Resolution on a EU/United States renewed transatlantic relationship for the third millennium

2003/2551(RSP) - 19/06/2003 - Text adopted by Parliament, topical subjects

Parliament adopted a resolution with 303 votes in favour, 109 against and 47 abstentions on a renewed transatlantic relationship for the third millennium. It stressed that a strong Europe is a precondition for a well-balanced partnership based on equality, and asked for a comprehensive European Strategy which includes a long-term strategic focus for the Transatlantic partnership. The issue-by-issue approach can only be successful if an overall framework is embedded in this strategy. The experiences of the last decade show that under the existing mechanisms new questions arise faster than old ones are solved. Parliament stated that the EU would only be recognised as a partner if it can accompany its economic strength with a real CFSP. This requires the extension of QMV (qualified majority voting) in the Council to services in external trade and the field of the Foreign and Security Policy, the establishment of a European common diplomatic service, enhanced co-operation in defence policy and stronger and more efficient use of military capabilities. Parliament expressed concern that the EU-US partnership could be undermined, on the one hand, by the apparently growing influence of those neo-conservative currents in US politics which emphasise unilateral, and often military, solutions to global problems at the expense of the traditions of more than 50 years of US internationalism and multilateralism, and, on the other, by the political and the military weakness of the EU and most of its Member States. Parliament pointed to the inability of Member States to follow up the common position arrived at by the Greek Presidency with regard to the Iraq conflict, despite the overwhelming non-belligerent will of European public opinion: this has ruthlessly exposed the EU's shortcomings. The transatlantic partnership must actively strengthen the international institutions and reaffirm the value of international law. All partners should avoid unilateral approaches and to revert to multilateralism and to the United Nations framework in order to develop global governance. Parliament stressed the importance of an Action Plan for the Fight against Terrorism, not only by military means but, by a civilian approach in the framework of conflict prevention and by addressing the roots of the tremendous political, social, economic and environmental problems of today. It emphasised that security is an all-encompassing collective concept that cannot be tailored only to the interests and exigencies of one country. The fight against terrorism cannot be waged at the expense of basic shared values such as respect for human rights and civil liberties. Transatlantic agreements on police and judicial cooperation must ensure a fair trial for all European citizens and full respect for data protection in the context of both police cooperation and requests for air passenger information. Parliament went on to welcome the common action for a sustainable peace in the Middle East in the framework of the Quartet, and stressed the positive results achieved in the field of external action when a common approach and effective action are developed. It regretted that in recent years, the potential differences between the EU and the US have grown to encompass trade, economic and environmental issues, increasing divergences in foreign policy, and on the balance between security and liberty, and,particularly, the International Criminal Court. Parliament also regretted that the US has not acceded to major international instruments such as those protecting the rights of the child, abolishing the death penalty, and safeguarding the treatment of prisoners of war in the wake of the recent conflicts. It urged the US to accede to the Statute of the International Criminal Court. On trade matters, Parliament recommended a continuous initiative designed to accelerate the implementation of WTO rulings which could lead to the completion of a transatlantic market. Whilst it welcomed recent commitments made on the UN Global Fund against AIDS, TB and Malaria, it called for increased development aid and strategies to meet the 0.7 per cent UN target and UN Millennium Development Targets. It also called for an absolute commitment to meeting the just demands of developing countries in the current WTO negotiations, including a joint commitment to ending agricultural protectionism against developing-country producers. It agreed with the Commission that the US complaint to the WTO about the EU's authorisation procedures for GMOs is legally unwarranted, economically unfounded and politically unhelpful. On defence matters, Parliament stated that the European Security Strategy should take into account the US national security strategy, paying

particular attention to the Union's position on issues which the U.S. seems to interpret differently. The two major points are the legitimacy of the use of military force in the absence of a UN mandate and the concept of pre-emptive strikes. Finally, Parliament felt that only the wider involvement at all levels of the Congress, the European Parliament and national parliaments will make it possible truly to enhance the whole process. The Transatlantic Legislators' Dialogue (TLD) should be fully activated.