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Subject:	European Union – United States relations – Council conclusions (7 December 2020)

Delegations will find in the annex the Council conclusions on European Union – United States relations, adopted by the Council at its meeting held on 7 December 2020.

Council conclusions on European Union – United States relations

1. The Council reaffirms the strategic importance of the European Union's partnership with the United States of America as the world's foremost and closest relationship, rooted in shared values and common interests, cultural and historic ties, as well as geopolitical reality. A strong transatlantic partnership is vital to ensure and to contribute to our common security, stability and prosperity. We also believe that transatlantic relations are the bedrock of the rules-based international order, reinforcing international peace and security, freedom, prosperity, human rights, gender equality, multilateralism, rule of law and democracy, not just for those living on our shores but also for the rest of the world.
2. The Council believes in a strong mutually beneficial long-term strategic partnership with the United States, in a strengthened multilateral order, which will promote a shared vision of the world and can achieve tangible results. A renewed transatlantic agenda is necessary to find joint answers to global challenges, in order to safeguard the health and wellbeing of our people and our planet, to protect democracy and make it deliver for our citizens. By pursuing its strategic course of action and increasing its capacity to act autonomously, a stronger European Union will actively contribute to strengthening the transatlantic partnership and its ability to deliver.

3. Given the devastating effects of Covid-19, there is an even more pressing need to fight the pandemic together, to fully implement the United Nations 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development, to ensure a green economic recovery and to expedite green energy and digital transitions as well as to strengthen our shared values. In this context, the Council welcomes president-elect Biden's intention for the United States to re-join the Paris Agreement on climate change as soon as possible. The Council stands ready to engage in a transatlantic climate dialogue in the run-up to COP26, building upon the Commission communication on the European Green Deal, and to jointly implement concrete measures to fight climate change and achieve climate neutrality. In order to boost economic recovery, we should work together towards deepening our economic relations, including settling trade differences. The EU and the US should aim to achieve a more effective and coordinated use of restrictive measures, as well as to address the issue of measures with extraterritorial effect.
4. It is time to deliver on our support for multilateralism, including through much-needed reforms in international organisations, in a way that preserves founding principles - enshrined in the Charter of the United Nations - and human rights. In this context, the Council welcomes the incoming Administration's commitment to multilateral diplomacy and international alliances. The European Union looks forward to working closely with the United States to strengthen the United Nations' ability to address global challenges. It is time to renew joint EU-US efforts aimed at strengthening as well as reforming international organisations such as the World Health Organisation and the World Trade Organisation, and to work together to reinforce the global non-proliferation, disarmament and arms-control architecture. We need to work together to preserve the Joint Comprehensive Plan of Action as endorsed by United Nations Security Council Resolution 2231 (2015), a key pillar of the global non-proliferation architecture, and to further its achievements and to address future challenges. The Council remains committed to reinforcing cooperation in international fora and protecting human rights, democracy and the rule of law.

5. The Council recalls that the democratic societies and market economies of the transatlantic partners face common threats and challenges presented by the growing international assertiveness of various actors. Together with the United States, we need to strengthen our strategic resilience, energy security, counter hybrid threats including disinformation, withstand economic coercion and attacks on critical infrastructure, step up our efforts to combat unfair trading practices and ensure that we maintain our technological edge. Wherever possible our cooperation should be broadened to include like-minded democracies around the world. The EU stands ready to continue working with the US in all areas, be it in the EU Eastern and Southern neighborhood, the Western Balkans, the Eastern Mediterranean, the Middle East, Africa, Latin America and the Caribbean, or the Indo-Pacific. Furthering our common agenda on sustainable connectivity will be equally essential.
6. The European Union and the United States should continue to maintain close cooperation and dialogue in the area of security and defence and further enhance their common efforts, including through enhanced, mutually-reinforcing and beneficial strategic EU-NATO partnership in areas of shared interest in the framework of the 2016 Warsaw and 2018 Brussels Joint Declarations. This will enable us to effectively address various traditional and emerging threats and challenges. In line with the Council conclusions of 17 June 2020, EU security and defence initiatives will enhance the European contribution to transatlantic security. This will also contribute to strengthening the rules-based international order with the United Nations at its core.

7. Ultimately and most importantly, we believe that our partnership is deeply rooted in relations between people. Promoting strong people-to-people connections can play a fundamental role in fostering a positive and ever closer EU-US relationship. Continued investment in people-to-people contacts, through cooperation in science, research and development, education, the Internet and information society, business and culture will be essential to building on our partnership. The Council also recognises the need to advance links between our young people and future leaders to promote mutual understanding for the benefit of EU-US cooperation, and the values and principles that we share. In order to enable all EU citizens to benefit seamlessly from people-to-people contacts, achieving full visa reciprocity with the United States for all its Member States remains a priority for the European Union.
8. The Council underlines its interest to engage in a regular, comprehensive and strategic political dialogue with the United States, including at the highest level, in order to reach the full potential of the transatlantic partnership. Cherishing the past while embracing the future, the Council stands ready to discuss the strategic direction of all policies of shared interest and looks forward to expanding cooperation with the United States.