

WRITTEN QUESTION E-0475/09
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to the Council

Subject: New transport corridors for natural gas

19 January 2008 saw the presentation, in the context of a working group organised by Parliament's Committee on Foreign Affairs, of the conclusions of a study by the Hudson Institute entitled 'Security Aspects of the South Stream [gas pipeline] Project'.

Can the Council state its position on some of the conclusions of this study?

One of the conclusions is that 'South Stream does not enhance European energy security', since it does not diversify the sources of supply, but, rather, 'increases Russian influence over Europe'. Does the Council find this conclusion valid?

A second striking conclusion is that 'South Stream is in direct competition with Nabucco' and that 'the European Commission's backing of South Stream' would create major problems for Nabucco. What is the Council's strategy concerning the two projects? Should the European Council's conclusions of spring 2007 on the strategic importance of the Nabucco project still be considered relevant?

Another key point made in the study is that 'South Stream would deny Europe direct access to gas from Azerbaijan and Central Asia, as well as possibly the Middle East and North Africa'. Does the Council endorse this conclusion of the study?