



Resolution 1421 (2005)¹

Relations between Europe and the United States

Parliamentary Assembly

1. The Parliamentary Assembly pays tribute to the benefits that for the past sixty years stemmed from a positive transatlantic partnership, in terms of both security and prosperity. Transatlantic cohesion continues to be an irreplaceable factor promoting stability and security.
2. The Parliamentary Assembly is concerned over the recent deterioration in the transatlantic relationship. While misunderstandings and miscommunications, notably in the run-up and during the war in Iraq certainly contributed towards the crisis in the United States-Europe partnership, it is obvious that genuine and long-standing differences of opinion concerning foreign policy issues exist between the two sides.
3. In the post-cold war world, we witnessed a shift in geopolitical security objectives, and increasingly divergent national foreign policy strategies between European countries and the United States. These factors led to different approaches towards such issues as terrorism, aggressive behaviour by “rogue” states, and international justice, as well as poverty and environmental degradation.
4. The Assembly recalls its [Resolution 758 \(1981\)](#) on relations between Europe and the United States of America and Canada, in which it emphasised that neither the democracies of Europe nor those of North America could face the challenges of the 1980s alone. More than twenty years later, the Assembly recognises the continued validity of this assertion.
5. Diminished transatlantic cohesion entails negative consequences for the world. An isolationist or isolated United States may be more prone to take unilateral, rather than multilateral (or coalition-based), actions. Unilateral actions may weaken international organisations and challenge the principle of collective security. Although the United States is stronger in military terms, it depends more than ever on its allies to gain legitimacy for its actions in the international arena. In other respects, the complementarity of the United States and Europe has been plainly illustrated during conflicts, such as those in Kosovo and in Afghanistan. In those instances, and others, it has been demonstrated that while European states and institutions were unable or unwilling to wield, alone, the military might required to effectively face threats to global security, they can still contribute resources and expertise to carry out post-conflict peace-building and reconstruction efforts, participate in peace-keeping and take on major military tasks in co-operation with the United States, in the framework of Nato or a “coalition of the willing”.
6. The dangers posed by an entrenched divide between the United States and its European friends are recognised by all concerned, as is the pressing need to save the partnership. The United States and Europe share common values and have common interests which continue to provide a basis for their future relations. While recognising the inevitability of the structural reasons for a changing transatlantic partnership, the Parliamentary Assembly underlines the crucial role that active and frank dialogue between partners operating on the basis of mutual respect can play in ensuring the continued viability and dynamism of the transatlantic partnership.

1. Assembly debate on 27 January 2005 (6th Sitting) (see [Doc. 10353](#), report of the Political Affairs Committee, rapporteur : Mr Azzolini). Text adopted by the Assembly on 27 January 2005 (6th Sitting).



7. The Assembly notes the EU-US Summit which took place in Dublin, Ireland (25-26 June 2004) and welcomes the work that has been undertaken to resolve remaining differences between the United States and Europe over Iraq, and notably the commitment to a continued and expansive engagement of the United Nations in Iraq. The Assembly recalls its [Resolution 1386 \(2004\)](#) on the Council of Europe's contribution to the settlement of the situation in Iraq, and its support for a leading role for the United Nations in Iraq.

8. The Parliamentary Assembly recalls the results of its Inter-Parliamentary Forum on Transatlantic Dialogue (London, 18-19 April 2004) in which both members of the United States Congress and the Canadian Observer delegation to the Parliamentary Assembly actively participated. The forum concluded by calling for an institutionalised dialogue between members of the Parliamentary Assembly and the United States Congress. As the forum proved, there is a wide range of issues which can and should be discussed, and misunderstandings which can be avoided through frank dialogue. It also illustrated the variety of opinions not only between delegations but also within them.

9. Dialogue should focus in particular on how Europe and the United States can work together to emphasise the benefits of their complementarity. The two sides should agree on means to encourage democracy, respect for human rights, and renewed stability in failing states, to find international strategies for effectively combating terrorism – while also respecting human rights and paying attention to the root causes of this phenomenon –, and to strengthen the United Nations in order to make it more responsive to the needs of its members.

10. The Parliamentary Assembly is therefore eager to engage in a series of comprehensive dialogues with the United States Congress. The dialogue should be anchored in a shared commitment to human rights, pluralist democracy and international co-operation, and focus on ways to strengthen the relationship and creatively address many of the challenges outlined above. The Parliamentary Assembly is ideally suited among European institutions for this vital transatlantic initiative due to its dedication to the maintenance of democratic security, human rights and the rule of law and because it is composed of elected members from forty-six European national parliaments.

11. The Parliamentary Assembly considers that communication between European and United States' representatives would be improved if the United States Congress participated actively in the Parliamentary Assembly as an Observer delegation.

12. The Parliamentary Assembly notes with interest the European Parliament Resolution on the State of the Transatlantic Partnership (B5-0185/2004) on the eve of EU-US Summit in Dublin and especially the notion that existing relationships between the European Parliament and the US Congress could eventually evolve into an EU-US transatlantic assembly. The Assembly should follow closely the developments and possibly seek involvement with this transatlantic assembly so as to avoid a confusing proliferation of similar institutions tasked with facilitating transatlantic parliamentary dialogue.

13. The Parliamentary Assembly calls on the governments of the Council of Europe member states and the United States :

to engage in a frank dialogue to analyse the existing divergences in the partnership and to reaffirm their shared ideals ;

to find an agreement at a pragmatic level on how to best defend and safeguard their common values ;

to recognise and take advantage of their complementarities ;

to consider the question of responsibility and methods for the worldwide promotion of democracy ;

to speed up their efforts, within the framework of the Quartet, for a settlement to the Middle East conflict, without which the G8 Broader Middle East and North Africa Initiative for improving democratic stability within these regions would have little chance of success ;

to intensify their joint efforts in the fight against terrorism, as well as against the proliferation of nuclear and other weapons of mass destruction ;

to prioritise dialogue and common action on other global security threats such as environmental degradation, ethnic hatred, poverty, mass migration and transnational health hazards such as the spread of HIV/Aids.

14. The Parliamentary Assembly calls on the United States Congress to consider applying for Observer status with the Parliamentary Assembly and in the meantime to take steps to designate a contact group in the US Congress with whom the Assembly could pursue the proposed dialogue initiative.

15. The Assembly is conscious of the constructive role that the Canadian and Mexican Observer delegations can play in reinforcing the transatlantic dialogue. It therefore appeals to them to share their experience with the Assembly and invites them to participate actively in the permanent transatlantic dialogue mechanism with the Assembly.