
PRO-GAZPROM BIAS DETECTED IN EUROPEAN PARLIAMENT VOTE ON PCIS

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A motion introduced by the Green group to oppose projects of common interest based on fossil fuels was rejected by a large majority of MEPs last week (March 14), but among those who supported it were MEPs who traditionally support Russia.

The Greens introduced the Motion for a Resolution considering that the majority of gas projects listed in the Commissions list of Projects of Common Interest (PCI) are incompatible with the commitments made under the Paris Agreement.

The major project among them is the Southern Gas Corridor, aimed at bringing Azeri gas to Europe by 2020. This is so far the only project to bring to Europe gas via a pipeline from the East, which is not Russian.

The vote breakup provided by VoteWatch.eu shows that among the 177 votes in favour of the resolution were forces in the European Parliament loyal to Russia, such as Front national in France.

Although the capacity of the TAP pipeline, the European section of the Southern Gas Corridor, is 10 to 15 billion cubic meters per year, a small fraction of the 193,9 bcm imported by Russia last year, the project is seen by Moscow as a competitor to its own projects, such as the Turkish Stream project.

Thanks to its PCI status, TAP pipeline was able to secure record loans.

All the MEPs from the centre-right EPP voted against, but the S&D group was split, as it often happens when Russia-related issues are put to vote. Indeed, part of the S&D MEPs could as well be motivated by green considerations.

A total of 48 S&D MEPs voted against the advice of their group leadership, supporting the Greens motion, while 108 voted in favour.

Krišjānis Kariņš, a Latvian MEPs who is the EPPs spokesman in the Industry Committee, slammed the attempt of the populist Greens and their followers to block the PCIs. He stated it would have been pure madness to block the projects, and that opposition to the PCIs would mean scrapping the Commissions proposal to invest 100 billion in key projects, many of which are not based on fossil fuels.

MEPs cannot cherry-pick with projects they want to oppose, he stated. He explained that the vote would endanger all 173 projects, including a sea connection for renewable energy between Spain

and France in the Biscay Gulf, and a project to transport wind-generated electricity between Denmark and Germany.

The Brief - Energy disunion

One quarter of MEPs surprisingly voted against the European Commissions list of gas and electricity projects on Wednesday. The latest show of disunity once again suggests that the dream of a carbon-free Europe might remain just that: a flight of fantasy.

Kaynak/Source: