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**8th Transatlantic Group Summit and the EIN-/IRI/Hudson Institute**  
(17<sup>th</sup>- 20<sup>th</sup> July 2017, Washington DC)

**18<sup>th</sup> July 2017**

**Venue: Cannon House office Building, Capitol Hill – United States of America (USA) House of Representatives**

The European Union (EU) members have recently engaged in debates with the representatives of the Congress, Congressman Trent Franks, AZ Representative for Arizona's 8<sup>th</sup> congressional district and Co-chair of TAG; Congressman Paul Anthony Gosar, AZ; the USA Senator Roger Wicker (R-MI) and Geoff Davis, former Congressman, Kentucky 4<sup>th</sup> on the current EU and US transatlantic relations with the new USA administration.

**19<sup>th</sup> and 20<sup>th</sup> July 2017**

**Venue: The Hudson Institute**

The EU members exchanged views with representatives of think-tanks, the private sector and media experts, on legislative issues of areas of particular interest, as well as current international matters.

The following areas were addressed during lively debates with the USA legislators, the EU members and with other political experts.

#### **Security and Defence issues**

- The USA and the EU should take steps to protect themselves against the fanatic ideology we face today, which is the one of killing innocent people at random, in the name of a God. It is a real and concrete danger that threatens the entire world.
- The USA supports the policy that the EU and the Western democracies should be aware of this new threat by protecting themselves and increasing their missile defence capabilities, as countries such as Russia, North Korea, Iran and China have continued developing their weapons and nuclear missile defences.
- The EU is currently carrying on deep discussions on security issues. The EU bloc has recognised that it has to spend much more in security and it fully understands NATO's legitimate budget claim.
- The EU is also aware that NATO has to find better ways of spending money in a unitary way.
- Although the US is demanding a more engaged position from member states in NATO's budget, it has to be said that the European Union is spending significant sums of money by funding the costs of the EU enlargement of Central and Eastern countries and it has heavily invested in

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security policies. It also contributes with 60 percent of the total world funding for the development aid for refugees and for the people of Syria. All that has to be taken into account, as a contribution to the security policy.

- The European way of making NATO stronger is by being united. The EU will continue to need the American help.
- Eastern European countries have assumed that security is solely the responsibility of the USA. However, those countries are currently worried that they cannot any longer rely on the USA for help.
- Building a stronger military defence in Europe should not be a competition, or in detriment of NATO.
- The USA and the EU are engaged in supporting Ukraine against Russia's aggression and acts of breaking off international agreements. Therefore, there is a need of investing in military defence weapons in Ukraine, supporting the country in its continuous political and institutional reforms and encouraging the civil societies. However, if Ukraine decides to join NATO and/or the EU in a near future, it might put Mr. Vladimir Putin in a difficult position.
- The USA representatives and the EU members have agreed that they have much more in common to continue the fight for the dignity of human beings.
- State actors and non-state actors are still turning to the USA. Therefore, the current international challenge must be focussed on the basis of international order. However, it begs the question whether we should keep the international order at any cost.
- There is a need of more flexibility when it comes to the definition of where our interests lie.

### Economics and trade

- International trade is one of the key ties keeping the transatlantic relations together.
- When it comes to globalisation, the EU and the USA must impose their own rules and regulations, because fairness and competitiveness are key issues for the global trade.
- Both sides recognise the mutual impacts of economic choices. They both stand open to an eventual revision of the TTIP, or to any other agreement to work jointly together facing unfair competition from emerging markets, particularly from China
- The EU and the USA depend on each other to grow; therefore the TTIP can still be an option, contrary to other bilateral-trade agreements
- EU members have stated that there are still some areas in which there is a need of making progress, such as the regulatory convergence in automobile; the energy and chemical sectors; the new economy data exchange and cyber security.

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- EU citizens are concerned with trade issues, but European leaders must remind them that trade leads to more choices, lower prices, and higher wages. There cannot be a welfare state without trade.

### Brexit

- Brexit will complicate, but not dramatically affect the Transatlantic relationship, since the USA has economic and security interests in the EU and in the UK. Some trade agreements with the UK and with the US will be easier.
- America needs to understand that Brexit is a crucial issue not only for Europe, but also for the USA.
- The process will require a new structure in the G7, G20 and NATO, but the USA must remain engaged to the UK and to the EU. EU members have insisted in a common platform for the UK, the EU and the USA, which could still be the TTIP.
- The EU 27 Member States will hope that the USA administration will encourage and support the EU side in the Brexit process.
- As per EU members, America's administration should not cooperate with single EU member states, rather than with the EU 27, as a whole.
- The EU delegation has shown great concern on the UK current weakness, which might lead to the risk of a victory for the Labour Party opposition leader Mr. Jeremy Corbin, should Mrs. Theresa May fail. They have warned the USA legislators about Corbin's position in relation to NATO and to other matters that could be a major shift for the Transatlantic relations and for the EU.
- The USA legislators have admitted that there is few political expertise in the USA concerning the Brexit process and have agreed with the EU that Brexit will not be good for Britain.
- The EU delegation has also transmitted its concerns on a possible constitutional crisis in the UK during the Brexit process and because of it, by highlighting matters such as the situation in Northern Ireland, Scotland and also the lack of transparency of the UK administration, in the whole process.

### Russia and Turkey

- The EU and the USA are facing major challenges with Russia's influence not only in Europe, but also worldwide such as: counterterrorism, Syria and Libya, cyber press, strategic communications, Asia, North Korea and China. Those are threats that both sides of the Atlantic need to urgently and jointly face.
- Russia is seeking to destroy NATO and to harm the European Union's unity, as well as its relationship with the USA, aiming to discredit this special bond to the rest of the world, in the process.
- The EU and the USA need to work together, remaining united and mutually loyal, otherwise others will set-up and decide the future of the world' agenda. Hence why it is necessary to put into place a Western strategy [EU and US] to face Russia's threats. Sanctions are essential in

terms of engaging Russia and Russian's opinion. The USA and the EU will have to give more support to Russian's opposition

- We have to invest more in countering Russia's propaganda and disinformation and the USA and the EU need to give more support to Russian's opposition. What Russia has done in Ukraine is just testing-out what they can do in the West.
- Russia is a problem in the Middle East for the EPP and not part of the solution.
- It has to be said that Turkey has increased its relations and flirtations with Russia, showing to the EU that it has other allies. On the other hand, Mr. Recep Tayyip Erdogan will continue to play with Mr. Donald Trump, because he needs the USA and the USA needs him. The question is how long Turkey's economy will last without the Western help.
- The Balkans' situation is very complicated and it is of great concern for the EU, since there is a clear absent presence on this spot. The circumstances in Serbia, Kosovo, Albania are under control by the two main players on the ground: Mr. Putin and Mr. Erdogan.

#### The Jihadi threat on both sides of the Atlantic and Radicalism

- The EU and the USA need to address the ideology of Jihadism to understand the implications of radicalisation. They both understand that cultural and liberal values, democracy, the rule of law and a free market are the only basis for a fruitful and stable partnership.
- Most EU politicians believe that the partnership with the USA is a matter of concern. A strong USA is absolutely necessary to grant these values, but it cannot be a closed and isolated America.

#### Populism in the USA and in the EU

- Mr. Trump's election represents a change and the end of the traditional left and right political parties. Nevertheless, he was elected not because he was a populist, but because he was an opportunist. His victory in the elections is related to the difficulties of the USA industrial working class, particularly in the states of Pennsylvania and Ohio, similarly to the victory of Brexit in the United Kingdom.
- The populists have shaped the narrative of Western democracy. They currently go for a more protectionist status, for more independence based on identity and on national sovereignty.
- Some current populist movements are likely being more democratic, but not liberal. This is the case in the USA and in the UK.
- Populism is a consequence of global threats. Citizens are worried that immigration will take their jobs away. They are also afraid of losing their identity and their liberal values. However, this new trend can pose threats to representative democracies, the only regime model that can preserve the rule of law and a free market economy, leading to a sort of nationalism across the West.
- Movements have been raised on both sides of the Atlantic as a democratic action to give the majority national opinion a strong say on matters such as immigration, but those movements do not necessarily mean populism. They have become the third largest movement behind the conservatives and the Christian and Social Democrats. Actually, populism has overtaken liberalism.

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- To combat populism the EU should increase compulsory political education from school age onwards.

### American Politics and the Elections in 2018

- The last election has shown that the Democratic Party had been declining both demographically and geographically. Therefore, its challenge will be expanding and being more competitive in Middle America. The Democrats are confined to urban big cities and to the western states, showing their inability of succeeding in the interior of the country.
- Democrats are divided on how to face this challenge, either going for a democratic populism view, or being pragmatic and reinforce the centre of the party in this new area.
- When it comes to the Republican Party, there is also an internal division. Big debates are taking place inside the party, trying to remain the historical conservative party after Mr. Trump's election.
- The situation in the USA needs a new strategy of both parties. The American people are losing confidence in the institutions because they think they are no longer working. Americans are feeling insecure about their uncertain future.

### Concluding remarks

Mr. Rangel concluded the meetings by thanking the Hudson Institute and the IRI for having co-organised those gatherings, which have been very useful and instructive. Both sides of the Atlantic are living through intensive times and major changes and the TAG EU Delegation is leaving Washington with a much better understanding of Trump's administration; the views of Congress and also the opinions of the Democratic Party, as well as the current situation of the USA media.