The European Union and Russia are not only neighbours, but also strategic partners. The 31st EU-Russia summit bears witness to the importance both sides attach to this strategic partnership.

The EU will be represented by Herman Van Rompuy, President of the European Council, and by José Manuel Barroso, President of the European Commission. Catherine Ashton, High Representative of the Union for Foreign Affairs and Security Policy and Energy Commissioner Günther Oettinger will also take part. Russia will be represented by the President of the Russian Federation, Vladimir Putin, accompanied by Foreign Minister Sergey Lavrov, Minister of Justice Alexander Konovalov, Minister for Energy Alexander Novak and Minister for the Economy and Development Andrei Belousov.

The summit will begin with a dinner on Monday 3 June and continue with a plenary session in the morning of 4 June, followed by a working lunch and a press conference.

During the working dinner, leaders are expected to debate the economic situation in Russia and in the EU. They will also discuss the overall global economic situation with a particular attention given to the upcoming G20 meeting and the Russian G20 presidency. Moreover, leaders will attend to the current state of affairs in relation to Syria.

During the plenary, leaders will address overall EU-Russia relations, including the new EU-Russia agreement, the partnership for modernisation, WTO and trade issues, energy and aviation, as well as visas and mobility, including passenger names records. Freedom, security and justice will also be discussed, including judicial cooperation, crisis management and counter-terrorism. Human Rights and fundamental freedoms, including rule of law and civil society, are likewise expected to be discussed during the plenary meeting.

Over a working lunch on the second day, leaders will discuss a wide range of regional and international issues, including developments in North Africa, the Middle East, Iran, the Korean peninsula, Central Asia as well as the common Neighbourhood (Moldova / Transnistria, Georgia and Nagorno-Karabakh).
Leaders will discuss progress in deepening EU-Russia cooperation in several areas:

**New EU - Russia agreement**
Negotiations on a New Agreement to replace the current Partnership and Cooperation Agreement (PCA) started in July 2008. Some progress has been made in the negotiations and both sides have on several occasions reiterated that they would like to develop even deeper cooperation and economic integration between the EU and Russia. A New Agreement would be the key instrument to deepen these relations in the near future. The New Agreement aims to provide a solid legal basis for the EU-Russia relations, covering all areas of our relationship, most importantly trade, investment and energy. The June Summit should provide an impetus to move the work on a New Agreement forward.

**Partnership for Modernisation**
The principles and objectives of the Partnership for Modernisation were defined at the EU - Russia Summit in Rostov-on-Don on 31 May and 1 June 2010. The Partnership for Modernisation is a shared agenda to help bring about reform in the area of socio-economic development, with due respect for democracy and the rule of law. Its priority areas include investment and trade, the alignment of technical standards, the promotion of a sustainable low-carbon economy and dialogue with civil society. It is a pragmatic and flexible framework which provides additional momentum to the EU - Russia relations. It is also accompanied by 25 bilateral modernisation partnerships between Russia and EU Member States. The Partnership is in full implementation phase and the Summit will provide an occasion to take stock of progress made.

**Economic and trade relations**
Economic ties between Russia and the EU have grown substantially over the last years and, since Russia's WTO accession in August 2012, this is only expected to further increase business opportunities. Russia remains the EU’s third most important trading partner (after the US and China), with 123 billion EUR in exported goods to Russia (7.3 % of all EU exports, 4th place after US, China, Switzerland) and 213 billion EUR in imported goods in 2012 (11.9 % of all EU imports, 2nd place after China). The EU is thus by far the largest market for Russian goods, accounting for roughly half of Russian exports in 2012. The EU is also the main supplier for Russia, with a 43 % market share, followed by China and Ukraine.

In both 2011 and 2012, bilateral trade increased by more than 10%. More specifically, Russia is the EU’s most important single supplier of energy products, accounting for 29 % of EU consumption of oil and gas. In turn, Russia’s economy remains highly based on the export of energy raw materials, with the EU as its most important destination. In 2012, 76 % of Russia’s exports to the EU consisted of crude oil, oil products and natural gas.

In 2011, EU stocks of foreign investment in Russia were estimated at 168 billion EUR. This was more than EU foreign investment stocks in China and India combined.

**Energy roadmap 2050**
In March 2013, EU Energy Commissioner Günther Oettinger and Russian Minister for Energy Alexander Novak signed the [EU-Russia Energy Roadmap 2050](#). This document sets out the main priorities for long-term cooperation in the energy sector, with a focus on a functioning and integrated network infrastructure and open, transparent and competitive markets. The roadmap should make a valuable contribution in ensuring energy security and reaching sustainable energy goals of both the EU and Russia.
Human Rights
Issues and concerns regarding both the EU's and Russia's international commitments to guarantee human rights and fundamental freedoms is a central theme in EU-Russia relations. Since 2005, the EU and Russia have held regular, six-monthly human rights consultations. These meetings have provided for a substantial dialogue on human rights issues in Russia and the EU and on EU-Russian cooperation on human rights issues, notably in international fora. The most recent meeting took place on 17 May 2013. The EU raised issues including the situation of civil society in Russia, notably in light of new laws on foreign-funded NGOs, the independence of the judiciary and the harassment of human rights defenders and opposition leaders. It also deplored the lack of investigation into several (individual) criminal cases (for more details, see press release). Russia shared its concerns for non-citizens in some EU Member States.

Citizens' mobility
Negotiations on an upgraded visa facilitation agreement are close to conclusion. The updated agreement would extend the categories of beneficiaries of visa facilitations among others to representatives of civil society organisations, and a broader spectrum of family members. Long-term multiple-entry visas would be foreseen in more cases than under the present agreement and wider groups of visa applicants would benefit from visa fee waivers. The present visa facilitation agreement entered into force in 2007. It provides EU and Russian citizens with a lower visa fee, wider issuance of multiple-entry visas as well as simplified requirements for supporting documents.

The implementation of the "Common Steps towards visa-free short-term travel", launched at the Summit in December 2011, is well underway. They concern actions revolving around document security, for example the introduction of biometric passports; combating illegal immigration; border management; public order, security and judicial cooperation, including the fight against transnational organised crime, terrorism and corruption as well as human rights related to the freedom of movement. Once the Common Steps are fully implemented, a decision on the launch of negotiations on a visa waiver agreement can be taken.

Foreign Policy
EU and Russia have a common interest to jointly address global security challenges. Regular Political Dialogue meetings on a wide range of foreign policy issues are therefore an essential element in EU - Russia relations. The aim is to improve and intensify cooperation between the two parties, but also in existing multilateral formats. Addressing issues such as the Syrian crisis, the Middle East Peace Process, the Iranian nuclear issue and other common challenges remains crucial to achieve the common goal of peace and security in our common neighbourhood as well as internationally.

Signature on a drug precursors agreement
The agreement, which will be signed at the June Summit, aims to fight illicit drug production by preventing the diversion of drug precursors and chemical substances frequently used in the illicit manufacture of narcotic drugs. It provides for co-operation in trade monitoring, exchange of information as well as technical and scientific co-operation.
The legal basis for EU relations with Russia is the Partnership and Cooperation Agreement (PCA) which came into force on 1 December 1997 for an initial duration of 10 years, and which has been automatically extended beyond 2007 on an annual basis. It sets the principal common objectives, establishes the institutional framework for bilateral contacts, and calls for activities and dialogue in a number of areas.

The EU is currently working with Russia on a new agreement to replace the PCA. Both the EU and Russia have experienced many political, economic and social changes since the entry into force of the PCA in 1997. The new agreement must reflect these changes as well as the new challenges linked to globalisation.

At the St. Petersburg summit in May 2003, the EU and Russia agreed to reinforce their cooperation by creating four "common spaces":

- the Common Economic Space aiming to make the EU and Russia’s economies more compatible to boost investment and trade;
- the Common Space on Freedom, Security and Justice covering justice, home affairs, the rule of law and human rights;
- the Common Space on External Security aiming to enhance cooperation on foreign policy and security issues; and
- the Common Space on Research, Education and Culture designed to promote scientific, educational and cultural cooperation.