

The Senate, the upper house of the Romanian Parliament, has amended the Energy Law by establishing a mandatory annual percentage for wholesale gas sales on the centralized market of 50 %, instead of 70 % previously proposed by the Chamber of Deputies.

Moreover, the Senate gave up the idea of the Committee for Industries of the Chamber of Deputies to give OPCOM, company controlled by Transelectrica, the status of single operator of the centralized gas markets, although currently all gas transactions concluded through open auctions take place on the Romanian Commodities Exchange.

Last autumn, the Committee for Industries of the Chamber of Deputies introduced as amendment to the Energy Law, the obligation for all gas market participants that at least 70 % of the total amount of gas sold in a year must be sold through contracts concluded on the centralized markets managed by OPCOM. The European Commission and the Government were against these measures, especially the establishment of OPCOM monopoly on the operation of centralized gas markets.

The document adopted by the Senate introduces as an amendment the provision according to which all participants on the gas market have the obligation, as of 1 January 2019, to conclude in that calendar year contracts on the wholesale centralized markets, in a transparent and nondiscriminatory manner, for the sale of a minimum gas amount that cannot be lower than that represented by a percentage rate of 50 % of the amount of gas for which sale-purchase contracts are concluded in the respective calendar year.

The percentage rate will be increased by the Government on annual basis, at the proposal of the competent Ministry, which is required to monitor the evolution of the wholesale gas market in Romania, no later than 31 March of each calendar year preceding the calendar year for which the obligation to trade on the centralized wholesale gas market of the minimum gas amounts is established.