

Transatlantic Legislators' Dialogue
66th Meeting of Delegations
From the European Parliament and
the United States House of Representatives
Prague, 18 – 20 April 2009

Joint Statement

We, the Members of the European Parliament and the United States House of Representatives, held our 66th Interparliamentary meeting (Transatlantic Legislators' Dialogue) in Prague, Czech Republic, on 18-20 April 2009.

Building on the joint statement issued following our last meeting in Miami on 6 – 8 December 2008, we stressed the importance of regular dialogue on a range of political, social and economic issues that affect all of our citizens. We agreed to report back to our parent bodies on the content and outcome of our discussions, particularly in the areas where joint efforts are likely to result in positive outcomes.

We discussed with Czech Minister of Foreign Affairs and Council President-in-office Karel Schwarzenberg the Summit held in Prague on 5 April 2009 between President Obama and the 27 EU Heads of State and Government. We welcomed its outcome and expressed our trust that this meeting will provide a strong impetus for strengthening the transatlantic relationship and furthering a common agenda.

The Transatlantic Legislators' Dialogue agreed that we should build on this political momentum to improve and renew the framework of the transatlantic relationship. In this context, we called for greater collaboration between legislators in the US House of Representatives and the European Parliament on issues of common concern and legislation that affects each side of the Atlantic. We also expressed our intention to have increased communication between our biannual meetings, using mechanisms such as periodic video conferences and the formation of working groups to address specific topics in greater detail.

With regard to foreign policy and security issues discussed during our TLD meeting, we agreed that joint action is the most effective way to approach problems which affect both sides of the Atlantic. In particular, we considered that:

a) peace in the Middle East requires a durable ceasefire, an end to attacks on Israel from Hamas and other terrorists, a functioning and effective government in the Palestinian Territories. We also expressed our support for the appointment of George Mitchell as Special Envoy to the Middle East Peace Process;

b) the comprehensive new strategy for Afghanistan and Pakistan announced by President Obama on 27 March 2009 constitutes a good basis for a regional approach to security, combating terrorism, and economic development. The EU and the US should enhance their

cooperation and support, work to improve the coordination and effectiveness of Provincial Reconstruction Teams (PRTs), and seek to help build critical infrastructure across Afghanistan;

c) the dialogue affirmed that a nuclear armed Iran is unacceptable. We also agreed that relations with Iran should involve both incentives for Iran to build constructive ties with the international community as well as concerted pressure on Iran if it continues to fail to comply with its international obligations in the nuclear area and human rights; and

d) relations with Russia should involve constructive cooperation on challenges, threats and opportunities of mutual concern, including security matters, disarmament and non-proliferation, and respect for democratic principles including human rights standards, and adherence to international law. The dialogue expressed concerns about Russia's recent behaviour in regards to the recent conflict with Georgia and energy dispute with Ukraine. We also cited the need to enhance mutual trust between the transatlantic partners and Russia.

On energy and climate change, we stressed that the EU and the US should work together to address these issues at the UN negotiations in Copenhagen later this year. We discussed cap-and-trade systems and the feasibility of setting up mutually compatible systems. We noted the link between tackling climate change and addressing energy security and economic growth, recognizing that the fight against climate change could also be an opportunity to create new jobs and sustain economic growth.

We examined the consequences of the global economic and financial turmoil. We agreed that the crisis requires a strong and coordinated policy response by the US and the EU. Recovery plans currently being adopted are critical in mitigating the effects of the crisis: approaches chosen should be compatible, avoid protectionist measures, and not give rise to distortions of competition in the transatlantic market place. We considered that global financial regulation and supervision should be strengthened, including better crisis prevention and management, and that EU and US should cooperate on the reform of international financial institutions.

We stressed the importance of the Transatlantic Economic Council (TEC), including its utility as a framework for macro-economic cooperation between both partners. We welcomed the progress made over recent months in promoting transatlantic economic integration, including investment, accounting standards, regulatory issues, the safety of imported products, and the enforcement of intellectual property rights.

We insisted that transatlantic economic cooperation must be more accountable and transparent. In particular, the schedules of TEC meetings, agendas, roadmaps and progress reports should be agreed upon between the core stakeholders as early as possible and then made public. Such measures are crucial to developing a clear and transparent process for setting the agenda of the TEC, extending the TEC to new sectors, and establishing a long-term roadmap of activities. We called on the EU and US executive branches to facilitate more active participation by members of the US Congress and the European Parliament in the TEC process, in particular via the TLD.

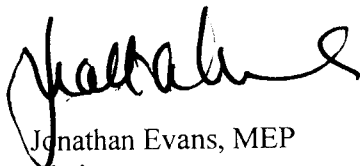
We considered that both partners should use the full potential of the TEC in order to overcome the existing obstacles to economic integration. To this effect, legislators on both sides of the Atlantic should convey their views on legislative and bureaucratic obstacles to the TEC leadership and conduct a regular review of the situation. We emphasized once more the concerns raised by the 100 percent cargo scan requirement, as well as the need to resolve remaining disputes with regard to the REACH regulation.

We discussed President Obama's signing of an executive order leading to the closure of the Guantanamo detention facility within a year. We also considered that the US and the EU Member States should cooperate in finding solutions wherever necessary, including accepting Guantanamo inmates in the European Union.

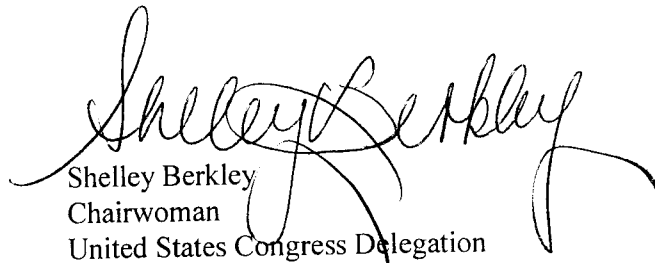
The dialogue also focused on the negotiations between the US and the EU Member States to extend access to the US visa waiver programme. We welcomed the extension of the programme to seven EU Member States, and encouraged the EU and US executive bodies to continue activities with regard to the Member States not yet included.

Finally, the dialogue took note of a 2008 European Commission report on legislation passed by the US Congress in 2006. The report found that the legislation was not in compliance with World Trade Organization policies as they apply to internet gambling. The TLD expressed strong support for ongoing discussions between the US and EU to resolve the situation in an effort to avoid potential sanctions against the US and the loss of export markets for US business sectors.

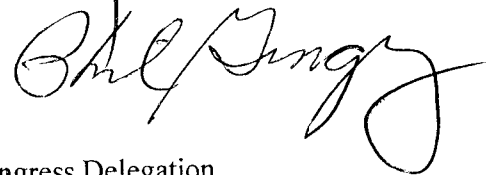
In conclusion, both sides renewed their commitment to make the TLD's work more relevant to the European Parliament and to the United States House of Representatives. We also agreed to further improve the effectiveness of our dialogue in order to realize the full potential of our interparliamentary relationship.



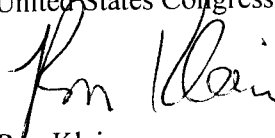
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