Charity founded by Liam Fox closes after intervention by Charity Commission

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The charity The Atlantic Bridge, which was founded by defence secretary Liam Fox, has decided to close after being told last year by the Charity Commission to cease its activities because it was "promoting a political policy [that] is closely associated with the Conservative Party".

The charity, whose objectives included furthering public education and research on relations between Europe and North America, was wound up on 23 September and removed from the register of charities on 30 September.

Fox founded the charity in 1997, but stood down as a trustee once he became defence secretary in May 2010. Members of its advisory board have included the Chancellor George Osborne, the Foreign Secretary William Hague, employment minister Chris Grayling and five US Republican senators and congressmen.

A Charity Commission report into Atlantic Bridge, published in July 2010, said the charity's "current activities must cease immediately" because they did not advance its charitable purposes.

The report said Atlantic Bridge could continue to operate as a charity so long as its future activities did not promote a political point of view.

A spokeswoman for the Charity Commission said the trustees had decided the charity could no longer continue to operate. She said it had transferred its remaining charitable funds to another charity that had "compatible charitable objects".

The commission's 2010 report said that, in practice, the charity's activities promoted the 'special relationship' between the UK and the US that was established when Margaret Thatcher and Ronald Reagan were in power.

These activities included a lecture programme called the Margaret Thatcher Series, which discussed Thatcher's personal contribution to the 'special relationship' and said the relationship should be strengthened and promoted, the report said.

"This suggests that the activities of the charity are promoting a political policy [that] is closely associated with the Conservative Party," it said.