

Speech at EU-Russia summit

15 December 2011, 15:00, Brussels

PRESIDENT OF RUSSIA DMITRY MEDVEDEV: Colleagues, ladies and gentlemen,

First, I would like to thank President of the European Council Mr Van Rompuy and President of the European Commission Mr Barroso for their hospitality.

We started the tradition of holding the second yearly summit in Brussels in the same composition right after the Lisbon Treaty came into force, and I am pleased that we are continuing this tradition. It speaks to the positive dynamics of our cooperation.

In the years since, we have developed positive and friendly relations. I value this and expect today's talks to be as open and productive as yesterday's conversation over dinner.

Last night, we had an in-depth discussion concerning some unpleasant issues, particularly the consequences of the global economic crisis. It is no secret that the situation remains very difficult, and the euro zone situation is also a matter of concern for all states, not just the European Union.

The European Union is indeed a major partner for us, and we hope that our colleagues will be able to overcome the difficulties they face. We are almost certain they will, and we are most interested in this outcome.

Today, we will analyse what we have done in the last six months, since our last summit in Nizhny Novgorod. I believe and openly declare that this has been a constructive period in our relations.

Our cooperation to implement road maps, in connection with the creating four common spaces, is progressing quickly. What's most important is that we've completed talks on Russia's accession to the WTO. I would like to once again publicly thank European Union and European Commission leadership for helping Russia join the WTO. This is an important, long-awaited event for us. The official decision on accession will be made tomorrow, and I am certain that this will give very good additional momentum to the advancement of our relations, which are currently at a very high level. I hope it will also allow us to activate talks on the basic agreement between Russia and the European Union.

Our Partnership for Modernisation is developing dynamically. I hope it will improve the competitiveness of our economies and support our country in modernising the Russian economy. We will discuss the specific results of this effort and evaluate how successfully our joint projects are progressing.

We also have serious achievements in the EU-Russia energy dialogue. The first line of the Nord Stream pipeline came into commission in November, and many of us here participated in the launch ceremony. Our country has essentially taken a

step toward ensuring stable supplies of energy resources to European consumers and, I hope, strengthened its standing as a reliable partner.

Progress has been made in liberalising the visa regime, as my colleagues just said. A very important document has been agreed upon: Joint Steps and Practical Measures Toward Visa-Free Short-Term Travel for Russian and EU Citizens.

We are partners, so our summits are not just held for the sake of thanking one another, but also to discuss unresolved problems which certainly exist between us, as is the case between any partners.

We are expressing our concern regarding the linear application of the so-called Third Energy Package, as well as several other energy-related documents. Naturally, there is another topic that I will have to bring up today: the European Union's unilateral steps in including aircraft in the greenhouse gas emission quotas trade system. I hope we will continue attempts to resolve all these matters, and perhaps even reach a final decision on some of them, since given the strategic partnership between Russia and the European Union, all of these issues can and should be brought to a close.

In conclusion, I would like to once again emphasise the importance of foreign policy dialogue between Russia and the European Union in today's agenda and in issues of strengthening international stability and security. Definitely, we will talk about this as well, although we discussed some of it yesterday.

I once again thank you for this meeting and for this invitation. We are ready to begin working.