

# Dmitry Medvedev's news conference following the 31st ASEAN Summit and the 12th East Asia Summit

**Excerpts from the transcript:**

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**Question:** What are the prospects of cooperation between the SCO and ASEAN?

**Dmitry Medvedev:** The Shanghai Cooperation Organisation is developing. New members, specifically India and Pakistan, have recently joined. As a result, the SCO now comprises countries that account for 44 percent of the world population and approximately one quarter of the global GDP. For now, this organisation is not an integration association in its pure form. However, the SCO coordinates the policies of large and very important states.

Above all, these are issues of security, maintaining peace and conflict resolution. These are issues of economic development. This is why we discuss economic development in formats like the SCO Heads of Government Council Meeting. The next meeting of the SCO heads of government will take place in late November and early December, in Sochi.

Clearly, there are some issues in our cooperation with ASEAN that can be described as overlapping, which means that we can use both SCO and ASEAN tools to address them. This is because our regions are close neighbours with virtually the same set of economic, political and security threats and challenges.

As for the economic agenda, we can take the path of integration to create various trade and investment conditions, starting with bilateral agreements and proceeding to potentially full-scale agreements on the establishment of a common economic space for the SCO and ASEAN nations.

**Question:** What do you think about the possibility of building trade and economic cooperation with the Philippines, primarily regarding Russian agricultural exports to this country?

**Dmitry Medvedev:** I believe we have a good potential here.

Our talks with the Philippines or more precisely with President Duterte have moved to a fundamentally new level. We are cooperating in nearly all spheres, including security as well as military and technical cooperation.

We have created a comprehensive legal framework for these relations. Yesterday we signed nine agreements on diverse subjects, including

intergovernmental, interdepartmental and corporate documents.

As regards agrarian cooperation, the Philippines is indeed a huge market with more than 100 million people. We have barely started working, but our trade has already grown considerably due to the distribution of Philippine goods and agricultural products to our market. We need to strengthen our foothold on the Philippine market, which we can do in the next few years.

**Question:** I have a question about the EAEU-Vietnam agreement. What result has it produced as of today? Are other [free trade area] agreements planned to be signed with other countries in the near future? Did you discuss the possibility of signing such an agreement between the EAEU and ASEAN at the summit?

**Dmitry Medvedev:** Despite existing negative trends, our trade has increased by some 20 percent thanks to this agreement. It is clear that this agreement has helped us increase our trade by 20 or 25 percent. We have not yet implemented some of our plans. There are several more projects that are awaiting implementation, in particular, those related to the automobile industry. It is an effective, important and interesting tool that has spurred our trade and investment ties and can be used in relations with other parties, including the ASEAN economies. We are discussing the use of this tool with other countries as well.

During this visit, I discussed the preparation of another free trade agreement with Prime Minister of Singapore Lee Hsien Loong. We have agreed to step up this work, because the agreement is in its final stages. We are also discussing this possibility with Cambodia and several other ASEAN countries. In principle, it is possible that at some point we will launch negotiations on a free trade agreement between ASEAN and the Eurasian Economic Union.

**Question:** The European Commission is currently considering imposing new restrictions with respect to our Nord Stream project. How might this affect the implementation of the project and what can Russia do in this case?

**Dmitry Medvedev:** Lately we have heard (and only heard) the opinion out of Brussels that the criteria for the so-called Third Energy Package to take effect have to be reevaluated, and this package should apply not only to gas pipelines and pipeline transport on the territory of the European Union but also to facilities in neutral zones, including neutral waters – that is, to offshore gas pipelines. From a legal viewpoint this position is rather dubious, if not absurd. Most probably, this is a way to impose pressure on our country and certain EU member states to induce them to refuse to build the second leg of the pipeline or to complicate this work in some way.

Our approach to the implementation of this project remains unchanged. This is not a political tool, not a means to influence European countries. This is a regular commercial project designed to support Europe's energy security, and it is, of course, beneficial to Russia as well, as it brings us significant foreign exchange earnings.

**Question:** Did you have an opportunity to interact with US President Donald

Trump during the summit these past few days? If you did, how would you characterise these interactions?

And the second question. How do you view the tightening of sanctions by the US, which it plans to tighten even further? How will Russia minimise the damage caused by these sanctions?

**Dmitry Medvedev:** It was the first time I met the incumbent President of the United States of America at an event like this. We spoke during the dinner in honour of the 50<sup>th</sup> anniversary of ASEAN. As President Donald Trump was seated virtually right next to me, we were able to talk. My general impression coincides with what Vladimir Putin said recently: that he is an open, friendly person with whom it is easy to talk on various topics.

What is bad is that despite these interactions and the opportunity to discuss certain issues, our relations are deteriorating every day. They are currently at their lowest point in decades. At the same time, the United States is urging us to cooperate on a number of the most complicated problems in the world, for example, the fight against terrorism or the situation on the Korean Peninsula. But on the other hand, it is making decisions that quite unambiguously declare us not just its opponent, but, in fact, its enemy. This is an inconsistent position, to say the least.

The new round of sanctions does not, in itself, create any new rules. Rather, it codifies the executive orders of the US Administration. Prior to that law, all those decisions, all those sanctions could have been rescinded by presidential order, but now this requires Congress's approval. This means that our relations will essentially be undermined for decades ahead.

As regards economic consequences, this is, to a considerable extent, within the purview of the same US Administration. Let us wait and see what decisions they make. Anyway, we are prepared for various kinds of restrictions. First, because they are nothing new and, second, because our economy has adapted both to the general economic crisis and the restrictions imposed on our economy by the United States and a whole range of other Western countries. So, nothing fundamentally new can happen. But we are able to influence the situation. Our economy has adapted itself. The Government has the necessary arsenal of tools that may be used in case something unexpected occurs.

Anyway, the economy is stronger than a bunch of political decisions. As for our trade with America, it has been growing in spite of the sanctions. Our trade with the European Union has been growing too. Hydrocarbons are part of that, but nevertheless, there has been growth.

Eventually, if certain instruments of that law are put in place, this will be a blow, above all, to European businesses and the interests of EU citizens. It will create tension on the markets of those countries as new projects will fail to be implemented or some new changes might emerge, including in terms of prices. This law is becoming, to a certain extent, a competition tool intended to promote US liquefied natural gas on European markets actually in breach of competition rules. This really rankles many business people in the European Union, as well as some EU politicians, who made pretty unambiguous

statements in that regard.

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## [Dmitry Medvedev's meeting with President of South Korea Moon Jae-in](#)

### **Excerpts from the transcript:**

Meeting with President of South Korea Moon Jae-in

**Moon Jae-in** (*via interpreter*): I know that you have made a significant contribution to the development of Russia-South Korea relations and have visited our country twice during your presidency. While you were in office, Russia-South Korea relations progressed to the level of strategic partnership.

We see Russia-South Korea relations as one of our highest priorities in foreign and security policy. This being said, I hope that the strong foundation of our strategic partnership will help us achieve peace, stability and prosperity on the Korean Peninsula as well as across Northeast Asia and the entire Eurasian continent.

It is good that our countries maintain the dynamics of close contact at the high and top levels. This meeting today is further proof that bilateral relations continue to progress at a good pace.

I am pleased to note that Russia-South Korea trade has gone up by 50 percent between January and September, and the tourist exchange is at an all-time high.

During our previous meeting with President Putin, we outlined the main spheres of economic cooperation and strengthened our strategic dialogue on North Korea. It was a very useful meeting that largely helped boost our relations. I hope that our governments will work together to implement all the agreements in this sphere. Mr Medvedev, I ask you to keep our affairs in focus.

For its part, Korea will provide all-round support for the projects to develop Russia's Far East under the guidance of the Presidential Northern Economic Cooperation Committee. We will do our best to implement our new northern policy by promoting cooperation in the nine coordinated areas. These "nine bridges" include, in part, shipbuilding, port infrastructure and the Northern Sea Route.

Next year we will celebrate the 10<sup>th</sup> anniversary of strategic partnership

between Korea and Russia. Also, Korea and Russia will host international sports events in 2018: the Winter Olympics in Pyeongchang and the 2018 FIFA World Cup in Russia. I hope that next year our peoples will become closer still and will exchange visits more often.

Last time President Putin congratulated me and the Korean people on the Korean national team winning the right to participate in the 2018 FIFA World Cup. I wish good luck to your team and, of course, to our team.

**Dmitry Medvedev:** Mr President, I am happy to have this opportunity to meet with you.

The Republic of Korea is one of Russia's key partners in the Asian-Pacific Region. Very good relations have developed between our countries. You recently visited Russia for the Eastern Economic Forum in Vladivostok, where you and President Putin discussed prospects for practical interaction on all issues, from politics and the political aspects of our cooperation to economic projects. Like the Republic of Korea, we want the Korean Peninsula to be a territory of peace. This is our position of principle, which we uphold at all levels.

As for our economic cooperation, the nine bridges initiative can give a powerful boost to our cooperation in key areas. Our Government is willing to work to implement these ideas, which should be given a practical push now.

Our relations have seriously improved over the past few years. The fact that our trade has increased considerably over the past nine months is proof that our relations have a good potential. Of course, we are willing to promote our humanitarian cooperation and contacts in education, culture and sports. All of this is very important. And the tourist exchange, as you said, has increased substantially over the past few years.

Let's discuss these issues.

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## [Dmitry Medvedev takes part in the 12th East Asia Summit](#)

The summit's agenda includes strengthening security, ensuring sustainable economic growth in the Asia Pacific Region and developing cooperation in energy, finance, healthcare and education.

The heads of the delegations of the countries participating in the 12th East Asia Summit

The East Asia Summit was established in 2005 for strategic dialogue between the Asia-Pacific leaders on security and economic growth. Meetings in this format take place annually in conjunction with the top-level events of the Association of Southeast Asian Nations (ASEAN).

Eighteen states currently participate in the East Asia Summit: the 10 ASEAN countries and their dialogue partners (Australia, China, India, Japan, New Zealand, Russia, South Korea and the United States).

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## [Dmitry Medvedev's meeting with Prime Minister of Vietnam Nguyen Xuan Phuc](#)

The meeting took place on the sidelines of the 12th East Asia Summit in Manila.

### **Excerpts from the transcript:**

Meeting with Prime Minister of Vietnam Nguyen Xuan Phuc

**Dmitry Medvedev:** Mr Prime Minister, friends, I am happy to meet with you again and to have this opportunity to speak with you on the sidelines of this summit in Manila. We met in May 2016 during the ASEAN-Russia Summit and also during your visit to Russia. Our contacts are progressing very well at every level. Just recently, President Putin attended the APEC Leaders' Meeting in Da Nang and met with President Tran Dai Quang. Last summer the President of Vietnam also visited Russia. I would like to take this opportunity to send my regards to President Tran Dai Quang and General Secretary of the Communist Party of Vietnam Nguyen Phu Trong. Our countries have many plans together and relations continue to develop. We put great emphasis on the Russia-Vietnam year of exchange in 2019 that marks the 25<sup>th</sup> anniversary of our Treaty of Friendship. The Russia-Vietnam free trade agreement has been in force for a year now. It has brought its first results, including a 20 percent increase in trade. We will make every effort to secure success.

I would also like to take this chance to express my sympathy in the wake of the Damrey Typhoon that caused human losses and destruction.

**Nguyen Xuan Phuc** (*via interpreter*): Mr Medvedev, members of the Russian delegation.

As I said during my official visit to Russia in May 2016, the Vietnamese leadership adheres to a consolidated position regarding the need to promote our relations and our comprehensive strategic partnership with Russia. In this context, we intend to continue to develop our multifaceted ties in

trade, the economy, science, technology and culture.

This year, Vietnam held great celebrations of the 100<sup>th</sup> anniversary of the Great October Socialist Revolution. It can be said that we celebrated this date more than any other country. This is additional evidence of our warm feelings for Russians.

I would like to use this occasion to once again thank President Vladimir Putin for his decision to attend the APEC Economic Leaders' Meeting in Da Nang. Also, I would like to express our sincere gratitude to Russia for its humanitarian assistance following the recent typhoon in central Vietnam. You sent 40 tonnes of humanitarian aid and also adopted a decision to allocate \$5 million in financial assistance to us.

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## [Dmitry Medvedev meets with President of the Philippines Rodrigo Duterte](#)

### **Transcript of the meeting's beginning:**

Meeting with President of the Philippines Rodrigo Duterte

**Rodrigo Duterte** (*via interpreter*): Mr Prime Minister, colleagues.

First of all, I would like to express my sincere appreciation and gratitude to you for finding the time to be here. I would like to thank you personally, Mr Medvedev, the Russian Government and all the Russian people for your support which we received at a crucial moment and which was very important to us. As you all know, we went through a very difficult military-political situation. We managed to defeat terrorism with weapons that Russia sent to us. One of three commanders of the armed gangs was killed with a Russian sniper rifle. This is the first thing I wanted to tell you, Mr Prime Minister.

As for the second matter that I wanted to touch upon: at present, two Russian citizens, Yury Kirdyushkin and Anastasia Novopashina, are being held in preliminary confinement here for drug trafficking. I would like to say that the investigation is ongoing, and it will determine if they are guilty. Time will tell. However, I will personally make sure that the conditions of their confinement are suitable. They are being held in comfortable conditions and I guarantee that the trial will be honest and fair.

*To be continued...*

**Documents signed following the meeting between Dmitry Medvedev and President**

## **of the Republic of the Philippines Rodrigo Duterte**

Signing of documents following the meeting

- Agreement between the Russian Federation and the Republic of the Philippines on mutual legal assistance in criminal cases  
*Signed by Minister of Justice of the Russian Federation Alexander Kononov and Minister of Justice of the Republic of the Philippines Vitaliano Aguirre;*
- Agreement between the Russian Federation and the Republic of the Philippines on extradition  
*Signed by Minister of Justice of the Russian Federation Alexander Kononov and Minister of Justice of the Republic of the Philippines Vitaliano Aguirre;*
- Memorandum between the Russian Ministry of Transport and the Philippine Department of Transportation on developing cooperation in transport education  
*Signed by Minister of Transport of the Russian Federation Maxim Sokolov and Secretary of the Department of Transportation of the Republic of the Philippines Arthur Tugade;*
- Memorandum of understanding between the Federal Service for Intellectual Property (Russian Federation) and the Intellectual Property Office of the Philippines on intellectual property issues  
*Signed by Head of the Federal Service for Intellectual Property (Russian Federation) Grigory Ivlev and Head of the Intellectual Property Office of the Philippines Josephine Santiago;*
- Memorandum between the Russian Ministry of Education and Science and the Philippine Commission on Higher Education on cooperation in higher education  
*Signed by Deputy Minister of Education and Science of the Russian Federation Lyudmila Ogorodova and Member of the Commission on Higher Education of the Republic of the Philippines Prospero de Vera;*
- Memorandum of understanding between the Ministry of Communications and Mass Media of the Russian Federation and the Philippine Presidential Communications Operations Office on cooperation in mass communications  
*Signed by Deputy Minister of Communications and Mass Media of the Russian Federation Dmitry Alkhazov and Secretary of the Philippine Presidential Communications Operations Office Martin Andanar;*
- Memorandum of cooperation between Russia's Rosatom State Corporation and the Department of Energy of the Republic of the Philippines  
*Signed by Rosatom Deputy Director General – Director for International Relations Nikolai Spassky and Energy Secretary of the Republic of the Philippines Alfonso Cusi;*
- Agreement on cooperation and partnership between Russia's Vi Holding and the Philippines' Global Ferronickel Holding Inc  
*Signed by Vi Holding Board Chairman Valery Krasnov and Board Chairman of*

*Global Ferronickel Holding Inc Joseph Sy;*

The parties also announced the signing of the Agreement on Cooperation between the Audit Chamber of the Russian Federation and the Audit Commission of the Philippines. The document was signed by Accounts Chamber Chairperson Tatyana Golikova and Chairman of the Audit Commission of the Philippines Michael Aguinaldo.