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## **COMMISSION DECISION**

**of XXX**

**on a Joint Declaration from the Fourth Ministerial Meeting of the Southern Gas  
Corridor Advisory Council, Baku, 15 February 2018**

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### **on a Joint Declaration from the Fourth Ministerial Meeting of the Southern Gas Corridor Advisory Council, Baku, 15 February 2018**

THE EUROPEAN COMMISSION,

Having regard to the Treaty on European Union and the Treaty on the Functioning of the European Union,

Whereas:

- (1) Article 17(1) of the Treaty on European Union lists the powers of the Commission and provides in particular that the Commission is to ensure the Union's external representation, with the exception of the common foreign and security policy and other cases provided for in the Treaties.
- (2) The Southern Gas Corridor is an EU priority project that has been recognised as such on a number of occasions, including the European Council Conclusions of 24 October 2014 which agreed on the need "to implement critical projects of common interest in the gas sector, such as the Southern Gas Corridor" and the Joint Communication on the Review of the European Neighbourhood Policy (JOIN (2015) 50 final) of 18 November 2015, which recognised its importance to achieve pan-European energy security.
- (3) To facilitate and further the practical realisation of the Southern Gas Corridor, a Southern Gas Corridor Advisory Council was set up at the initiative of the Vice President Šefčovič and the President of Azerbaijan Ilham Aliyev. The Advisory Council has already met on three occasions (in February of 2015, 2016 and 2017) and the fourth meeting is now planned to take place on 15 February 2018 in Baku.
- (4) [REDACTED] Azerbaijan has prepared the text and circulated it to all concerned parties for comment.
- (5) Since 7 December 2017, discussions have been taking place between representatives of the Commission and of Azerbaijan. Azerbaijan is also negotiating with the representatives of the Republic of Albania, the Republic of Bulgaria, Georgia, the Hellenic Republic, the Italian Republic, the Republic of Turkey, and the Republic of Croatia, Montenegro, the United Kingdom and the United States of America, with a view to drawing up a non-binding instrument setting out political commitments with regard to the Southern Gas Corridor. The Joint Declaration from the Fourth Ministerial Meeting of the Southern Gas Corridor Advisory Council is the result of those discussions.
- (6) In view of the multilateral context of this Joint Declaration, the Commission's representative should be authorised to accept minor changes to the draft Joint Declaration.
- (7) The envisaged date for signature of the Joint Declaration from the Fourth Ministerial Meeting of the Southern Gas Corridor Advisory Council is 15 February 2018.

- (8) The Council has been kept informed of the discussions and of the envisaged date for signature.
- (9) The Joint Declaration from the Fourth Ministerial Meeting of the Southern Gas Corridor Advisory Council does not, nor is it intended to, create any legal obligations on either side under domestic or international law.
- (10) Given the interest of the Union in demonstrating the EU's continued strong support and commitment to the Southern Gas Corridor, as highlighted in particular in the European Council Conclusions of 24 October 2014, it is appropriate to sign the Joint Declaration of the Fourth Ministerial Meeting of the Southern Gas Corridor Advisory Council.
- (11) It is necessary to submit the Joint Declaration from the Fourth Ministerial Meeting of the Southern Gas Corridor Advisory Council to the Council for endorsement, prior to its signing by the Commission on behalf of the Union,

HAS DECIDED AS FOLLOWS:

*Article 1*

The Joint Declaration from the Fourth Ministerial Meeting of the Southern Gas Corridor Advisory Council, as attached to this Decision, is approved.

The text of the Joint Declaration from the Fourth Ministerial Meeting of the Southern Gas Corridor Advisory Council is submitted to the Council for endorsement.

*Article 2*

The Vice-President responsible for the Energy Union or the person designated by him is authorised to sign the Joint Declaration from the Fourth Ministerial Meeting of the Southern Gas Corridor Advisory Council on behalf of the Union, after its endorsement by the Council, subject to non-substantial changes.

Done at Brussels,

*For the Commission*  
*Miguel Arias Cañete*  
*Member of the Commission*