

The construction works on the South Stream gas pipeline will continue normally without any delays while the negotiations between the EU and Russia are underway on issues concerning the implementation of the EU Third Energy Package with regard to the pipeline, stated Serbian Energy Minister Zorana Mihajlovic. Serbia is not in the position to get involved between the EU and Russia talks on South Stream.

“Our position is that the EU and Russia should reach an agreement on how to regulate the legal part of the South Stream agreement, that is, the issue concerning the Third Energy Package, and whatever Russia and the EU agree to do, Serbia will respect it,” Mihajlovic told a press conference in the Serbian government.

She pointed out that the Serbian government and Energy Ministry have received no official document from either the EU or Gazprom stating that the agreement on South Stream is not in compliance with European directives.

Building the sections of South Stream through Serbia and other countries will carry on according to the agreement and the EU and Russia should reach a deal on the matter as soon as possible, Mihajlovic said commenting on the conclusions from a conference on South Stream held in Brussels two days ago.

Mihajlovic said that the implementation of the agreement between the EU and Russia will primarily be related to the EU member-states that South Stream will be transiting through and it is they that need to start talks on the matter first.

She pointed out, however, that Serbia wants to be part of the EU and does not want to do anything that may not be in conformity with EU directives.

Mihajlovic said that it was noted at the conference in Brussels that EU Energy Commissioner Guenther Oettinger sent a letter to Russian Energy Minister Alexander Novak stating that the issues regarding South Stream need to be resolved.

Klaus-Dieter Borchardt, director of the Internal Energy Market at DG Energy at the European Commission, said during the conference that the bilateral agreements which the Russian Gazprom signed with countries taking part in the South Stream project, including Serbia, are not in compliance with relevant EU regulations and therefore these countries will have to re-negotiate them.

According to the reply of Deputy Russian Energy Minister Anatoly Yankovski, Russia will not accept application of EU rules to cross-border projects such as pipelines that also go through territories that are not parts of the EU.

Source; Serbia Energy