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**MINISTER: UK IN EU DIMINISHES RISK OF RUSSIAN GAS BLACKMAIL**

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EurActiv

Britains membership of the European Union helps secure the countrys energy supply from any possible threat by Vladimir Putins Russia to restrict gas flows, energy minister Amber Rudd will say today (24 March).

Her comments are part of the governments campaign to persuade UK citizens to vote to stay inside the EU in the 23 June referendum. Public opinion is evenly divided and many voters are undecided on an issue that will define the countrys future global role.

Rudd will argue in a speech that Britains dependence on imported gas is not without risk and that EU membership gives it greater negotiating power in supply disputes.

Russia provides around 30% of the EUs gas and a single supply deal signed last year by Britains biggest energy supplier Centrica meant that, at the time, Russias Gazprom would meet 9% of the countrys gas needs.

We have seen how countries such as Putins Russia use their gas supplies as a tool of foreign policy, threatening to cut off supplies or drastically increase prices, Rudd will say according to advance extracts of her speech.

We cant let our energy security be hijacked as a political pawn to bring Europe to its knees. By working together in the European Union, each member state can stop this becoming a reality \* To put it plainly – when it comes to Russian gas, united we stand, divided we fall.

She will also say that an exit from the 28-member EU would threaten foreign investment in Britains energy industry.

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Kaynak/Source: