

**Question for written answer E-002756/2022
to the Commission**
Rule 138
Gunnar Beck (ID)

Subject: Human rights concerns in Azerbaijan following the EU-Azeri gas deal

On Monday, 18 July 2022, Commission President Ursula von der Leyen signed with Azerbaijani President Ilham Aliyev a memorandum of understanding on a strategic partnership in the field of energy. The aim is to double the supply of gas from Azerbaijan to the EU by 2027, and to expand the Southern Gas Corridor. Commission President Von der Leyen stated that Azerbaijan is a more reliable supplier of gas than Russia.

President Aliyev has ruled the country for the last 19 years. During his time, scores of local civil society activists have faced persecution while the country's freedom scores¹ have deteriorated with each presidential term.

1. How does the Commission view the concerns over the severe human rights violations by the Aliyev regime, especially in the light of the ongoing Article 7 procedures against Hungary and Poland?
2. What is the Commission's response to the fact that according to Freedom House's freedom index, Russia scores significantly better (19/100) than Azerbaijan (9/100), both in terms of political rights and civil liberties?
3. Why is de-russifying energy imports more important to the Commission than human rights?

¹ <https://freedomhouse.org/countries/freedom-world/scores>