



**EUROPEAN TRADE UNION  
CONFEDERATION - ETUC (CES)**



**FEDERATION OF INDEPENDENT  
TRADE UNIONS OF RUSSIA - FNPR**

## **TRADE UNION STATEMENT TO THE EU-RUSSIA SUMMIT 24.11.2006**

### **ETUC-FNPR Trade Union Forum in Helsinki 10 November 2006**

Meeting in Helsinki on 10 November 2006, representatives from the European trade Union Confederation (ETUC) and the Federation of Independent Trade Unions of Russia (FNPR) considered the development of EU-Russia relations. They expressed the view that the four Common spaces and the roadmaps developed in their wake represented good stepping stones towards reaching a new EU-Russia Agreement next year, based on common values.

### **EU-Russia relations and Social Dimension**

The ETUC and the FNPR believe that the positive development of the EU-Russia Common European Economic Space requires a social dimension and the involvement of the social partners. Trade union organisations are particularly concerned about issues such as industrial restructuring, industrial cooperation, and skills and training requirements and wish to be involved closely in the development of policy in these areas among others. Cooperation in energy production, delivery and consumption are areas of vital interest for both the EU and Russia. As it is the companies and workers in those energy companies that will have to deliver, it is essential that the social partners are brought into the process of co-operation. We are very disappointed that the Russian Social Partners were not invited to the EU-Russia energy conference on 30 October, and ask that they be included in subsequent discussions.

We propose the following structure to advance a social dimension with social partner involvements in EU-Russia relations:

- A formal exchange of views between ourselves and the Presidency of EU-Russia Summits;
- Periodic meetings of the Labour and Social Affairs Minister and Commissioners from both sides, with the opportunity of an input by the social partners;
- The establishment of permanent consultative mechanisms for the social partners on issues of economic and social interest, following the positive response in principle expressed by the Russian Government.

The G 8 trade union summit meeting with President Putin in Moscow last July clearly demonstrated the value of free and open discussions at the highest level on issues of common interest. We welcome the genuine interest from the Russian side to include the social dimension in global policies.

The ETUC and FNPR believe that a real Social Dialogue should become a constitutive element of EU-Russia relations and would make a positive contribution to their development. The involvement of trade unions should be put at a par with that of employers' organisations, which are already afforded an important role in EU-Russia processes.

### **Northern Dimension and Trade Union Contribution**

The renewal of Northern Dimension Action Plan II is going to take place this year. We find the idea of producing a Policy Framework linking on the EU-Russia cooperation and the Four Common Spaces useful. This will no doubt increase the commitment of both sides.

In order to promote a positive development in the Northern Dimension Area it is essential to have well functioning labour markets. The more clearly we can guarantee fair competition for enterprises and decent working conditions for workers, the better we will succeed. Trade unions find the following principles essential:

- Equal treatment of workers regardless of their country of origin
- Fair competition between companies based on respect for industrial relations and collective bargaining systems
- Respect for ILO core labour standards as stated in the Declaration.
- Multinational companies with headquarters in the EU, Norway, Iceland or Russia have to live up to principles stated in the OECD Guidelines for Multinational Companies.

### **Creating democratic and social Europe**

Taking into consideration the importance of the Social Charter of the Council of Europe for the development of democracy, sustainable societies and high level standards of living, it is important that all European countries who have signed the text also ratify and fully implement the Charter.

The EU, through its partnerships, could be the driving force in assisting to create democratic civil societies in Europe. The situation with the trade union movement in Belarus remains of particular concern and requires renewed efforts to be resolved.

**John Monks**

General Secretary ETUC

**Michael Shmakov**

President FNPR

Helsinki, 10 November 2006