



COMMISSION IMPLEMENTING DECISION (EU) 2026/335

of 9 February 2026

establishing the list of third countries exempted from prior authorisation for gas imports into the Union pursuant to Article 5(4) of Regulation (EU) 2026/261 of the European Parliament and of the Council

THE EUROPEAN COMMISSION,

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

Having regard to Regulation (EU) 2026/261 of the European Parliament and of the Council of 26 January 2026 on phasing out Russian natural gas imports and preparing the phase out of Russian oil imports, improving monitoring of potential energy dependencies and amending Regulation (EU) 2017/1938 ⁽¹⁾, and in particular Article 5(4) thereof,

Whereas:

- (1) Regulation (EU) 2026/261 introduced a legal prohibition on imports of natural gas originating in or exported, directly or indirectly, from the Russian Federation.
- (2) Article 5(3) of that Regulation introduced a prior authorisation process which is meant to allow for a smooth verification process of the country of production before the gas enters the Union customs territory.
- (3) In accordance with Article 5(4) of Regulation (EU) 2026/261, imports of natural gas from a third country, other than the Russian Federation, can be exempted from the obligation of prior authorisation under clearly defined conditions. The conditions are to be deemed fulfilled where a third country produces natural gas, has exported more than 5 bcm of natural gas to the Union in 2024 and has prohibited the import of Russian gas or is applying other restrictive measures concerning Russian gas; or where a third country has no gas infrastructure in place which allows it to import LNG or pipeline gas.
- (4) This decision establishes the list of third countries which fulfil the conditions set out in Article 5(4) of Regulation (EU) 2026/261 at the time of its adoption.
- (5) Given the need to ensure the effective implementation of Regulation (EU) 2026/261, and to promptly put forward the elements required for a seamless functioning of the prior authorisation procedure, by bringing clarity on which imports of natural gas are exempted from prior authorisation, it is necessary that this Decision takes immediate effect after its adoption to prevent uncertainty for concerned authorities and market participants.

HAS ADOPTED THIS DECISION:

Article 1

In accordance with the conditions set out in Article 5(4) of Regulation (EU) 2026/261, the following countries shall be exempted from prior authorisation:

- (a) Algeria;
- (b) Nigeria;
- (c) Norway;
- (d) Qatar;
- (e) United Kingdom;
- (f) United States.

⁽¹⁾ OJ L, 2026/261, 2.2.2026, ELI: <http://data.europa.eu/eli/reg/2026/261/oj>.

Article 2

This Decision shall enter into force on the day following that of its publication in the *Official Journal of the European Union*.

Done at Brussels, 9 February 2026.

For the Commission
The President
Ursula VON DER LEYEN
