

Bulgaria would achieve full diversification of its energy sources as of 1 January 2021, said Bulgarian Prime Minister Boyko Borisov during the visit to the construction site of Greece-Bulgarian gas interconnection (so-called IGB pipeline).

PM Borisov said the project was making progress at full speed, adding that the country holds a 20 % stake in the LNG terminal at Alexandroupoli in northern Greece so that 100 % diversification will be achieved after gas from sources different to the current ones starts flowing from south to north. So far 159 kilometers of line pipes have been delivered for the project, 72 kilometers of the route has been welded and over 11 kilometers of pipes have been laid and covered. The IGB pipeline will link the gas transmission systems of the Greek national operator (DESFA) and the Trans-Adriatic Pipeline (TAP) at Komotini and the transmission system of Bulgartransgaz at Stara Zagora. The interconnector is one of seven priority projects for the security and competitiveness of the EU energy market. Through it, Bulgaria will get Azeri natural gas through TAP and supplies from the US, Qatar, Algeria, Israel and Egypt, among others, through the Alexandroupoli LNG terminal. The total length of the IGB pipeline is 182 kilometers, including 150 kilometers in Bulgarian territory. Its capacity for gas transmission is 3 billion cubic meters per year, with the option to reach 5 billion cubic meters. The project is worth 220 million euros.

In September, Bulgarian media reported that the deadline for the completion of gas interconnection between Bulgaria and Greece could be postponed for the second half of 2021. Currently, the commissioning of the pipeline is planned for April 2021. Executive Director of ICGB, a joint venture company of Bulgarian Energy Holding (BEH) and IGI Poseidon, in which Greek Public Gas Corporation (DEPA) and Italian Edison hold equal stakes, Teodora Georgieva said that, due to the coronavirus pandemic and the disruption of international travel and supplies, the company tasked with the construction of the pipeline - Greek AVAX, has asked for an extension of the deadline.