

Croatia is currently engaged in the preparation of a bilateral agreement with neighboring Slovenia on mutual support in case of the interruption of natural gas supply from Russia. According to Croatian media, similar solidarity agreements could soon be signed with Italy, Hungary and Austria.

The mechanism in question is provided by the European regulation on security of supply from 2017, but so far only six solidarity agreements have been signed within the EU. The first was signed in December 2020 between Germany and Denmark, then at the end of 2021, between Germany and Austria, and as many as four were signed this year - between Estonia and Latvia, Lithuania and Latvia, Italy and Slovenia, and Finland and Estonia. In the meantime, the European Commission has supplemented the regulation with articles that, in case of need, can be directly applicable even if there are no bilateral agreements signed. The goal is for countries to help each other to ensure that their so-called protected consumers (such as households and hospitals) are supplied with gas even in the case of the worst crisis.

According to the latest EU agreement on reducing gas consumption by 15 % by the spring of 2023 (savings are voluntary at this stage, but could become mandatory in the event of an EU alert), member states should update their existing intervention plans for the crisis in gas supply by the end of summer, with continuous updates every two months.

The member states that request joint purchases of gas will be asked to show what measures they have taken to reduce domestic demand.