

The chief executive officer of Israel's natural gas company Delek Drilling, Yossi Abu, believes Bulgaria has considerable advantages to become a gas hub in the Balkans, the Bulgarian energy ministry said on Tuesday.

"In your country, Israel sees a stable partner in the field of energy cooperation," Yossi Abu said during a meeting with Bulgarian energy minister Temenuzhka Petkova, according to a press release issued by the energy ministry in Sofia.

Petkova, on a visit to Israel, and Abu discussed opportunities for natural gas deliveries to Bulgaria from gas discoveries in the Eastern Mediterranean, the ministry said.

EU member Bulgaria, which is heavily dependent on Russian gas supplies, is seeking alternative sources and routes for gas deliveries. The country imports almost all the gas it needs to cover its domestic needs via a pipeline from Ukraine through Romania.

Delek Drilling is the leading Israeli energy partnership in the exploration, development, production and sale of natural gas and condensate, according to information from the corporate website. It is a partner in several major gas discoveries in the Eastern Mediterranean including, among others, Tamar, Leviathan and Aphrodite.

According to the company, the proven natural gas reserves in Israel's economic zone in the Mediterranean amount to 1,000 billion cu m, which would cover the country's gas consumption for about 130 years, the press release reads.

On Monday, Bulgaria's energy ministry said that the country is interested in opportunities for receiving natural gas from the offshore fields of Tamar and Leviathan. One option for delivery of Israeli natural gas to Bulgaria is through liquefied natural gas terminals. Another option is the EASTMED gas pipeline project, which will deliver gas from Israel via Cyprus and Crete to Greece.

The Bulgarian government proposed to the European Commission in 2014 to build an EU-funded regional gas hub near the country's Black Sea port of Varna to dispatch gas deliveries to the rest of Europe - to Greece, Romania, Hungary, Croatia, Slovenia and, via those countries, to EU member states in central and western Europe, as well as to non-EU Serbia, Macedonia, and Bosnia and Herzegovina.

Source: seenews