



**EUROPEAN COUNCIL
THE PRESIDENT**



Warsaw, 30 September 2011
EUCO 84/11
PRESSE 340
PR PCE 57

**Remarks by President of the European Council
Herman Van Rompuy
following the Eastern Partnership Summit**

Let me first express my gratitude to Prime Minister Tusk for hosting this second summit of the Eastern Partnership in the beautiful setting here in Warsaw.

I can think of no better place to have the second Eastern Partnership Summit than here in Warsaw. The message of our Eastern partnership is a perspective for those who choose the path of reform and democracy. A vision that offers more opportunity and more prosperity to their people.

Poland is a vivid example of what is possible when countries take reform seriously. You are not only a natural promoter of these ideas, but also a dedicated one, and we are all grateful to you for that.

Two years on after the Prague summit, our partner countries in the East remain a priority for the European Union. I am therefore happy that we have been able to register good progress and have set out new goals for the next two years.

First, we are well on the way to concluding new and upgraded contractual relations with most of our partners. We are looking forward to the possibility of finalising the negotiations on the EU-Ukraine Association Agreement before the end of this year. And if the conditions are in place, negotiations on deep and comprehensive free trade could also start with Georgia and the Republic of Moldova by the end of the year.

Second, we are moving forward on our agendas in the field of trade and mobility. On mobility, we confirmed the way ahead towards visa free regimes, in due course, provided the conditions are met.

Third, we have created a network of multilateral contacts between the 27 member states and 6 partner countries across a wide range of policy areas. Our cooperation is embracing a larger number of policy areas that directly impact on our respective socio-and economic developments.

P R E S S

Dirk De Backer - Spokesperson of the President - (+32 (0)2 281 9768 - +32 (0)497 59 99 19
Jesús Carmona - Deputy Spokesperson of the President - (+32 (0)2 281 9548 / 5150 - +32 (0)475 65 32 15
press.president@consilium.europa.eu <http://www.consilium.europa.eu/>

Fourth, we have launched flagship initiatives (regarding energy efficiency, regional electricity markets, renewable energies and border control) to support our objectives of strengthening the policy cooperation.

And fifth, we have reached out to all stakeholders – civil society, parliaments, the business community. Achieving our goals requires broad support and engagement. My meetings with the Civil Society yesterday is a part of this work. And I will later this afternoon meet with the business community at the newly created Eastern Partnership Business Forum in Sopot.

Earlier this year the EU has agreed on a new framework for the Neighbourhood Policy. This will open further opportunities for our Eastern European neighbours as well, and will allow for programs better tailored to individual situations.

I also want to make it clear that, the EU acknowledges the European aspirations and European choice of some partners. We are prepared to support partners along this road. The stronger the commitment to pursue genuine reform and to uphold our shared values, the more support you will be able to count on the EU.

The European Union is, at its heart, a community of values. Ultimately, these values guide our policies, and these values are reflected in our approach to individual countries.

In the case of Belarus, the EU remains attached to the vision of a democratic Belarus. A Belarus with its proper place in European cooperation.

But we can not re-engage fully with Belarus without clear progress towards democratisation and respect for human rights. This means, not least, the immediate release and rehabilitation of all political prisoners and the engagement in a genuine political dialogue with the opposition.

I emphasized this message yesterday when, together with Prime Minister Tusk, I met the representatives of the Belarus opposition. And the European Union sent a strong message on this from this Summit to Minsk as well.

A word on the still existing protracted conflicts in the region. Without an end to conflict, reforms will have no effect and democracy will not flourish. Nor can the EU's relations with its partners reach their full potential. Security and prosperity in Europe depend on the stability of the Eastern partners. The EU stands ready to support any confidence building and reconciliation efforts. We have both the means and the experience to do so.

Finally, the summit today, in the good presence of Heads and State and Government here in Warsaw, gave proof of our clear determination to maintain the EU's commitment to our Eastern European partners. For the European Union, there is much at stake for the future. The success of our Eastern European partners and our Eastern Partnership is a critically important building block towards a European continent whole, prosperous, free and at peace.

Thank you Prime Minister Tusk, thank you Warsaw, and thank you Poland for this successful summit.