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

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The European Parliament adopted a resolution on the Transatlantic relationship, drafted by James ELLES (EPP-ED, United Kingdom). (Please refer to the document dated 23/04/02.) Parliament acknowledged the depth of emotions caused by the events on September 11, but stated that the attacks had nothing to do with either the so-called clash of civilisations nor with a single act of terrorism, but rather with a conflict aimed at undermining open societies, which makes it indispensable to reinforce ties between the EU and US. International terrorism must be combated not only by military means but by addressing the roots of the tremendous political, social, economic and ecological problems of today's world. Parliament notes the importance of the concept of linkage, whereby aspects of economic, political and security policy are tied closely together. Closer institutional relations between NATO and the EU are needed in order to make them both stronger. Parliament expressed its concern about the very different approaches to the issue of collective security that seem to exist on both sides of the Atlantic. Priority must be given to important security topics such as non-proliferation of weapons of mass-destruction, missile defence systems and the role of the UN, and the Security Council in particular. The strongest terms were use to express Parliament's disapproval of the USA's unsigning of the Treaty establishing the International Criminal Court. Members noted the dramatic difference in "value for money" between EU defence spending and that of the US. This can only be overcome by courageous steps in the field of arms procurement. Balanced cooperation between the EU and the USA in the field of external relations is vital to solve the major conflicts in the world. Parliament welcomes the positive results of joint post-war actions in the Balkans. The Israel-Palestine conflict does require an active approach of both translantic partners working closely together. On economic and trade relations, Parliament strongly condemned the unilateral measures taken by the US in the case of steel, as well as the recent decision to approve a huge increase in agricultural subsidies in breach of the commitments made at Doha in 2001. This action will undermine WTO negotiations, with appalling consequences for world trade and for sustainable development and export prospects for developing countries. A number of suggestions are made for an update of the TEP. There are suggestions for a renewed transatlantic partnership, where the pursuit of common global interests act as the central defining political purpose of the transatlantic partnership. Finally, Parliament calls for an end to the embargo against Cuba, and the rescinding of the extra-territorial "Helms-Burton" law.