



Helsinki 16 October 2006

**Dear colleague**

It is my pleasure to invite you to an Informal Meeting of EU Heads of State or Government which I will host in Lahti on Friday, 20 October 2006, to be followed by a dinner with Russian President, Vladimir Putin.

The meeting will give us the possibility to have an informal, open discussion on two themes that are relevant to the Union's economic growth and employment: energy policy and innovation.

The Commission has produced two communications, one on energy policy and another on innovation, as background documents for our discussions.

We will start our meeting over lunch at 13.00. During the lunch, we will focus on finding a common view on how to develop our external energy policy.

We face several challenges in this field. Developments in world energy markets have reminded us of our dependency on external energy suppliers and the importance of the security of supply. Furthermore, combating climate change requires a global commitment to sustainable use of energy.

Let me be clear on this: only if we act in a more coordinated manner, can we exert real influence on world energy markets and respond more effectively to energy disturbances. This is why we need to speak with one voice with our partners. Coherent energy policy will also enhance the EU's international prominence.

Thus I wish to hear your views on the principles that should form the basis of the EU's energy relations with Russia and on how those principles can be put into practice. We shall also look at ways to strengthen our relations with other

important third countries. In order to implement a coherent external energy policy, we should also improve ways of sharing and processing information, not least when responding to crises.

Towards the end of the lunch we will touch upon immigration issues that concern the EU as a whole. Prime Minister Zapatero will introduce this theme.

The alarming situation in Sudan/Darfur also needs our attention and will be briefly taken up.

We shall then proceed to the family photo. The working session on innovation policy will follow at 15.00. The challenge is to create a policy mix for innovation that helps translate investment in knowledge into successful products and services.

To this end, I think it is necessary to have a comprehensive and balanced EU-wide strategy on intellectual property rights (IPRs). A high quality IPR framework should be the underlying principle of such a strategy. This would also enhance our global influence. As a matter of priority, we need to improve the cost-effectiveness of the patent system in Europe to foster the competitiveness of our companies. We also need improvements in the litigation system to make it more predictable.

We need to tighten cooperation between business and research. We should pave the way for those European Technology Platforms that seem mature enough to become Joint Technology Initiatives. It is important to let the business world know that the public funding providers are committed to these partnerships.

I welcome the Commission's intention to issue a proposal later this week on the creation of a European Institute of Technology. This enables us to discuss this important initiative in Lahti.

We shall conclude at around 17.15 for the press conferences.

At 19.00 we convene again to welcome Russian President, Vladimir Putin, who will join us for a family photo followed by a dinner.

At the dinner my plan is to discuss the strategic partnership between the EU and Russia, including energy issues.

My intention is to make some introductory remarks on the strategic partnership and ask President Putin to reply. I will also convey some of the Union's common goals and concerns to Russia.

On energy issues I have invited President Putin to lead and President Barroso to reply. Our earlier lunch discussion will serve as a useful basis for our messages to President Putin. I also look forward to hearing President Putin's thoughts on ways to develop Russia's energy sector.

I hope the discussion will be a fruitful one. As the time available is short, I would ask for all contributions to be correspondingly concise.

I hope that we could conclude the dinner at about 21.15.

Because of the informal nature of the meeting, there will be no formal written conclusions. At the end of each session I will draw informal oral conclusions, which will form the basis of my press statements.

With my best regards and looking forward to seeing you in Lahti.

Matti Vanhanen  
President of the European Council