
AZERBAIJAN OFFERS BALKANS NEW ENERGY OPTIONS

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Azerbaijans Energy Minister Parviz Shahbazo has suggested that the Southern Gas Corridor □ a pet project of the countrys president İlham Aliyev □ has the prospect of expanding into central and eastern Europe, including the Balkans. The Southern Gas Corridor does not only ensure long-term development of our country as an exporter but also forms a model of multilateral cooperation, said Mr Shahbazo, who went on to stress the importance of the diversification of energy supplies and a major cooperation both with the European Union and countries in Central Asia.

The idea of the South Caucasus Pipeline (SCP) and the Trans-Anatolian Gas Pipeline (TANAP) will become a reality, he added. The successful implementation of the Southern Gas Corridor, which requires major funding and is a large-scale infrastructure project, has once again □ despite the global economic crisis and financial difficulties □ demonstrated the determination to carry out large-scale projects in Azerbaijan.

The Greece-Bulgaria gas interconnector, the opening ceremony of which is expected to take place in June, will also upgrade the status of the Balkans in the field of energy. In addition, Azerbaijans state-owned oil company SOCAR signed an agreement with its Albanian counterpart Albgaz for the integration of Montenegro and Croatia in the wider distribution of Azeri gas in the Balkans.

By authorising the transportation of these resources to European markets, Azerbaijan is today regarded as a reliable provider of energy security, said Minister Shahbazov.

The Southern Gas Corridor segments, one of the EUs priority energy projects, includes the Shah Deniz-2, TANAP and TAP projects and the expansion of the South Caucasus Pipeline. The pipeline will transport gas from the Shah Deniz-2 field in Azerbaijani to Turkey and then on to Europe by 2020. With a total length of 3500 kilometres is designed to initially transport six billion cubic metres of gas to Turkey and 10 billion cubic metres to Europe.

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