

**Question for written answer E-6116/2010  
to the Council  
Rule 117  
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Subject: Future suppliers of the Nabucco gas pipeline and competition with the South Stream project

Nabucco, which has the backing of the European Union, is an ambitious gas pipeline project which would enable Europe's energy supply sources to be diversified as of 2014.

Nabucco is in direct competition with the North Stream project – which would supply the north of Europe and Germany via the Baltic Sea – and the South Stream project – a gas pipeline which is scheduled to be constructed by 2015 by the Gazprom (Russia) and ENI (Italy) consortium. Nabucco is characterised by the diversity and number of its future gas-supplying countries, which include Azerbaijan, Iran, Kazakhstan and Uzbekistan.

While the project's purpose is laudable, its main weakness is the dearth – not to say total lack – of reliable producer countries capable of feeding the gas pipeline in a uniform fashion. In 2009 three of the producer countries – Turkmenistan, Kazakhstan and Uzbekistan, which were present in Prague with low protocol status – refused to sign the joint declaration. Turkmenistan, for example, is still refusing to adopt the trading standards drawn up in Brussels.

Given the considerable cost of the pipeline and the great uncertainty surrounding the reliability of gas supplies from the Transcaucasus, is the Commission still as determined to invest its efforts in Nabucco?

European gas producers such as GDF Suez still find it preferable to put their confidence in decades of close Franco-Russian cooperation, rather than venturing upon the risky Nabucco project.

Given the appeal of the South Stream project run by Gazprom, compared with the 'less efficient and more expensive' (according to the Russian Deputy Energy Minister) Nabucco project, what is the Commission's position vis-à-vis this European gas pipeline project, whose route turns out to be very close to that of Nabucco?