

## The New Transatlantic Agenda

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*For the last fifty years, the Transatlantic relationship has been central to the security and prosperity of our people. Our aspirations for the future must surpass our achievements in the past!*

The New Transatlantic Agenda, adopted on 3 December 1995 at the EU-US Summit in Madrid

## The New Transatlantic Agenda

On 3 December 1995 at the EU-US Summit in Madrid, European Commission President Santer, Spanish Prime Minister González, as President of the European Council, and then US President Clinton signed the New Transatlantic Agenda (NTA). This provided a new framework for a partnership of global significance, designed to lend a new quality to the Transatlantic relationship, moving it from one of consultation to one of joint action in four major fields:

- Promoting peace and stability, democracy and development around the world;
- Responding to global challenges;
- Contributing to the expansion of world trade and closer economic relations;
- Building bridges across the Atlantic.

The NTA is accompanied by a Joint EU-US Action Plan setting out no less than 150 specific actions to which the EU and US have committed themselves. These range from promoting political and economic reform in Ukraine to combating AIDS; from reducing barriers to Transatlantic trade and investment to promoting links between colleges and universities. It is an agenda which is ambitious, outward-looking and which affects all sectors of society from big business to the individual citizen.

### ...with concrete benefits for the partners

Since the NTA was adopted, the EU and US have made good progress in implementing the actions which were agreed. In many cases this has direct, beneficial implications for the citizens and business across the Atlantic.

We have reduced barriers to trade, benefiting businesses and consumers on both sides. Within this framework, a new initiative to reinforce the Transatlantic Economic Partnership was launched at the 18 May 1998 EU-US summit, in London under the TEP, negotiations began in November 1998 on several bilateral agreements, complemented by a wide range of bilateral co-operative actions and a regular dialogue on multilateral trade policy issues. We have concluded agreements to remove technical barriers to trade by mutual recognition of conformity assessment, and to work together on customs procedures.

We have developed a series of joint projects from the Ukraine to the Caribbean, to promote civil society, to support Democracy, to combat illicit drugs and to fight against terrorism. We have decided to co-operate systematically on Higher Education and Vocational Training and on Science and Technology and to hold high level consultations on security, environment, energy, fisheries and information society. We have encouraged parliamentarians, business-people, trade unionists, consumers and people from all walks of life to meet and to make their own contribution to the Transatlantic dialogue. Each side supports initiatives to bring our societies closer together, for example the European Union Centres in the United States.

Alongside these elements of co-operation, the NTA also provides us with a framework within which we can address our differences more constructively. A partnership does not exclude tough talking on difficult issues. But the strength of our relationship means that even thorny subjects such as the US

extraterritorial legislation, Foreign Sales Corporations, or the different approaches to consumer protection on questions such as genetically-modified food do not prevent progress in other areas.

.....and a positive impact on the global community

But the benefits of our close bilateral relations reach well beyond the EU and the US. As powers of global significance, the EU and the US have a responsibility to co-operate to provide leadership in the world. The NTA is quite deliberately an outward-looking agreement committing both partners to co-operate on issues of global importance. This applies as much to the field of foreign affairs and development as to the more traditional area of trade.

The consequences of 11 September 2001 in New York City and 11 March 2004 in Madrid have further demonstrated how our economies and political prospects are intimately dependent. We are operating in a global context, fighting common challenges, and are committed to closely co-operate and adopt mutually supportive initiatives. A lot has been done to address the threat of terrorism, from fighting the financing of terrorist organisation to the judicial and police co-operation, from the higher security standards in the transport sector to co-operation on borders control.

Together, the EU and the US are working to consolidate peace and democracy in the former Yugoslavia and to stabilise the Middle East region, to rebuild Afghanistan and Iraq, to alleviate poverty in the developing world. We have also co-operated to address the global issues which are of most concern to our citizens, agreeing measures to combat international organised crime and to stem the trade in illegal drugs. We are working together in organisations such as the World Trade Organisation and the Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development to encourage our trading partners to join with us in our efforts to liberalise trade and investment on a multilateral basis so that businesses and consumers across the world can benefit from the economic gains that these bring.

#### **An intensive dialogue**

This ambitious agenda of co-operation between the EU and US in such a large number of areas requires intensive dialogue. The yearly Summits between the Presidents of the European Commission and the European Council and the President of the United States are the edge of an intensive dialogue for the implementation of the NTA.

The Summits are prepared by a Group of Senior Level Representatives (SLG), (composed of senior officials each from the European Commission, the EU Presidency and the US State Department) which has been entrusted to oversee work of the NTA. The SLG meets 4-6 times a year and prepares a report to the Summit leaders on achievements and new priorities. It is supported in its work by a NTA Task Force, which follows closely the day-to-day implementation of the NTA, prepares the SLG meetings, and recommends areas for SLG input.

#### **Prospects for the future**

We are approaching the 10th anniversary of the NTA and soon the political juncture will be ripe to assess the results of the NTA and adapt it to reflect new realities. The ultimate goal is to optimise our partnership, making it even more fruitful and mutually beneficial, to increase wealth, prosperity and well-being on both sides of the Atlantic, and to enable the EU and the US to contribute to increased security, stability and welfare at a global level.

Full text of the New Transatlantic Agenda (NTA) at:

[http://europa.eu.int/comm/external\\_relations/us/new\\_transatlantic\\_agenda/text.htm](http://europa.eu.int/comm/external_relations/us/new_transatlantic_agenda/text.htm)