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„New ways of answering old problems”

Transatlantic Policy Network Steering Committee, „Toward Transatlantic Partnership – Rebuilding Trust”

Brussels (online), 9 December 2020

Our discussion today is under the title Toward Transatlantic Partnership – Rebuilding Trust.

I believe we need to start by being straight with each other and acknowledge that the relationship over the past four years has suffered. In spite of the fact that EU-US bonds have become largely dysfunctional, we remain the world biggest economic, trade and investment relationship. Taking this into account it is natural to expect that there will be frictions and disputes and we have to build capability to manage them.

The EU and US now have the opportunity and the obligation to repair, renew and revitalise our relationship with a view to protect our citizens and advance our national interest while standing together in the global world.

We need to rebuild trust and confidence at all levels of our relationship, especially between our peoples. With trust and openness we can prepare the ground for a common transatlantic agenda.

We have a long history of transatlantic projects, initiatives and processes. Some of them have run into 'rough seas'. Some of us continue to suffer from the nostalgia for TTIP.

It is important now to be focused on what matters most and find new ways of answering old problems. This means finding ways to de-escalate disputes, find speedy agreement on a small number of concrete issues but also take a joined approach to strategic geopolitical challenges. In particular, we should come together to persuade China to take more responsibility as a global economic actor.

We need to build relations that would fit the world of tomorrow. We care about sustained prosperity of the EU and the US.

This will require deep cooperation in building a climate-friendly transatlantic business model, a shared digital economy and both business practices and supportive public policies that will contribute to our capacity to successfully compete globally.

In this context I find it useful to look for a focus that would cover five core areas, reflected also in the work that TPN is doing.

I think here of post-COVID economic cooperation for resilience, jobs and prosperity, digital transformation, sustainability and climate change, global

rules based system including reforming together the WTO, and last but not least working together to ensure that our peoples' security is protected from new and proliferating threats, whether coming from cyber terrorism or other sources.

Regarding digital transformation, as we know, the EU is already moving forward towards implementation of its plan to create a regulatory framework for the digital transformation of its Single Market, with several legislative proposals already issued. But there is still an unprecedented opportunity and there is still time for the EU and the US to move forward with a greater appreciation that commonly desired outcomes can be delivered through transatlantic cooperation and convergence on emerging technologies. The prize of a global regulatory architecture based on values and norms that we both hold dear is truly worth having. Balkanization of the internet and regulatory divergence might not produce a win-win situation. A good example here could be the area of AI. We have to resist the temptation to go alone in this area and look for a better way.

Harnessing the respective strength of the EU normative power, great research capacities and availability of skills with value added and leadership provided by US clusters, potential and investment capacities could deliver a win-win outcome.

We should also raise the profile of the EU-US legislators' dialogue. We should reach out to pragmatic innovations fostering the exchange of ideas and recommendations between the US Congress and the European Parliament for joint action. Legislators, with a long tradition of cooperation, want and can help deliver a common upgraded ambition. We should, therefore spare no effort to facilitate the involvement and support of political communities on both sides of the Atlantic.

We could do more on developing a legislative exchange program between individuals, facilitating personal, including online, contact for building up trust and confidence between the legislators.

We should multiply exchanges of thought and action provoking ideas.

For the Annual Meeting of Members of the European Parliament and Members of the House of Representatives we should have a focused agenda.

Our renewed agenda is an urgent necessity, but it is also an exciting opportunity to deliver the kind of progress that can only happen in response to crises.

A new sense of purpose is with us.