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# Russia, Iran And Qatar Agree To Form An OPEC-Style Gas Cartel

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/PanARMENIAN.Net/ World gas powers Russia, Iran and Qatar pledged on Tuesday to strengthen cooperation and Tehran said there was a consensus to form an OPEC-style grouping, comments likely to worry Western consumer nations.

Iran's Oil Minister Gholamhossein Nozari said he and Qatar's Energy Minister Abdullah al-Attiyah and Chief Executive Alexei Miller of Russian gas export monopoly Gazprom agreed to establish a high-ranking natural gas committee.

Unlike Nozari, Miller did not refer to a "gas OPEC" at a joint news conference but said the three sides had set up a "major gas troika" that would help implement joint projects.

Russia, Iran and Qatar are ranked the first, second and third biggest holders of natural gas reserves in the world and together boast more than half of the global total.

"We have made major decisions," Nozari said after talks in the Iranian capital. "There is a demand to form this gas OPEC and there is a consensus to set up gas OPEC."

Major gas exporters have met informally for several years at the annual Gas Exporting Countries Forum, a grouping including also Venezuela, Nigeria, Algeria, Egypt, Indonesia and Libya.

Iran wants to turn it into a more formal organization akin to the Organization of the Petroleum Exporting Countries, the 13-member cartel which makes output decisions that can sway the oil price.

Europe and the United States have warned against such a gas export body, saying it could pose a danger to global energy security and create room for price manipulation.

Gazprom has previously played down the idea of a gas OPEC, saying it was not feasible. But Miller told Tuesday's news conference: "We have decided to be in close contact and we can say that today a major gas troika was formed."

Some analysts say any gas OPEC could be expected to share insights on upstream contract terms with investors rather than act on restricting gas supply as the oil OPEC does.

"Surely this gathering of gas exporting countries is to give assurances over gas supply to the world," said Miller, whose country is the world's largest natural gas exporter, Reuters reports.

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