

**Statement of the Russian Duma on the
Partnership and Cooperation Agreement
between the Russian Federation and the EU**

26/10/04

STATEMENT OF THE STATE DUMA

in relation to the ratification of the Protocol to the Partnership and Cooperation Agreement establishing partnership between the Russian Federation on the one hand and the European Communities and their member-states on the other hand, taking into account the accession of the Czech Republic, the Republic of Estonia, the Republic of Cyprus, the Republic of Hungary, the Republic of Latvia, the Republic of Lithuania, the Republic of Malta, the Republic of Poland, the Republic of Slovenia and the Republic of Slovakia to the European Union

The State Duma of the Federal Assembly of the Russian Federation notes that the Partnership and Cooperation Agreement establishing a partnership between the Russian Federation on the one hand and the European Communities and their member-states on the other, which was signed on June 24, 1994 (hereafter referred to as "the Agreement"), retains its character as the fundamental legal basis for relations between Russia and the European Union. The extension of the Agreement to the new ten member-states of the European Union (EU) objectively corresponds to the national interests of the Russian Federation.

The State Duma attaches fundamental importance to the implementation of the Protocol to the Partnership and Cooperation Agreement establishing a partnership between the Russian Federation on the one hand and the European Communities and their member-states on the other, taking into account the accession of the Czech Republic, the Republic of Estonia, the Republic of Cyprus, the Republic of Hungary, the Republic of Latvia, the Republic of Lithuania, the Republic of Malta, the Republic of Poland, the Republic of Slovenia and the Republic of Slovakia to the European Union (hereinafter "the Protocol") and of the Joint Statement on EU enlargement and EU-Russia relations, which were both signed in Luxembourg on April 27, 2004. These documents should form an important practical contribution to the process of creating a Europe without dividing lines.

In adopting the Federal Law on the ratification of the Protocol, the State Duma recalls its Statement of April 29, 2004 No. 488-IV SD "In relation to EU enlargement" and proceeds from the following [considerations]:

1. Trade and economic relations between Russia and the European Union are developing overall in the spirit of the Joint Statement on EU enlargement and EU-Russia relations. At the same time it appears that there is an obvious need to intensify, inter alia in the course of preparations for the next EU-Russia Summit, the efforts of the Government of the Russian Federation for the speedy implementation of the agreements set in this document concerning the solution of remaining problems in the field of veterinary and phytosanitary control, trade in nuclear materials and agricultural products.
2. The State Duma notes that the problem of transit of people and cargo to/from the Kaliningrad region still awaits its final resolution on the basis of the Joint Statement on EU enlargement and EU-Russia relations and the Joint Statement of the Russian Federation and the European Union on transit between the Kaliningrad region and the rest of the Russian Federation of November 11, 2002. Despite all these agreements, the enlargement of the European Union has already led to a costlier and more complicated procedure of cargo transit, which causes considerable damage to the economic development of the Kaliningrad region. There is a concern with regard to the lack of due dynamism in implementing the project for a high-speed, visa-

free railway link between the Kaliningrad region and the rest of the Russian Federation as well as with regard to the attempts of some Lithuanian politicians to revise the package of compromise agreements that are rather complex from both international-legal and political points of view.

3. The accession of Latvia and Estonia to the European Union has not led to the improvement of the situation regarding the human rights and the rights of national minorities in these countries and in Latvia in particular. Moreover, instead of searching for efficient solutions to the remaining problems, first of all the [problems of] mass statelessness (lack of citizenship), differences in the political and socio-economic rights of citizens and non-citizens, and language discrimination, the European Union has taken the line of defending Latvia and Estonia from objective criticism within the OSCE and the Council of Europe.

The State Duma proceeds from the fact that, after the Protocol enters into force, Article 2 of the Agreement, in accordance with which "respect for democratic principles and human rights, as defined in particular in the Helsinki Final Act and in the Charter of Paris for a New Europe, underpins the internal and external policies of the Parties and constitutes an essential element of partnership and of this Agreement", will be legally binding for all EU member-states without exception.

4. The State Duma is particularly anxious and concerned about the fact that after the accession of Latvia and Estonia to the European Union the leadership of these countries have noticeably intensified their anti-Russian rhetoric and put forward some initiatives the essence of which is the reanimation of ungrounded "historical", material and other claims to Russia and, what is most unacceptable, continue to pursue a course aimed at revising the results of the Second World War and the glorification of the deeds of former SS formations.

Such a position of the new members of the European Union does not only sharply contrasts the spirit of strategic partnership between Russia and the European Union, but also threatens the security and stability of the whole European continent.

Proceeding from an understanding of the historical importance of the relations between the Russian Federation and the European Union for both European and world development, the State Duma is planning to monitor on a permanent basis all aspects of the dialogue between the Russian Federation and the enlarged European Union, and would also propose to the European Parliament to consider establishing - in framework of the EU-Russia Parliamentary Cooperation Committee - a special sub-committee to oversee the implementation of the Protocol, the Joint Statement 'on EU enlargement and EU-Russia relations' as well as of other key agreements between the Russian Federation and the European Union.