

Brussels, 13 November 2008

## EU-Russia Summit in Nice on 14 November

***Nice will host the next EU-Russia Summit on November 14, which, following the meeting of EU Foreign Ministers of 10 November, will confirm the continuation of negotiations for a New EU-Russia Agreement. Alongside topics such as the economic and financial crisis, energy security, and climate change, the Summit will also address the recent conflict in the Caucasus and other international issues such as Iran and proposals for a new European security architecture. In addition, the summit will review the state of play in the four Common Spaces<sup>1</sup>. The Commission will be represented by the President of the European Commission, José Manuel Barroso, accompanied by Commissioner for External Relations and European Neighbourhood Policy Benita Ferrero-Waldner, and Trade Commissioner Catherine Ashton.***

Prior to the Summit, President of the European Commission, José Manuel Durão Barroso, said: *"The conflict in Georgia has emphasised the crucial need for permanent political dialogue between the EU and the Russian Federation, while the global economic crisis has underlined once more the interdependence between the EU and Russian economies. It is our belief that the New Agreement offers the best possibility for the EU to advance its interests while defending its values."*

Commissioner for External Relations and European Neighbourhood Policy, Benita Ferrero-Waldner added: *"The Commission's recent review of EU Russia relations has received overwhelming backing from EU member States. Russia needs the EU, and the EU has a clear interest in pursuing close co operation with Russia. Our team will approach the forthcoming negotiations with Russia with a clear-eyed sense of where the EU sees its own advantage. At the same time, the EU stands firm on the positions we have adopted since the Georgia crisis: the Geneva process must advance, and the principle of territorial integrity must be upheld."*

Commissioner for Trade, Catherine Ashton commented: *"The EU-Russia trade relationship is now worth around EUR 260 billion a year. While the EU is a strong economic partner for Russia, our relationship could be much more valuable if Russia were to join the WTO."*

The Summit will set a date for the next round of negotiations for the new EU-Russia Agreement, for which the mandate was adopted by the EU Council of Ministers on 26 May 2008. Negotiations for the Agreement were launched at the last EU-Russia summit in June in Khanty-Mansiisk and the first round of negotiations took place on 4 July 2008. Following the conflict in the Caucasus the European Council of 1 September 2008 decided to postpone meetings on the negotiations. At the meeting of EU Foreign Ministers of 10 November the Commission received political backing to pursue negotiations.

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<sup>1</sup> ***Common Economic Space; Common Space of Freedom, Security and Justice; Common Space of External Security and the Common Space of Research and Education***

The new Agreement will cover results-orientated political co-operation, the perspective of deep economic integration, a level playing field for energy relations based on the principles of the Energy Charter, closer relations in the field freedom, security and justice, and a mutual opening of the educational and scientific systems. The new agreement will build upon the current four Common Spaces.

The EU does not accept status quo in Georgia. Council conclusions have made clear that the Russian violation of territorial integrity and unilateral recognition of Abkhazia and South Ossetia are unacceptable. The October GAERC noted that the withdrawal of Russian troops from the zones adjacent to South Ossetia and Abkhazia was an essential step in the implementation of the agreements of 12 August and 8 September, and called on all parties to continue to implement their commitments. The EU is fully dedicated to the international discussions provided for in these agreements (Geneva process) which continue on November 18<sup>th</sup>. The EU is committed to the independence, sovereignty and territorial integrity of Georgia.

More information:

[http://ec.europa.eu/external\\_relations/russia/sum11\\_08/index\\_en.htm](http://ec.europa.eu/external_relations/russia/sum11_08/index_en.htm)

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