



**EUROPEAN COUNCIL
THE PRESIDENT**

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**Remarks by Herman VAN ROMPUY,
President of the European Council,
following the EU-US Summit**

It has been a pleasure to welcome President Obama to the EU-US summit here in Lisbon.

It is the first time that as President of the European Council, along with the President of the European Commission, I am hosting this annual Summit on behalf of the 27 Heads of State and Government of the European Union, one year after the previous Summit.

The United States is and continues to be our closest and most important partner.

Both the EU and the US are in a rapidly changing G20 world. We share a transatlantic area of 800 million people, producing almost half of the world's GDP.
We share the same values, interests and objectives.

To build on this common ground, it is not enough to simply use expressions like “transatlantic dialogue” or “strategic partnership”. We need to set things into motion. That's why our discussion focussed on concrete concerns for our citizens: jobs and growth, security, and a world clean and stable.

We have had a good discussion this afternoon. I would like to underline the following three points: the economy, security and foreign policy.

First, at the centre are our ambitions to advance the economic recovery.

In global terms this means engaging constructively together and with emerging economies on global imbalances. We have a common interest to ensure that what was agreed last week with difficulties in Seoul on this issue, will be delivered.

On the bilateral aspects of our economic relationship, President Barroso will brief you.

P R E S S

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As regards the EU's own economic situation, I underline here, as I did earlier to President Obama, that the fundamentals of our economy are sound. The European Union has much higher levels of economic growth than expected a few months ago; we have low inflation, a current account of the balance of payments in equilibrium, and positive prospects for jobs in 2011.

A lot of member states are involved in reform programmes to strengthen their economies, to consolidate their budgets and to prepare the ageing of the population.

The Union decided upon a new and robust framework for economic governance in order to underpin our common currency and common market. Moreover, we have put in place the necessary instruments of financial support (under strong conditionality) to overcome the current problems in the Euro zone.

Second: we share the same vision on the future of security. Both our societies are built on the free flow of people, goods and information. The networks these flows require, face threats of a new kind. Terrorism, market disruptions, cyber attacks.

EU and US cooperation has added value here. That's why we decided to develop our partnership on a wide range of security issues. This needs to be founded on our respect for fundamental rights and freedoms.

Cyber security – as also stated earlier at the NATO summit – is a threat with an immense impact. EU-US cooperation in this field can contribute to protect ourselves against it.

I am therefore happy to announce that the EU and the US will enhance their cooperation, by creating a EU-US Working Group on Cyber security. The Working Group will report progress within a year.

Furthermore, speedy compromise on a comprehensive EU-US data protection agreement will significantly facilitate all negotiations between the EU and US on Passenger Name Records, cyber security, fight against terrorism and transnational organised crime.

Third, on foreign policy:

Iran's nuclear programme remains a grave concern to us all. I recalled to President Obama the EU's restrictive measures on Iran adopted in June. Without our working together, the sanctions would be inoperative.

I also informed the President that we believe we now have a very good chance to engage Iran in direct talks, under the leadership of the High Representative, on the 5th of December.

On Sudan, we need to ensure that the upcoming referenda reflect the will of the populations concerned. In order to build confidence in the referendum, the EU is deploying an Electoral Observation Mission.

Regarding the Middle East, I expressed the Union's support to President Obama's efforts to put the direct talks back on track. I also recalled the EU's vital contribution to the process, through our assistance to the Palestinian Authority.

And on EU-NATO relations, we all welcomed yesterday's agreement on NATO's new Strategic Concept. I reiterated to the President my belief that we have an opportunity to make serious progress on the EU-NATO strategic partnership, while respecting the legitimate concerns of all EU Member States and all EU allies, and without discriminating anyone.

We had a fruitful summit, we saw eye to eye, and, Mr. President, I wish you a good trip home.

Video coverage of the trips and meetings will be available for download in broadcast quality from the Council TV newsroom <http://tvnewsroom.consilium.europa.eu>

Photos covering the event will be available for download in high resolution from the Council Photo Library <http://www.consilium.europa.eu/photo>