



Delegation for Relations with the United States

Rescheduled 83rd EU - US Inter-Parliamentary Meeting

Transatlantic Legislators' Dialogue (TLD)

26 - 28 February 2019

Washington, DC - USA

MISSION REPORT



I. SUMMARY

The 83rd EU - US Inter-Parliamentary Meeting (IPM) of the Transatlantic Legislators' Dialogue (TLD) was rescheduled for February 2019 due to the state funeral of former US President George H. W. Bush in December 2018. In December, Members of the Parliament only held bilateral meetings at the US Senate and with Administration officials from the Departments of State and Defence and the US Trade Representative's Office.

The rescheduled TLD/IPM from 26 to 28 February 2019 was constructive and held in a very positive atmosphere. It provided the opportunity to meet and cooperate with the new TLD leadership in the House of Representatives, which showed strong commitment to the transatlantic partnership in general and the TLD in particular. This spirit and commitment were reflected in the agreed Joint Statement (attached) which called notably for de-escalation in transatlantic trade tensions.

The official lunch hosted by Nancy Pelosi, the Speaker of the House, and attended by President Tajani, also underlined the importance attached to the TLD and the legislative dimension to the transatlantic relationship on both sides of the Atlantic, and the President raised the idea that the US Congress might upgrade the status of the TLD within their system. Members also met with four Senators and held useful meetings with stakeholders, including US Administration and the National Governors Association.

II. TLD WORKING SESSIONS - HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

In two of the following sessions, the level of attendance on the US side was impacted by three high profile Congressional hearings taking place at the same time.

Session 1 on Recent political developments in the US and EU

Jim Costa (D-CA), US Co-Chair of the TLD, opened the working session and focussed on the results of the US midterm elections and the impact for the 116th Congress. He introduced the new Ranking Member, Mark Meadows (R-NC) who expressed his commitment to the TLD and welcomed the opportunity to reset EU-US relations, instead of them being driven by emotive headlines. He argued that the relationship must be strong, because many enemies want to destroy our societies. They both paid homage to character and work of the outgoing Co-Chair, Mario Diaz-Balart (R-FL).

Session 2 on Election Interference

Alina Polyakova, a Brookings Institute expert, addressed Members on the issue of increasing malign cyber-enabled interference by state and non-State actors, which was targeted at our electoral systems. She explained that there were a number of self-reinforcing parts impacting democracy: political influence attempts, attacks on electoral infrastructure and information warfare/disinformation. She commended the EU for taking many good measures, while conceding that much remained to be done.

Rep. Jim Costa confirmed that unlike the EU and EP, the US Congress has not yet been able to take measures to address the problem. There were no fixed solutions as everything was evolving. Members stressed the need for education in critical thinking. The focus had been on Russia hitherto, but there were question marks as to whether there might be a significant threat from China going forward.

Session 3 on Trade and economic cooperation

Members emphasised their commitment to a rules-based, open multilateral trading system and welcomed efforts to reform the WTO including the Dispute Settlement System. They discussed EU-US trade negotiating mandates, US section 232 steel and aluminium tariffs under the justification of national security, and the threat of imposing additional auto tariffs. INTA Chair Bernd Lange presented Parliament's draft resolution on the EU-US trade negotiating mandates and pleaded for a multilateral approach on trade because of global value chains and the need to de-escalate trade-irritants and reform the WTO.

Ron Kind (D-WI) reported that USTR Lighthizer had said that very morning that it was not his intention to undermine the WTO. He also reported on an ongoing bipartisan initiative to reclaim a greater role for Congress in the imposition of 232 tariffs. He stressed that an international coalition and united front was needed against China and wanted EU help to get credible WTO reform. While he favoured trade negotiations with the EU, he insisted that including agriculture was very important for the US. Other members stressed the importance of joint standard setting and the damaging impact of tariffs. Members appreciated hearing so many American Representatives express their commitment to international institutions.

Session 4 on Cooperation in Foreign Affairs and Security policy - with a focus on Russia, the INF treaty, Venezuela and Afghanistan

US Democrats underlined the inconsistency of US policy on Iran and North Korea. They pleaded for repairing the JCPOA and criticised the talks with North Korea. Rep Sheila Jackson-Lee (D-TX) said that the US and EU needed to work together more, including on Russia and Venezuela. On the latter, Democrat Congress Members also pleaded for an international coalition and against a military intervention.

Official working lunch hosted by US Congress Keynote speaker: Nancy Pelosi, Speaker of the US House of Representatives and Antonio Tajani, President of the European Parliament

During lunch, both President Tajani and Speaker Pelosi expressed their strong commitment to transatlantic relations. Speaker Pelosi highlighted climate change and the need to combat resurgent antisemitism as major priorities and underlined the value of inter-parliamentary dialogue. She also argued that the fact that no fewer than 50 Members of Congress had attended the Munich Security Conference earlier in the year, showed the interest and commitment of this Congress to Europe.

III. MEETINGS WITH UNITED STATES SENATORS

Meetings with senior US Senators have become a regular fixture of the TLD meetings in Washington and are important to ensure that both chambers of the Congress are deeply involved in transatlantic legislative dialogue.

The Delegation was welcomed by **Senator Ron Johnson (R-WI)**, chairman of the Homeland Security committee and of the Foreign Relations Europe subcommittee. The Senator stressed the need to stand up and stand together for our values. He said that US leadership was indispensable, but it needed allies. He had faith in the checks and balances in the US political system, and pleaded for an active role for Congress in foreign policy and gave the example of pushing back on Syria which had led to a change of Administration policy.

The Senator pleaded for an evaluation of the effectiveness of the various existing sanctions in place on Russia, before imposing new ones. Sanctions should squeeze Putin, not US allies, he said. He welcomed increased NATO efforts from Europe and said Europe needed to be able to defend itself and participate in coalitions of the willing. He stated that while he is a free trader, he was cautious on China, which does not share our values, and has in effect been stealing western technology.

Senator Ben Cardin (D-MD) underlined that Democrats and Republicans broadly agree on transatlantic relations and NATO, but the latter see less urgency regarding the undermining of democracy. Democrats are critical of the tactics of President Trump in various areas, such as in relation to North Korea (still no transparency after two summits), President Duterte of the Philippines, NATO policy and its commitment to Montenegro, and the JCPOA with Iran. Sen. Cardin was confident that the US would remain involved in climate change talks and that US business would implement the Paris agreement.

Senator John Boozman (R-AK), who comes from a strong agriculture trading state, said he definitely favoured negotiations with EU, but he was worried that Europe was not ready to negotiate on the difficult agriculture aspects.

Senator Bob Menendez (D-NJ), who has been working on foreign policy in Congress for 27 years, criticised China for speaking of multilateralism, but not respecting it, and said that Russia had repeatedly violated the international order. He was also critical of the national security based trade tariffs against both the EU and Canada. He criticised some EU Member States (without listing them) for backsliding on democratic standards. The EU and US needed to address their own internal issues to be stronger vis-a-vis third countries. He also disapproved of the Administration's policy on North Korea. He favoured recognising Mr Guaido under the present constitution in Venezuela and stressed Cuban security interference in support of Mr Maduro.

IV. MEETINGS WITH THE ADMINISTRATION AND OTHER STAKEHOLDERS

Meeting with Ms. Abigail Slater, Special Assistant to the President for Economic Policy, in charge of digital issues

Members discussed the digital economy, e-commerce and data privacy with Ms Slater. She acknowledged that the US framework for e-commerce and data privacy were outdated, that GDPR was becoming the global standard, and that the EU was much further along on various issues. On regulating privacy, she explained there was still a question of who did the regulation, and noted that Facebook was attempting to self-regulate. Members asked what actions would be taken regarding monopolies of data, and whether the EU and the US should not cooperate more in this field.

State Department meeting with DAS Michael Murphy (Security, NATO, Arms Control) and DAS Julie Fischer (EU)

Members had a frank discussion with DAS Murphy and DAS Fischer. The State Department officials spoke about a new era of great power competition, in which Europe needed to make its fair contribution to NATO. They insisted that the world was not more dangerous because of US withdrawal from INF, but because of Russian systematic violations of INF. They also argued for EU Member States to live up to their commitments and buy the right defence capabilities and ensure proper readiness.

Meetings at the Office of the USTR with Dan Mullaney, Assistant US Trade Representative for Europe and the Middle East

Discussions with Mr Mullaney focussed on the ongoing draft USTR and EU trade negotiating mandates and their divergences and the impact of the existing steel/aluminium tariffs and possible car tariffs on the trade talks. There were also discussions on the EU and US concerns on the functioning of the WTO and its Dispute Settlement System, including the Appellate Body.

Meetings at the National Governors Association (NGA) with CEO Scott Pattison

In the meeting with Mr Pattison, Members were informed of the importance of Governors in promoting trade and investment, in the implementation of trade agreements and in influencing federal policies behind the scenes. Governors wanted to become more active internationally, through the NGA Global programme and notably through missions to Brussels in 2019.

Meetings at CSIS - The Centre for Strategic and International Studies with Heather A. Conley, Senior Vice-President for Europe and other experts on “Transatlantic challenges and a resurgent Russia”

At the Centre for Strategic and International Studies, discussions focused on Russia and the challenge it poses to Europe and the US. The main messages were that: Russia was playing a disruptive role but could bring about some solutions; that Russia did not create divisions, but amplified them; that we should not focus solely on Russia, but on the weaknesses of our system; and that for some crises, Russian buy-in was needed to find political solutions, but that the different views on sovereignty and territorial integrity complicated matters.

Lunch event at the Bipartisan Policy Centre John C. Fortier, Director of the Democracy Project, other BPC fellows, and Mark Strand, President of the Congressional Institute

During this public diplomacy event, Members discussed with representatives from the Bipartisan Policy Center and the Congressional Institute about the changes in the American political landscape after the Midterms and looked ahead to the 2020 Presidential elections.

In addition, Members received a comprehensive briefing by **David O'Sullivan, EU Ambassador to the US** and staff members from the EU Delegation's trade section. They also attended a reception with the **Congressional EU Caucus** organised by the **Transatlantic Policy Network** and the EP Liaison Office in Washington, DC.

V. PARTICIPANTS AND FOLLOW-UP

Co-Chairs: Christian EHLER (EPP, DE) and Jim COSTA (D, CA)

MEPs: Christian EHLER (EPP, DE), Laima Liucija ANDRIKIENE (EPP, LT), Elisabetta GARDINI, (EPP, IT), Danuta HÜBNER (EPP, PL), Godelieve QUISTHOUDT-ROWOHL (EPP, DE), Dubravka ŠUICA (EPP, HR), Eugen FREUND (S&D, AT), Ana Maria GOMES (S&D, PT), Daniel DALTON (ECR, UK), Marietje SCHAAKE (ALDE, NL), Helmut SCHOLZ (GUE, DE), Gerolf ANNEMANS (ENF, BE), Bernd LANGE (S&D, DE) and Ioan Mircea PA CU (S&D, RO).

Republican Reps.: Mark MEADOWS (NC), Mario DIAZ-BALART (FL), Scott PERRY (PA) and Jackie WALORSKI (IN).

Democrat Reps.: Jim COSTA (CA), Nancy PELOSI (CA), RUPPERSBERGER (MD), TJ COX (CA), Henry CUELLAR (TX), Ron KIND (WI), Sheila JACKSON-LEE (TX), Gregory MEEKS (NY), David PRICE (NC), Jan SCHAKOWSKY (IL) and William KEATING (MA).

Follow-up

The US side suggested that the 84th TLD/IPM be held in late autumn in Helsinki, Finland during the Finnish Presidency of the EU. This will need to be confirmed once the new Parliament and US Delegation have been constituted following the European Elections.

ANNEXES

-Programme

- List of EP Participants

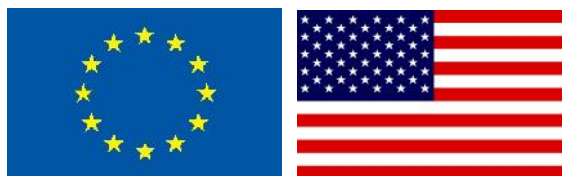
- Joint Statement

PROGRAMME

Delegation for relations with the United States

83rd EU-US INTER-PARLIAMENTARY / TLD MEETING

26 - 28 February 2019
Washington DC



Tuesday, 26 February 2019

08.15-09.30	Briefing with David O’Sullivan, EU Ambassador, followed by Ms Esther Nieto Hernandez, EU Delegation’s trade section
10.00-11.00	Meetings at CSIS - The Centre for Strategic and International Studies with Heather A. Conley, Senior Vice-President for Europe and other experts on “Transatlantic challenges and a resurgent Russia”
11.30-12.30	Meetings at the National Governors Association with Scott Pattison, CEO
13.00 - 14.30	Lunch event at the Bipartisan Policy Centre with John C. Fortier, Director of the Democracy Project, other BPC fellows, and Mark Strand, Congressional Institute
15.00-16.00	State Department meeting with DAS Michael Murphy (Security, NATO, Arms Control) and DAS Julie Fischer (EU) on Transatlantic Security, European Defence Initiatives and INF Treaty
16.30-17.30	Meeting with Ms. Abigail Slater , Special Assistant to the President for Economic Policy, in charge of digital issues
19.00-21.00	Traditional welcome TLD dinner hosted by US Co-Chairs

Wednesday, 27 February 2019

09.00-10.45	<u>Working Session 1: Recent political developments in the US and EU</u>
11.00-12.10	<u>Working Session 2: Election Interference</u>
12.30-14.15	Official working lunch hosted by US Congress Keynote speaker: Nancy Pelosi, Speaker of the US House of Representatives and Antonio Tajani, President of the European Parliament
14.30-16.00	<u>Working Session 3: Trade and economic cooperation</u>
16.15-18.00	<u>Working Session 4: Cooperation in Foreign Affairs and Security policy - with a focus on Russia, the INF treaty, Venezuela and Afghanistan</u>
18.15	<u>Signature of Joint Statement</u>
18.30-19.30	Reception in Congress with the EU Caucus organised by TPN and EPLO DC

Thursday, 28 February 2019

09.00-11.30

Meetings with United States Senators

09.30 - Sen. Ron **Johnson** (R-WI)

10.00 - Sen. Ben **Cardin** (D-MD)

11.00 - Sen. John **Boozman** (R-AK)

11.30 - Sen. Bob **Menendez** (D-NJ)

12.30-13.45

Meetings at the Office of the USTR with Dan Mullaney, Assistant US Trade Representative for Europe and the Middle East

14.00

End of programme



Европейски парламент Parlamento Europeo Evropský parlament Europa-Parlamentet Europäisches Parlament
Euroopa Parlament Ευρωπαϊκό Κοινοβούλιο European Parliament Parlement européen Parlaimint na hEorpa
Europski parlament Parlamento europeo Eiropas Parlaments Europos Parlamentas Európai Parlament
Parlament Ewropew Europees Parlement Parlement Europejski Parlamento Europeu Parlamentul European
Európsky parlament Evropski parlament Euroopan parlamentti Europaparlamentet

Delegation for Relations with the United States of America

Rescheduled 83rd EU-US IPM/TLD meeting 26-28 February 2019 - Washington DC

LIST OF EP PARTICIPANTS

D-US Members and Substitutes

EHLER Christian (Chair)	EPP	GERMANY
GARDINI Elisabetta	EPP	ITALY
HÜBNER Danuta	EPP	POLAND
QUISTHOUDT-ROWOHL Godelieve	EPP	GERMANY
ŠUICA Dubravka	EPP	CROATIA
FREUND Eugen	S&D	AUSTRIA
GOMES Ana Maria	S&D	PORTUGAL
DALTON Daniel	ECR	UNITED KINGDOM
SCHAAKE Marietje	ALDE	NETHERLANDS
SCHOLZ Helmut	GUE/NGL	GERMANY
ANNEMANS Gerolf	ENF	BELGIUM

Committee Rapporteurs

LANGE Bernd	S&D	GERMANY
PA CU Ioan Mircea	S&D	ROMANIA

Staff

4 from the Secretariat and 6 Political Group advisors

Abbreviations:

EPP	Group of the European People's Party (Christian Democrats)
S&D	Group of the Progressive Alliance of Socialists and Democrats in the EP
ECR	European Conservatives and Reformists Group
ALDE	Group of the Alliance of Liberals and Democrats for Europe
GUE/NGL	Confederal Group of the European United Left - Nordic Green Left
ENF	Europe of Nations and Freedom Group

83rd Inter-Parliamentary Meeting

TRANSATLANTIC LEGISLATORS' DIALOGUE

Washington, DC - 27 February 2019

JOINT STATEMENT

We, the members of the U.S. House of Representatives and the European Parliament, held our 83rd Inter-Parliamentary Meeting of the Transatlantic Legislators' Dialogue in Washington, DC on 27 February 2019.

The bond between the United States and the European Union is our most fundamental economic, security and strategic partnership. Based on the strong foundation of our common history and values, including the principles of democracy, rule of law, human rights, and free and open societies and markets, we, as elected representatives of the United States and the European Union, used the latest meeting to discuss ways to strengthen our cooperation.

We currently face a competitive, challenging and changing global strategic environment, such as the conventional and hybrid challenges posed by competing powers such as China and Russia, who are aggressively trying to impose their own distorted worldview, contrary to our common principles, by creating an alternative to Western democracy. The erosion of and threats to the multilateral and rules-based international order, which has greatly served the common interest since World War II, are a threat to our joint prosperity and to global stability. These challenges make transatlantic cooperation more, not less, essential, and we commit to strengthening our efforts to address them effectively.

We exchanged views on issues organised under four themes:

1. Recent political developments in the US and the EU

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2. Election interference
 3. Trade and economic cooperation
 4. Cooperation in Foreign Affairs and Security policy - with a focus on Russia, the INF treaty, Venezuela and Afghanistan.

Recent Political developments in the US and the EU

We updated each other and exchanged views on the main political developments on either side of the Atlantic, notably on the results of the US midterm elections and the impact for the 116th Congress, as well as the prospects for the European elections in May 2019. We also discussed the latest developments regarding the withdrawal of the United Kingdom from the EU and the future EU-UK relationship.

We are concerned that there are serious instances of anti-semitism and democratic decline worldwide. Radical nationalist parties and intolerance are rising.

Furthermore, we stressed the need for continued transatlantic leadership to address the challenges posed by climate change and energy transition, in order to ensure sustainability and eliminate resulting risks such as regional instability, conflicts over scarce resources and migration.

Election Interference

We stressed that a free and fair electoral process is the bedrock to our functioning democracies, and we reiterated that in recent years our electoral systems have been the target of malign cyber-enabled interference, carried out by both state and non-state actors - most notably Russia. These aggressive practices - such as undermining critical election infrastructure, spreading disinformation on social media platforms, hacking and leaking confidential information and misusing citizens' personal data



for political purposes - disrupt and erode confidence in our democratic processes, sow division and chaos in our societies, and ultimately seek to influence decision-making.

We take the view that addressing attempts to destabilise Western societies requires a coordinated, comprehensive and assertive transatlantic response, involving service providers, regulators and political actors and parties, and the involvement of NATO where appropriate. We welcomed recent initiatives by both the US and EU to enhance the resilience of our electoral systems, which include efforts to protect critical election infrastructure against cyber-security attacks and responding to disinformation campaigns.

Technology companies have a clear responsibility to protect and foster democracy and human rights, and we call upon them to act accordingly. We are convinced of the need for a common approach to increasing the accountability of digital platforms to ensure they are not misused by hostile actors to interfere in democratic elections. We reiterated the need to work together to promote an open, interoperable and secure internet, governed by a multi-stakeholder model which promotes human rights, democracy, the rule of law and freedom of expression and which fosters economic prosperity and innovation, while respecting privacy and guarding against deception, fraud and theft.

Trade and Economic Cooperation

We emphasised our belief in a rules-based, open and non-discriminatory multilateral trading system, which helps both the EU and the US fight unfair trade policies and practices and ensures a genuine level playing field. We welcomed the increased efforts to modernise and reform the WTO and its Dispute Settlement System and called on both our executives to reach speedy decisions, and to provide credible leadership by adhering to the rules of the multilateral trading system. We stressed the need for China to trade fairly, to respect intellectual property rights and to meet its obligations, and to engage constructively in e-commerce as a member of the WTO. We shared our deep concerns about security vulnerabilities and behaviour posed by China, specifically in the cyber and telecom

infrastructure space as well as with regard to constant violations of intellectual property rights. Both sides agreed to step up their efforts to work together to counter these threats.

We recalled the summit between Presidents Trump and Juncker in Washington, DC on 25 July 2018, and took note of the trade talks to bring concrete results for our citizens. We also took note of USTR's specific negotiating objectives and the European Commission's proposals for launching negotiations.

As a guiding principle, we remain fully committed to free, fair and rules-based trade between the US and the EU in order to bolster economic growth and provide jobs for our citizens. Failing to resolve our trade disagreements only harm consumers, workers and businesses. De-escalating transatlantic trade tensions is therefore essential to strengthening further our trade and investment relationship, which is the largest in the world and a key driver for global economic growth and creation of jobs. We therefore recommitted to greater transatlantic investment and economic and research cooperation.

Cooperation in Foreign Affairs and Security Policy - with a focus on Russia (including the INF treaty), Venezuela and Afghanistan

We strongly oppose **Russia's** ongoing attempts at destabilisation across Europe. We reiterated our condemnation of its illegal occupation of Crimea and military intervention in Eastern Ukraine and called for sanctions to be extended until Russia complies fully with the Minsk agreements. We also condemned Russia's recent use of force against Ukrainian vessels entering the Sea of Azov, its contempt for international norms and blatant disregard for Ukraine's sovereignty and territorial integrity, and demand that Russia take immediate steps to de-escalate the situation, which undermines the stability of the broader region and poses a threat to European security. We also condemned the continued militarisation and deteriorating security and humanitarian situation in the Georgian occupied territories of Abkhazia and Tskhinvali Region/South Ossetia and called on Russia to fulfil its obligations under the EU-mediated 2008 Ceasefire Agreement. We continue to condemn Russia's enabling of chemical weapons use in Syria and Russia's use of chemical agents in attacks on



European soil. Further, the US reiterates its longstanding support for European energy security and diversification, including through cooperation with the US. We discussed in this context the Nord Stream II pipeline and the progress on the EU Gas Directive. We agreed to continue to take important steps to increase and diversify EU energy security.

We noted the suspension of obligations under the **Intermediate-Range Nuclear Forces Treaty (INF)** by both the US and Russia, and we regret that Russia has not addressed in a substantial and verifiable way the serious concerns raised by the US, NATO and the EU over its compliance with the INF provisions. Russia must address these urgent and legitimate concerns, and the US should coordinate closely with European partners on this matter. All diplomatic efforts within the framework of the treaty should be fully explored. The INF has been a pillar of the post-Cold War security architecture and a bedrock for European security for the last 30 years, and Russia's continued disregard for effective arms control, disarmament, and non-proliferation is something we must work together to counter in order to avoid an arms race. We reaffirmed our full commitment to the preservation of effective international arms control, disarmament and non-proliferation regimes.

We reiterated our strong conviction that **NATO** is the cornerstone of collective defence and deterrence for its Members in the Euro-Atlantic area, and that the European Union is a unique and essential partner for NATO and the US. We recognize the importance and complementary efforts of a stronger and more capable European defence – including through the EU Common Security and Defence Policy. The development of coherent, complementary and interoperable defence capabilities, avoiding unnecessary duplication, is key in our joint efforts to make the Euro-Atlantic area safer. Such efforts will help enhance our common security, contribute to transatlantic burden sharing, help deliver needed capabilities, and support an overall increase in defence spending in line with NATO guidelines. As we continue to face various conventional and unconventional challenges, it is vital that we work together to maintain our collective viability to counter these threats from wherever they may come.

In light of the illegitimate usurpation of presidential power by Nicolas Maduro before the Supreme Court of Justice on 10 January 2019, which was in breach of the constitutional order, we supported the Venezuelan's National Assembly's decision to recognise Juan Guaidó as the legitimate interim president of **Venezuela** until free, transparent and credible presidential elections are called in order to restore democracy. We reiterated our full support to the National Assembly, which is the only legitimate democratic body of Venezuela. We strongly condemned the authorities' lethal repression and violence against peaceful protestors and called for a halt of illegal raids, arbitrary arrests and of all other violations of human rights and fundamental freedoms. We also called on the authorities to urgently allow humanitarian aid to enter the country in accordance with international humanitarian principles. We believe that this unprecedented social, economic and democratic crisis cannot be resolved by attempts that entail the use of force. We called upon our respective executives to proceed carefully, consult allies and engage with other countries in the region to build an agreement around new presidential elections based on an agreed calendar, equal conditions for all actors, transparency and international observation.

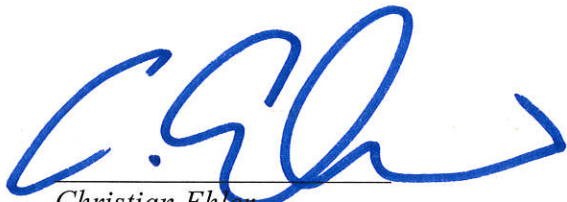
We are concerned by the territorial gains of the Taliban and various terrorist groups in **Afghanistan**, and the continued attacks against civilians and the security forces and reiterated our full commitment to fighting all forms of terrorism. We paid tribute to all coalition and Afghan forces and civilians who have paid the ultimate price for a democratic, secure and stable Afghanistan. We expressed our support for the peace process and call on the Taliban to engage constructively in intra-Afghan peace talks, denounce violence and commit to the full respect for the human rights of all Afghans, including religious and ethnic minorities. We particularly stressed that no backtracking on women rights is acceptable. We also encourage the government to step up efforts to stamp out corruption and urge our regional partners to combat drug trafficking, money laundering, terrorist financing and human smuggling. Afghanistan is at a crucial point in its history; as absent further efforts, all of the progress and sacrifices hitherto could be wasted. Withdrawing coalition forces prematurely could have

negative consequences. We encourage NATO's Resolute Support mission to continue its training and oversight of the Afghan army and police and recognise that a security presence and assistance might be required in the long term, in order to support the Afghan security forces in the suppression of terrorist groups. We also welcomed the ongoing process to ratify the EU - Afghanistan Cooperation Agreement on Partnership and Development (CAPD), which is the first contractual relationship between the EU and Afghanistan and welcomed the EU's financial package of 474 million euros to support state building and public sector reforms in the areas of health, justice, elections and migration.

Conclusion

This being the last inter-parliamentary meeting before the European elections of May 2019, we looked back with satisfaction on the close contacts and work accomplished by the Transatlantic Legislators' Dialogue over the last eight meetings since June 2015 in Riga. We are particularly proud of the policy-oriented approach of our dialogue in the areas over which we have responsibility as legislators and are determined to intensify our parliamentary partnership in between our bi-annual meetings, in these testing times for the transatlantic alliance.

We look forward to achieving progress on the issues we discussed and plan to meet again towards the end of the year.



Christian Ehler
Co-Chair
EU Delegation



Jim Costa
Co-Chair
US Delegation



Marietje Schaake
Vice-Chair
EU Delegation



Mark Meadows
Vice-Chair
US Delegation