

Russia's Gazprom has stopped supplying gas to Bulgaria and Poland and warned them not to take fuel from other countries for gas. Bulgarian Prime Minister Kiril Petkov called the move a breach of contract and blackmail, and said his government was reviewing all agreements with the company, including those on transit. Some EU countries have agreed to Russian payment terms.

Gazprom announced today that it has temporarily suspended gas supplies to Bulgaria's Bulgargaz and Poland's PGNiG because they did not pay for fuel in rubles for April. The Russian state-owned company added that it had informed them that the suspension would last until it settled its obligations in the prescribed manner.

"Bulgaria and Poland are transit countries. In the case of unauthorized takeover of Russian gas from the quantities intended for transit to third countries, the transit supply will be reduced by the amount taken over," the statement reads.

The Prime Minister of Bulgaria, Kiril Petkov, stated that his government has prepared for this scenario and provided alternative sources, and that deliveries to consumers will not be reduced.

"By severely interrupting the flow of gas, they grossly violated the contract, and that is blackmail to implement a plan on payment in rubles through third parties, which does not provide guarantees for gas for Bulgarians or their money. "We will not give in to such racketeering... Bulgaria is revising all agreements with Gazprom, including those on transit through Bulgaria, because unilateral action for extortion is unacceptable," Petkov said. He added that he had heard from his Greek counterpart Kyriakos Mitsotakis and that he had confirmed that the interconnection with Greece would be operational in June.

### **Bulgaria will not hinder Serbia and Hungary in gas transit**

Immediately before that, the Minister of Energy, Alexander Nikolov, stated that Bulgaria is a loyal partner of Serbia and Hungary. "Whenever we can, we will help all neighboring countries. "We will not create artificial disturbances to neighboring countries," he pointed out.

According to Nikolov, the two-stage payment procedure proposed by Russia carries serious risks. "We would practically lose control of the payment. It is unclear which course would be used. Therefore, the Bulgarian side is in danger of paying for fuel without receiving it," the minister added.

He also mentioned that deliveries to consumers for the next month are guaranteed. Bulgaria has paid its liabilities for April, Nikolov claims. According to him, gas deliveries from Azerbaijan will be increased on July 1.

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