

Concluding document of the Conference*

The presentations and also the subsequent discussions in this conference clearly show that excessive politicization of projects for supply of natural gas through the territory of Southeastern Europe proved counterproductive for their practical realization and raises the risk instead of an energy hub for the region to become a not very significant energy periphery of the continent, wasting chances to ensure its energy security, to provide stable income from transit fees and increase its geopolitical weight.

Moreover, such developments only increase the risk Southeast Europe to become, along with Ukraine, the main "battleground" of the emerging energy war between Brussels and Moscow, which is equally harmful and meaningless for all participants.

For those countries in the region, who before 1989 were part of the communist bloc and who sincerely believe in the ideals of a united and democratic Europe is alarming to see how within the European Union trends are observed, bringing back memories of the not so distant past when their will and national interests were not respected and they often had to implement obviously disadvantageous in economic terms projects or terminate any of such from which they would benefit.

Current attempts again to dictate to them in which projects (including in the gas sector) to engage and in which not, regardless of their performance and the possibility to be realized in practice, but only because of the interests of forces outside the region do not contribute to the successful realization of the European project, but on the contrary - contribute to alienation of the nations of Southeast Europe. Double standards, allowing each project to be terminated and others to be realized only because they are in the interest of the major players in the European Union or even beyond, are in obvious conflict with the idea of solidarity which should be at the basis of common energy policy of the countries of the continent and the formation of so-called European energy alliance.

Undoubtedly, diversification of gas supplies is imperative, as well as ensuring energy security of the continent, but at first place it means a place where free competition is possible between the different energy (including gas) projects and their liberation from harmful politicization. This means that the even sole criteria for their realization should become their economic expediency and feasibility in practice and whether the chosen routes for the transit of natural gas are actually safe.

If they do not want to become hostages of the clash between external geopolitical interests, which, as history shows, often play a negative role for the future of the region, countries in it should unite their efforts to defend realization of those projects that - at their own discretion - are most profitable for them economically. And also to work for such a pan-European energy policy and energy and such European Energy Alliance, which is based on solidarity and equality of all participants, not on double standards and the interests of the big players in the EU and beyond.

From this perspective, I think that this conference was not only at the right time but it also was very useful to clarify the situation and outline possible steps and initiatives to be taken if we really want the region of Southeast Europe to become one of the key energy hubs on the continent rather than risking to be recognized as a backwater and the poor periphery.

Therefore we intend to acquaint with the conference papers, which will be published in a separate collection in Bulgarian and in English, all European institutions involved in one way or another with the energy sphere. We also plan to continue and expand discussions on energy geopolitics in Southeast Europe, and for this purpose we organize in 2016 a new international conference.

** The concluding document was presented by Todor Kondakov, secretary of Bulgarian geopolitical association, chief editor of the magazine "Geopolitics"*