

Bulgaria in Talks With Greece to Ease Reliance on Russian Gas

By [The Moscow Times](#)

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SOFIA — Bulgaria is in talks with neighboring Greece on gas imports, fearing the Ukraine crisis may lead to disruption of supply from Russia, its economy minister said Thursday.

Poland, Slovakia and Austria have reported slight declines in shipments in recent days from Russia. Romania's energy minister said Tuesday that Russia was playing games with gas supplies to cause concerns in EU states.

Interim Economy Minister Vasil Shtonov said Bulgaria was already holding talks with its southern Balkan neighbour.

"We are working to reverse natural gas via an existing gas pipeline with Greece as we could receive additional quantities between 1 to 3 million cubic meters per day," he said.

Bulgaria plans to reserve capacity at a liquefied natural gas terminal near Athens and then

pump it through an existing pipeline between Bulgaria and Greece, which at present carries Russian gas to Greece.

"Reserves in the Chiren gas storage facility will be sufficient for 120 days."

Bulgaria can use 4 million cubic metres per day from its sole underground gas storage facility in northwestern Bulgaria while its daily consumption is 10-11 million cubic metres.

He also said that some of Bulgaria's heating utilities are getting ready to use heavy fuel oil instead of gas in case of supply cuts after being warned to test their capabilities.

Bulgaria is one of the European Union countries most exposed to possible gas supply cuts. It meets almost all of its current gas needs of between about 3 and 4 billion cubic metres a year with imports from Russia's Gazprom.

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