

ORAL QUESTION H-0026/08  
for Question Time at the part-session in February 2008  
pursuant to Rule 109 of the Rules of Procedure  
by Petru Filip  
to the Commission

Subject: South Stream agreement between Bulgaria and the Russian Federation and the Commission's position in principle

On the occasion of the recent signing of the South Stream agreement between Bulgaria and the Russian Federation (along with an agreement worth EUR 4 billion on the construction of the Belene nuclear power plant by the Russian company Atomstroyexport - the first contract of this kind to be concluded within the EU), President Putin did not hold back from referring in a press release to the political price that Russia is placing on the agreement: 'The most important thing for us is that Bulgaria should not develop a defence policy that is subject to the security interests of other countries. Bulgaria's new commitments as a NATO ally should not become a barrier to the expansion of its relations with Russia'. The response from the Energy Commissioner Andris Piebalgs (via his spokesman Ferran Tarradellas) to the Russian Federation's efforts to become (in the words of the Jamestown Foundation analyst Vladimir Socor) 'the political manager of an energy supply system for Europe' provides no indication of what implications the Commission expects the agreement to have.

Bearing in mind the significant consequences for European energy policies and the regional geostrategic impact, how will the Commission modify its position and, if any adjustments are planned, what are the basic principles which the Commission is not prepared to renounce?

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