

Bulgarian state-owned natural gas transmission system operator Bulgartransgaz submitted project proposals for partial grant financing for the expansion of the Chiren underground gas storage under the Connecting Europe Facility (CEF). The program is administered by the European Climate, Infrastructure and Environment Executive Agency (CINEA). The expansion of the only gas storage facility in the country has been selected by the European Commission as a project of common interest in all published PCI lists to date. This status is one of the eligibility requirements for receiving CEF funding. Early this year one of the most important studies for the expansion has been accomplished – the 3D -seismic studies of the Chiren structure, which were co-financed by CEF with 50 % of the eligible costs. The future investment is valued at 308 million euro and will allow for increasing the volume of the working gas to 1 billion cubic meters and the daily injection and withdrawal capacity to 8-10 million cubic meters. For this purpose, new exploitation and surveillance wells, above-ground facilities and pipeline connection to the existing gas transmission infrastructure will be built. The increase of the storage capacity will foster natural gas trade, will stimulate competition and will improve the liquidity of the gas markets in the country and the region. The project realization will contribute to improving security of supply and market integration in South-Eastern Europe. The results of the project proposals' evaluation are expected to be announced by CINEA in early 2022.