

According to Romanian natural gas transmission system operator Transgaz, this expansion increase includes the capacity envisaged under the first phase of the BRHA pipeline project. Export capacity to Hungary, through the Arad-Szeged interconnector, will increase from current 0.75 billion cubic meters per year to 1.75 billion cubic meters per year as of 1 December. Thus, the export capacity through the interconnection point with Hungary will be over 17 % of the domestic production, which is currently under 10 billion cubic meters per year.

In March, Transgaz committed to increase the transfer capacity to both Hungary and Bulgaria, in order to avoid a fine of up to 10 % of its turnover from the European Commission. More specifically, Transgaz has committed: - to make available minimum export capacities of 1.75 billion cubic meters per year at the interconnection point between Romania and Hungary (Csanadpalota). This capacity is equivalent to around one sixth of Hungary's annual gas consumption; - to make available minimum export capacities totaling 3.7 billion cubic meters per year at two interconnection points between Romania and Bulgaria (Giurgiu/Ruse and Negru Voda I/Kardam). This capacity covers more than half of Bulgaria and Greece's annual gas consumption; - to ensure that its tariff proposals to the Romanian national energy regulator (ANRE) will not discriminate between export and domestic tariffs in order to avoid interconnection tariffs that would make exports commercially unviable; - to refrain from using any other means of hindering exports. The EC launched a formal investigation in June 2017 to assess whether Transgaz infringed EU antitrust rules by restricting exports of natural gas from Romania. In particular, the Commission was concerned that Transgaz may have carried out such restrictions by: underinvesting in or delaying construction of infrastructure for gas exports; interconnection tariffs for gas exports that made exports commercially unviable and by using unfounded technical arguments as a pretext for restricting exports. These restrictions may have maintained or created barriers to the cross-border flow of natural gas from Romania, one of the EU's largest natural gas producers, to Hungary and Bulgaria, contrary to the objective of an integrated Energy Union where energy flows freely across borders directed by competitive forces and based on the best possible use of resources.