

EUROPEAN PARLIAMENT

DELEGATION FOR RELATIONS WITH THE UNITED STATES

(34 members)

History of the Delegation for relations with the United States

Chairpersons

2004 –	Mr Jonathan EVANS	(PPE–DE, United Kingdom)
2002 – 2004	Mr Jim NICHOLSON	(PPE–DE, United Kingdom)
1999 – 2001	Ms Imelda READ	(PSE, United Kingdom)
1998 – 1999	Mr Barry SEAL	(PSE, United Kingdom)
1992 – 1998	Mr Alan DONNELLY	(PSE, United Kingdom)
1989 – 1992	Mr Geoff HOON	(PSE, United Kingdom)
1987 – 1989	Mr Klaus HÄNSCH	(PSE, Germany)
1985 – 1987	Mr Piet DANKERT	(PSE, The Netherlands)
1979 – 1985	Ms Eva GREDAL	(PSE, Denmark)

Background

The origins of interparliamentary relations between the European Parliament and the United States Congress date back to 1972 when a US Congress delegation visited for the first time the European Parliament in Brussels and Luxembourg. This interparliamentary relationship is indeed, the longest and most intensive one in the history of the European Parliament, both before and after the direct elections of 1979.

The two delegations meet regularly twice a year in Europe and the US. Until 1995, when these meetings were held in the European Union (EU) they usually took place in the capital of the country holding the EU presidency. Since 1995, meetings in Europe have always taken place in one of the three working places of the EP until 2002, when the previous practice was again adopted.

The political groups have traditionally regarded the EP delegation as the most important delegation with the largest political group in the EP often taking the chairmanship. It is one of only three parliamentary delegations (besides those of Canada and Mexico) whose members are given the privilege of being received on the floor of the US Senate when in Washington. The EP delegation has traditionally been received at the highest levels of government, having on various occasions had meetings with the secretaries of state, defence, commerce, agriculture, environment, the US Trade representative, etc. In September 1974 the delegation was received in Washington by President FORD and in 1982 by Vice-President BUSH. In June 1993 Vice-President GORE was a special guest-speaker at a congressional dinner in honour of the delegation. In November 2002, vice-president CHENEY received the delegation in Washington.

The US Congress delegation has been accorded similar treatment, when in Europe, and in a number of countries has been received by the Head of State. For example in 1982 by Queen BEATRIX of the Netherlands, in 1988 by President KARAMANLIS of Greece, in 1986 by President HILLERY of Ireland, in 1988 by President VON WEIZSÄCKER of the Federal Republic of Germany, in 1991 by the Grand Duke Jean of Luxembourg, in 1992 by President SOARES of Portugal and in 2004 by President McALEESE of Ireland. The two delegations had also meetings in 1988 with Chancellor KOHL of the Federal Republic of Germany, in 1989 with Prime Minister ROCARD of France, in 1990 with the leader of the opposition KINNOCK of the UK, in 1991 with Prime Minister SANTER of Luxembourg, in 1992

with Prime Minister CAVACO SILVA of Portugal, in 1993 with Prime Minister PAPANDREOU of Greece, and in 2004 with Prime Minister AHERN of Ireland.

The importance of the EP/US relationship has always meant that both delegations have attracted high-ranking members of their respective legislatures. Over the years, the membership of the EP delegation has included vice-presidents of Parliament, committee chairmen, quaestors and other senior MEPs. The chairmen of numerous political groups have, at various times, joined the delegation when meeting in the United States, as did Mrs VEIL the first President of the EP in 1980. President Lord PLUMB in 1987 and President BARON CRESPO in 1990 and 1991 participated in the meetings in Europe. Similarly, the US delegation has always contained a number of high-ranking Democrats and Republicans. The past Chairman of the Congressional delegation, Benjamin GILMAN, chaired also the House International Relations Committee. The US delegation has on occasions been joined by the Speaker of the House of Representatives, as was the case with Speaker JIM WRIGHT in Madrid in 1987.

At the 50th interparliamentary meeting on 15-16 January 1999 in Strasbourg, both delegations decided to launch the Transatlantic Legislators' Dialogue (TLD), the formal response of the EP and the US Congress to the call in the New Transatlantic Agenda for enhanced parliamentary ties. The year 2000 marked the implementation of the TLD with the organisation of a first series of videoconferences that brought together legislators of the EP and the US Congress for an in-depth exchange of views on a number of topics. Since its launch a number of important issues have been addressed by video-link. An indicative list is provided below:

- "Internet and 3rd generation telecommunications"
- "Freedom of information and access to documents"
- "Priority issues for the COP6 conference on Climate Change"
- "US restrictions on steel imports"
- "Financial Services and the Sarbanes–Oxley legislation"
- "Transfer of airline data to the US (Passenger Name Record)"

These live videoconferences are expected to constitute the backbone of the TLD and provide the essence of an early warning system in addition to offering the opportunity for better understanding of mutual positions.

The 53rd interparliamentary meeting was originally scheduled to take place from 11-16 September 2001 in Washington DC and Chicago. The visit was marked by the tragic events of 11 September, which occurred on the very first day of the official programme. As it was to be expected, the meeting in Chicago with the House of Representatives was cancelled. However, in a spirit of solidarity, the delegation proposed the organisation of a scaled-down interparliamentary meeting with the House of Representatives, which took place in Washington on Thursday, 13 September.

The attacks in New York and Washington DC, highlighted the relevance of the EU-USA partnership and its unparalleled strategic and economic dimension. They also put into perspective the trade frictions, which often cloud the nature of the bilateral relationship. The overall message of support underlined the necessity of maintaining close consultations and underpinned the role the Transatlantic Legislators' Dialogue can play in this context.

Interparliamentary meetings since the first direct elections of the European Parliament in June 1979

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|---|--------------------------|---------|-----------|------|------------------------------|
| - | 58 th meeting | 02 - 06 | April | 2004 | Dublin |
| - | 57 th meeting | 12 - 16 | November | 2003 | Washington D.C./Williamsburg |
| - | 56 th meeting | 27 - 30 | June | 2003 | Rome |
| - | 55 th meeting | 11 - 17 | November | 2002 | Washington D.C./San Diego |
| - | 54 th meeting | 19 - 22 | April | 2002 | Madrid |
| - | 53 rd meeting | 11 - 16 | September | 2001 | Washington D.C. |

- 52nd meeting 19 - 23 June 2000 Washington D.C.
- 51st meeting 13 - 14 January 2000 Brussels
- 50th meeting 15 - 16 January 1999 Strasbourg.
- 49th meeting 22 - 28 June 1998 Washington D.C./Houston, Texas
- 48th meeting 16 - 17 January 1998 Brussels
- 47th meeting 21 - 26 September 1997 Washington D.C.
- 46th meeting 20 - 21 February 1997 Strasbourg
- 45th meeting 08- 12 July 1996 Washington D.C.
- 44th meeting 25 - 30 September 1995 Washington D.C.
- 42nd meeting 13 - 16 January 1994 Athens
- 41st meeting 25 June - 1 July 1993 Washington D.C./San Francisco
- 40th meeting 14 - 17 January 1993 Strasbourg
- 39th meeting 22 - 29 June 1992 Washington D.C./Palisades, N.Y.
- 38th meeting 09 - 12 January 1992 Lisbon
- 37th meeting 17 - 24 June 1991 New York City/Washington D.C./Hanover, New Hampshire
- 36th meeting 05 - 09 January 1991 Luxembourg
- 35th meeting 18 - 25 June 1990 Washington D.C./Chautauqua, N.Y.
- 34th meeting 05 - 09 January 1990 London/Derbyshire
- 33rd meeting 18 - 25 September 1989 Washington D.C./Los Angeles
- 32nd meeting 06 - 11 January 1989 Paris
- 31st meeting 20 - 27 June 1988 Washington D.C./Minneapolis, Minnesota
- 30th meeting 10 - 13 January 1988 Düsseldorf/Bonn
- 29th meeting 22 - 28 September 1987 Washington D.C./Seattle, Washington
- 28th meeting 10 - 14 April 1987 Madrid
- 27th meeting 16 - 23 June 1986 Washington D.C./Santa Fé, New Mexico
- 26th meeting 06 - 08 January 1986 Dublin
- 25th meeting 19 - 26 June 1985 Washington D.C./West Point, N.Y.
- 24th meeting 07 - 09 January 1985 Brussels
- 23rd meeting 19 - 21 January 1984 Strasbourg
- 22nd meeting 19 - 25 September 1983 Washington D.C./Hot Springs, Virginia
- 21st meeting 16 - 19 January 1983 Athens
- 20th meeting 21 - 27 June 1982 Washington D.C./San Francisco
- 19th meeting 06 - 10 January 1982 The Hague
- 18th meeting 18 - 22 May 1981 Washington D.C.
- 17th meeting 12 - 17 November 1980 Copenhagen/Strasbourg
- 16th meeting 28 Jan.- 1 February 1980 Washington D.C.