

STATEMENT OF HEADS OF STATE OR GOVERNMENT

The Heads of State or Government discussed recent developments concerning possible intelligence issues and the deep concerns that these events have raised among European citizens.

They underlined the close relationship between Europe and the USA and the value of that partnership. They expressed their conviction that the partnership must be based on respect and trust, including as concerns the work and cooperation of secret services.

They stressed that intelligence gathering is a vital element in the fight against terrorism. This applies to relations between European countries as well as to relations with the USA. A lack of trust could prejudice the necessary cooperation in the field of intelligence gathering.

The Heads of State or Government took note of the intention of France and Germany to seek bilateral talks with the USA with the aim of finding before the end of the year an understanding on mutual relations in that field. They noted that other EU countries are welcome to join this initiative.

They also pointed to the existing Working Group between the EU and the USA on the related issue of data protection and called for rapid and constructive progress in that respect.

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