EU/USA relations: reinforcing the transatlantic cooperation, strategy and results

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The committee adopted the report by James ELLES (EPP-ED, UK) on the Commission communication. While stressing the historical contribution of the transatlantic partnership to the democratic values and stability of the EU, the report said that this partnership and its fundamental texts had not evolved since the 1995 New Transatlantic Agenda, which had become largely a 'bureaucratic inter-administration exercise' rather than an instrument for political leadership. During this period the EU had undergone considerable change, the European Parliament had acquired extra powers and the international scene had been thrown into turmoil by the events of 11 September. MEPs deplored the US trend towards unilateralism and, in some cases, disengagement from many of the world's problems and called for transatlantic ties to be strengthened, on equal terms, in all areas where the two sides share common interests and values. The committee reaffirmed the key role of NATO as the guarantor of Euro-Atlantic stability and security and said that increased transatlantic cooperation would make a decisive contribution towards resolving major international crises. However, the EU must be prepared to take courageous steps towards a more strongly integrated ESDP. The USA, for its part, should encourage technological cooperation and open up its defence procurement markets. However, the committee stressed that, despite terrorism, the world's problems could not be solved by purely military means and added that the emphasis must shift from collective defence to collective security. Concerned at the very different approaches on the two sides of the Atlantic to this issue, MEPs called for closer transatlantic dialogue on the non-political causes of insecurity, in the belief that the economic and environmental causes as well as those relating to international justice must also be given priority. The committee also wanted to see institutionalised or negotiated multilateral arms controls. The report made a number of suggestions for a renewed transatlantic partnership for the third millennium, such as streamlining transatlantic discussions as well as increased involvement of parliaments, including a fresh impetus for the Transatlantic Legislators' Dialogue.