



ETUC (CES) - EUROPEAN TRADE UNION CONFEDERATION
AFL-CIO - AMERICAN FEDERATION OF LABOR AND CONGRESS OF INDUSTRIAL ORGANIZATIONS

Trade Union Statement to the EU-US SUMMIT

Washington, 20 June 2005

The ETUC and the AFL-CIO representing organised workers in the European Union and the United States strongly support transatlantic cooperation and call on the summit to address the joint economic and social concerns of working people in both areas.

The US and EU represent a tradition of democracy and respect for human rights and together form a strong influence on the evolution of globalization and the potential to advance democratic governance and institutions around the world.

Both the Declaration of the EU-US Summit 2004 and the recent EU-Commission Communication focus on economic aspects of the partnership aimed at eliminating barriers in the transatlantic market. We would underline the importance the two labour movements attach to the social and environmental dimension of the relationship, improving the economic and social security of working families on both sides of the Atlantic and underpinning democratic institutions including market regulatory frameworks to strengthen and ensure greater transparency, stakeholder rights and effectively attack corruption, looting companies, indifferent management, etc. and run away top corporate compensation.

In this context, we welcome the Commission's proposal of holding a tripartite conference in the field of industrial relations to strengthen organization, collective bargaining and social dialogue. This is a good beginning as investment back and forth across the Atlantic continues to represent the largest cross-flows between continents. We would also like to draw attention to joint work of the ETUC and AFL-CIO on corporate governance, including a project on European Works Councils, which could serve as a basis to build on.

Job dislocation, which occurs on both sides of the Atlantic, reviewing social protection, health care, education and training, occupational safety and health, pension systems, wider industrial relations including labor legislation, framework agreements and development assistance in respect of international core labour standards are other relevant topics for that dialogue. In this context, we welcome the next bi-annual EU-US Health and Safety Conference to be held in Orlando, Florida in September.

The recent Communication also makes a series of proposals to strengthen the broader political architecture of the transatlantic partnership.

We welcome the Commission's suggestions on promoting dialogue between representatives of the social partners from the EU and the US including the tripartite conference in the field of industrial relations mentioned above.

With a view to the long-standing and close relationship of the ETUC and the AFL-CIO since before the beginning of the new transatlantic relationship in the early 1990s, we would, however, suggest that the Transatlantic Labour Dialogue be included and treated on an equal footing with the other Dialogues and underline the importance of involving all the Dialogues in the different Fora and Task forces suggested in the Communication.

The Communication suggests, among others, creating a business-consumer-government Joint Task force drawing on the combined resources of the Transatlantic Business and Consumer Dialogues. We strongly suggest that the Transatlantic Labour Dialogue be included in the proposed structures.

In this context, we deeply regret that the Dialogues have not been accepted on an equal footing in past summit meetings and summit declarations, and would recommend that the Dialogues be taken into account on an equal basis.

We support the recommendations of the European Economic and Social Committee on deepening and broadening both the agenda and the political architecture of EU-US relations. This should include the creation of a structure enabling regular joint contacts and dialogue between EU and US civil society groups, in line with practice followed by the EESC in other parts of the world where the EU has an interest.

John J. Sweeney
President
AFL-CIO

John Monks
General Secretary
ETUC

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