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## **RUSSIA, TURKEY 'IN TALKS' OVER TURKISH STREAM EXTENSION TO GREECE**

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Novinite

Turkey is to issue exploration permits for the Turkish Stream gas pipeline within days, Gazprom CEO Alexey Miller has said.

The two countries are also negotiating over a possible extension of the project to Greece, with Turkey granting the opportunity in principle, Miller has added.

Ankara has told Moscow the Russian energy giant will soon be given clearance to work on the pipeline's Turkish end the country's exclusive economic zone in the Black Sea, Miller has told reporters following meeting with Turkish officials in China, as quoted by Russian media.

In 2014, Russian President Vladimir Putin unveiled Turkish Stream as an alternative to South Stream, a project designed to carry gas to Central Europe via Bulgaria which was abandoned by Gazprom over opposition from the EU.

Russia has since then insisted gas could be supplied to Europe via Turkish Stream if a leg to Greece is built. However, talks on the project were brought to a halt for months over Moscow-Ankara tensions and a dispute over gas pricing.

TASS also quotes Miller as denying the beginning of Turkish Stream is also bringing about a renewal of South Stream, saying the development is "exclusively" related to the former project.

Each one of Turkish Stream's two (projected) pipes will have a capacity of 15.75 billion cubic meters of gas per year. The initially proposed capacity was two times bigger, but the project was cut down in size over doubts about EU demand for gas from the prospective pipeline.

Over the weekend, Russian Energy Minister Alexander Novak made clear South Stream was not on the agenda as of the moment.

Photo: Novinite (Gazprom CEO Alexey Miller. File photo, EPA/BGNES)

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