

Caretaker Minister of Energy Rossen Hristov said that Russian Gazprom Export has finally responded to Bulgaria's plea for resuming a part of agreed gas supply and is ready to discuss future steps.

According to Minister Hristov, Gazprom is prepared to supply about a third of Bulgaria's natural gas needs. He added that the communication with Russians is slow, but hopes for the positive outcome. The caretaker Government wanted to avoid the arbitration process with Gazprom over undelivered gas volumes and now everything is being done to receive agreed volumes of gas by the end of this year .

Last week, Minister Hristov said that Russian authorities have decided that gas company Gazprom will not work with Bulgaria on supplying Russian natural gas to the country. He explained that it is unclear whether this is an official statement, but the Ministry is trying to send a message that Bulgaria is ready to resume negotiations on gas supply, which was cut in late April when Bulgaria rejected to pay in rubles. He said that Bulgaria is ready to pay for supplied gas under the same conditions as Germany.

He said that the previous Government reacted "too emotionally" in relations with Russia and Gazprom, adding that natural gas supplied from Russia is the second cheapest option for Bulgaria, after gas from Azerbaijan.

Minister Hristov said that caretaker Government is not planning to launch negotiations on new gas supply deal with Gazprom. It is only interested in getting already contracted quantities of gas in order to avoid paying penalties due to "take or pay" clause in the contract.