

Monday 6 November 2006 - Transcript of VP's speech during the press conference of the EU-US Ministerial.

MR. FRATTINI: Well, I think we had indeed a very fruitful meeting. I will be very brief, because I think what is very important to say that today we all agreed on the importance of strengthening our Euroatlantic cooperation on security, justice and on protecting fundamental rights of people.

This is the first political message to be launched. That is a positive message of cooperation. That's why we decided to establish a high-level contact group, not to carry out a bureaucratic exercise, but to try to identify how our common values, our common principles can be translated into common proposals.

That's the practical cooperation we need. The positive spirit of cooperation is not only possible, but absolutely indispensable.

The areas where we need to strengthen our cooperation are, of course, prevention and fight against terrorists, which is the first threat against our democracies. Europe and United States should continue to stay very firm on defending values, principles of democracy and fighting terrorists, including prevention of radicalization, including exploring the best way to tackle recruitment of young people apparently educated and integrated, but ready to become suicide bombers, as it happened recently in Europe. Cooperation also on practical measures on exchanging data. In this particular field, which is a very sensitive one, we need on one hand to explain, first of all, to our public opinion that there is no contradiction between more security and more protection of fundamental rights, including privacy protection. There is no contradiction because, for example, we can find the best way to improve -- thanks to technologies -- protection from misuse of personal data, while increasing protection of lives of our citizens. So no contradiction. We do want more security while protecting in a better way fundamental rights.

Of course I'm not talking about specific dossiers, I'm talking about a comprehensive approach towards cooperation, operational cooperation, and improving mutual trust between law enforcement authorities, between judicial authorities and police authorities as well.

This contact group will have an important role to play -- identify, if I may say, commonalities, not focus on divisions and different approaches.

The second point, which is also important, in my view, is the necessity of encouraging a better public-private cooperation on security. It's absolutely impossible to succeed on fighting for more security without getting involved with the private sector -- industry, private companies and so on.

I've informed our American friends about launching of a permanent European platform for cooperation between public institutions

and private sector on detection of explosives, on protection of critical infrastructures, on risk of misusing of biologic and chemical materials, and so on.

And my view is that building on such experience, which is starting now in Europe, in the near future we could also envisage a permanent transatlantic forum for the cooperation between private and public sector. This is the second message to be launched as a result.

And the third and final point is the importance of addressing together regional issues of common concern. We talked about some key areas, key areas for Europe, key areas for United States as well -- for example, how to tackle illegal immigration and trafficking in human beings or trafficking in drugs in the eastern dimension of Europe, like the region of Balkans, the region of Caucasus, or how to tackle illegal migration and trafficking in human beings from the south -- that is, Euro-African cooperation. I think it's very important on these two regional, extremely important issues to improve our capacity to exchange data and information; for example, about countries of origin of illegal migrants or about the routes of drug coming from Afghanistan through Central Asia to Europe and finally to the United States, as well.

These are just an example on how we intend, thanks to improving cooperation between our institutions and bodies, like Eurojust and Europol, and American structures, like FBI, for example.