



## EUROPEAN COMMISSION - PRESS RELEASE

### **Speaking with one voice – the key to securing our energy interests abroad**

Brussels, 07 September 2011 - In today's ever-changing global energy markets achieving EU energy security calls for adequate coordination at home and a strong and assertive position abroad. Today the Commission adopted a Communication on security of energy supply and international cooperation, setting out for the first time a comprehensive strategy for the EU's external relations in energy. Improved coordination among EU Member States in identifying and implementing clear priorities in external energy policy is central to the approach outlined by the Commission.

Commissioner for Energy Günther Oettinger said: "*The EU energy policy has made real progress over the last several years. Now, the EU must extend the achievements of its large internal energy market beyond its borders to ensure the security of energy supplies to Europe and foster international energy partnerships. Therefore, the Commission proposes today a coherent approach in the energy relations with third countries. This need to improve internal coordination so that the EU and its Member States act together and speak with one voice.*"

Alongside the Communication, the Commission proposed a Decision setting up an information exchange mechanism for intergovernmental agreements in the field of energy between Member States and third countries. It will extend and complement the notification procedure already applicable to gas agreements to all forms of energy. And it will provide for an instrument to exchange information at EU level before and after negotiations with third countries. The proposed mechanism is set to strengthen the negotiating position of Member States *vis-à-vis* third countries, while ensuring security of supply, proper functioning of the internal market and creating legal certainty for investment.

## Background

The share of imported energy in the EU – currently 80% for oil and over 60% for gas – continues to rise. National decisions and agreements with third countries have a significant impact on the development of energy infrastructure and energy supply to the EU as a whole. EU interests need to be better promoted in relations with both transit countries and energy producing countries. At the same time, new patterns of supply and demand in global energy markets and growing competition for resources also make it necessary to exercise the combined weight of the EU in external energy relations.

In line with the Energy 2020 strategy, today's Communication proposes to enhance the external dimension of the EU energy policy through improving transparency among EU Member States on their energy agreements with third countries, strengthening coordination when approaching partner countries, when taking position in international organisations, and when developing comprehensive energy partnerships with key partner countries.

The strategy lists 43 concrete actions which include notably:

- Member States have to share among each other information about international agreements with third countries in the field of energy. This includes agreements which are still under negotiation. On a case-by-case basis, the Commission may provide an opinion on the conformity of these agreements with EU law and with the EU security of supply objectives.
- Energy agreements with third countries could also be negotiated at EU level where necessary to achieve the EU core objectives. This is the case for an agreement with Azerbaijan and Turkmenistan on a Trans-Caspian gas pipeline, where a specific mandate from the Council has been requested.
- The EU will propose a new partnership on renewable energy projects with the Southern Mediterranean countries.
- The EU will advocate for international legally binding nuclear safety standards in multilateral discussions, including under the International Atomic Energy Agency (IAEA), and will aim to extend nuclear safety assessments to EU neighbouring countries.
- The EU development policy will include a greater emphasis on improving access to sustainable energy for the least developed and developing countries.

## Further information

More information on the external dimension of the EU energy policy and the Commission proposal can be found at:

[http://ec.europa.eu/energy/international/index\\_en.htm](http://ec.europa.eu/energy/international/index_en.htm)

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