



## Transatlantic Partnership Agreement to strengthen the EU-US relationship

**An own-initiative report by Elmar Brok (EPP-ED, DE), the Chairman of the EP's on Foreign Affairs, calls for a Transatlantic Partnership Agreement to strengthen the EU-US relationship. The report passed by a large majority in plenary, and mentions both common threats and challenges, as well as several current irritants to transatlantic relations.**

The report calls for close cooperation on the Iran nuclear issue, Kosovo, energy security, and the Middle East peace process. The EP urges that "*China, Russia and Ukraine be prioritised for actions with respect to EU-US collaboration*" and "*encourages the partners to engage in further common action regarding obligations deriving from international treaties,*" such as the International Criminal Court, the Kyoto Protocol, human rights and non-proliferation treaties.

The report also does not shy away from criticisms of US policy. The European Parliament "*urges the US to extend the Visa Waiver Program to cover all EU citizens.*" *It also strongly regrets [...] the combination of mistrust due to suspected violation of human rights and international law involved in the so-called extraordinary renditions in Europe,*" and "*reiterates its call for the immediate closure of the Guantánamo detention centre.*"

On the institutional front, the House proposes the adoption of a Transatlantic Partnership Agreement by 2007, "*reiterates the need to strengthen the parliamentary dimension of the Transatlantic Partnership by transforming the Transatlantic Legislators' Dialogue (TLD) into a transatlantic assembly,*" and suggests that the EP should establish a permanent post in Washington DC to maintain permanent contact between the two bodies.

Mr Brok's report joins a related one by Erika **MANN** (PES, DE) from the Committee on International Trade, which calls for a barrier-free transatlantic market to be established by 2015, and the creation of a bilateral trade dispute settlement system.

### **A barrier-free transatlantic market by 2015**

Transatlantic trade and investment ties have never been stronger: with 57% of world GDP between them, the EU and the USA are the engine-room of the world economy. On top of their economic links, they are united by shared values and standards. The EP is calling for a barrier-free transatlantic market by 2015 and regular dialogue between the EP and the US Congress.

Ten years after the signing of the New Transatlantic Agenda (1995), an own-initiative report by Erika **MANN** (PES, DE) calls for EU-US relations to move in the direction of a new transatlantic partnership. The economic dimension of this partnership would be based on three key pillars: cooperation on regulatory issues, a set of operational cooperation tools (an early warning system, a bilateral mechanism for settling trade disputes and a third-generation agreement on the application of competition law) and sectoral economic cooperation agreements building on the Joint EU-US Work Programme.

The partnership agreement should provide for the removal of non-tariff barriers in key markets by 2015, through gradual regulatory alignment and mutual recognition of rules and standards. For financial services and capital markets, the target date for a barrier-free market would be 2010.

Although WTO disputes concern less than 2% of all trade, the report urges the European Commission to set up a mechanism for settling trade disputes in advance with the aim of exhausting all diplomatic channels before resorting to the WTO dispute settlement body. The early warning system should enable potential trade disputes to be identified at an early stage.

The EP regrets that the US Administration remains so reluctant to enter into any meaningful international partnership on climate change, but notes that it has taken a modest step forward, inasmuch as it is now willing, as agreed at the December 2005 Montreal Conference of the United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change, to engage in a thorough forward-looking dialogue; welcomes the fact that an emerging coalition of interests in the US, including Members of Congress from both Houses and both parties, State legislators, local authorities, NGOs and representatives of the business community, is pushing for a more ambitious agenda to tackle greenhouse-gas emissions".

MEPs underlines the need for enhanced EU-US scientific cooperation on biofuels and recommends that the initiative for a joint EU-US biofuels work programme that focuses specifically on second generation bioethanol be implemented as soon as possible"

### **The European Parliament's role**

MEPs want to strengthen the parliamentary dimension of EU-US summits by involving legislators from both sides. For this purpose, they call for "a meeting prior to every summit between the TLD [Transatlantic Legislative Dialogue] and the Senior-Level Group to exchange views on the progress of the Work Programme".

### **Contact :**

#### **Marjory VAN DEN BROEKE**

Press Service - Press Officer

E-mail: [foreign-press@europarl.europa.eu](mailto:foreign-press@europarl.europa.eu)

BXL: (32-2) 28 44304

PORT: (32) (0) 498 98 3586

#### **Richard FREEDMAN**

Press Service - Press Officer

E-mail: [press-EN@europarl.europa.eu](mailto:press-EN@europarl.europa.eu)

BXL: (32-2) 28 41448

STR: (33-3) 881 73785

PORT: +32(0) 498 98 32 39