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Gazprom Set to Lose Stake in Turkey's Akfel Holding – Reports

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Gazprom Chief Executive Officer Alexei Miller **Maxim Shemetov / Reuters**

Russian energy Gazprom may lose its biggest asset in Turkey, the Kommersant newspaper reported Tuesday.

The Turkish authorities took over the Akfel holding – the country's largest private gas importer – in early December, over suspicions that it could have links to the Gulen movement.

The holding owns Akfel Gas, Avrasia and Enerco, all of which hold contracts with Gazprom.

The Russian firm provides the companies with 5.25 billion cubic meters of gas each year, making up approximately a fifth of all Russian gas deliveries to the county.

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The Akfel Holding and Gazprombank own a 60 percent joint venture in both Avrasia and Enerco overall. The Gazprom group also owns a minority stake in the Akfel Holding itself.

Gazprom's shares have been in limbo since the takeover despite Russian negotiation attempts, Kommersant reported. The Turkish Deposit Insurance Fund (TMSF) then reached out to shareholders informally, telling them that the state organization would be "taking over" the shareholder role, several unnamed sources told Kommersant.

Gazprom will now likely be forced to negotiate a new deal on gas supplies to private importers in 2017, Kommersant reported.

Both Gazprom and Akfel declined to comment on the report.

The Gulen movement is an Islamic transnational group led by Turkish preacher Fethullah Gulen. The group is banned within Turkey, and Gulen has lived in the United States since 1999.

The group was blamed by the Turkish government for a coup attempt against the country's leader, Recep Erdogan, in July 2016. Hundreds of teachers, journalists, and other officials have been arrested in the aftermath of the coup.

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