# The European Union and Russia: the future relationship

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The report on the future relationship between the European Union and Russia (rapporteur: Catherine LALUMIERE (ERA, F), was adopted unopposed, with one abstention, by the Committee. The rapporteur argues that the security of the European peoples forms an indivisible whole and that this security depends to a very large extent on relations between the European Union and Russia. There is a need, she believes, for all the possibilities offered by the Founding Act between Russia and NATO to be exploited at the outset. Cooperation must be effective in all areas, including the military sphere, as one cannot imagine Europe enjoying security without Russia. The threatening scenario of the past has been replaced by a situation in which Russia can become Europe's security partner, although Russia should review its position on the Ottawa Convention on anti-personnel mines. The report goes on to say that the EU should support the economic and political reform process in Russia and also promote exchanges between people in leading roles in politics, administration, economic life and social affairs as well as helping the development of civil society in Russia. Greater cooperation with the Russian authorities is needed on matters covered by the 3rd pillar (justice and home affairs), so as to strengthen the fight against crime. The committee also calls upon Russia to follow up its moratorium on the death penalty, which has been in place since August 1996, by abolishing capital punishment completely. In addition, says the report, the EU's TACIS programme should in the next few years focus on the following areas: carrying out projects in the areas of health, education, safety and housing; setting up a legal framework within which the rule of law can operate and which accords people and businesses greater legal certainty and confidence in the courts; and implementing a just and effective tax system. The committee also calls for joint Euro-Russian industrial projects to be devised, starting with hi-tech industries (e.g. biology, computers, space, aeronautics, energy, telecommunications), so as to make Russia a fully-fledged partner in these industries of the future.