

Bulgarian Commission for Energy and Water Regulation (KEVR) has approved a 25 % increase of wholesale natural gas price for April, much lower than the proposal by gas supplier Bulgargaz for 57.7 % price hike.

The wholesale price is increased to around 72.9 euros/MWh, excluding VAT and excise duty. Previously, KEVR approved 3.5 % increase of wholesale natural gas price for March. The increase is due to the record-high natural gas prices on the European commodity exchanges resulting from the ongoing war in Ukraine and Russia's threats to cut off gas supplies, which is causing energy insecurity. KEVR also added that it has used all possible quantities of gas available from Bulgaria's Chiren gas storage facility to bring down the April gas price as much as possible. Its decision was formed based on the provisions of the contracts between Bulgargaz and Russian Gazprom as well as the company supplying gas from Azerbaijan.

Furthermore, KEVR intends to rearrange the current timeline under which Bulgargaz requests monthly price changes, moving the requirement for the gas supplier to propose price amendments from 20 days to between 7 and 10 days before the regulator's approval which is due at the start of each new calendar month.

In March 2020, Bulgargaz and Gazprom Export have finalized an agreement on 40.3 % reduction of the price at which Russia supplies natural gas to Bulgaria, backdated to 5 August 2019. Bulgaria was the last of eight EU Member States of Eastern Europe to strike a deal on a price cut with Gazprom, in the wake of a settlement reached between the European Commission and the Russian monopolist on an anti-trust investigation.