

62nd Meeting of the Transatlantic Legislators' Dialogue
European Parliament - United States Congress
Interparliamentary Meeting
Charleston, 1-3 December 2006

Joint Statement

We, Members of the European Parliament and the United States House of Representatives held our 62nd interparliamentary meeting (Transatlantic Legislators' Dialogue) in Charleston, South Carolina on 1-3 December, 2006.

Building on the joint statement issued following our last meeting in Vienna, on 18-21 April 2006, we stressed importance of regular dialogue, which affords an opportunity for engaging in constructive discussion of a range of political, social and economic issues.

We agreed to report back to our parent bodies the content of our discussions, particularly in the areas where joint efforts by both sides are likely to result in positive action.

We examined a wide array of issues of common interest, including the situation in the Middle East, Iraq and Afghanistan, international terrorism, the nuclear programs of Iran and North Korea and the future of Kosovo, as well as immigration and the integration of minorities.

We agreed to work together to develop pragmatic, forward-looking solutions to the situation in Iraq and Afghanistan based on realities on the ground and within the region.

We stressed the importance of Russia as a partner in achieving peace and stability in the world, but at the same time expressed deep concern over anti-democratic developments under the Putin government. Particular concern was noted about the lack of freedom of the media and freedom of expression. We also condemned the murders of journalists and opponents of the regime in recent years. We call for a thorough investigation of the murders of Anna Politkovskaya and Aleksandr Litvinenko by the appropriate Russian and European authorities.

We were encouraged to learn about President Bush's plans to propose a reform to the Visa Waiver Program which would strengthen security measures and facilitate inclusion of new countries in the Program.

We also:

1. heard a briefing on Project Seahawk, a five-year pilot program to enhance maritime and intermodal security for Charleston and other South Carolina ports; the briefers stressed the importance of applying the unified command and

- innovative information-sharing procedures to other ports both in the United States and Europe;
2. held a “TLD Workshop” on energy security, with the participation of experts, and discussed strategies and opportunities for developing alternative and renewable energies in a sustainable framework, and diversifying supply sources.

In order to promote understanding and closer ties between the peoples of the United States and the European Union, we support the Bilateral Agreement on Cooperation on Higher Education and Vocational Education and Training that was renewed at the 2006 EU-US Summit. We call for required funding for this initiative in 2007 by both sides.

We expressed our commitment to a multilateral rules-based international trade system. In view of the current window of opportunity to rescue the multilateral trade talks, we agreed that an ambitious and comprehensive Doha Round is the appropriate place to exercise common leadership.

We discussed the bilateral economic agenda and expressed our satisfaction over the successful resolution of some key long-standing trade disputes in 2006. However, we stressed the need to avoid complacency since much work remains to realize the vision of a Barrier-Free Transatlantic Market that spurs innovation, growth and employment.

We reviewed the Economic Initiative to Enhance Transatlantic Economic Integration and Growth and noted the need for greater progress in moving forward transatlantic economic cooperation. This is particularly important in the areas of regulatory cooperation, investment, intellectual property rights enforcement, capital markets, energy, as well as trade and security. We also stressed the need for the successful conclusion of the Air Services Agreement.

The two sides renew their commitment to make their work more relevant to the United States House of Representatives and to the European Parliament. Therefore, we undertake to provide the TLD with the required resources to improve the effectiveness of our dialogue and realize the full potential of our interparliamentary relationship.

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