

Wednesday, 4 June 2008 - Brussels

EU-United States summit

Ana Maria Gomes (PSE). - (PT) The last EU-United States summit in the Bush era will take place on 10 June. That era has been forever tainted by the illegal invasion of Iraq and the ignominy of Abu Ghraib, Guantanamo and the secret prisons. We will breathe a sigh of relief after eight years of going backwards. Eight wasted years in terms of what could have been an effective fight against terrorism compatible with the values of democracy and human rights. Wasted years in terms of the quest for peace in the Middle East, wasted in terms of the fight against organised crime and in terms of disarmament and nuclear non-proliferation.

Yet we know that Barack Obama will be the Democratic Party candidate and that hope is returning. Obama has pledged his support for strengthening the Nuclear Non-Proliferation Treaty and has even upheld the objective of complete nuclear disarmament. This has already had a knock-on effect on his Republican opponent, Senator McCain, who has aligned his position with Obama's and who has added that he supports the withdrawal of tactical nuclear weapons from Europe. This proves that there is a critical mass in the United States that is ready for a change of strategy.

Europe must approach the new Administration as early as possible with regard to drawing up joint strategies for the 2010 NPT Review Conference, and for all frameworks in which global security and, especially, non-proliferation of weapons of mass destruction are at stake, including negotiations with Iran. With this in mind, contacts between Members of the European Parliament and of the US Congress are of the utmost importance and should be stepped up right away.

Mr President, the US leadership is no longer enough to combat today's threats and to prevent new ones in the future. It is, however, still indispensable. We are confident that President Obama - and I hope it is him - will be up to the challenge and that Europe will be able to use every opportunity to contribute towards a lasting strengthening of the multilateral system.