

Albania's Energy Ministry on Friday presented a feasibility study for a 618-million-euro gas corridor between Albania, Bosnia and Croatia, which it hopes the EU and US will support. Albania's Ministry of Energy on Friday in Tirana unveiled a preliminary feasibility study for a proposed Ionian-Adriatic gas pipeline, hoping the EU may fund construction of the section of the pipeline between Albania and Montenegro.

Damian Gjoknuri, Minister of Energy and Infrastructure, said Albania had a strong interest in the pipeline project, which could help gasify the country. "We hope for support from the EU and the US [for the project]," he said.

The 511-km-long pipeline, expected to cost up to 618 million euros, aims to link the Trans-Adriatic Pipeline with Montenegro, Bosnia and Croatia.

The feasibility study calls for a new pipeline with a capacity of 5 billion cubic meters per year, BCM, from which Albania and Bosnia hope to consume 1 BCM each, Montenegro 0.5 BCM while Croatia, the biggest and the strongest economy in the Western Balkans, is expected to consume 2.5 BCM per year.

The US Ambassador to Tirana, Donald Lu, expressed America's support for the project, as a way to obtain a new source of energy that is not dependent on Russia, and as a means to strengthen regional energy collaboration.

The Albanian Energy Ministry said that, in collaboration with the European Commission, its Directory for Energy and the Ministry of Economy of Montenegro had presented a proposal to the Western Balkans Investment Framework, hoping it will finance the development of the project for the sections in Albania and Montenegro.

The Trans-Adriatic Pipeline is currently under construction. It is expected to ship gas from Azerbaijan to Italy through existing pipelines in Turkey and Greece and through a new pipeline running from Greece to Italy through Albania and under the Adriatic Sea.

The pipeline will have an exit point near Fieri, in Albania, which creates hopes of getting new energy supplies for all Western Balkan countries.

They all have large energy deficits and are heavily dependent on coal to generate electricity. Albania and Montenegro have large hydropower capacities but they are not sufficient to cover all their energy needs.

A gas network could help both countries to produce electricity by burning gas and substitute the use of electricity in some functions like heating, thus limiting the need to use coal and protecting the environment at the same time.

Source: balkaninsight