, Karellas served as a senior staffer with the House Small Business Committee, focusing on international trade and technology issues. He has also worked as deputy director of government affairs for Aon Corporation in Chicago and as the special assistant to U.S. Commerce Secretary Carlos Gutierrez.

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Get Involved

CSG’s International program adds value to CSG’s public policy work by providing a global context, comparing and exploring innovative policies from around the world to help tackle issues at home. The program is also a CSG service and training initiative providing state leaders a variety of opportunities to share experience and learn from international counterparts.

With the CSG affiliate, the State International Development Organizations, or SIDO, CSG works directly with the 50 state trade agencies to share best practices and advocate for robust state international trade programs and efficient coordination with the federal government on trade.

The CSG International Committee is co-chaired by Nevada state Sen. Moises Denis and Alaska state Sen. Gary Stevens. The committee vice chairman is Manny Mencia, president of SIDO and senior vice president for Enterprise Florida, a public-private partnership that serves as the state’s economic development organization. The committee oversees CSG International program activity and assists in promoting an international focus through a variety of workshops and training events at CSG meetings.