
UNCERTAIN POLITICAL CONSEQUENCES HAMPER PROPOSED RUSSIAN-KAZAKHSTANI- UZBEKISTANI GAS UNION

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The Jamestown Foundation

Nuray Alekberli

In recent weeks, Russia, Kazakhstan and Uzbekistan have been hotly discussing the possibility of establishing a trilateral natural gas union among the three countries. The union, proposed by Russian President Vladimir Putin, is an alliance that aims to coordinate efforts to transport Russian gas through the territories of Kazakhstan and Uzbekistan (Xabardor.uz, November 29, 2022). According to Russias plans, the gas union would include cooperation in the transportation, export and processing of natural gas supplies, among other cooperative measures. After publicly announcing the proposal on the tripartite union, the presidents of the three countries exchanged views on the arrangement in their respective bilateral formats (Gazeta.ru, December 12, 2022).

However, Russias proposal has provoked some controversy and discussion in Kazakhstan and Uzbekistan, with a number of differing opinions being expressed on the matter (Inbusiness.kz, December 9, 2022). In 2021, gas exports from Kazakhstan and Uzbekistan amounted to 7.2 and 2.38 billion cubic meters, respectively, with a significant volume of overall gas production being used mainly for domestic consumption. The gas that is not used domestically is exported primarily to China (Rus.ozodi.org, December 13, 2022). Given these circumstances, the necessity of such an alliance for Kazakhstan and Uzbekistan comes into question, with the answer girded in Moscows need to save its energy sector from the current Western sanctions regime.

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