

Bulgaria: European Commission opens investigation against Bulgarian Energy Holding for gas network access competition breach

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The European Commission said on Friday it opened formal proceedings to investigate whether the Bulgarian Energy Holding (BEH), its gas supply subsidiary Bulgargaz and gas infrastructure subsidiary Bulgartransgaz might be hindering competitors from accessing key gas infrastructures in Bulgaria, in breach of EU antitrust rules.

The Commission has concerns that BEH and its subsidiaries may be abusing their dominant market position on the natural gas markets in Bulgaria, it said in a statement.

"In particular, the Commission has concerns that these companies may be preventing potential competitors from accessing the Bulgarian gas transmission network and the gas storage facility by explicitly or tacitly refusing or delaying access to third parties," it said.

In addition, according to the Commission, these companies may be preventing competitors from accessing the main gas import pipeline by reserving capacity that is consistently not used, without releasing it on the market. "Without access to this key infrastructure, it is impossible for any companies to compete with Bulgargaz on the Bulgarian gas supply markets," it noted.

There is no legal deadline to complete inquiries into anti-competitive conduct.

Source;EC