



European Economic and Social Committee



Civic Chamber of the Russian Federation

4th Joint workshop between the European Economic and Social Committee and the Civic Chamber of the Russian Federation

Brussels, 28 June 2011

CONCLUSIONS

Cooperation between the European Economic and Social Committee (EESC) and the Civic Chamber of the Russian Federation (CCRF) is being pursued in the framework of the Memorandum of Understanding signed in 2008 with a view to establishing regular contacts between the two Parties and fostering the exchange of information and expertise in order to acquire a better understanding of the political, economic and social situation in the EU and Russia and contribute to people-to-people contacts and mutual understanding.

This fourth joint workshop, organised by the EESC and the CCRF, was held in Brussels in the presence of Mr Staffan Nilsson, President of the EESC and Mr Evgeniy Velikhov, President of the CCRF. At this meeting, participants from both sides discussed a number of issues, including civil society involvement in the EU-Russia Partnership for Modernisation, greening the economy, sustainable development, solutions to migration problems and maintaining intercultural relations.

The participants agreed on the following conclusions:

1. We welcome the progress made in implementing the EU-Russia Partnership for Modernisation and the progress report agreed by the EU and Russia coordinators and presented to the EU-Russia Summit on 9 and 10 June 2011. In this respect, we appreciate the commitment of the EU and Russian authorities to enhance dialogue with civil society.
2. We consider that civil society of the EU and the Russian Federation has a great potential and could play an important role in the Partnership for Modernisation and call for greater and more systematic involvement of the representatives of the EESC and CCRF in the various dialogues under the Common Economic Space and in the activities foreseen in the Work Plan for the EU-Russia Partnership for Modernisation.
3. Accordingly, we urge the next EU-Russia Summit to request more structured civil society contributions in the form of joint positions by the EESC and the CCRF on subjects of

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particular interest. To this end, the EESC-and the CCRF will set up a working group and designate coordinators.

4. We will step up our cooperation with the EU-Russia Parliamentary Cooperation Committee in order to promote EU-Russia relations at all levels.
5. We insist that all relevant stakeholders should be included in the dialogue between the EU and Russia and call for better inclusion of representative organisations of civil society and especially of small and medium size enterprises and the social partners in relevant sectoral dialogues under Common Spaces and in activities organised under the Partnership for Modernisation. We consider also that there is need to modernise Russian agriculture and rural areas and a specific support for farmers' organisations should be foreseen to achieve this objective.
6. We consider that there is also a need to maintain regular dialogue between the EU and the Russian Federation on employment and social policy with effective participation of social partners from both sides in order to ensure that modernisation efforts preserve social stability.
7. We will elaborate a project for involving civil society in the Partnership for Modernisation and to submit it to the EU and Russian authorities during the next EU-Russia Summit. This project could be based on the role, which the European Economic and Social Committee is playing in the Europe 2020 Strategy.
8. We recognise that enhancing trade and industrial cooperation will require greater harmonisation and/or mutual recognition of technical regulations and standards, appropriate protection of intellectual property rights, commercial risk reduction and increased protection for investors and we call on the Russian and European authorities to step up their efforts in these fields.
9. In this respect we also consider necessary to establish a truly representative EU-Russia Business Forum to tackle the issues that hinder the development of economic and trade relations between businesses and to present recommendations how to remove the existing obstacles in mutual relations.
10. We stress that developing mutually beneficial cooperation with regard to promising innovations, the implementation of new technologies, the exchange of experiences related to public private partnerships and the fostering of exchanges of young specialists could all contribute greatly to the success of the Partnership for Modernisation.
11. We welcome efforts by the civil societies of EU and Russia, and consider that non-governmental organisations together with economic and social partners from the EU and the Russian Federation have a instrumental role to play in relation to democracy and human rights, protection of the environment and fostering people to people contacts..

12. We call for further progress in the negotiations of the new EU-Russia Agreement and we reiterate our appeal to negotiating parties to include in the forthcoming agreement provisions for civil society involvement in its implementation, and in particular the establishment of a joint EU-Russia civil society consultative body as a part of the institutional framework of the Agreement.
13. We welcome the successful regional cooperation in the frame of the Northern Dimension policy and reiterate the importance of having involvement of all partners concerned in other regional projects of mutual interest related to the Baltic Sea and the Black Sea. In this respect, we consider that civil society involvement and awareness of these cooperations would be beneficial.
14. We agree to organise the next seminar in Russia in 2012 and to include subjects related to public health and rural development amongst the possible topics for discussion.

Solving migration problems and maintaining intercultural relations

15. We welcome the progress made by the EU and Russian authorities on visa liberalisation and consider that visa-free travel would facilitate contacts between EU and Russian businesses, researchers, students and citizens.
16. We welcome the launch of the Russia-EU Dialogue on Migration, which will contribute to finding solutions for shared migration issues. We consider that taking into account the challenges and experiences of European policies on migration could be beneficial in the development of the migration policies of the Russian Federation. We stress that solving migration problems and maintaining intercultural relations is of key importance for achieving successful integration policy.
17. We consider important the organisation of the EESC-CCRF joint activities, together with other specialised institutes and governing bodies of Russia and the EU on intercultural dialogue, strengthening of social solidarity, fight against xenophobia and other forms of ethnic and religious intolerance or language discrimination.
18. We recognise that natural population decline in the EU and the Russian Federation heightens the importance of formulating successful integration policies for migrants in order to prevent rising intolerance and support for xenophobic and migrant-phobic attitudes.
19. We emphasise that the integration of immigrants is a two-way process which involves adaptation and responsibility on the part of both immigrants and host communities. We also

note that civil society organisations should be able to participate at national and regional level in the formulation of integration policies.

20. We insist that there is a need for mutually beneficial partnerships between countries of origin of migrants and host countries in order to avoid impact on development and economic growth and to prevent brain drain.
21. We consider the European Integration Forum hosted by the EESC, which provides an opportunity for civil society organisations to express their views on migrant integration issues and discuss challenges and priorities with the European institutions, to be a positive example that should be taken into account. This Forum together with Russian organisations active on migration issues could be involved in the cooperation between the EU and the Russian Federation on migration.
22. We consider that access to education, employment and social security systems for migrants are of pivotal importance for integration. However, we recognise that the civic and political participation of migrants in host societies still needs to be improved and should not be hindered by unnecessary bureaucratic obstacles.
23. We consider that shared forums, cultural exchanges and the promotion of mutual understanding of languages, traditions and religions could contribute greatly to improving interactions between immigrants and host societies and reducing ethnic and religious intolerance.
24. We support the guiding principles and recommendations for action set out in the Report "Living Together: Combining diversity and freedom in 21st-century Europe" of the Group of Eminent persons of the Council of Europe, presented to the Council of Ministers of the Council of Europe in May 2011 and recognise that there is a need to extend the full rights and obligations of citizenship, including the right to vote at municipal elections, to as much of the resident population as possible, in order to broaden the base of our democracies.

Greening the economy

25. We consider that the green economy must be understood in the context of sustainable development and requires transforming our development model to place an equal focus on economic growth, social inclusion and preservation of the environment. We understand that the shift to a green economy will be difficult and will require an effort from the whole of society, including governments, the social partners and various other stakeholders.
26. We call for the development of suitable policy frameworks at the multilateral, regional and national levels to ensure the transition towards a green economy, the promotion of sustainable consumption and production patterns and the preservation of ecosystems.

27. We recommend that environmental policy priorities and environmental requirements should be included in general development plans aimed at solving socio-economic problems. The political authorities must play a leading role in promoting sustainability, by creating an effective regulatory environment for encouraging industries' own initiatives.
28. We believe that there is a need for a well-designed regulatory framework at international level, which can define rights and create incentives for driving green economy activities forward. We recognise the progress already made towards the transition to a green economy both in the EU and in the Russian Federation and urge that more efforts are made to ensure effective and genuine implementation of relevant legislation.
29. We consider energy production - particularly renewable energies - and agriculture to be key sectors when it comes to greening the economy and believe that they could also serve as good case studies for measuring the transition towards a green economy. We recommend that the EU and the Russian Federation consider these sectors as a starting point for their cooperation.
30. We encourage the adoption of more comprehensive and balanced tools and indicators that go beyond GDP, so as to reflect the extent to which production and consumption activities can be detrimental to natural and human capital. In this respect, accumulated environmental damage, biodiversity loss, resource depletion, landscape degradation and the effect of pollution on human health should be taken into account.
31. We encourage the private sector to assume its responsibilities when it comes to compliance with environmental requirements, provided that it is granted sufficient legal certainty and predictability to plan the required investments. We recognise that SMEs are key actors in promoting green goods and services and call for specific support to help them enter new markets.
32. We urge that steps be taken at the multilateral and regional levels to facilitate trade in environmental goods and services. A stable regulatory framework for green products should be established at global level in order to restore confidence and prevent early sustainable movers from eroding their competitiveness.
33. We recognise that in order to determine priorities for EU-Russia joint action, there is a need to refer to generally accepted rules of conduct and a code of ethics approved by the global community. The "Earth Charter", which started as a United Nations' initiative and has been transformed in civil society initiative could be used as a basis for such actions.
34. We encourage stronger government support for innovation and research into the green economy through measures such as increasing research funding and providing subsidies to R&D programmes. We acknowledge the need for cooperation between the EU and Russia on R&D and innovation related to greening the economy.

35. We emphasise that, in order to implement sustainable development policies, there needs for a broad public debate and social acceptance of green products and services by consumers. In this respect, information campaigns and education on the green economy to raise public awareness are essential and should be promoted. The involvement of civil society organisations in this respect could be instrumental for the success of such policies.
36. We note that a shift to a green economy will also entail a shift in employment. Consequently, there is a need to establish permanent dialogue with the social partners and civil society and to ensure that the changes are accompanied by policies aimed at safeguarding incomes and promoting vocational training and retraining.
37. We stress that the transition to a green economy should be seen by the public authorities and the private sector as opportunities for creating more skilled and stable jobs and for reducing the risk of precarious employment. In this respect, international initiatives such as the ILO green jobs programme and UNEP/ILO/IOE/ITUC Green Jobs Initiative should be taken into account.
38. We express the hope and expect that the Rio+20 Conference in 2012 will make a major contribution to the move towards a more sustainable economy and set clear targets for greening the economy and achieving resource efficiency.
39. The EESC and the CCRF are convinced that strong involvement on the part of civil society organisations is essential to create the momentum and pressure needed to achieve a significant outcome at this Conference. The EESC and the CCRF will continue to cooperate in order to contribute to this process by preparing a common position for the Rio +20 Conference. To this end cooperation will established be between the EESC's Sustainable Development Observatory and the Civic Chamber's Institute for Sustainable development.

This final declaration will be submitted to the political authorities of the European Union, its Member States and the Russian Federation.

The President of the European Economic and
Social Committee:



Staffan Nilsson

The President of the Civic Chamber of Russian
Federation:



Evgeniy Velikhov
