

Bulgaria and the United States are strategic partners in the field of energy and that is a key factor for the diversification of energy suppliers not only in Bulgaria but also in the entire region, said Minister of Energy Temenuzhka Petkova, at a meeting with US Department of State's Bureau of Energy Resources Assistant Secretary Francis R. Fannon. Minister Petkova said that Bulgaria is actively working on guaranteeing energy security and values highly the United States' support for the implementation of the priority infrastructure projects in this field: the Gas Interconnector Greece-Bulgaria (IGB) and the liquefied natural gas (LNG) terminal near Alexandroupoli. According to Petkova, IGB project is a key priority of the Government in the energy sector, confirming the Government's strong commitment to the successful construction of the interconnector as infrastructure of strategic importance to the security of gas supplies in Southeast Europe. Bulgaria views the construction of the IGB pipeline in synergy with the participation in the Alexandroupoli LNG terminal project. By participating in these projects, Bulgaria is achieving actual diversification of the gas sources and supply routes, and is becoming a key factor in this process in the region. Minister Petkova and Fannon also discussed the progress achieved in the project for diversifying the fresh nuclear fuel for nuclear power plant Kozloduy power plant. According to Bulgarian media, Fannon said after the meeting that the US considers the NPP Belene project bad from a commercial and technical point of view, and incapable of ensuring Bulgaria's energy security. According to him, the Russian equipment for NPP Belene is technologically outdated and Russia refuses to use it on its own territory. Asked whether the US sanctions against the TurkStream gas pipeline project would also apply to the Balkan Stream project, Fannon said that regardless of the difference in the names of the projects, the US views Balkan Stream and TurkStream as one and the same pipeline. He specified that the Countering America's Adversaries Through Sanctions Act directed against TurkStream does not oblige the US to impose sanctions but to use various means to ensure the Act's implementation.