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European Commission President Barroso calls for “new Atlanticism” *~EU foreign policy chief Ashton describes transatlantic ties as “fundamental”~*

BRUSSELS (March, 26 2010) – European Commission President José Manuel Barroso called today for a more dynamic transatlantic relationship based on results rather than process and on strategic dialogue between leaders over an “endless lists of issues.”

“We must go beyond traditional Atlanticism and build a new Atlanticism,” Barroso told the Brussels Forum, the annual high-level conference on the transatlantic relationship attended by heads of state, senior officials from European Union institutions and member states, U.S. and Canadian officials, Congressional representatives, parliamentarians and academics. “All the pieces of the jigsaw are in place for a qualitative leap in the transatlantic relationship; for a dynamic approach,” said the former Portuguese premier.

Referring to figures showing greater U.S. investment in Spain than in China and India combined, Barroso rejected talk of a new world order dominated by Washington and Beijing. “All this talk about a G2 is a complete mistake,” said Barroso, drawing attention to “growing differences between the United States and China on many matters.”

Barroso urged American and European leaders to work together more closely to tackle global challenges such as terrorism and climate change. “We need to think global and act transatlantic,” he said. In a nod to an EU-U.S. summit that was postponed by President Barack Obama, Barroso called for future meetings to be “much more efficient and results-oriented, and occasions for a high-level, less scripted, strategic dialogue between leaders.”

Addressing a panel on the relevance of the transatlantic relationship in an increasingly globalizing world, EU High Representative for Foreign Affairs and Security Policy Baroness Cathy Ashton told the Forum the transatlantic relationship was “fundamental for business and fundamental for people.” Denying that there was a “values crisis” in transatlantic relations, Baroness Ashton said the relationship would continue “forever.”



Taking issue with Ashton, Estonian President Toomas Ilves said the problems that had dominated transatlantic relations for the last 60 years had been solved. “Europe is not on the radar screen in the way it has been in the past,” he said, adding that the “real problems for the United States lie elsewhere.”

Anne-Marie Slaughter, Directory of Policy Planning at the U.S. Department of State, said the fact that the transatlantic relationship did not create headlines was a “good thing.” Praising the EU’s Lisbon Treaty, which created Baroness Ashton’s new role, Slaughter said: “Post-Lisbon we are in a better position to be fundamental partners solving global problems.” The U.S. official added that Secretary of State Hillary Clinton found it an “enormous advantage” to be able to pick up the phone to Ashton as an “equal counterpart.”

Brussels Forum is an annual high-level meeting of the most influential North American and European political, corporate, and intellectual leaders to address pressing challenges facing both sides of the Atlantic. Participants include heads of state, senior officials from the European Union institutions and the member states, U.S. and Canadian officials, Congressional representatives, Parliamentarians, academics, and media.

Brussels Forum is organized by the German Marshall Fund of the United States (GMF), the Federal Authorities of Belgium, the Egmont Institute, and Daimler. Additional sponsors include the European Union Delegation to the United States, Eli Lilly and Company, BNP Paribas Fortis, the Ministry of Defence Republic of Latvia, and the Japan Foundation Center for Global Partnership.

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