

Turkish President Recep Tayyip Erdogan said during his official visit to Serbia that Russia will not object to Turkey's plan of transferring natural gas from its TurkStream gas pipeline project to Serbia.

President Erdogan stressed that Turkey supports the issue of bringing natural gas to Serbia through the TurkStream pipeline, as the country's desire is for the gas to get to Europe as soon as possible, adding that he believes that Russia wants the same.

Last month, Russian Minister of Energy Alexander Novak said in an interview that Russia is prepared to supply natural gas from the future TurkStream gas pipeline to both Bulgaria and Greece if necessary. However, he stressed that the first and foremost thing is that the necessary confirmations were obtained concerning the EU and the European Commission so that there were guarantees for the implementation of these long-term infrastructure projects.

TurkStream pipeline project emerged as an alternative for South Stream pipeline project which was cancelled on 1 December last year due to non-compliance with EU legislation. The construction of TurkStream pipeline was agreed between Gazprom and Turkish state-owned gas company BOTAS in December 2014. New pipeline will be constructed under Black Sea towards western Turkey. Capacity of the pipeline will be some 63 billion cubic meters annually, where some 14 billion cubic meters (one line) would be supplied to Turkey and remaining amount to Greece-Turkey gas hub. From this hub, natural gas will be supplied to both Bulgaria and Greece. However, in October 2015 Gazprom halved the proposed capacity of TurkStream gas pipeline to 32 billion cubic meters of gas per year, while Turkey insisted on the construction of just one line, with the option for the second line in the future. The final agreement envisages the construction of two lines (one for gas supply directly to Turkey and the other for gas supply to Europe) with the capacity of 15.75 billion cubic meters of gas per year each.

In December 2016, Gazprom announced that it has signed an agreement on the construction of the first line of TurkStream gas pipeline with the Swiss Allseas Group and in February 2017 the deal with Allseas was extended to the second line of the pipeline as well. CEO of Gazprom, Alexey Miller said previously that the company aims to complete the construction of TurkStream gas pipeline by the end of 2019. The construction of offshore section of the pipeline started in May 2017.