Economic relations EU/USA: the new transatlantic marketplace NTM

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OBJECTIVE: presentation of a new strategy to achieve partnership between the European Union and the United States or a new transatlantic marketplace based on the elimination of technical obstacles to trade. SUBSTANCE: the Commission communication seeks to show that further possibilities exist for developing the partnership between the United States and Europe over and above those contained in the new transatlantic agenda of 1995 (COS0304). Major problems still exist in the form of barriers to trade and investment, especially with regard to regulations and standards. In the Commission's view, these non-tariff barriers constitute a major obstacle to the development of trade between those concerned and are a source of constant friction over and above traditional trade disputes. For this reason, the Commission proposes a further set of measures to facilitate trade in goods and services between the European Union and the United States in the form of a New Transatlantic Marketplace (NTM) which would make it possible to prevent numerous bilateral conflicts which are harmful to both sides in both economic and political terms while ensuring a high level of environmental and public health protection as already achieved in Europe. The NTM which takes the form of a single overall agreement should meet the following requirements: - it should address the real barriers to EU/US trade and investment; - it should bring economic benefit to the EU and the US commensurate with the effort involved; - it should not damage European objectives in the future multinational negotiations within the WTO; - it should not lead to the creation of new trade obstacles to third countries or reduce their access to US markets; - it should capture political interest but be technically achievable; - it should be consistent with and should not jeopardize the agreed multilateral rules of the WTO and other international fora (OECD, WIPO etc.); - it should enhance the political relationship between the parties concerned; - it should benefit consumers and preserve a high level of protection of public health and consumer safety, - it should not impede the further development of the Community acquis. In addition, any proposal in this area should serve to stimulate further multilateral liberalization both through the adoption of approved bilateral liberalization measures and a firmer set of rules which could subsequently be extended to other partners. the NTM should also focus on bilateral obstacles which cannot be resolved within a multilateral framework. The NTM has four major objectives 1. A widespread removal of technical barriers to trade in goods through an extensive process of mutual recognition and/or harmonization, promoting both consumer and business interests. 2. A political commitment to eliminate by 2010 all industrial tariffs on a most-favoured-nation basis provided that a critical mass of other trading partners do the same. 3. A free trade area in services bearing in mind the criteria and requirements established by the Council. 4. Liberalization beyond multilateral or plurilateral agreements in areas of government procurement, intellectual property and investment. Bilateral cooperation should also be sought in areas such as trade facilitation, customs procedure simplification, SME partnerships and sustainable development and the environment.