



FACTSHEET

EU-Russia summit Brussels, 28 January 2014

The 32nd EU-Russia summit will take place on Tuesday 28 January 2014 in Brussels. The meeting will provide an occasion to have a joint reflection between leaders on the nature and direction of the EU- Russia strategic partnership.

The summit, which will be held in a smaller composition and in a format conducive for an in-depth political discussion, will consist of a meeting among principals and key advisors, followed by a working lunch in the same format. A press conference will be held at the end of the lunch.

The EU will be represented by Herman Van Rompuy, President of the European Council, and by José Manuel Barroso, President of the European Commission. Catherine Ashton, High Representative of the Union for Foreign Affairs and Security Policy and Vice-President of the European Commission, will also take part. Russia will be represented by the President of the Russian Federation, Vladimir Putin and he will be accompanied by Foreign Minister Sergey Lavrov.

EU-Russia relations have recently been going through a challenging period and in this context the EU will seek to engage Russia in a firm yet forward-looking dialogue about the future of economic and political relations on our continent.

The discussions among leaders are expected to focus on our common interests as well as differences in light of recent developments, including the respective regional economic integration initiatives, our common neighbourhood, trade questions and WTO obligations as well as other international commitments including those in the areas of rule of law, human rights and fundamental freedoms, and key foreign affairs challenges, such as Syria and Iran.

P R E S S

Background:

New EU-Russia agreement

The legal basis for EU relations with Russia remains the Partnership and Cooperation Agreement (PCA) which came into force on 1 December 1997 for an initial duration of ten years, and which has been automatically extended beyond 2007 on an annual basis. It sets the principal common objectives, establishes the institutional framework for bilateral contacts, and calls for activities and dialogue in a number of areas.

Negotiations on a New Agreement to replace the current Partnership and Cooperation Agreement (PCA) started in July 2008. Some progress has been made in the negotiations and both sides have on several occasions reiterated that they would like to develop even deeper cooperation and economic integration between the EU and Russia – and lay the foundations for a future common economic space from the Atlantic to the Pacific. A New Agreement would be the key instrument to deepen these relations in the future. This comprehensive Agreement aims to provide a solid legal basis for EU-Russia relations, covering all areas of the relationship, including political dialogue, economic and trade relations, energy, sectoral cooperation as well as justice, freedom and security aspects.

Partnership for Modernisation

The principles and objectives of the Partnership for Modernisation were defined at the EU - Russia Summit in Rostov-on-Don on 31 May and 1 June 2010. The Partnership for Modernisation is a shared agenda to help bring about economic and institutional reform, with due respect for democracy and the rule of law. In 2013, the main achievements of the Partnership for Modernization have been the adoption of the Energy Roadmap 2050, an agreement between CEN/CENELEC and Rosstandart on technical standards, the creation of an appeal systems in the Russian judiciary system, and the launch of a project in the Russian Federation to protect the rights of entrepreneurs from corruption. In addition, the Partnership for Modernization supports people-to-people links and civil society dialogue. Overall, it is a pragmatic and flexible framework which provides additional momentum to the EU - Russia relations. In order to support various modernisation projects, considerable loan facilities have been made available by the European Investment Bank (EIB) (more than € 1 billion), the European Bank for Reconstruction and Development (EBRD) and the Russian Economic Development Bank (VEB).

Economic and trade relations

Economic ties between Russia and the EU have grown substantially over the last 15 years and Russia's WTO accession in August 2012 has laid the basis for further increasing business opportunities. Russia remains the EU's third most important trading partner (after the US and China), with 123 billion EUR in exported goods to Russia (7.3 % of all EU exports, 4th place after US, China, Switzerland) and 213 billion EUR in imported goods in 2012 (11.9 % of all EU imports, 2nd place after China). The EU is thus by far the largest market for Russian goods, accounting for 45% of Russian exports in 2012. The EU is also the main supplier for Russia, with a 34% market share, followed by China and Ukraine.

In both 2011 and 2012, bilateral trade increased by more than 10%. More specifically, Russia is the EU's most important single supplier of energy products, accounting for 29 % of EU consumption of oil and gas. In turn, Russia's economy remains highly based on the export of energy raw materials, with the EU as its most important destination. In 2012, 76 % of Russia's exports to the EU consisted of crude oil, oil products and natural gas.

In 2011, EU stocks of foreign investment in Russia were estimated at 167 billion EUR. This was more than EU foreign investment stocks in China and India combined.

In order to fully explore the potential trade benefits and business opportunities the EU is stressing the importance of full implementation of Russia's WTO commitments. Even if amicable solutions are preferable, the EU has already felt obliged to refer a case (recycling fees on vehicles) to the WTO dispute settlement mechanism, and will be ready to do so again if needed.

Human Rights

Issues and concerns regarding both the EU's and Russia's international commitments to guarantee human rights and fundamental freedoms are a central theme in EU-Russia relations. Since 2005, the EU and Russia have held regular, six-monthly human rights consultations (the last meeting was held on 28 November 2013 - [press release](#)). These meetings have provided a platform for dialogue on human rights issues in Russia and the EU and on EU-Russian cooperation on human rights matters, notably in international fora. The EU has continuously raised issues of concern including pressure on civil society in Russia, the independence of the judiciary and the harassment of human rights defenders and opposition leaders. While the EU has welcomed some recent cases of amnesty it continues to deplore the lack of investigation into several (individual) criminal cases and the lack of systemic reforms in the area of human rights. The EU has also expressed its concerns about the recent wave of restrictive legislation affecting the work of civil society, fostering discrimination against minorities and curtailing the enjoyment of fundamental freedoms of assembly, expression and association.

Citizens' mobility

Negotiations on an upgraded visa facilitation agreement are on-going. The updated agreement would extend the categories of beneficiaries of visa facilitation among others to representatives of civil society organisations, and a broader spectrum of family members. Long-term multiple-entry visas would be foreseen in more cases than under the present agreement and wider groups of visa applicants would benefit from visa fee waivers. The present visa facilitation agreement entered into force in 2007. It provides EU and Russian citizens with a lower visa fee, wider issuance of multiple-entry visas as well as simplified requirements for supporting documents.

The implementation of the "Common Steps towards visa-free short-term travel", launched at the Summit in December 2011, is underway. They concern actions revolving around document security, for example the introduction of biometric passports; combating illegal immigration; border management; public order, security and judicial cooperation, including the fight against transnational organised crime, terrorism and corruption as well as human rights related to the freedom of movement. Once the Common Steps are fully implemented, a decision on the launch of negotiations on a visa waiver agreement can be taken.

Foreign Policy

EU and Russia have a common interest to jointly address global security challenges. Regular Political Dialogue meetings on a wide range of foreign policy issues are therefore an essential element in EU - Russia relations. The aim is to improve and intensify cooperation between the two parties, but also in existing multilateral formats. Addressing challenges such as the Syrian crisis, the Middle East Peace Process, the Iranian nuclear issue and other common interests remains crucial to achieve the common goal of peace and security in our common neighbourhood as well as internationally. The EU insists on the need for jointly working with Russia towards viable solutions to protracted conflicts in our shared neighbourhood. The EU continues to recall Russia's international commitments in relation to these conflicts and underlines that respect for the sovereignty and territorial integrity of its neighbours remains indispensable.
