

Russia and Turkey control the Balkan's energy future

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The impact of the EU is also diminished because the prospect of EU membership is no longer credible since France vetoed accession negotiations with Albania and North Macedonia last year.

On the launch of the Turkish Stream gas pipeline, one branch of which will reach Serbia, the German press estimates that Turkey wants to become an energy crossroads and that the pipeline will increase its existing dependence on Russian gas.

German newspaper stated that the Turkish Stream was built by Gazprom - for Russian gas flowing to Turkey for the time being, and it is added that the new pipeline there will increase its already existing dependence on Russia for gas.

The paper also explains that another, almost finished pipe, should then deliver Russian gas via Bulgaria and Serbia - and to Europe.

"Serbian President Alexander Vucic and Bulgarian Prime Minister Boyko Borisov were also invited to the ceremony at the Istanbul Convention Center. Bulgaria also wants to become an energy crossroads, which is why, like Serbia, it accepts dependence on Russia, writes this German newspaper, commenting that Turkey and Russia are rivals in the Balkans competing for influence, Politika reports.

The pipeline was also commented by journalist Michael Martens that "Isolated and in the short term, connecting with the Turkish Stream can be of benefit to countries in the region. But Moscow and Ankara are gaining access to some of the energy security in the fragile world of Southeast Europe's small states".

Martens further explains that these are not reassuring prospects for the EU whose impact is diminishing and because the prospect of EU membership is no longer credible since France vetoed accession negotiations with Albania and Northern Macedonia last year. The German journalist estimates that the EU, Berlin and Paris in Southeastern Europe will increasingly come into the background if they do not play a more active role.

The same newspaper published a lengthy text by several journalists, estimating that the impact of the new project Russia and Turkey on the EU's doorstep is particularly clear in Serbia, adding that Russia's Gazprom can continue to solidify its lead in Serbia by connecting the Serbian gas pipeline network to the Turkish Stream, Politika reports.

"In Serbia, Turkish Stream is run by Gastrans, a joint venture of Gazprom and the state-owned gas company Srbijagas. The partners seek to establish full market control and isolate themselves from the competition. This applies not only in terms of sales and implementation, but also in terms of gas storage", the text reads.

It added that the only Serbian underground gas tank belongs to the majority Gazprom Germany, a company owned by Gazprom Exports, and that the new gas pipeline and deliveries in Serbia are controlled almost exclusively by Gazprom.

Dirk Busle, deputy director of the Energy Community Secretariat, said that in Serbia, between compliance with European law and controls on the Serbian gas market, they obviously decided on the latter.