

Mr. Chairman,  
Ladies and Gentlemen,

First of all, I would like to present to your attention the brief overview of the recent Belarus-Russia negotiations in the Gas.

As you are all aware the negotiations between Belarus and Russia on gas supplies and gas transit for 2007 and subsequent years were not easy. However the reached agreements reflect the special allied relationship between the two countries.

This does not exclude the fact that a double increase of gas price puts the economy of Belarus in a quite difficult situation.

Certainly, we could have continued negotiations with the Russian Federation on gas supplies to Belarus but this delay would have threatened the security of transit of the Russian gas through Belarus and would affect the interests of its customers in Europe.

Having accepted the price proposed by Russia on the eve of the New Year the Government of Belarus was conscious of the interests and concerns of our European partners to provide for a secure transit of gas to the EU Member States. It was done in the interest of the European energy security in general. I would like to specifically underline that on the 31<sup>st</sup> of December we signed a single contract covering both supplies and transit of gas.

This approach clearly indicates the reliability of Belarus as a partner of the EU in the spheres of common interest and in particular in a highly sensitive and important field of energy security.

It shows also the willingness of Belarus to take into account the interests of our European partners in the most serious way.

According to the new contract the gas price for Belarus will be linked to the gas prices in the European market. It means that we are objectively interested in the success of the common European energy policy the final purpose of which is to improve the energy security and help decreasing gas prices.

The Republic of Belarus strongly supports the establishment of a balanced energy policy which will take into account the interests of producing, consuming and transit countries.