

PRESIDENT OF RUSSIA DMITRY MEDVEDEV SPEECH FOLLOWING THE EU-RUSSIA SUMMIT IN BRUSSELS, 7 DECEMBER 2010:

Colleagues, ladies and gentlemen,

First of all I would like to thank my colleagues Herman Van Rompuy and José Manuel Barroso for the very good atmosphere fostered in Brussels during the 26th Summit. I'll be honest with you, we didn't only talk about football although after my friends' comments you may have got the impression that Russia's winning bid was the main subject of discussion. No, I am going to have to disappoint you: we talked about far more boring things. One of them is our interaction in the G20 format. I will tell you what we talked about but I'll be brief because my colleagues have already informed you very precisely about everything we discussed and even the sequence in which we discussed it.

However, returning to the subject of G20, I can say that our cooperation within the group is very useful because those coordinated approaches and positions that emerge through the communication between Russia and the European Union help, in my view, to address the most complex issues connected with the development of global economy. Our main challenge now is to continue with the reform of the global financial system.

One of the topics that did not evoke as many comments is climate change. As you know, consultations on this subject are taking place at present in Cancun. None of us present here are optimistic enough to believe that something substantial will be agreed there, but nevertheless those negotiations are very important. Ultimately we must move to a comprehensive and compulsory agreement in this area.

Let me remind you that a small but crucial step in this direction was made at the Copenhagen Climate Change Conference, and now we must focus our efforts in this area. It seems to me that practically everyone understands the importance of this issue today. Frankly, after the colossal drought and wildfires in Russia last summer even some of the sceptics in our country have realised that climate processes are extremely complex. We must think about what should be done next.

Of course, we talked about the Partnership for Modernisation, as my colleagues have just said. Once again, I would like to thank the EU leadership for its close attention to this idea. Indeed, the modernisation policy is the top development priority for our country. Apart from introducing changes, gaining access to new technologies, creating more efficient and less energy intensive economy, this policy stipulates upgrading social institutions. In this context we are always in dialogue, as my colleagues have said, discussing various issues in a completely open and confidential manner, which, of course, does not mean that our positions coincide perfectly on all subjects.

We believe that we already have a few achievements to our credit. We cannot expect to take our cooperation in this field to some extraordinary level in just a year. But it is evident that even the fragmented efforts moving our cooperation forward today are good results, especially since our agreements with the EU are supplemented by bilateral agreements with some of our partners among EU member states. Just recently, over the past few days, such agreements have been signed with Italy and Poland. Therefore, it seems to me that the practical aspects of our partnership have been outlined. There is still much work to be done. Once again, I would like to say that Russia is very interested in this partnership and we are grateful to our European partners for their careful attention to this issue.

I don't know if we will get any questions about visas today but this is a subject of great interest to Russian citizens and, consequently, to Russian journalists. Two things are clear: first, visas must be scrapped, and second, it must be done in such a way as not to

unbalance the situation in the EU. How can we achieve this goal given these two conditions? That is what the discussion has been centred on. We must move forward. We should think about simplifying the visa regime and signing regional agreements. So I hope that this dialogue will be continued, including on the basis of the agreement on abolishing visas, which I put forward to my colleagues at our meeting in Rostov.

Energy and energy security is a traditional subject for discussion and we came back to it again today. We talked about major trans-European projects and improving the regulatory framework, which is another important aspect in this area because a number of previously adopted decisions in the European Union do not seem to us to promote a reconciliation of our positions. We hope that we will continue a meaningful dialogue, a discussion, so as not to destroy those multifaceted energy relations that bind Russia and the EU today. Those relations are very versatile, very extensive and in my opinion, absolutely advantageous for all the parties involved. Those relations are not political, despite the fact that they create a stream of political comments; those relations are pragmatic and, in my view, mutually beneficial.

I would like to confirm that we have reached an extremely important agreement, as my colleagues have said, the agreement on Russia's accession to WTO. In fact, after our agreements with the United States and the European Union, Russia's WTO entry is becoming reality. I am pleased with the progress we made in this field in the past year. In all the decades of negotiations, this year has been the most successful. I would like to thank all of my colleagues who participated in resolving this issue and our EU partners, as well as our teams, including those that took part in these negotiations.

We already have the basic outlines of a new agreement between Russia and the European Union; the 12th round of negotiations is taking place now. We are not forcing these negotiations because we understand that they will end one day with agreement on the relevant provisions. The most important articles of this agreement have been coordinated or confirmed by the parties ad referendum.

A number of important international events have taken place recently, which we certainly could not ignore. Incidentally, we will continue the discussion on this subject today because our talks are not finished. We will talk about international and economic issues.

Indeed, the recent Russia-NATO summits have taken place in a far more favourable atmosphere than the previous ones. It is important to preserve this spirit.

As for the OSCE summit, I can say that it demanded great organisational effort, which was provided by the President of Kazakhstan. Overall, it was a useful event, though I must admit that the summit revealed all of OSCE's current flaws and the certain helplessness of the organisation in adopting important decisions.

Therefore, our task is to fill the OSCE with new content, provide new opportunities and possibly renounce the stereotypes that are sometimes used in the work of this organisation.

We would like to see our collaboration continue along the lines we have agreed on, including on a number of current initiatives, for example the Russian-German initiative to launch the Russia-EU Committee on foreign policy and security at the ministerial level. Other reliable channels could be used as well. In short, all of these projects must be implemented.

We reviewed a whole range of regional issues, namely Transdniester and Nagorno-Karabakh, and we must continue our frank discussion on these issues. I hope that this

will contribute to the resolution of these complex frozen conflicts and will help achieve the relevant agreements.

Overall, I fully agree with my colleagues that the summit was conducted in a completely open, trusting and friendly atmosphere, and allowed us to move forward on a number of vital areas of our cooperation. I would like to thank my colleagues for very constructive and substantive work.