

The European Commission has recommended Serbia to suspend work on the South Stream construction while the project is fully harmonized with the EU legislation. EC urges to work on connecting with the Bulgarian system of gas flow.

“The EC, in principle, is not opposed to the South Stream project, because it is very important to expand the types and sources of gas supply in the Western Balkans”, writes in the text of EUIC and adds that “the Commission is not concerned about the pipeline as such, but the way in which this project is carried out”.

South Stream, as well as all other major infrastructure projects in Europe, must have a strong legal and regulatory framework, which, as stated, there is not for now.

No intergovernmental treaty that Russia signed on the South Stream is not in line with EU law, as in the case of the EU Member States and third countries, such as Serbia, and the Commission’s stance on South Stream in Serbia’s case is not exception, stated in the text.

“As a signatory to the Treaty on establishing the Energy Community, Serbia is obliged to implement all relevant EU legislation, to develop an appropriate regulatory framework, and to liberalize the energy market in line with the EU acquisition. As candidate country, in the long-term interests of Serbia is also to ensure that her participation in the South Stream project does not violate the basic principles of the EU acquisition”.

At this stage, the European Commission recommended Serbia to suspend work on the South Stream construction until the point of complete harmonization project with EU legislation, by which “would avoid increasing costs for infrastructure repair in the future”, EUIC says. “At the same time, the Commission urges Serbia to work on connecting with the Bulgarian system of gas flow”, writes in the text.

EC allocated 14, 2 MEUR for that project, which would contribute to improving of the Serbia energy stability, and the European Bank for Reconstruction and Development has promised to support “if Serbia reconstructs Srbijagas in line with the EU rules”.

In addition it also adds that the allegations that Trans Adriatic pipeline “is not under the framework of the EU legislation” are incorrect and reminds that, in contrast to the supporters of the South Stream, proponents of the Trans-Adriatic pipeline filed an application for exemption with the appropriate government regulatory authorities still in 2011th and the European Commission granted in 2013th the partial exemption from the rule that is subject to special conditions.

Supporters of the South Stream has not still filed such a request, and if they do, the state regulatory authorities and the Commission would be required to assess such requests and analyze the details of this project based on the criteria in the Directive on Gas, EUIC explains.

The text concludes that the purpose of exemption from rules is to enable the development of infrastructure, which would otherwise be impossible.

Let’s recall that Bulgaria suspended the South Stream construction in June and at the

request of The European Commission. “We have received a request from the European Commission (EC), after which I ordered the suspension of work. Further activities will be clearer after further consultations with Brussels”, said the then Prime Minister of Bulgaria Plamen Oresharski. Brussels indicted Bulgaria for violating European rules when tendering for infrastructure projects and giving privilege to the Russian and Bulgarian companies.