

The launch of the Serbian section of the TurkStream gas pipeline could be postponed at least by the next spring, according to Russian media.

They say that a potential reason for the delay lies in the construction of a compressor station in Serbia.

The Serbian part of TurkStream, which connects the Bulgarian and the Hungarian sections between Zajecar and Horgos, is 403 kilometers long and has a capacity of 13.9 billion cubic meters of gas a year. The gas started flowing through TurkStream to Bulgaria, Greece and North Macedonia in early 2020, but the beginning of the delivery to Serbia and Hungary, planned for the first half of the year, has already been postponed for the end of the year, because Bulgaria could not complete its part on time. In June, Bulgarian Prime Minister Boyko Borissov said that the delay occurred due to the influence of the coronavirus pandemic on the procurement of the equipment for the compressor station and promised the completion of the construction of the gas pipeline by the end of the year.

Earlier this month, President of the Serbian Gas Association Vojislav Vuletic said that, although gas pipeline in Serbia and Bulgaria are now connected, first volumes of gas through the pipeline are expected in May 2021. Director of Serbian gas company Srbijagas Dusan Bajatovic also said that Serbian compressor station along the route of the pipeline will be completed in May 2021, by which time Bulgaria will complete its first compressor station, while the second one will be built in 2022. It is expected that commercial operation of the pipeline could start in third or fourth quarter of 2021.

Serbia has completed the laying of the pipes for its section of the TurkStream gas pipeline extension in December last year. The construction of Serbian section, connecting Bulgarian and Hungarian borders, has officially started in May 2019. With an envisaged capacity of almost 14 billion cubic meters of gas per year, 403 kilometers long Serbian section should be put into operation as early as 2020, and reach its full capacity during 2022. The operator of the pipeline in Serbia is local company Gastrans, a joint venture between Russian Gazprom and state-owned gas company Srbijagas.