



**COUNCIL OF
THE EUROPEAN UNION**



**Extract from the press release
2903rd meeting of the EXTERNAL RELATIONS Council
Brussels, 10 and 11 November 2008**

EU-Russia relations

Ministers discussed EU-Russia relations, with a view to the summit meeting in Nice on 14 November. On the conclusion of their discussion, the Presidency made the following declaration:

1. The conflict in Georgia has affected the trust which is necessary for the partnership between the European Union and Russia. All points regarding the withdrawal of Russian troops from Georgia and the implementation of the agreements of 12 August and 8 September, as set out in the Council conclusions of 1 September and 15 and 16 October, remain valid and relevant, including those concerning access to certain areas. Russia must continue to implement its commitments and enter constructively into the international discussions which have opened in Geneva. We continue fully to support the independence, sovereignty and territorial integrity of Georgia.
2. The Commission and the Council Secretariat have carried out an in-depth examination of relations between the EU and Russia, as requested by the European Council in its 1 September conclusions. That process will continue, in particular in the light of Russia's actions. It will be taken into account in the further negotiations on the new agreement with Russia and in other aspects of EU-Russia relations; it forms part of a regular process which will be continued by the Council and the Commission after the Nice Summit.
3. For the Union, dialogue and negotiation are the best means of pursuing its aims, furthering its principles and values, and resolutely defending its interest with a united front, in accordance with the negotiating mandate, which was adopted unanimously. Negotiation and dialogue on bases such as these in no way legitimise the status quo in Georgia, or Russian action contrary to our values and principles.

P R E S S

4. In accordance with the European Council conclusions of 1 September which reiterate what is at stake in relations between the European Union and Russia, we expect Russia to behave in a responsible manner, honouring all its commitments, in a way which will restore the necessary confidence; we will remain vigilant, in particular on common neighbourhood issues that are covered by the Union's negotiating mandate.
