

**04.09.2026**

Signing of the Memorandum of Understanding on the extension of the Vertical Corridor to the Western Balkans

Today, 4 September 2026, in Thessaloniki (Greece), on the sidelines the 10th edition of the South-East Europe Energy Forum (SEEF), organized by the American-Hellenic Chamber of Commerce, a **Memorandum of Understanding on the extension of the Vertical Corridor** and the inclusion of new members, i.e. the natural gas transmission system operators of **Serbia** (Transportgas Serbia LLV) and **North Macedonia** (NOMAGAS JSC Skopje), was signed, marking a new milestone in the **extension of the Vertical Corridor towards the Western Balkans**.

The ceremony for the signing of the **Memorandum of Understanding on the extension of the Vertical Corridor** was attended by the energy ministers of Greece (Mr. Stavros Papastavrou), Bulgaria (Ms. Iva Petrova), Cyprus (Mr. Michael Damianos), North Macedonia (Ms. Sanja Božinovska), the Secretary of State within the Romanian Ministry of Energy (Mr. Cristian Bușoi) and the Chief Executive Officers of the natural gas transmission system operators: **DESFA** (Greece), **ICGB** (Bulgaria), **Bulgartransgaz** (Bulgaria), **Transgaz** (Romania), **Vestmoldtransgaz** (Moldova), **FGSZ** (Hungary), **EUSTREAM** (Slovakia), **GTSOU** (Ukraine), **NOMAGAS** (North Macedonia) and **Transportgas Srbija** (Serbia), as well as **Gastrade** Greece, and the US ambassadors to the countries of South-Eastern Europe (H.E. Ms. Kimberly Guilfoyle – the US Ambassador to Greece, Ms. Nicole Varnes - Chargé d'Affaires a.i. at the U.S. Embassy in North Macedonia and Mr. Joshua Volz - Special Envoy for Energy Integration at the U.S. Department of Energy).

On this occasion, Mr. Cristian Bușoi, Secretary of State within the Ministry of Energy, stated:

Energy security is one of the most important components of national security, as energy is the foundation of any modern state's functioning—from the economy and critical infrastructure to the well-being of the population and political stability. Energy security is an essential prerequisite for national security, because without a secure and stable energy supply, there can be no functional economy, resilient infrastructure, or effective defense. In the current

geopolitical context, it is becoming a strategic pillar of national and European security policy. The Romanian government has consistently supported initiatives that strengthen national, regional, and European energy security, and I am referring here to the Vertical Corridor as a solution for diversifying gas supply sources and routes and reducing external dependencies—a solution with clear benefits for energy security in the Balkan region and Central and Eastern Europe. The investments made by Transgaz to increase interconnectivity and expand options in the region and within the European Union can help us become more resilient in the face of the challenges posed by a constantly evolving energy sector. As part of the strategic initiatives through which Romania is strengthening its energy security and its importance in the regional energy architecture, the Vertical Corridor initiative—through the signing of the Memorandum of Understanding regarding its expansion toward the Western Balkans—has reached a new level of maturity. The Vertical Corridor will bring prestige to Romania and ensure energy security for the countries of Eastern Europe, the Republic of Moldova, and Ukraine, as well as for Central Europe. A coordinated development of gas infrastructures in the countries along the Vertical Corridor route and of interconnection capacities can contribute to transforming the region and the continent in terms of gas supply security and enable Romania to capitalize on its geostrategic position, its transmission network, and future gas resources from the Neptune Deep field in the Black Sea and to become a hub for Europe's economic development.

Pursuant to the statement made on the occasion of the signing of the MoU on the extension of the Vertical Corridor, Mr. Ion Sterian, Director General of SNTGN Transgaz SA, affirmed:

"Today, the 4th of September 2026, we signed the Memorandum of Understanding on the extension of the Vertical Corridor, a strategic concept that I initiated and that Romania and Transgaz have promoted and supported since 2016, the first Memorandum of Understanding having been signed in Bucharest, in July 2017.

The Vertical Corridor has evolved from one stage to another and managed to reach a new level of maturity. The initiative is now moving towards an integrated regional platform for energy cooperation aimed at strengthening security of supply, diversifying gas sources and routes, reducing dependence on Russian gas, energy infrastructure resilience and gas markets development in South-Eastern and Central Europe, including the Western Balkans. The extension of the Vertical Corridor to North Macedonia and Serbia is of particular importance in terms of the European and regional energy cooperation, contributing to the strengthening of the regional energy connectivity, diversification and resilience, the development of a more integrated, more competitive regional energy system. We will continue to coordinate our joint efforts for cooperation in terms of the development and operation of the interconnected transmission systems, optimization of the use of existing infrastructure, identification of

additional infrastructure needs, improvement of bidirectional gas flow capacities and expansion of cross-border capacity, but also to attract grants to finance the necessary investments, cooperation at regulatory, technical and commercial level, with the aim of rendering the Vertical Corridor more flexible, competitive and attractive to the market. As we have already stated, the Vertical Gas Corridor represents a key element of energy cooperation between Romania, the United States and the states of the Central, Eastern Europe and the Balkans and by its extension, through the development of the interconnections between the national natural gas transmission systems of Greece, Bulgaria, Romania and the ones of the Republic of Moldova and Ukraine on the one hand, respectively and the national gas transmission systems of Hungary, Austria, Czech Republic, Slovakia, Poland, Germany on the other hand, this North-South Corridor creates a modern, safe and efficient infrastructure, capable of ensuring bidirectional gas flows and responding to the increasingly complex needs of the regional energy market".

SNTGN Transgaz SA is the technical operator of the National Natural Gas Transmission System (NTS), which ensures the implementation – under conditions of efficiency, transparency, safety, non-discriminatory access and competitiveness – of the national strategy for the domestic and international transmission of natural gas, its dispatching, as well as research and design in this field, in compliance with the requirements of European and national legislation, as well as standards relating to quality, performance, the environment and sustainable development.







Communication Department