EU/Russia: The four “Common Spaces”

At the St Petersbourg Summit in May 2003 the EU and Russia confirmed their commitment to further strengthen their strategic partnership. They agreed to reinforce co-operation with a view to creating four EU/Russia Common Spaces, in the long term and within the framework of the existing Partnership and Co-operation Agreement (PCA), on the basis of common values and shared interests. These Common Spaces cover economic issues and the environment; issues of freedom, security and justice; external security, including crisis management and non-proliferation; and research and education, including cultural aspects.

The EU/Russia Summit on 10 May 2005 in Moscow is expected to adopt a comprehensive package of Road Maps for the development of the four Common Spaces. Negotiations are ongoing. These Road Maps, which will set out shared objectives for EU/Russia relations as well as the actions necessary to make these objectives a reality, will determine the agenda for co-operation between the EU and Russia for the medium term.

Common Economic Space
The aim of efforts to create a Common Economic Space is to put in place conditions for increased and diversified trade between the EU and Russia and to create new investment opportunities by pursuing economic integration and regulatory convergence, market opening, trade facilitation and infrastructure development. The Common Economic Space will cover a wide range of issues such as trade, investments, industrial co-operation and enterprise policy. It will also cover more specific areas such as Intellectual Property Rights, competition and agriculture. In this space the EU and Russia also intend to maintain the momentum of the existing energy dialogue and take forward work in the field of transport, on issues such as infrastructure projects, maritime safety, satellite navigation and aviation, including the phasing out of Siberian overflight charges. Co-operation on environmental issues will form a central part of the work to create this space.

Common Space of Freedom, Security and Justice
The EU and Russia have considerable interest in strengthening co-operation in the field of justice and home affairs to tackle the common threats of organised crime, terrorism and other illegal activities of a cross-border nature. For the EU, this co-operation must reflect the necessary balance between security on the one hand, and justice and freedom on the other, in addition to the common values that underpin EU/Russia relations.

Progress in negotiations on visa facilitation and readmission will also be reflected in the Common Space of Freedom, Security and Justice. The EU recalls its willingness to finalise negotiations on these agreements before the Moscow Summit in May 2005.
It also recalls its readiness to continue to examine the conditions for visa-free travel between the EU and Russia as a long-term perspective. Progress on migration and border-management issues will be important, as will the demarcation of the Russian and Lithuanian border and the signature and ratification of outstanding border agreements with Estonia and Latvia.

The EU underlines the centrality of common values (democracy, human rights and rule of law) in the context of this space. Within this space, the EU and Russia recently launched regular consultations on human rights and fundamental freedoms, including the rights of persons belonging to minorities. The first meeting on 1st March in Luxembourg was open and constructive. A second meeting will take place in the autumn.

**Common Space of Co-operation in the Field of External Security**

The aim of work on this space is to intensify co-operation on security issues and crisis management, to address new threats such as terrorism, regional conflicts and state failure, the proliferation of weapons of mass destruction (WMD) and to reinforce co-operation in responding to natural disasters. This co-operation will be based on the common values which underpin the external policies of both sides, as set out in the PCA.

The EU is focussing its efforts on promoting co-operation with Russia on the ‘common neighbourhood’ it shares with Russia (in particular Moldova and Georgia) where it is in the interest of both the EU and Russia to find solutions to lingering conflicts and promote stability and prosperity.

In this space, the EU and Russia will also recall their shared interest to promote an international order based on effective multilateralism, recognising the importance of the United Nations, the OSCE and the Council of Europe.

In terms of civil protection, the EU and Russia aim to strengthen EU/Russia dialogue and co-operation in order to better respond to disasters and emergencies.

**Common Space on Research, Education and Culture**

This space is designed to reinforce people-to-people contacts and contribute to increasing the competitiveness of the EU and Russian economies.

The idea is to capitalize on the strong EU and Russian intellectual heritage and knowledge capital to promote economic growth, involving civil society in Russia and the EU. The space will serve to intensify links and exchanges in the fields of science and technology, research, education and culture and to promote the identification and adoption of best practices.

The EU and Russia have good co-operation on research, with the renewal of the Science and Technology Co-operation Agreement in 2003, and the adoption, in 2002, of the Action Plan to enhance Science and Technology co-operation. Opportunities for the participation of Russian scientists and researchers in EU-funded activities have been extended via the 6th Research and Development framework.

Russia and Europe have a rich shared heritage. In recognition of this, the Summit in May is expected to welcome the completion of ground work to found a European Studies Institute in Moscow. An initial recruitment of 50 students is foreseen for September 2006 with a further 200 students in September 2007. It is expected that the Institute will be co-funded by Russia and the EU and will be managed by an independent legal not-for-profit public entity with participation of Russian official bodies, the European Commission and College of Europe.