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**MERKEL: AZERBAIJAN IS IMPORTANT IN DIVERSIFYING EUROPE'S ENERGY SECURITY**

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Earlier in August, the State Oil Company of the Azerbaijan Republic announced that the commission would allocate around \$5.8 million to support the Trans-Anatolian Natural Gas Pipeline project, part of the Southern Gas Corridor (SGC).

"Azerbaijan is an important country for the EU [European Union] in terms of the diversification of Europe's energy security," Merkel said at a meeting with business representatives in the country's capital, adding that the launch of the Southern Gas Corridor project "will play an important role in ensuring Europe's energy security."

She also said that Berlin was ready to contribute to the diversification of Azerbaijan's economy.

The German chancellor has already traveled to Georgia and Armenia as part of her three-day working visit. Earlier in the day, Merkel met with Azerbaijani President Ilham Aliyev.

Azerbaijan is one of the key countries that partake in the SGC project, launched by the European Commission and aimed at obtaining new sources of gas supplies to Europe. The project envisages the construction of the infrastructure that will help deliver gas from the Caspian region, namely Azerbaijan, to Europe via Georgia and Turkey.

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