

Serbian energy minister Aleksandar Antic said on Tuesday he expects the construction of a gas interconnection with Bulgaria could be completed by 2018 so that the gas could start flowing in 2019, Belgrade-based media reported on Tuesday.

The 150 km pipeline should have the capacity to carry 1.8 billion cu m of gas annually, news agency Beta reported, quoting Antic.

Antic said that 60% of the pipeline will be laid on the Serbian territory and that the Bulgarian side will help its Western neighbour to secure financing for the project from EU funds.

Last week, the energy minister said he expects works on the construction of the gas interconnection with Bulgaria could start next year.

In April, Antic said he expects financing for the gas interconnection with Bulgaria to be agreed with the European Commission by the end of 2015.

The planned bidirectional gas interconnector with Bulgaria would diversify Serbia's supply options. The Balkan state currently has just one gas supply route, coming via Ukraine and Hungary.

Gazprom Export delivered 1.36 billion cu m of gas to Serbia in 2014 as part of a 10-year supply agreement.