Europe and the United States US: the way forward

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The report by Dominique SOUCHET (I-EN, F) was adopted at a meeting of the Committee. The report says that the strengthening of relations between Europe and the United States remains crucial to the stability of the international community but that this must be preceded by a "rebalancing" of relations in order to create a genuine partnership. With this in mind, the rapporteur advocates the development of joint initiatives in the international sphere, provided that they respect the balance between the partners and that, in particular, the European Union and the Member States are not involved in them solely as paymasters. The report also calls for greater Euro-American cooperation over the management of crisis situations and the deployment of peacekeeping forces in sensitive areas. In addition, says the committee, there is a need for dialogue and cooperation to be strengthened and deepened in a number of priority areas which constitute new challenges to international stability, in particular the fight against terrorism and large-scale organized crime, trafficking in drugs and fissile material, trade in human beings and the sexual exploitation of children, global environmental issues and illegal immigration. On the subject of trade relations, the report calls on the Commission to defend European interests clearly and vigilantly, taking care above all, when negotiating with the United States, to ensure strict reciprocity of concessions as well as "symmetry" in the granting of advantages. Noting the recent increase in trade disputes between Europe and the United States, it condemns the desire to give extraterritorial application to certain domestic US legislation, such as the Helms-Burton and Amato-Kennedy Acts, and emphasises the need for Europeans, following the example of the Americans, to have a legal mechanism which permits the use of credible threats of reprisals - the aim being to reach compromises which genuinely take account of European concerns and interests. However, the report acknowledges the importance of preventing Euro-American crises and urges the competent bodies within the European Parliament, the national parliaments of the Member States and the American Congress to work towards this end by making the most of the various channels of communication and opportunities for meeting available to them. Lastly, the committee welcomes the conclusion of the agreements concerning the New Transatlantic Agenda and the Joint Action Plan. It hopes that these two institutional frameworks will allow the development of wider cooperation and deeper dialogue between Europeans and Americans and contribute to the renewal of the transatlantic link, which must continue to make an important contribution to peace and international stability.