



## Post release

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### **The VII Northern Dimension Forum comes to an end**

The VII Northern Dimension Forum was held on 7 April 2016 in Saint-Petersburg. More than 200 delegates attended the event.

The aim of the forum was to boost cooperation between the authorities, business and civil society in the participating countries of the Northern Dimension. This year the Northern Dimension Business Council (NDBC) and the Association of European Businesses (AEB), who organised the forum, chose the theme of the Arctic as an area of joint development. During the forum, participants discussed new challenges and opportunities for the development of the Arctic region.

At the forum presentations were made by senior representatives of European and Russian ministries and departments, and company executives. They included: Sergey Zimin, Assistant of the Plenipotentiary Presidential Representative in the North Western Federal District; Andrey Kelin, Director, Department of European Cooperation, RF Ministry of Foreign Affairs; Marina Kovtun, Governor of the Murmansk region; Sven-Olov Carlsson, Deputy Head, EU Delegation to the RF; Paavo Lipponen, Prime Minister of Finland (1995-2003); Esko Aho, Chairman, Business Team for Russia; Prime Minister of Finland (1991-1995); Kirill Komarov, First Deputy CEO for Corporate Development and International Business of ROSATOM and others.

The vice-chairmen of the Arctic Economic Council Tero Vauraste and Evgeny Ambrosov - were special guests at the event.

At the forum roundtable meetings were held regarding: energy, the quality of life in the Arctic: ecology and nature conservation, transport and logistics, medicine and pharmaceuticals, creative industries (including tourism).

### **Alexey Mordashov, Chairman of PAO Severstal, Co-chairman of Northern Dimension Business Council:**

"The fact that the Arctic agenda has been chosen as the main topic for the VII Northern Dimension Forum reflects increasing worldwide interest in the region. The Arctic today is already a significant region for the global economy. It is an important resource for rare metal production and experts predict this will become a major region of investment for Europe in the future.

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Sustainable Arctic development is a complex issue that requires a sensitive and considered approach, involving the development public private partnerships, collaboration with partners and technological support. Today the Northern Dimension participants are in a position to start discussing the future of Arctic development and facilitating growth in the region”.

**Tapio Kuula, Member of the Board, Fortum Corporation; Co-Chairman of the Northern Dimension Business Council (NDBC);**

“The Arctic is an issue where a long-term perspective is needed. Decisions made today will have long-lasting consequences for generations to come. In the Arctic, the environment, logistics and infrastructure contain both challenges but also opportunities. A general lack of infrastructure on both sea and land is perhaps the largest barrier to development in the Arctic. Successful cooperation in this area requires commitment of all the actors - countries, regions and business representatives”.

**Evgeny Ambrosov, First Deputy General Director, Member of the Board, PJSC Sovcomflot:**

“For the seventh time the Northern Dimension Forum is playing its role as a platform for dialogue between Russia and the EU countries, Iceland and Norway on cooperation in the Arctic region. This proves once again that our countries are genuinely interested in working together to maintain stability in the region, despite the economic and geopolitical complexities involved.

The development of the North and, above all, the Arctic is becoming more important than ever, as this region has serious economic potential, which will only be discovered in this century. This close collaboration between the countries of the Arctic region should of course be aimed at preserving the unique and extremely fragile Arctic ecosystem, and the implementation of development programmes should contribute to strengthening the cultural potential, identity and traditions of indigenous peoples.

I believe that the extensive experience of cooperation gained under the Northern Dimension project should be further utilised in the new and promising international organisation — the Arctic Economic Council”.

**Philippe Pegorier, Chairman of the AEB Board:**

“Today, the Arctic is one of the most promising areas for international cooperation. Business is interested in infrastructure projects and mining operations in the Arctic. But no country is able to meet these challenges alone, so close cooperation among the EU countries, Norway, Iceland and Russia is playing a vital role.

I am glad that the Northern Dimension Forum continues to be one of the few platforms for dialogue between the countries, where the parties are able to communicate in an honest, open and constructive way. The business community does not want to be involved in the geopolitical crises and international sanctions, but rather wants to successfully implement projects for the further development and prosperity of our economies”.

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The forum organizers have set the date of the VIII Northern Dimension Forum: it will be on April 6, 2017 in St. Petersburg.

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### **About the Northern Dimension Business Council (NDBC)**

At a meeting of Northern Dimension senior officials and politicians on 12 November 2009 in Stockholm, the initiative to establish and determine the concept of the NDBC was approved. Since it was founded, the NDBC has been co-chaired by Tapio Kuula, Member of the Board, Fortum Corporation, and Alexey Mordashov, Chairman of the Board of Directors PAO "Severstal."

The aim of the initiative is to involve companies in the policies of the Northern Dimension, so that these companies gain a competitive advantage from their active participation in the NDBC.

The NDBC aims to facilitate partnerships to enable modernisation (EU-Russia), to encourage investment in priority sectors such as medicine and biotechnology, pharmaceuticals, energy, nanotechnology, IT and microelectronics, mechanical engineering, shipbuilding, mining and mineral resources transportation technology, etc., and to develop bilateral dialogue with a view to improving trade policy and advice on planning and implementing joint ventures.

The bulk of the practical work of the NDBC is carried out within the working groups headed by the co-chairs.

### **About the Association of European Businesses (AEB)**

Founded in 1995, the Association of European Businesses (AEB) is an independent non-profit organisation of more than 550 European and Russian companies. The AEB members are multinational corporations and small and medium-sized businesses. They all share a commitment to strengthening economic ties between the EU and Russia, as well as the desire to improve the investment climate of the Russian Federation.

The AEB includes 65 committees and subcommittees and working groups that are engaged in lobbying on a wide range of issues in various business areas including energy, transport and customs, air travel, legislation, taxation, banking, real estate, the production of crop protection products and many others. These committees work closely with the European and Russian authorities, and provide comments and suggested changes to the draft laws of the Russian Federation.

The AEB provides information support for its members through its website, printed publications, media campaigns, and distributes reviews and releases about the current events in the legal and business fields.

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