

**Question for written answer E-010878/2013  
to the Commission**

Rule 117

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**Subject:** EU response to Russian pressure on Eastern Partnership countries negotiating Association Agreements

In its resolution of 12 September 2013, Parliament strongly criticised the pressure that Russia has been exerting on the Eastern Partnership (EaP) countries in the run-up to the Eastern Partnership Summit in Vilnius. It called on the Commission to take action in defence of the Union's partners, to send out strong messages of support for all EaP countries and to devise concrete, effective measures to back those countries.

The European Union must, however, be mindful of the fact that Russia's actions vis-à-vis EaP countries are also an attempt to undermine EU policies as enshrined in the Association Agreements. We should defend the EU's sovereign choice of associated partner countries, along with its European Neighbourhood Policy, in order to demonstrate the Union's weight as a global actor. The most effective means of counterbalancing Russian pressure on the EaP would therefore be to respond in kind.

In the light of the above, and in the context of the EU's efforts to formulate a response to the pressure exerted by Russia on EaP countries, which is intended to undermine multiple EU policies, what steps is the Commission considering taking, with regard to:

1. measures aimed at Russia, such as: (a) stepping up efforts to ensure that Russian companies and their subsidiaries operating on EU territory comply fully with internal market law and EU competition law, especially in the energy sector and in the light of the ongoing investigation into Gazprom's uncompetitive behaviour in European markets; (b) introducing trade restrictions on selected Russian products to mirror the restrictions introduced by Russia vis-à-vis EaP countries such as Ukraine and Moldova; (c) introducing visa restrictions mirroring those which Russia has imposed on EaP (Moldovan) migrant workers; and (d) any other measures;
2. measures aimed at EaP countries with which the EU is negotiating Association Agreements (EaP-AA countries), such as: (a) fast-tracking visa liberalisation; (b) pursuing unilateral trade opening and concessions in respect of EaP-AA countries; (c) offering financial assistance to EaP-AA countries (including accelerating and front-loading assistance in sensitive areas); (d) accelerating energy integration with EaP-AA countries, e.g. by boosting gas deliveries through reverse flows and new interconnectors; and (e) any other measures?