

JOINT CONCLUSIONS

EU – Russia Permanent Partnership Council on Freedom, Security and Justice

Nicosia, 3 October 2012

The sixteenth meeting of the EU-Russia Permanent Partnership Council on Freedom, Security and Justice was held in Nicosia on 3 October 2012.

The European Union delegation was led by Ms. Eleni Mavrou, Minister of Interior of the Republic of Cyprus, Mr. Loukas Louka, Minister of Justice and Public Order of the Republic of Cyprus, and Ms Cecilia Malmström, European Commissioner responsible for Home Affairs.

The Russian Federation delegation was led by Mr. Alexander Konovalov, Special Envoy of the President of the Russian Federation for cooperation with the European Union in the area of Freedom, Security and Justice, Minister of Justice, and Mr. Vladimir Kolokoltsev, Minister of Interior.

The participants reviewed the progress in the implementation of the EU-Russia Roadmap for the Common Space of Freedom, Security and Justice and reached the following conclusions:

- The Parties reiterated the importance of and respect for commitments in the area of human rights and rule of law, including the independence of the judiciary, which underpin cooperation in the area of freedom, security and justice. They also expressed the necessity to prevent discrimination, protect minorities and combat hate crimes. They noted the importance of EU's prompt accession to the European Convention on Human Rights and Fundamental Freedoms.
- The Parties welcomed the ongoing implementation of "Common Steps towards visa free short term travel for Russian and EU citizens" adopted at the EU-Russia Summit of 15 December 2011 and reconfirmed their willingness to progress in joint work in that context. They welcomed in particular the experts meeting held on 14-16 March 2012 in Moscow, the exchange of written reports as well as complementary information. They noted the first expert field mission on document security which took place on 24-28 September.

- The Parties looked forward to the conclusion of the negotiations on amendments to the 2006 Russia-EU visa facilitation agreement.
- The Parties emphasized the importance of effective implementation of the EU-Russia Readmission agreement. While stressing the need to conclude the remaining implementation protocols between Russia and EU Member states, the Parties welcomed the progress achieved so far in concluding implementation protocols. The Parties stressed the importance of continuing efforts in order to further improve the application of some of the technical aspects of the Agreement.
- The Parties welcomed the amendment of the Local Border Traffic Regulation by the EU and the entry into force of the agreement between Poland and Russia on local border traffic covering the whole Kaliningrad Region and additional parts of Polish territory.
- The Parties welcomed the holding of the second Senior Officials meeting of the Migration Dialogue on 25 June 2012 in Brussels, and the emphasis placed on moving beyond information exchange into concrete actions. They endorsed the Work Plan for 2013-2014 and looked forward to its implementation. They agreed that further thematic experts level meetings should focus on practical issues and cooperation. Participants in thematic events and activities will be the competent authorities of the Russian Federation, the EU and its Members States, as well as representatives of other national international agencies, civil society organizations and experts invited upon agreement between both sides.
- The Parties agreed to strengthen their cooperation on combating transnational crime. They welcomed the good progress made at the expert meeting on the protection of confidential information held on 20-21 September 2012 in The Hague and look forward to the next steps, in accordance with each other's internal procedures, towards the conclusion of a cooperation agreement between Russia and Europol. The EU reaffirmed the importance of the adequate data protection level for the conclusion of that agreement.
- The Parties emphasised their common interest to cooperate in the fight against corruption. In this context, they welcomed the first expert seminar held in Moscow on 21 December 2011 as a step to strengthen cooperation in this area. As agreed in Moscow, they plan to hold the next conference in Brussels by the end of this year with the participation of civil society.
- The Parties reconfirmed their commitment and necessity to strengthen their cooperation and efforts to combat trafficking in human beings; to that end they plan to hold a meeting between their respective authorities.

- The Parties noted the EU's invitation to work actively within the Global Alliance against Child Sexual Abuse Online.
- The Parties agreed to undertake further measures to strengthen cooperation in the area of combating illicit drugs, primarily opiates produced in Afghanistan, cocaine of Latin American origin, synthetic drugs and new psychoactive substances. To that end the Parties agreed to provide for a wider use of existing anti-drug cooperation mechanisms within bilateral and multilateral formats, as well as intensifying cooperation between their competent bodies in suppressing drug production and trafficking, including through joint activities, exchange of information and training. In this spirit, they welcomed the recent developments in the negotiations for an Agreement on Drug Precursors and look forward to its conclusion shortly.
- The Parties acknowledged the need to strengthen judicial cooperation in criminal matters, as well as in civil and commercial law, taking into account the existing multilateral international framework. In this context the Parties welcomed Russia's accession to the 1980 Hague Convention on Child Abduction and to the 1996 Hague Convention on Child Protection. The Parties underlined their interest in further developing practical judicial cooperation in civil and criminal law; to that end they will continue discussions at expert level.
- The Parties acknowledged the importance of the protection of personal data in their practical judicial, law enforcement and anti-drug and drug precursor cooperation.
- The Parties agreed to hold one Permanent Partnership Council on Freedom, Security and Justice per year. To ensure continuity of the work between Permanent Partnership Council meetings, the Parties agreed to hold a Senior Officials Meeting in line with implementation of the EU-Russia Partnership and Cooperation Agreement.

The participants agreed to hold the next, seventeenth meeting of the Russia-EU Permanent Partnership Council on Freedom, Security and Justice in 2013 in the Russian Federation.