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Russia's Gazprom Plans First Gas Supplies Via Turkish Stream in 2016

By The Moscow Times

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Russia's Gazprom plans to supply the first gas via a new route to Turkey in December 2016, Chief Executive Alexei Miller said in a statement on Tuesday.

Gazprom said last year it would build a new pipeline to Turkey with a capacity of 63 billion cubic meters (bcm) a year to bypass Ukraine. It had earlier scrapped a planned South Stream pipeline over disagreements with the European Union.

Under the new plan, the EU would have to build its own link to the proposed pipeline to Turkey to get Russian gas, which now accounts for around a third of Europe's needs. Around half of that is currently being pumped via Ukraine.

On Tuesday, Miller said the new pipeline would consist of four lines of 15.75 bcm each, with the first one to supply Turkey only. Turkey is already receiving Russian gas via existing routes, importing 27.4 bcm last year.

Miller added Russia and Turkey would sign an agreement on building the pipeline in the second quarter of 2015. Gazprom has still to reveal the estimated cost of the project.

The EU, at loggerheads with Moscow over unrest Ukraine and keen to reduce its energy dependence on Russia, had objected to the $40 billion South Stream pipeline, which was to enter the bloc via Bulgaria, on competition grounds.

The proposed undersea pipeline to Turkey is seen as avoiding that problem. Russia has offered to link it with a gas hub — also yet to be built — at the EU's southeastern edge, the Turkish-Greek border, to supply southern Europe.

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