Resolution on the forthcoming EU-US Summit (Ljubljana, 9-10 June 2008)

2008/2530(RSP) - 05/06/2008 - Text adopted by Parliament, topical subjects

Following the debate in plenary on 4 June 2008, the European Parliament adopted a resolution on the forthcoming EU-US Summit (Ljubljana, 9-10 June 2008). The resolution had been tabled for consideration in plenary by the EPP-ED, PES, ALDE, Greens/EFA and UEN.

General approach to transatlantic relations: in the light of the forthcoming US presidential election, the Parliament looks forward to working with the new US President, and hopes for a strengthened US commitment to multilateralism and to peace and democracy worldwide. It believes that the partnership between the EU and the United States on sensitive issues, such as the global challenges of poverty and climate change, needs to be reinforced. MEPs are aware that transatlantic differences of approach still persist on some subjects, such as the International Criminal Court (ICC), methods applied in the fight against terrorism and the Kyoto Protocol to the UN Framework Convention on Climate Change. They hope that the next President of the United States engages his Administration in solving these problems.

Climate change: the Parliament strongly encourages both partners to agree on a joint approach to limit climate change to a maximum temperature increase of 2°C over pre-industrialised levels. MEPs urge the United States to do its utmost to wrap up work on its domestic climate legislation by the December 2009 UN conference in Copenhagen. They also invite the United States to persist in its efforts to establish a carbon trading system that could be linked with the EU Emissions Trading Scheme (EU ETS) in the future. They welcome, therefore, the provision in the EU ETS draft proposals to allow linking up to other mandatory cap-and-trade systems, including sub-national systems.

Terrorism and human rights: the Parliament is concerned that the very existence of the Guantánamo Bay detention centre and the practice of arbitrary arrests and extraordinary renditions continues to send out a negative signal as to how the fight against terrorism is being pursued. The Parliament urges the Council to issue a clear and forceful declaration calling on the US Government to put an end to the practice of arbitrary arrests and extraordinary renditions. The US Government is requested to try or release the remaining detainees and to resettle and compensate them, and to give clarifications regarding the existence of secret prisons outside US territory. The Parliament reiterates its call on the Council and the Commission to finally implement the recommendations addressed to them by its Temporary Committee on the Alleged use of European countries by the CIA for the transport and illegal detention of prisoners.

The resolution calls on the United States to immediately lift the visa regime and to treat all citizens of EU Member States equally, on the basis of full reciprocity. It welcomes the start of EU-US talks to establish a visa-free regime. These negotiations must be transparent and respect EU data protection provisions. MEPs welcome the recognition by the United States of the European Community's competence to negotiate such an agreement. They note that, matters falling within EU competence, such as security-related matters (including exchange of PNR data, extradition and legal mutual assistance), should be negotiated with the Council, and with Member States only insofar as they relate to their own nationals. MEPs stress the importance of respecting fundamental rights and the rule of law in the fight against terrorism and organised crime, and urge the Commission to inform the Parliament of progress made in the negotiation of a Euro-Atlantic cooperation framework. The EU and the US government are called to launch an initiative within the UN in order to reform the existing practice of sanctions lists.

Nuclear proliferation, missile defence, arms control and NATO: the Parliament reiterates its full support for the United Nations Security Council (UNSC) resolutions on Iran and calls on the EU and the

United States to agree on a common strategy that would convince Teheran to abide by the UNSC resolutions. It calls on the United States, following its diplomatic success in the negotiations with North Korea, to participate directly in negotiations with Iran along with the EU. It also stresses the importance of cooperation with the United States, Russia, China and non-aligned countries with a view to considering complementary ideas aimed at achieving a comprehensive agreement with Iran on its nuclear facilities and their use.

The resolution stresses the need for closer cooperation between the EU and the United State s in combating terrorism and the proliferation of weapons of mass destruction and for both sides to support the role that the UN must play in these areas. It urges the Council to discuss with its US counterparts how to make a positive approach to future NPT Preparatory Committees, as a first opportunity to strengthen the global non-nuclear proliferation regime in the run-up to the NPT Review Conference in 2010. MEPs are of the view that the US plan to establish an anti-missile system in Europe at this time may hamper international disarmament efforts. They also express concern over Russia's decision to suspend the observance of its obligations under the Treaty on Conventional Armed Forces in Europe. MEPs stress that both issues affect the security of the peoples of Europe and should therefore not be the subject of purely bilateral discussions between the US and individual European countries.

Development cooperation and food prices: the Parliament calls for increased emergency aid to address the immediate threat to the world's poorest people posed by higher food prices. It recognises, however, that money is not enough and therefore calls on the Council, the Commission and the US Congress and Administration to address structural problems such as under-investment in agriculture. It calls for a coordinated global approach by the EU, the United States and multilateral organisations, which should include fairer trade rules and increased investment in agriculture in developing countries, focused on small-scale producers and women. MEPs call on the EU and the United States to make the MDGs the heart of international development policy. They urge the Council, the Commission, the Member States and the United States to scale up their assistance to developing countries in order to maintain the credibility of their commitments to increase aid. They also urge the US government to increase its funding for the United Nations Population Fund (UNFPA).

International relations: the Parliament underlines that the resolution of the Israeli-Palestinian conflict is crucial to securing peace and stability in the Middle East: it reiterates its call on Israel to freeze all settlement activities and calls for an immediate end to the firing of rockets by Palestinian militias from the Gaza Strip into Israeli territory. MEPs also underline that Euro-Atlantic and wider international security is closely tied to Afghanistan's future. They call on the Council to engage in a dialogue with the United States about Iraq and to continue supporting the enhanced multilateralisation of the role played by the international community in Iraq. They also believe that the EU and the United States must urgently deal with short-term challenges of security and longer-term challenges of Kosovo's development.

Lastly, the Parliament recommends that steps be taken to strengthen transatlantic relations with the United States through a new Transatlantic Partnership Agreement replacing the currently existing New Transatlantic Agenda (NTA). It suggests, in this regard, the establishment of a regular review mechanism for such a Transatlantic Partnership Agreement, whereby experts from the EU and the United States strive constantly to improve the Transatlantic Partnership so as to exploit its full potential.