**Civil society is key for success of major EU-US initiatives**

**Through increased transatlantic dialogue, the Trade and Technology Council and the upcoming Summit for Democracy, the United States and the European Union have reached out to each other to jointly face global and internal challenges, and build a strong partnership on the basis of common democratic values.**

The EESC's External Relations Section (REX) put the strengthening of transatlantic relations at the centre of its meeting of 17 November 2021, presided by the REX President **Dimitris Dimitriadis,** and hosting prominent speakers and guests from both sides of the Atlantic.

*Strengthening transatlantic cooperation ahead of the Summit for Democracy on 9 10 December 2021*

Ms **Uzra Zeya, United States Under Secretary for Civilian Security, Democracy, and Human Rights**, clearly demonstrated her commitment to the voices of the civil society within the renewed transatlantic partnership by engaging in a warm, lively and rich discussion with EESC members around the upcoming Summit for Democracy.

"It is now our task to show to the world that democracy works, and that it can deliver: in the current context of climate change, massive displacements of people and increasing inequalities, we need to demonstrate that democracies can solve even the most complex problems"- Under Secretary stated, adding that "if civil society is solidly in favour of democracy, then democracy is stronger at all levels.

**Jennifer Hillman**, Senior Fellow for Trade and International Political Economy at the Council on Foreign Relations, pointed out that the Summit for Democracy should indeed focus on transatlantic alliance, while stressing the importance of transatlantic economic ties and their tremendous potential to shape global trends.

Professor **Olivier Roy** from the Robert Schuman Centre for Advanced Studies at the European University Institute in Florence, argued that the EU and the US indeed share the same values, but might disagree on their implementation, adding that importing democratic models must always take account of the situation on the ground, specific geostrategic contexts and involvement of the civil society. Mr Roy added that "the time has come to democratise the debate on foreign policy, and this could be a good starting point for the Summit for Democracy".

*Transatlantic dialogue in the framework of the EU-US Trade and Technology Council (TTC)*

"The TTC has created an unprecedented place to identify risks before they materialise", said **MEP Danuta Hübner**, adding that "the European Parliament has been closely following all TTC developments, because transparency is a must when we discuss trade matters".

**Matthias Jorgensen**, Head of Unit for the Americas at the European Commission's DG Trade, underlined the progresses made in the settlement of trade disputes between the EU and the US this year, be it aircrafts, digital services tax or exports of steel and aluminium. The European Commission is ensuring a thorough follow-up to the Pittsburgh summit and the formal launch of the TTC.

**Garrett Workman**, Senior Director for European Affairs at the U.S. Chamber of Commerce, put a special accent on the opportunities the TTC provides to collaborate on emerging regulatory challenges and provide a democratic model of governance in the tech space, and emphasised the urgency of results.

**Cathy Feingold**, Director of the AFL-CIO’s International Department and Deputy President of the International Trade Union Confederation underlined the importance of workers' involvement in the TTC, of using technology to promote workers' rights and battle climate change, and resilience of global supply chains.

**Lea Auffret** from BEUC illustrated expectations of European consumers from product safety to the fight of harmful practices based on data exploitation online and the use of artificial intelligence.

*\* The own-initiative opinion* ***A strong transatlantic partnership based on the common values of democracy and the rule of law, key in tackling global challenges and preserving the international order*** *(*[*REX/534*](https://www.eesc.europa.eu/en/our-work/opinions-information-reports/opinions/strong-transatlantic-partnership-based-common-values-democracy-and-rule-law-key-tackling-global-challenges-and)*, rapporteur Christian Moos, co-rapporteur Peter Clever) is expected to be adopted at the EESC Plenary session on 8-9 December 2021.*