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EU - RUSSIA INDUSTRIALISTS' ROUND TABLE

The EU-Russia Industrialists' Round Table (IRT) is a business-driven process, endorsed by the EU-Russia Summit in July 1997. Its main objective is to provide a permanent forum for businesspeople to present joint recommendations to the European Commission and the Russian Government with regard to business and investment conditions and promotion of industrial co-operation.

DG Enterprise and Industry's role is that of a facilitator, co-ordinating the Commission services' input to the IRT process and providing a follow-up to its recommendations. The Commissioner in charge of Enterprise and Industry, Vice President Verheugen, acts as political sponsor of the IRT process and actively participates in the annual plenary meetings of the IRT. His counterpart in the Russian Government is Victor Khristenko, Minister of Industry and Energy.

Mr. Jukka Härmälä, CEO of Stora Enso, has been the EU Co-Chairman of the IRT process, since May 2004. Mr. Suuronen, Vice-President of Stora Enso Packaging Boards, is the European coordinator of the Round Table.

The previous EU Co-Chairmen of the IRT were Mr. Jaakko Ihamuotila (Fortum), who co-chaired the 1st and 2nd Round Tables (1997/98); Mr. Göran Lindahl (ABB), who co-chaired the 3rd IRT, in Moscow (7/8 October 2000); Mr. Paolo Cantarella (Fiat) who co-chaired the 4th IRT, in Turin (15/16 February 2002) and Mr. Matti Vuoria (Fortum) who co-chaired the 5th IRT, in Moscow (1/2 December 2003).

Mr. Anatoly Chubais, CEO of RAO-UES (Unified Energy Systems of Russia), has been the Russian Co-Chairman of the IRT process since February 2000. The first Russian Co-chairman was Mr. Vyakhirev (Gazprom).

The meetings of the Industrialists' Round Table have adopted substantial joint recommendations, which resulted in some concrete policy changes. The EU-Russia Summits' joint declarations have referred to the IRT and its results, recognising it as an important aspect of economic co-operation between the parties. The IRT is also referred to in the Roadmap on the creation of a Common Economic Space between the EU and Russia as the source for business input into this process.

The work of the Round Table is based on the activities of sectoral Task Forces, covering the following subjects:

Task Force I - Energy

European chair: Mr. Gert Jan Lankhorst, CEO, Gasunie Trade & Supply B.V.
Russian chair: Mr. Victor Vekselberg, Managing Director, Gas Projects, OAO TNK-BP Management

Task Force II - Transport

European chair: Mr. Hartmut Mehdorn, Chairman, Deutsche Bahn AG
Russian chair: Mr. Vladimir Yakunin, Chairman, RAO Russian Railroads

Task Force III - Telecommunications, Information Technology and Space

European chair: Mr. Alf-Henryk Wulf, President, Alcatel Germany
Russian chair: Mr. Sergey Kuznetsov, First Deputy Director General, OAO Svyazinvest

Task Force IV - Financial Services (banking, insurance and stock exchange)

European chair: Mr. Kurt Geiger, European Bank for Reconstruction and Development
Russian chair: Mr. Garegin Tosunyan, President, Association of Russian Banks

Task Force V - Construction and Real Estate

European chair: Mrs. Maarit Toivanen-Koivisto, President, Onninen Oy
Russian chair: Mr. Nicolay Koshman, Chairman, OAO Zhilishie; President, Russian Builders Association

Task Force VI - Forest and Paper Industries

European chair: Dr. Veit Sorger, President, Federation of Austrian Industry
Russian chair: Mr. Andrey Frolov, Vice President, Union of Timber Manufacturers and Exporters of Russia

The 7th EU-Russia Industrialists' Round Table took place in London on 3 October 2005. The Round Table was co-chaired by Mr. Chubais and Mr. Härmälä and attracted about 600 participants, who represented a broad cross-section of business sectors and official bodies of the EU and Russia. This was the largest IRT meeting to date. The Round Table discussed the whole range of EU-Russia bilateral economic relations, both in the plenary sessions and within the Task Forces. The main theme of the event was the role that industry can play in the implementation of the Common Economic Space Roadmap.

The forum was attended by high-ranking European and Russian officials, including Vice President Verheugen, Commissioner Piebalgs, Minister Khristenko, and Alan Johnson, the UK Trade and Industry Minister, who all gave keynote speeches.

The Joint Conclusions recommended rapid entry of Russia to the WTO and realistic and coherent implementation of the Common Economic Space Roadmap, fully involving business. The IRT also agreed to establish a new **Business Cooperation Council**. This body comprises 6 CEO level representatives of the key business sectors from both sides and aims to provide strategic advice on EU-Russian business co-operation and act as an interface in high level contacts with the Commission and Russian Government. The Commission has welcomed the initiative.









The next meeting of the Round Table will take place in Helsinki on 23 November 2006. The IRT website, with information about this year's event is at www.IRT2006.com

For more information see:

[5th Round Table, Moscow, December 2003](#)  

[6th Round Table, The Hague, November 2004](#)  

7th Round Table, London, October 2005

- [Joint Conclusions](#)  
- [Task Force Recommendations and Conclusions](#)  
- [Speech of Vice President Verheugen](#)  
- [Programme](#)  

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