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EU & Brazil: Working towards a strategic partnership

EU-Brazil Summit

Lisbon, Portugal, 4 July 2007
Excellencies,

Ladies and Gentlemen,

I am very pleased to be with you today.

Let me first welcome your initiative to set up an EU-Brazil Round Table. We expect it to become a tangible, visible and valuable example of cooperation between the EU and Brazil. The Commission will, no doubt, make full use of all the opportunities to exchange views with you.

I have come here on this special occasion of the first EU Brazil Summit with a strong message: “The EU is deeply committed to developing a strategic partnership with Brazil. There is a huge potential to unlock in this relationship at the multilateral, regional and bilateral level. I also believe that by activating dialogue we will support the conclusion of an EU-Mercosur Agreement”.

Let me say why I am convinced that close cooperation between the EU and Brazil is extremely relevant today.

Looking at Brazil today, we see a major trading nation and emerging global political power.

Economic stabilisation conducted under the leadership of President Lula has spurred economic growth, and put Brazil on the right track to be South America’s powerhouse.

Brazil represents close to 80% of Mercosur GDP and has the means to impulse its integration.

Brazil is a pillar of South America’s stability. It has emerged as a champion of the developing world in the UN.

There is a wide range of areas on which we share views and on which we can raise the level of our cooperation:

• On global challenges EU and Brazil are like-minded partners in key areas. We share a strong belief in multilateralism.

• We’ve co-operated in the success of great projects such as the International Criminal Court or the Convention on Cultural Diversity. We can do more particularly in promoting human rights, peace and stability in the world (Haiti, Timor…) and efforts to tackle global poverty.

• Brazil is also a vital actor on climate change and protection of forests. This will be one of the key items discussed during the Summit. We have already set up a dialogue on environment at the level of experts and are about to launch one on energy.

• Tomorrow I will be hosting in Brussels an International Bio-Fuels Conference in which President Lula, Prime Minister Socrates and President Barroso will participate. The international community must ensure that bio-fuels are developed in ways that protect our planet. Co-operation with Brazil, a constantly innovating leader in the sector, is essential.

• One of my primary objectives will be to develop contacts between our civil societies in promoting academic and cultural programmes. A strong civil society dialogue is also a powerful way of encouraging a better understanding between Brazil and Europe. Too often the EU is seen in Brazil as a commercial block only. Business can also contribute to change this vision.
We have agreed to enhance economic co-operation in a number of sectors which have been identified as key to our relationship. Just to mention a few examples, research and technology, maritime transport, satellite navigation or social issues.

With your involvement, these sector policy dialogues will complement and contribute with valuable input for our trade negotiations, be they multilateral or bi-regional. When I call upon you to contribute, I also mean in the sense of making the necessary compromises in order for the negotiators to narrow the gap and find common ground. This is particularly valid in the DDA context, where the outcome of Potsdam was really disappointing for the Commission and the EU member states.

This would also be the case when the time is right for resuming the negotiations for an EU-Mercosur agreement. Let me assure you that the Commission is committed to negotiating an ambitious and comprehensive bi-regional agreement as soon as it is technically and politically feasible.

To conclude, I am delighted to see the launch of an EU-Brazil CEO round table. This is the visible sign of your support and firm endorsement of the proposed strategic partnership. I would welcome your engagement in making the EU-Brazil Strategic Partnership a success.

I am hopeful that our already strong relationship can be taken to a yet higher level, a partnership in which both sides add strength to each other. Let us jointly ensure that we can realise its full potential.

Thank you.