

**High-level representatives of Russian and EU meat industry  
agree to solve mutual challenges by new cooperation structures**

An important meeting took place in the European Parliament in Brussels on Friday 23<sup>rd</sup> July 2010 between European Meat Exporters and Russian Meat Producers & Traders under the high patronage of Mrs. Ria Oomen-Ruijten, MEP, Member of the Delegation to the EU-Russia Parliamentary Cooperation Committee (PCC). Over 80 participants filled the room in the European Parliament showing how very timely and appropriate this meeting really was. The purpose of this meeting was to allow a more structured and regular interaction of the EU and Russian meat industry, focusing on real practices and real day-to-day issues in the trade relations.

After welcoming words by Mrs. Ria Oomen-Ruijten, MEP and Hosting Member of the Delegation to the EU-Russia Parliamentary Cooperation Committee (PCC), Ms. Paola Testori Coggi, Director General, Directorate General for Health and Consumers (DG SANCO), EU Commission and Mr. Sergey A. Dankvert, Head of the Federal Service for Veterinary and Phytosanitary Surveillance of the Russian Federation (“*Rosselkhozadzor*”), participants were informed about the impact for meat trade as a result of the new Customs Union between Russia, Belarus and Kazakhstan which entered into force this year.

Participants learned that the European Union and the Russian Federation have a strong trade relationship. Bilateral trade and investment continue to grow rapidly. Russia is one of the EU's key trading partners; yet the commodity specific trade is very diverse. In 2009, the EU exported €65.6 billion worth of products covering nearly all categories of machinery and transport equipment, manufactured goods, food (meat among others) and live animals. The goods imported into the EU from Russia in 2009 were worth €15 billion and are mainly concentrated on energy and mineral fuels products (77.3%), some manufactured goods chemicals and raw materials.

The conference included a set of practical presentations and discussions regarding the Russian and EU meat markets, their situation and outlook. Participants discussed specific trade issues of EU exporters and Russian producers & traders including the compliance of EU plants and products with Russian legal requirements.

The questions under discussion included:

- *How to address trade impact due to provisional disruptions for export to Russia, following differences concerning antibiotic residues standards?*
- *The implementation of harmonized veterinary certificates. Is there room for trade facilitation?*

As regard the EU meat market, after DG SANCO had provided an overview of the import requirements for meat and meat products to the EU, the expectations of the Russian delegates were expressed.

A third topic under discussion was how to build an efficient cooperation. After an overview of the Russian and EU meat federations, the delegates worked on a program on how to improve the partnership between the Russian and the EU meat federations with the aim to facilitate the trade. A key question asked was “*What is the role of training and education?*”

### Conclusions

At the end of the meeting it was concluded that the EU wants to remain an important, reliable, consistent and sustainable partner for Russia in the meat and meat products sector. On the other hand, as the EU is the biggest importer of agricultural products in the world, there is a great potential for Russian meat and meat products exports in the context of the clear message conveyed by the Russian authorities aiming to strengthen Russian exports in the meat sector. For this to happen, dialogue and cooperation need to be stepped up. “*Mutual cooperation needs to be set up so that the Russian industry can help the EU industry in its efforts to bring meat onto the Russian market and the EU industry can help the Russian industry to enter the EU market with their meat products*”, Mr. Jos Goebbels, Vice-President of the UECBV Meat Industry Section said at the end of the meeting.

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