

ABSTRACT

Bulgaria's Energy Priorities and Prospects in the context of SEE,

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For a number of years Bulgaria has been and remains a major energy player in SEE. The closure of 4 out of its 6 civilian nuclear reactors has brought about structural changes in its energy export potential. On the other hand, its accession to the EU has led to new opportunities for Bulgaria to play a substantial role in the establishment of an integrated and liquid regional energy market, linked to the EU energy market. In the meantime Bulgaria has entered into preliminary or contractual arrangements on a number of new oil, gas and electricity related trans-border projects.

The new centre-right Bulgarian Government, headed by Prime Minister Boyko Borissov, is presently conducting a review of most of these energy projects and other major energy related policies. Its thrust is to ensure a stricter investment approach and make all projects commercially viable. The review has not been completed but there are already a number of decisions and new developments – signing of the Intergovernmental Agreement on Nabucco, postponement of the NPP Belene, an offer by Russia to double the capacity of South Stream, a more demanding attitude to the ecological and other parameters of the Burgas-Alexandroupolis oil pipeline - that are worth discussing in a regional context.

As Bulgaria revises some important aspects of its energy strategy and policy, it nonetheless intends to keep its options open. So far as international energy projects are concerned, their realization will take place in much closer cooperation and coordination with the EU Commission and interested EU Member States and in conformity with the Energy Policy for Europe, the Energy Charter and the goals of the Energy Community. Bulgaria is interested in deepening its energy dialogue and coordination with EU neighbours Greece and Romania, including in this circle, with time, other SEE countries.