



Mr. Herman Van Rompuy
President of the European Union
Council of the European Union
175 rue de la Loi
B-1048 Brussels
Belgium

7 December 2011

Dear President,

On the occasion of the forthcoming EU-Russia Summit that will take place in Brussels on the 15th of December 2011, I would like to reiterate BUSINESSEUROPE's support on European Union's efforts to further strengthen economic relations with Russia.

1. BUSINESSEUROPE welcomes the accession of Russia to the WTO and its positive impact on trade and especially investment. The EU and Russia should also work closely together on the issue of implementation of the commitments stemming from Russia's accession to the WTO. Proper regulatory reforms should be undertaken in order for existing problems that European companies may currently face in Russia to be lifted and not re-introduced. A business-friendly environment, where international standards and norms in areas of certification, labelling and product classification apply, is crucial for the attraction of investments.
2. Given that practical improvements for businesses would greatly benefit trade and investment between the EU and Russia BUSINESSEUROPE would like to see a rapid transition to a more liberal visa regime for Russian citizens. Single and short-term visas should be replaced by multi-entrance, multi-annual visas, without invitation requirements. European businesses would also like to see similar steps taken by Russia for EU citizens.
3. BUSINESSEUROPE welcomes an ambitious New Agreement between the European Union and Russia to replace the Partnership and Cooperation Agreement and hopes that Russia's WTO accession will facilitate expeditious conclusion of the negotiations on the New Agreement.



BUSINESSEUROPE also strongly recommends transition to deeper economic relations between the EU and Russia. By launching negotiations on a strategic and comprehensive free trade agreement – in a parallel process to the negotiations on the New Agreement – the EU would not only take advantage of the current momentum but also accelerate the development of a firm, mutually complementary and balanced economic relationship.

I trust that you will take up these important business matters at the Summit and look forward to hearing about the results.

Yours sincerely,

Jürgen R. Thumann