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HOLDER**

AT EU/US JUSTICE AND HOME AFFAIRS MINISTERIAL MEETING

WASHINGTON, D.C.

I am honored by the opportunity to join you today for the exchange of instruments between the European Union and the United States for two essential treaties on mutual legal assistance and extradition. I want to welcome the members of the European Parliament who have joined us for this occasion.

Before I address the value of these treaties and talk about how they can benefit us all, I would like to recall the origin of these negotiations. We began negotiating these treaties immediately after September 11, 2001. There were many people on both sides of the Atlantic who worked hard to complete these negotiations and the all of the bilateral treaties that were required to bring these into force.

But one man stands above all the others in terms of deserving recognition, and that is our beloved colleague, Mark Richard.

Mark served in the Justice Department for 40 years, and was the father of our entire international program. He served in Brussels the last 7 years of his career as our Counselor to the European Union. I understand it was it was Mark, along with Gilles de Kerchove and Hans Nillson, who are here today, who came up with the idea to negotiate these treaties. Mark led the US delegation in negotiations on the overall agreements, as well as the bilateral implementing treaties.

Unfortunately, Mark passed away this past Memorial Day weekend, so he is not here to see his work come to fruition. I would like, however, to introduce his wife of 48 years, Sheila Richard, who has joined us today, as well as their daughters, Cara and Alisa, and their son Dan and their daughter in law, Amy O'Neill Richard. Sheila, Cara, Alisa, Dan and Amy, we welcome you.

We also want to assure you that there is not a day goes by that lawyers in the Justice Department don't say to themselves, "What would Mark do in this situation?" He was an inspiration to all of us and his spirit lives on in the Department. We are thrilled that you are here today as we take the final step to bring these agreements, which Mark worked tirelessly to advance, into force. Thank you for joining us.

These treaties represent a great achievement, both for their practical benefits and in what they symbolize. They give us important new tools to combat crime, including terrorism. Let me list some of these tools:

- The extradition agreement will modernize the existing bilateral extradition treaties with each of the Member States, in many cases replacing lists of offenses that are deemed extraditable with a dual criminality standard.

- 1 The mutual legal assistance agreement contains cutting edge provisions for future legal cooperation. These include authority:

- to identify the existence of bank accounts associated with the subjects in the other's jurisdiction in terrorism and other serious crimes,

- 1 to conduct joint task forces across national lines directed against terrorism and serious crime cases rather than merely "coordinating" inquiries;

- 2 to obtain assistance in administrative matters that may lead to criminal investigations in matters involving terrorism and serious crimes;

- 3 to acquire evidence, including testimony, by means of video conferencing,

- 4 to use data acquired via the agreement for additional serious offenses other than just the one triggering the initial request.

But beyond their important practical value, these treaties symbolize the joint resolve of Europe and the United States to fight terrorism and transnational crime.

The United States is profoundly grateful that strong cooperation from our international partners has helped us reduce violent crime and prevent another major terrorist attack on American soil. Our common values and our mutual interest in protecting our citizens strengthen our resolve to deepen our cooperation with Europe. We look forward to implementing these important instruments in a spirit of mutual respect and cooperation.

