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CENTRE FOR EASTERN STUDIES 11.05.2011 www.osw.waw.pl

Nabucco's problems are adding to the likelihood of a merger as part of the Southern Corridor

The consortium which is to implement the Nabucco project announced on 6 May that the planned start of the gas pipeline's construction would be postponed by one year and the date of its launch into operation would be postponed by two years. At the same time, it has been hinted that the project's costs could grow and support could increase (for example from Turkey) for alternative projects (mainly the ITGI interconnector running to Italy). The delays and problems in the implementation of Nabucco are adding to the likelihood of a merger of the projects planned as part of the Southern Corridor, which has already been under discussion for more than a half year.

The Nabucco construction's start date has been postponed by one year to 2013, and the launch of the pipeline is now planned in 2017. Further delays may entail the postponement of the final investment decision and cause an increase in the project's costs, of which the Turkish media are among those who have been giving warnings. It has been explained that the consortium's decision results from changes in the plans of launching exports from the Caspian and Middle East regions, from which gas will be supplied to the pipeline. For example, the exports from the second phase of the Azeri Shah Deniz gas field are expected to start precisely in 2017.

Nabucco is the largest gas pipeline project as part of the EU's Southern Corridor concept (it is the longest and has the greatest capacity). For this reason, its implementation is also the most expensive and the pipeline is the most difficult to fill. It has been impossible so far to guarantee gas supplies for Nabucco even partly, and the chances of success in the next few months – given the high competition and relatively low volumes of gas available – are quite low. Thus the project is increasingly likely to be modified and will probably be linked for example with the Turkey-Greece-Italy (ITGI) pipeline, the Turkish-Greek section of which has been in operation since 2007, which has been suggested for a few months now. <agł>