EU/United States Air Transport Agreement

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The Council was informed by Vice-President Barrot of the latest state of play regarding the negotiations on the Air Transport Agreement with the US, following a delay in the adoption of the rules on control of US airlines.

The Council referred to the results of the EU-US Transatlantic Summit in Vienna on 21 June 2006, after the last meeting of the Transport Council on 9 June, where EU and US leaders agreed to redouble their efforts to conclude a first-stage Air Transport Agreement by the end of 2006.

The Council underlined the importance it attached to the conclusion of an historic EU-US air transport agreement. It reaffirmed its unanimous satisfaction with the text of the draft agreement negotiated in November 2005 but regretted the further delay in the US reform on control of U.S. air carriers, which it considered an essential element before proceeding with the agreement. The results must be absolutely clear, meaningful and robust.

Several delegations expressed particular concerns regarding the implications of this delay and that the existing agreements do not ensure a level playing field.

The Council requested the Commission to continue its efforts, on the basis of further contacts with the United States, to secure a satisfactory and balanced outcome with the necessary safeguards, including the transitional provisions, in preparation for the December Council and in accordance with the EU-US Summit conclusions.