

EP-Präsident Pat Cox nimmt bei offiziellem USA-Besuch zu gegenwärtigen Problemen EU - USA Stellung

Wien (OTS) - Der Präsident des Europaparlaments sprach gestern in Washington u.a. die Differenzen in bezug auf den Internationalen Strafgerichtshof, diverse US-Handelsgesetze und die Krise im Nahen Osten an

Es folgt im Wortlaut der Text der Rede von Pat Cox, Präsident des Europäischen Parlaments, gestern vor dem National Press Club in Washington:

"Emerging Europe: Implications for Transatlantic Relations"

I am honoured to be with you here today at the National Press Club and I am grateful for this opportunity to share my thoughts with you as President of the European Parliament.

This is my first time in Washington DC since 9/11, so you may not be surprised if I take that as the starting point for my remarks.

What I take from 9/11 as an MEP is a sense of the overwhelming intensity of what we share.

Since that day - 10 months ago tomorrow - Europe has been in transformation, America in trauma. It is hardly surprising that a comprehension gap has opened up. This heightens the need to communicate, to connect, to engage.

The importance of the US-EU relationship

My message today is about the importance of what unites us.

The US-EU relationship is the most important bilateral relationship in the world, in terms of trade, investments and political values.

Total EU-US trade exceeds \$500 billion, accounting for more than 6 million jobs in the US and the EU. The EU has more than \$500 million invested in the US, and the amount of US investment in Europe is only slightly less.

Together we share many burdens around the world. The global picture shows that the EU is the biggest development aid donor and contributes massively to the Balkans, the Middle East Peace Process, Afghanistan and in Africa.

Enlargement: an historic opportunity

For us Europeans, 2002 is the year. The year of the introduction of the Euro. The year of the Convention on the Future of Europe, when we must redraw and reform our existing processes and institutions for a new Europe on a truly continental scale. The year when we must decide how to take on responsibility for foreign policy and defence on a scale which is at last commensurate with Europe's economic power.

Above all, 2002 is the year of enlargement, of the reunification of our continent. The European Parliament was the first of the European institutions to fight to establish a date for enlargement. Since the fall of the Berlin Wall in November 1989, we have all anticipated the prospect of reintegrating Europe, as indeed the moment was seized in Germany, for reunification. There is, among the political leadership in candidate states now, a certain ennui - they are tired of being told that enlargement is always just five years away. After the Berlin Wall collapsed and a new prospect presented itself, they have been knocking on our door now for almost thirteen years. The time has now come for us to seize this moment, to recognise the historic dimension to the enlargement, to bring closure to a very barbaric twentieth century and to begin a healing process at the beginning of this century.

Dealing with difficulties

Like all relationships, ours is not without its stresses and strains. Let me list some, to elucidate, but not to exaggerate.

President Bush said, in his State of the Union address, that "good jobs depend on expanded trade ...selling into new markets creates new jobs". So we in the EU felt a deep disappointment at the imposition by the US of tariffs on steel, by Foreign Sales Corporations and by the US Farm Bill.

These are some of the major trade issues currently at dispute. But such disputes cover only 4% of our vast trade and investment

relationship.

We are hopeful - and here I send a message from 'Parliament to Parliament' - that current legislative efforts on the Trade Promotion Authority can be rapidly consolidated, thereby reassuring the international community of Congress' support for international trade expansion.

Finally on trade, the Doha Development Agenda is of fundamental importance. Both the US and the EU were very active in pushing for the new Round: Strong leadership is now needed if we are to conclude on time by the end of 2004. The European Parliament strongly favours rapid progress in these talks.

In all these areas of stresses and strains, I have come here not to harass or to be harangued. Instead, I see an indispensable role for a dialogue between politicians.

Turning to the International Criminal Court, the statutes have now been ratified by some 70 countries, including all 15 EU Member States. This is now international law. The EU understands the US's concerns, stemming from the US's special position as the world's only superpower, but we cannot in any way go along with the US proposed mechanisms for dealing with these concerns.

If the US feels a threat we will listen respectfully, but also suggest respectfully that the US should not outreach its powers. The ICC will only act if States refuse or are unable to investigate. The US, with its pre-eminently excellent judicial system, should have nothing to fear from the ICC.

As regards the Middle East Peace process, we welcome President Bush's engagement. None of us can afford to let the tragedy go on because of the horrendous cost in human suffering and also because the conflict is a breeding ground for terrorism. The parties alone cannot break the vicious circle : the International Community must step in. The EU supports the Quartet, under the indispensable leadership of the US. The EU supports reform of the Palestinian Authority and fresh elections. The European Parliament will send observers, as in 1996. These elections could generate a new momentum.

It is up to the Palestinians themselves to choose their leaders.

Israel would have to open closures to ensure that elections can take place. What is needed is a political process to break the cycle of atrocities.

We should both accept honest differences of perspective. The question is how best to address them.

We respectfully recognise that, from the US perspective, again in President Bush's words, in some ways life will never return to normal. "Those of you who have lived through these challenging times have been changed by them".

So I am not here to moralise or to polarise, but to connect with democratic friends so that we can successfully overcome these challenges together.

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