

The tender for the construction of Serbian section of gas interconnection with Bulgaria will be published in the next seven to ten days, said Serbian Minister of Mining and Energy Zorana Mihajlovic. Minister Mihajlovic said that the construction of the gas interconnection with Bulgaria, the Nis-Dimitrovgrad gas pipeline, is the first step toward the diversification of not just the gas routes, but also the gas suppliers and a possibility of receiving gas from other sources, including not just Azerbaijan, but also the LNG terminal in Greece and the future EastMed gas pipeline. She emphasized that the money for the construction of a gas interconnection had been secured from European funds and loans from European banks and that the plan was for the gas pipeline to be operational in 2023.

Last month, Serbian Ministry of Mining and Energy has launched a public tender for awarding a contract for supervisory services for the project of the construction of gas interconnection with Bulgaria. This is the first step in preparations for the construction of Nis-Dimitrovgrad gas pipeline, which is expected to start in late 2021. The planned capacity of a new pipeline is 1.8 billion cubic meters per year, with estimated cost of the project of 85.5 million euros, which will be provided from the pre-accession funds of the European Union and a loan of the European Investment Bank (EIB). In January 2017, Bulgaria and Serbia have signed a Memorandum of Understanding (MoU) on the project for the construction of gas interconnection between the two countries. According to the MoU, the construction of the gas pipeline between the two countries should begin by May 2019, while it should be put into operation by the end of 2020. The project envisages the construction of gas pipeline with the annual capacity of 1.8 billion cubic meters of gas. Serbian section of the interconnection is 180 kilometers long two-way gas pipeline, which should enter the country from Bulgaria near Dimitrovgrad and finish near Nis, where it would branch towards Zajecar. The cost of the construction of Serbian section of the pipeline is estimated to some 85 million euros and, according to Serbian media, the European Union has already awarded 49.7 million euros for the implementation of this project.