
EUROPE RECEIVES FIRST GAS FROM AZERBAIJANI PIPELINE

- 05.01.2021

AP News (4 January 2021)

Report news agency said by [quoting SOCAR](#) that on December 31, 2020, Europe received its first shipment of commercial natural gas from Azerbaijan via the final leg of the Southern Gas Corridor (SGC), the Trans-Adriatic Gas Pipeline (TAP).

In an unprecedented move, Azerbaijan started supplying its natural gas to the European countries through pipelines. Having been successfully linked to the Italian natural gas network on November 15, TAP saw the first gas supplies from Melendugno to Italy via SNAM Rete Gas (SRG) and from Nea Mesimvria to Greece and Bulgaria via DESFA on December 31.

Having gained direct access to Europe, which tops the list of global regions by gas consumption, Azerbaijan was able to diversify its export opportunities. This will help the nation to achieve greater economic independence.

Speaking about the first gas shipments to Europe, Rovnag Abdullayev, SOCAR President, emphasized that on that historic day he would like to express his deep gratitude to the partner countries, companies, experts and colleagues who had engaged in the TAP, Shah Deniz-2, and Southern Gas Corridor projects and contributed to the unprecedented delivery of Azerbaijani gas to the European market. At the same time, he thanked financial institutions for their support and the residents of the communities where the pipelines pass.

At the same time, Mr. Abdullayev congratulated both EU member states and Azerbaijan on behalf of SOCAR, a shareholder in all Southern Gas Corridor segments, and the countrys oil workers who have done their best to see the project through. I warmly congratulate the people of Azerbaijan on behalf of President Ilham Aliyev, the architect and driving force of the great project, he said.

As the head of SOCAR argued, Seven years have passed since we made the final investment decision with our partners. It crystallized into 25-year gas purchase agreements with Europes gas transport companies. The construction of three 3,500-kilometer interconnected gas pipelines - something that some were skeptical about - has ended. Azerbaijani gas is in Europe now.

Mr. Abdullayev viewed natural gas transported from the new source via the alternative route as the way to boost Europes energy security. With a decline in EU gas production, there is a need for more gas in the market. Thus, natural gas going through TAP will meet this demand, promoting Azerbaijan's importance to the Old Continent, he said.

As he marked the long-awaited moment, Luca Schieppati, TAP Managing Director, said that Today is a historic day for our project, the host countries and Europe's energy landscape. TAP is an indispensable part of the continent's gas network, as it contributes to the energy transition roadmap. We offer a reliable, direct, and cost-effective transportation route to Southeast Europe and beyond, he pointed out.

The summer of 2021 will witness the second phase of market research to further expand TAP and boost its capacity to reach the target of 20 billion cubic meters.

A 878-kilometre pipeline, TAP delivers gas to Europe from the massive Shah Deniz field offshore Azerbaijan. It connects with the Trans-Anatolian Pipeline (TANAP) at the Turkey-Greece border (near Kipoi), and crosses Greece, Albania and the Adriatic Sea before coming ashore in southern Italy.

More interconnectors may mean more gas shipments to Southeast Europe via TAP. Consider Bulgaria which will bolster energy security by being an importer of 33% of its natural gas needs from the Azerbaijani pipeline. It, in turn, will ramp up natural gas penetration on the ground. Furthermore, crossing Greece, Albania and Italy, the corridor infrastructure allows Shah Deniz gas to be delivered to other European nations.

The last SCG segment, TAP has strategic significance for Europe, as it enhances energy supply reliability, ensures diversification and plays a major role in decarbonizing the countries' economies.

The TAP stakeholders encompass SOCAR, BP and SNAM, with a 20% holding each, Fluxys with a 19% stake, Enagas with 16% and Axpo with 5%.

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