

Turkey Eyes Partnering With Russia to Pipe Gas to Europe

By [The Moscow Times](#)

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President Vladimir Putin and Turkey's President Tayyip Erdogan attend a news conference at the Presidential Palace in Ankara.

KAYSERI, Turkey — Russia's Gazprom is likely to start the construction of a planned gas pipeline to Turkey by the end of this month, Turkish Energy Minister Taner Yildiz said, adding that Ankara is considering becoming an equity partner in the project.

"Once the information regarding the coordinates of the pipeline are received, the permits granted and the talks finalized, construction could begin by the end of the month," said Yildiz, who will be leaving his post after this weekend's parliamentary elections.

In December, Russia scrapped its \$40 billion South Stream pipeline project which would have supplied gas to southern Europe without crossing Ukraine because of objections from the European Union on competition grounds.

Moscow is now pressing ahead with an alternative pipeline dubbed Turkish Stream, with the aim of delivering 63 billion cubic meters (bcm) of gas per year by 2020.

The pipeline will consist of four lines, which each have an annual capacity of 15.75 bcm, with the first line reaching Turkey.

Gazprom hopes to create a gas hub at the Turkish-Greek border for transit to Europe. Yildiz said instead of acting as "just a transit hub" in the project, Turkey was keen to play a bigger role.

"We are talking about partnership and ownership here. We need to set up the mechanism very carefully for this. We are looking to become a partner in the costs," Yildiz said.

Turkey is heavily dependent on Russia for natural gas. Last year it bought 27.4 bcm of gas through the Blue Stream and Trans-Balkan pipeline, known as the Western line in Turkey. That figure is equivalent to more than half of its gas imports.

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