

EU's Energy Chief Says Gas Supplies Safe

By [The Moscow Times](#)

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BERLIN — European Union Energy Commissioner Guenther Oettinger said in an interview after a Moscow trip that close ties with supplier Russia would avert any new winter gas supply crisis.

Preparations have been taken to avoid a gas transit crisis as seen in January 2009, he said.

"There are no signs of a crisis. There is an intact business relationship and close political ties to Gazprom and the Russian government," Oettinger told Reuters after addressing the European Autumn Gas Conference in Berlin.

He said he visited Moscow last week and was assured of supply security.

"All those involved realize that the 2009 incidents damaged everyone — producers, transit countries and gas as a product," he said.

The EU had early warning systems and minimum storage level requirements in place to help it respond to supply disruptions, he added.

Oettinger told the conference, sponsored by utility RWE, that, in his view, gas has to play a role in Europe for decades to come.

Europe's gas companies, in the commission's vision, will turn away from their national champion role and serve an internal market supported by public policy to give energy a cross-border European dimension, he said.

Every country should have at least three gas supply origins at its disposal rather than, as in many cases today, just one, he said.

The commission supported reverse flow capabilities for new pipelines to allow more flexibility, and backed new import infrastructure, be it pipelines or terminals for liquefied natural gas.

As Europe's own gas resources diminish, it will need to rely on more imports and is especially looking at the Caspian region and the Middle East, Oettinger said.

Oettinger is due to announce his flagship policy on the EU's energy strategy for the next decade on Wednesday.

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