

# Putin Will Talk Pipeline In Bulgaria

By [The Moscow Times](#)

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Prime Minister Vladimir Putin will visit Bulgaria on Saturday to discuss the South Stream gas link and Russian gas prices amid competing projects to supply the fuel to the European Union.

Putin will meet with his Bulgarian counterpart, Boyko Borissov, and will oversee the signing of energy accords, according to a statement on the Russian government's web site.

Gazprom, the world's biggest gas producer, plans to build the pipeline to supply Eastern, Central and Southern Europe, bypassing transit states such as Ukraine. Bulgaria's Cabinet said earlier this week that it approved a proposed joint venture with Gazprom to run the Bulgarian section of the link. The agreement envisages a 50-50 partnership between Gazprom and Bulgarian Energy Holding and will be signed during Putin's visit to Sofia, the Cabinet said.

Bulgaria may also be seeking to cut the price of gas imports by 5 percent, which Valery Yazev, who heads the Russian Gas Association, said isn't critical for either country and a compromise might be found.

Bulgaria may also seek to minimize costs caused by the delayed construction of the Belene nuclear power plant, which are estimated to have risen by as much as 2.5 billion euros (\$3.4 billion) from the 4 billion euros budgeted in 2005, Borissov said Friday.

“On the subject of Belene I will raise the issue of the price increase,” Borissov said. “The price by now is much higher than the initial estimates.”

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