

Citizens of Slavonski Brod and surrounding areas will breathe more easily.

In about a year, Slavonski Brod should solve the problem of pollution coming from an oil refinery in nearby Bosanski Bro, across the Sava River in Bosnia and Herzegovina. In the fall of next year, the refinery should start using gas instead of oil.

The government recently adopted a decision which allows the refinery to be connected to the Croatian gas system, which will enable gas to reach the refinery which will be connected to the Croatia's gas transport system at the Slobodnica gas station.

Gas should completely stop the pollution which has tormented the citizens for years. The owner of the refinery, the Russian company Zarubezhneft, has agreed the deliveries of gas with Crodux Gas, a company owned by retired Croatian General Ivan Čermak. The agreement on the construction of the pipeline which will connect the main gas pipeline in Croatia and the refinery in Bosanski Brod will be signed on 10 October, it was agreed recently in Moscow at the meeting of the Russian-Croatian Intergovernmental Commission for Trade-Economic and Scientific-Technical Cooperation. The Croatian delegation was led by Deputy Prime Minister and Economy Minister Martina Dalić.

"My main motive was to solve the pollution problem in Slavonski Brod, and that is what we did. We proposed this solution to Zarubezhneft three years ago," said Ivan Čermak. "Works on the pipeline will start early next year and will last for six months. It is an investment worth about a few million euros, which will be funded by Crodux," Čermak noted.

Crodux and Zarubezhneft will sign a gas delivery contract for the next ten years. Early year, about 70,000 cubic meters of gas will be delivered, worth about 150 million kunas. According to Čermak, this is not a big deal for him because just a moderate profit margin will remain for his company, but he is extremely pleased that the problem has finally been resolved.

That agreement on gas supply at the political level was agreed in February this year by President Kolinda Grabar-Kitarović and Russian Foreign Minister Sergei Lavrov. The Russian side also broke the resistance of the authorities of the Republika Srpska, the Serb entity in Bosnia and Herzegovina in which the refinery is located, which were persistently opposed to connecting to the Croatian gas pipeline, insisting that the refinery should instead be supplied with gas which Russia sends to Serbia. Earlier, Russian Ambassador to Croatia Anvar Azimov announced that Russia was ready to pay ten million euros of the estimated costs of this project and added that the right solution was indeed to build a gas pipeline from Croatia to the refinery itself.

Prime Minister Andrej Plenković said that the solution which was adopted would enable the improvement of air quality and ensure the health of the local population in the long term,

while the Minister of Environmental Protection and Energy Tomislav Ćorić said that Croatia was interested in this project because its implementation would contribute to the reduction of health risks in the Slavonski Brod area and address the long-standing problem of cross-border air pollution.

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