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Rome Summit lays the foundations for a stronger NATO-Russia relationship

From the Pratica di Mare Air Force Base near Rome, on 28 May, Heads of State and Government from NATO member countries and the Russian Federation *"launched a new era in NATO-Russia cooperation"*. They signed the Rome Declaration, "NATO-Russia Relations: A New Quality", that has formally established the NATO-Russia Council. This new forum *"will serve as the principal structure and venue for advancing the relationship between NATO and Russia"*.



The creation of the NATO-Russia Council was prompted by the 11 September 2001 terrorist attacks against the United States and the ensuing need for greater cooperation between NATO and Russia in dealing with challenges such as terrorism and the proliferation of weapons of mass destruction. It replaces the NATO-Russia Permanent Joint Council, established by the NATO-Russia Founding Act in 1997. The NATO-Russia Council is therefore designed to bring relations to a qualitatively higher level by providing *"a mechanism for consultation, consensus-building, cooperation, joint decision, and joint action for the member states of NATO and Russia on a wide spectrum of security issues in the Euro-Atlantic region"*.

The security issues of common interest that have been defined so far are:

- the struggle against terrorism;
- crisis management;
- non-proliferation;
- arms control and confidence-building measures;
- theatre missile defence;
- search and rescue at sea;
- military-to-military cooperation and defence reform;
- civil emergencies;
- new threats and challenges.



In their declaration today, Heads of State and Government outlined initial steps to be taken in these different areas and confirmed that other areas of cooperation would be identified at a later stage. The NATO-Russia Council will take decisions by consensus, with all parties working

"as equal partners" and meeting on a regular basis to raise levels of understanding and trust. As explained in the Rome Declaration, the NATO-Russia Council *"will work on the basis of continuous political dialogue on security issues among its members with a view to early identification of emerging problems, determination of optimal common approaches and the conduct of joint actions, as appropriate"*.

As the Chairman of this new forum, NATO Secretary General, Lord Robertson, stated that *"there will be high expectations of all. Expectations that this will not be just another glitzy protocol event, but a real breakthrough. Expectations that the NATO-Russia Council will not just talk but will act, not just analyse but prescribe, not just deliberate but take decisive action. We have a profound obligation to ensure that these expectations are not disappointed. And if we need a reminder of why, then there is a simple answer. There is a common enemy out there."*

Additional information:

- [Web module](#) on the NATO-Russia Summit in Rome, Italy - 28 May 2002

