

Romanian Energy Ministry however shows far too little initiative when it comes to capitalizing on opportunities in this domain

When it comes to the production of natural gas and the interconnection of national natural gas transmission grids, Romania has the best potential and geographic position to become the stepping-stone in this sector. At least in Central and South-East Europe. This is the conclusion of the second summit of the Central East South Europe Gas Connectivity's High Level Group (HLG CESEC) in Dubrovnik, Croatia. Central and South-East European states attended the summit. The summit was hosted by Maros Sefcovic, Vice President for Energy Union, Miguel Arias Canete, European Commissioner for Climate Problems and Energy and the Croatian Economy Ministry.

The summit brought together energy ministers and high energy officials from nine CESEC states, namely from Austria, Bulgaria, Croatia, Greece, Hungary, Italy, Romania, Slovakia and Slovenia, as well as from the European Union. From outside the bloc EU, Serbia, Albania, Bosnia and Herzegovina, the Former Yugoslav Republic of Macedonia, the Republic of Kosovo, Montenegro, Moldova and Ukraine were invited.

Romania is the only country in this region of Europe that covers over 95-97 per cent of its natural gas consumption from domestic production, and in recent months it has managed to gain total independence from imports.

Nevertheless, our country has little initiative and many backlogs in what concerns its interconnections with regional neighbors.

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In what concerns the initiatives, in recent years Romania followed the initiatives of other regional states. There were, for instance, the Vertical Gas Corridor (VGC) that should have ensured [natural gas supplies](#) for the EU's southern flank, namely for Bulgaria, Romania and Greece, a project that Hungary was set to adhere to later on. The VGC is presently a frozen project (the crisis in Greece is only one of the causes).

The Bucharest-based Transgaz S.A. Medias's initiative does not seem to be any more successful either. We are talking about the BRHA (Bulgaria, Romania, Hungary and Austria) project that seeks to connect the four states to the national and trans-European natural gas transmission grids. By now we should have found out whether the Romanian company has managed to ask for and obtain European financing, as stated over a month ago by the company's CEO. We also do not know whether the approval of a corporate non-guaranteed issuance worth a maximum of RON 500 M was obtained at the general assembly of shareholders meeting on June 15 in order to finance the "Plan for the Development of the

National Natural Gas Transmission Grid 2014-2023.”

A Memorandum of Cooperation was signed and an Action Plan was approved in Dubrovnik, Croatia. Several projects have been included on CESEC’s list of priorities. Consolidating the Romanian transmission grid in order to allow the usage of existing interconnections and of those currently being developed is among them. The Bulgaria – Romania interconnector (a planned project), the expansion of the Romania – Republic of Moldova interconnector (Iasi-Ungheni) and the implementation of reverse flow between Romania and Ukraine (at the Isaccea interconnection point) also have been included.

“The action plan includes several energy projects for Romania in order to ensure a natural gas flow that would allow energy independence. These are projects that are included in Romania’s energy strategy in order to ensure efficient and stable energy mix. At the same time, they represent strategic projects for this region and are part of the infrastructure system with which Romania is trying to have a consolidated position in the Energy Union. In Eastern Europe, only Romania has sufficient domestic production with which to weather off an energy crisis, which means that apart from its capacity of being energy independent our country also has a strategic regional role to play as an exporter of energy and, hence, of security,” Romanian Energy Minister Andrei Gerea stated.

We agree with Minister Gerea’s statements. With one observation: Romania has not finalized its medium- and long-term Energy Strategy. And Andrei Gerea himself is responsible for this.

source: nineoclock.ro