

Brussels, 23 November 2004

## **EU/Russia: The four “common spaces”**

*At the St Petersburg Summit in May 2003 the EU and Russia confirmed their commitment to further strengthen their strategic partnership. They agreed to reinforce co-operation with a view to creating four EU/Russia common spaces, in the long term and within the framework of the existing Partnership and Co-operation Agreement (PCA), on the basis of common values and shared interests. These common spaces cover economic issues and the environment; issues of freedom, security and justice; external security, including crisis management and non-proliferation; and research and education, including cultural aspects.*

On 25 November 2004 the EU will host a Summit with Russia in The Hague. The development of the four common spaces will be a central point on the Summit's agenda. Negotiations on a package of Road Maps for the creation of the four common spaces are ongoing and will continue right up to the Summit itself. These Road Maps, which will set out shared objectives for EU/Russia relations as well as the actions necessary to make these objectives a reality, will determine the agenda for co-operation between the EU and Russia for the medium-term.

### **Common economic space**

The Summit will reconfirm the commitment of the EU and Russia to pursue the creation of a common economic space.

The aim is to put in place the conditions for increased and diversified trade between the EU and Russia and to create new investment opportunities by pursuing economic integration and regulatory convergence, market opening, trade facilitation and infrastructure development. The Common Economic Space will cover a wide range of issues, such as trade, investments, industrial cooperation, enterprise policy, but also more specific areas such as Intellectual Property Rights, competition and agriculture. In this space, the EU and Russia also intend to maintain the momentum of the existing energy dialogue and take forward work in the field of transport, on issues such as infrastructure projects, maritime safety, satellite navigation and aviation, including on the phasing out of Siberian overflight charges. Co-operation on environmental issues will form a central part of the work to create this space.

### **Common space of freedom, security and justice**

The EU and Russia have considerable interest in strengthening co-operation in the field of justice and home affairs to tackle the common threats of organised crime, terrorism and other illegal activities of a cross border nature. For the EU, this co-operation must reflect the necessary balance between security on the one hand, and justice and freedom, on the other, and the common values which underpin EU/Russia relations.

The EU will underline the centrality of these values (democracy, human rights and rule of law) for work on this space and will propose that the EU and Russia establish regular consultations on human rights, including the rights of persons belonging to minorities and on fundamental freedoms, including freedom of the media.

The Summit, which follows a first visit of the EU's counter-terrorism co-ordinator Gijs de Vries to Moscow, will note the readiness of the EU and Russia to step up co-operation to prevent as well as combat terrorism, following the recent horrific terrorist acts in Russia, in full respect of human rights.

Summit leaders will welcome the positive outcome of the first Permanent Partnership Council of Ministers of Justice and Home Affairs, which took place on 26 October 2004 in Luxembourg, and the progress made in negotiations on visa facilitation and readmission. The EU will underline its willingness to finalise negotiations on both these issues before the Moscow Summit in May 2005. It will also recall its readiness to continue to examine the conditions for visa-free travel between the EU and Russia as a long-term perspective, and underline the importance of progress on migration and border management issues, including demarcation in the Russian and Lithuanian border, as well as the finalisation of outstanding border agreements with Estonia and Latvia.

### **Common space of cooperation in the field of external security**

The aim of work on this space is to intensify co-operation on security issues and crisis management, to address new threats such as terrorism, the proliferation of weapons of mass destruction (WMD), regional conflicts and state failure and to reinforce cooperation in responding to natural disasters. This cooperation will be based on the common values which underpin the external policies of both sides, as set out in the PCA.

The EU has clearly expressed its wish that the geographical priority of this space should be the 'common neighbourhood' it shares with Russia (eg Belarus, Moldova, Georgia) where in its view it is in the interests of both the EU and Russia to promote solutions to lingering conflicts and to promote stability and prosperity.

In this space, the EU and Russia will also recall their shared interest to promote an international order based on effective multilateralism, recognising the importance of the United Nations, the OSCE and the Council of Europe.

In terms of civil protection, the EU and Russia aim to strengthen EU/Russia dialogue and co-operation in order to better respond to disasters and emergencies.

### **Common space on research, education and culture**

This space is designed to reinforce people-to-people contacts and contribute to increasing the competitiveness of the EU and Russian economies.

The idea is to capitalize on the strong EU and Russian intellectual heritage and knowledge capital to promote economic growth, involving civil society in Russia and the EU. The space will serve to intensify links and exchanges in the fields of education and culture and to promote the identification and adoption of best practices.

The EU and Russia have good co-operation on research, with the renewal of the Science and Technology co-operation agreement in 2003, and the adoption, in 2002, of the Action Plan to enhance Science and Technology co-operation. Opportunities for the participation of Russian scientists and researchers in EU-funded activities have been extended via the 6<sup>th</sup> Research and Development framework.

Russia and Europe have a rich shared heritage. In recognition of this, the Summit is expected to welcome agreement in principle to found a European Studies Institute in Moscow.