

According to Bulgarian media, the process of technical acceptance and obtaining of the operational permit from the competent state authorities is in progress as Bulgarian natural gas transmission system operator Bulgartransgaz confirmed that the construction of TurkStream gas pipeline extension through the Bulgarian territory (so-called Balkan Stream) has been completed, while preparations for its official commissioning are in progress.

In October, Bulgarian Prime Minister Boyko Borisov said that the construction of Bulgarian section of TurkStream gas pipeline extension will be completed by the end of the year, which was also confirmed by the additional agreement signed between state-owned natural gas transmission system operator Bulgartransgaz and the contractor - Saudi-based Arkad consortium. According to newly agreed deadlines, the construction of the entire route with a length of 474 kilometers will be completed sooner. According to initial agreement, the first 308 kilometers had to be built within 250 calendar days from the signing of the contract, which was at the end of May 2020. However, the construction procedure was delayed due to the coronavirus pandemic. The remaining 166 kilometers had to be ready in 615 calendar days. Now, however, the construction of the entire route is united in a new total deadline - 448 days from the signing of the contract, which was in September last year. Thus, the entire route of the Bulgarian section of the pipeline will be completed in mid-December. In related news, Serbian President Aleksandar Vucic said that Serbia will start pumping gas into its section of the pipeline on 29 or 30 December. Serbian section of the pipeline has been completed in December 2019, although the start of commercial operation is expected in May 2021 after the completion of the compressor station.