

Brussels, 1 June 2010

## **EU and Russia launch new partnership for modernization**

***The 25th EU - Russia Summit took place in Rostov-on-Don on 31 May and 1 June. The Summit was hosted by President Dmitri Medvedev, accompanied by the Foreign Minister of Russia, Mr Sergey Lavrov. The EU was represented by Mr Herman van Rompuy, President of the European Council, and by Mr José Manuel Barroso, President of the European Commission. The High Representative for Foreign Affairs and Security Policy/ Vice-President of the Commission Catherine Ashton and European Trade Commissioner Karel de Gucht also attended the Summit.***

European Commission President José Manuel Barroso remarked: "The EU-Russia Partnership for Modernisation was a common vision at the last Summit in Stockholm. Today, we launched its concrete priorities. This Partnership is a shared modernisation agenda to advance our economies and bring our citizens closer together. This ambitious venture will also contribute to the global recovery and stronger international economic governance."

The discussions took place in an open and business-like atmosphere. They focussed on common challenges facing both the EU and Russia, such as the global economic crisis, climate change, energy relations, and international and regional issues.

The leaders gave their backing to an EU-Russia Partnership for Modernisation and agreed a Joint Statement setting out the main priority areas for future work. This Partnership will now be elaborated in more detail by coordinators on both sides

Leaders also discussed joint policy responses to the global economic crisis, recent developments in the EU and Russia in this regard, as well as steps towards stronger global economic governance. The EU recalled the importance of respecting commitments made at the G20 Summit in April, 2009, notably in avoiding protectionist measures. The EU also stressed its continued support for early Russian accession to the WTO.

The leaders discussed how to move forward the international negotiation process on climate change, and how to cooperate concretely on measures to reduce greenhouse gases. They also discussed energy and energy-security related issues, including energy efficiency and sustainable energy development.

The leaders discussed progress to date and the way ahead in the EU-Russia visa dialogue. The EU and Russia reiterated their commitment to the long-term objective of visa free travel between the EU and Russia, based on a step-by-step approach focused on substance and practical progress. Work will now begin on preparing a list of common steps for a visa-free travel regime.

The Summit also took note of progress in the negotiations on a new EU - Russia Agreement, which is to provide a solid basis for deepened bilateral relations covering all aspects of the relationship.

The EU welcomed number of positive developments in the area of human rights, including the ratification of Protocol 14 of the European Convention on Human Rights and the continued moratorium on the death penalty. However, it also recalled its concerns on other issues, including the situation in the Northern Caucasus, the protection of human rights defenders in Russia and the reform of the penitentiary system.

The parties discussed the prospects for greater cooperation on crisis management, and reviewed progress in the expert talks aimed at resuming negotiations on a Framework Agreement on Russia's participation in EU crisis management operations.

The EU and Russia discussed a number of key international and regional issues, including the Iranian nuclear issue, the Middle East Peace Process, Afghanistan/Pakistan, European security and the protracted conflicts in Georgia and the Republic of Moldova. The EU reiterated the importance of improving dialogue and cooperation as regards the improvement of security and stability in the common neighbourhood. The EU particularly called on Russia to fully comply with its commitments following the August 2008 war in Georgia and to implement fully the agreements of 12 August and 8 September 2008.