



**COUNCIL OF  
THE EUROPEAN UNION**

**Brussels, 25 October 2010  
(OR. fr)**

**15352/10**

**LIMITE**

**PE-QE 1221**

**PRELIMINARY DRAFT REPLY TO WRITTEN QUESTION  
E-7816/10 put by Niki Tzavela (EFD)**

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from: General Secretariat of the Council  
to: Permanent Representations of the Member States  
Subject: **"Relations between the EU and Russia in the energy sector"**

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1. Delegations will find attached:
  - the text of the above Written Question;
  - a preliminary draft reply prepared by the General Secretariat.
  
2. If no comments have been received from delegations **by 17.00 on 10 November 2010**, this preliminary draft reply will be submitted to the Permanent Representatives Committee (Part 1) and to the Council for approval.

Any comments received will be examined by the Working Party on General Affairs

**Question for written answer E-7816/2010  
to the Council**  
Rule 117  
**Niki Tzavela (EFD)**

Subject: Relations between the EU and Russia in the energy sector

Russia, which is currently the only regular supplier of gas to the European Union, has recently concluded gas purchase agreements with all Europe's prospective suppliers, including Iran.

In view of this:

- Will we conclude binding trade agreements with Russia, with a view to achieving more balanced cooperation with Russia in the form of a partnership arrangements designed to uphold our mutual interests?

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## REPLY

to Written Question E-7816/10

put by Niki Tzavela (EFD)

The Council would recall that, in its conclusions of September 2010, the European Council affirmed that "the European Union's strategic partnerships with key players in the world provide a useful instrument for pursuing European objectives and interests". It added that "this will only work if they are two-way streets based on mutual interests and benefits and on the recognition that all actors have rights as well as duties."

The Council would, moreover, emphasise that trade agreements – contracts – for the supply of gas are concluded between commercial undertakings. These contracts are subject to European Union legislation, in particular legislation on the internal energy market.

The Council would point out that, at the political level, relations with Russia in the energy field are based on several instruments:

- the EU-Russia energy dialogue between the Russian Energy Minister and the European Commissioner for Energy, which takes place more or less annually. The next meeting is scheduled for the end of November 2010.
- the Partnership and Cooperation Agreement between the EU and the Russian Federation. At present the two sides are conducting negotiations on the *new* partnership and cooperation agreement that is to replace the existing framework.