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Speech at BusinessEurope event - *“EU-US: How to build a positive agenda”*

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Introduction

Thank you for your introduction Art 4.1(b), and many thanks to BusinessEurope for hosting this event.

We have worked together hand in hand over the last 6 years on social dialogue, and I look forward to this new opportunity to build up our great cooperation.

Let me say on behalf of the European Commission that we very much appreciate BusinessEurope's recent proposal on how to rebuild a positive agenda for transatlantic relations. This publication brought a welcome injection of ideas and energy to the debate.

American companies create jobs, innovation and wealth on both sides of the Atlantic every day.

And European companies do the same thing – day in, day out.

Investment in both directions remains very strong: in the last decade, the EU attracted over 58% of total US foreign investment, meaning that US companies choose to invest more in the EU than in all other markets combined.

Transatlantic supply chains permit companies on both sides of “the pond” to operate smoothly and efficiently.

This incredible trading relationship is built on a platform of certainty and trust, allowing our economic operators to invest and plan with confidence, securing 16 million jobs on both sides of the Atlantic at last count.

During my own time as European Commissioner I have enjoyed an excellent and fruitful cooperation with the U.S. on developing a shared agenda on economic and financial affairs.

I have seen with my own eyes how the EU and U.S. can find areas of mutual interest and benefit, and this is the approach I will always take in my transatlantic outreach.

Of course, transatlantic relations are underpinned by a deep historical bond, which goes far beyond economics and trade.

So while in economic terms it is quite a small deal, in political terms, I feel justified in saying that this is a pretty big deal!

There will be a reduction of U.S. tariffs on European exports worth around \$160 million a year. This includes products, such as crystal glassware, and lighters.

On our side, the EU will eliminate tariffs on imports of U.S. live and frozen lobster products, estimated to be worth \$111 million a year.

Beyond the economic win-win, we want to use this deal as a springboard for greater things. We want to continue improving bilateral economic and trade opportunities. There is scope for so much more in our relationship.

Airbus/Boeing

We do, however, need to resolve our outstanding disputes. In particular, we remain committed to tackling the sensitive issue of civil aircraft subsidies. This has been the biggest trade disagreement between us for some time, and let's be honest – both sides would benefit from taking this issue off the table.

I have already spoken to USTR Lighthizer and I look forward to working closely with him in the coming weeks.

WTO

I made the point to Ambassador Lighthizer that transatlantic cooperation is needed more than ever, given the Covid-19 pandemic and its devastating impact on the global economy.

It makes very good sense that the EU and U.S. should act together to ensure global economic recovery. For this, we need more trade, not less.

Accordingly, we should work together to strengthen the multilateral system. This will give the world the best possible chance to recover quickly from Covid-19.

The EU is more committed than ever to reforming the WTO - for us, this is an even bigger priority after Covid-19.

A strong WTO can help to rebuild a truly resilient global economy; an economy that protects workers, companies and supply chains; an economy that does more to drive climate action and digitalization; yet also an economy that safeguards international trade, keeping our markets open and discouraging import and export restrictions.

The Covid-19 crisis has accelerated the digital transformation of our societies, and the EU is working hard with our partners to develop an international consensus on the taxation of multinational digital services.

We continue to believe that the best way forward is through a global solution at the OECD, not through unilateral measures. We remain fully committed to the OECD process and to working with the U.S. there.

I also believe it is vitally important to engage with the U.S. on the trade-related aspects of the European Green Deal, including climate change. Our door remains open to transatlantic dialogue in this area.

Conclusion

Ladies and gentlemen, I would like to offer a warning before I conclude on a hopeful note.

We are living in a time of extraordinary challenges and difficulties. This is a time for keeping our friends close and remembering the alliances that really count.

There are still some ongoing disputes between the EU and U.S. and in my view, we are very well advised to fix these quickly.

Realistically, no successful multilateral initiative to restore open, fair and rules-based trade can be done without the EU and US together leading the effort.

As Trade Commissioner I will continue to reach out to our American friends and I hope we can make real progress on building a positive transatlantic agenda in the coming weeks. Thank you.