



EUROPEAN UNION
DELEGATION TO THE UNITED STATES OF AMERICA

The Head of Delegation

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Subject: EU-U.S. Trade and Technology Council, Pittsburgh – 29 September 2021

The inaugural meeting of the EU-U.S. Trade & Technology Council (TTC) took place in Pittsburgh, Pennsylvania on 29 September 2021 under the leadership of Executive Vice-President M. Vestager, Executive Vice-President V. Dombrovskis, U.S. Secretary of State T. Blinken, U.S. Secretary of Commerce G. Raimondo and U.S. Trade Representative K. Tai.

Less than four months after this new political platform was agreed at the EU-U.S. Summit, the TTC showed a broader sense of direction as well as a strong commitment from both sides to address the strategic challenges that exist at the nexus of trade, technology and national security [REDACTED] Ten working groups prepared the meeting that resulted in a joint statement in areas ranging from technology standards to trade opportunities. Some of the working group leads debriefed the five principals directly on the work that has started, while stakeholders showed a keen interest in the work of the TTC and in being part of the conversation from the start.

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The TTC started with a **virtual stakeholder roundtable** with business, labor representatives and civil society at large. In their opening remarks, the principals agreed on the importance of a transparent and inclusive involvement of stakeholders in the TTC work, terming it “mission critical.” EVP Vestager noted that “we can set the TTC on a political direction, but it will depend upon business and consumers’ ambition to ensure that it can make a real difference to our citizens’ lives.” Secretary Blinken and EVP Dombrovskis shared the view that the EU and

the U.S. are best placed to maintain leadership by setting high standards based on shared values, while warning that other actors are interested to overtake this leadership.

Twelve stakeholders from the EU and the U.S. presented their views to the principals on (1) how the TTC can advance shared values and receive popular support, (2) how the TTC can respond to economic and national security challenges and (3) how the TTC can support complementary approaches to new and emerging technologies. While all participants expressed overwhelming support for the TTC, several European stakeholders drew parallels to the TTIP negotiations, cautioning that those failed because of a lack of transparency and a lack of (early) consultation with all stakeholders.

Business representatives raised the need for more transatlantic standards, in order to address unfair barriers, as well as the need for a safer internet as more than two thirds of all companies crucially rely on the internet. Topics put forth included supply chain concerns, critical materials, resilience, semiconductors, cybersecurity, AI, and the future of 5G. **Digital Europe** invited the TTC to focus on three wide areas: (1) developing and promoting standards on AI, cybersecurity and safe internet; (2) emphasising development of digital skills; and (3) securing resilient supply chains with initiatives such as the U.S./EU Chip Acts.

BusinessEurope called for joint EU-U.S. action and referred to its joint message with the **U.S. Chamber**, focused on: (1) resolving existing bilateral trade tensions, such as Section 232 tariffs, (2) ensuring future conflicts are avoided, and (3) developing forward-looking cooperation, stressing the importance that TTC takes forward the work done under the trilateral process and rally like-minded partners to update multilateral rules addressing non-market practices. BusinessEurope also saw the TTC as a platform that could help to address security of supply chains, while avoiding duplications and promoting complementarity of policy responses on both sides of the Atlantic.

The U.S.-based **Information Technology Industry Council** called for the development of pro-innovative policies based on transparency and risk based assessment, which will support global leadership of EU and U.S. tech companies. In terms of short-term priorities, TTC should focus on regulatory and procurement policies based on voluntary business-led standards in areas such as AI or cybersecurity, avoid non-tariff trade barriers, and avoid pursuing unilateral reactions against non-market practices. **Orgalim** encouraged the TTC to focus on removing non-tariff barriers, which increase costs by up to 18%. This should be done by development of common rules and promotion of use of international standards, and by ensuring mutual recognition.

Labor representatives urged for a digital transition that benefits all worker and their families, to address supply chain concerns, and worker's issues caused by non-market economies. This time workers need to benefit from the new form of globalisation. **AFL-CIO** welcomed the TTC as an opportunity to work together to eliminate forced labor and tackle the supply chain shortages. Its representative emphasised the need for the work to benefit the worker while promoting democratic values, growth and protection of environment, and highlighted the need for civil society to be involved – “we need to be heard and it needs to be acted upon.” **ETUC** echoed the remarks of AFL-CIO calling for real and immediate involvement of unions to

ensure benefits for the workers. It supported also the EVP Vestager's call to pursue renewed globalisation that avoids workers being on the losing side of trade.

Civil society, citizens and consumer organisations advocated for transatlantic policies addressing their concerns with the major tech platforms, with AI and the risks associated with big data, privacy, security and data driven decision-making. Other topics proposed to the TTC included online safety of products & services and harmful online practices. The **Center for Democracy and Technology** urged ministers to articulate a vision committed to the rule of law and shared values. Its representative highlighted the importance of the work on regulation of platforms and data governance. The EU and the U.S. must work together against authoritarian regulatory approaches. **BEUC** appreciated that consumers are being involved in the dialogue from the beginning. From a consumer perspective, the TTC could be a platform to increase consumer product safety, address harmful practices based on data exploitation, and ensure that AI does not become a threat to consumers. An expert from a think tank formulated the challenge by saying “we need to promote convergence on trade and tech policies across the Atlantic; where this is not possible, we must manage the divergences effectively and efficiently.”

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The TTC concluded with a **fourth roundtable on workforce policies**, in which principals discussed with workforce and education policy leaders and CEOs to obtain their views on how best to address the talent shortage and mismatch of skills, in the short- and long-term. Facing similar challenges on both sides of the Atlantic, what can the EU and U.S. learn from each other? Topics discussed included apprenticeships, innovative hiring and talent support practices, higher education, cost for training and education, and how best to prepare the young generation for a job market where the nature of work and skills continue evolving.

The principals held a private dinner which helped to deepen some of the discussions that took place throughout the day. In the margins of the TTC, the principals visited the subsequent day AI company ARGO that develops software for driverless vehicles for Volkswagen and Ford.

No press conference was held. The EU published the TTC statement [here](#). The US published it [here](#).

Reporting coordinated by [Art. 4.1(b)] and [Art. 4.1(b)]

Signed

Stavros Lambrinidis