

**Question for written answer E-001853/2022
to the Commission**

Rule 138

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Subject: Change in the Commission's position on Russia's ultimatum on gas payments in roubles

At the end of March, in response to additional sanctions, Vladimir Putin issued a decree requiring Member States to pay for Russian gas in roubles. Commission President Ursula von der Leyen criticised the requirement at the time, saying that such an option, if not set out in the contract, constitutes a breach of the sanctions imposed by the EU on Russia. In the meantime, Russia has cut off gas supplies to Poland and Bulgaria, which refused to accept its ultimatum.

Despite this, however, Commission representatives and Member State diplomats met in Brussels on 13 May 2022. At that meeting, the Commission provided guidance on how European companies could pay for Russian gas in roubles, thus circumventing EU sanctions¹.

1. Is it true that the Commission is working on a scheme to pay for Russian gas in roubles so as to circumvent the sanctions, and if so, why has it changed its position and was that change preceded by discussions between the Commission and representatives of Gazprom or the Russian authorities?
2. Is the Commission not concerned that accepting breaches of contracts according to which payments for Russian gas should be made in euros or dollars will undermine the effectiveness of EU sanctions?
3. Russia has cut off gas supplies to Poland and Bulgaria, which followed the Commission's previous position in refusing to accept Russia's ultimatum. With that in mind, is the Commission's consent for European firms to pay for gas in roubles not detrimental to those countries and does it not undermine EU solidarity?

¹ <https://www.pap.pl/aktualnosci/news%2C1210313%2Czrodla-pap-ke-informuje-kraje-ue-jak-maja-placic-w-rublach-za-rosyjski-gaz>