



**EUROPEAN COUNCIL
THE PRESIDENT**



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**Remarks by President of the European Council
Herman Van Rompuy on the occasion of the launch of the
EU-US Transatlantic Trade and Investment Partnership
(TTIP)**

This is a special moment. At the last EU-US summit with President Obama, we jointly decided to see if launching such historical negotiations would be possible. It was. And now we can already start the talks. A year and a half ago, we were not even sure the place had a door, and now we are entering the negotiating room together.

It is a sign of the strong political will on both sides. This February, in the European Council, all European Heads of State and Government reiterated their support for a comprehensive trade and investment deal with the United States – a political signal formalised last Friday when ministers under the Irish presidency formally gave the EU negotiators the green light to start the talks.

It shows the political will to work together with our long-standing and most trusted partner on the essential objective for governments on either side of the Atlantic: growth, jobs and prosperity. We both know there are no magic solutions, recent economic turbulence underlines it. But if we cannot expect to harvest new jobs today, we can plant the seeds for the jobs of tomorrow. And that's exactly what a trade agreement is about.

Together Europe and the United States are the backbone of the world economy. Opening up that space further for opportunities for businesses and consumers is simple common sense. Not just our own economies but also those of our trading partners will benefit. The positive ramifications will even go beyond the economy as such. We are making the economies all over the world even more interdependent. This will make the world safer.

P R E S S

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What's at stake with a transatlantic free trade area, is to enshrine Europe and America's role as the world's standard setters; beyond product specifications, by setting a positive force in shaping the way we work, and the way we live our daily lives. This is of key strategic significance. The Atlantic is not the past. It is also the future.

That is why we are impatient to start, although we know the negotiations won't be a smooth ride. Obviously there are and will be sensitive issues on each side. With flexibility, open-mindedness, and some creativity - the greatest asset for negotiators and statesmen - I am confident we will find solutions. There is too much at stake.

We will find these solutions, not only because we know the great benefits it will bring, not only because we share the same rules-based approach at home and abroad in these matters, but also because trade is one, vital part of our overall relationship. It will knit our transatlantic destinies even closer together.

The launch of our negotiations therefore stands for our continued common commitment to engage with each other in order to engage with the world. The EU and its Member States are ready to engage and look forward to the new trade landscape we will shape together.
