

Russia ceases use of the Odessa-Brody pipeline as well as transit via Gdańsk

On 10 November, Mikhail Arustamov, the deputy head of Transneft, the Russian pipeline monopoly company, said in an interview for the monthly newspaper *Truboprovodny Transport Nefti* that Russia will stop transferring oil using the Odessa-Brody pipeline and via the Naftoport terminal in Gdansk. The Russian decision was not unexpected, and was caused by Moscow's consistently pursued policies in recent years of breaking its dependency on transit countries (Belarus, Ukraine, Poland) to export its oil.

Arustamov stated that Russia had been using the Odessa-Brody pipeline to transport oil (2.8 million tonnes this year) because its own ability to export was insufficient. However, after the first section of the Eastern Siberia–Pacific Ocean (ESPO) pipeline was opened, the demand for oil transit via Ukrainian ports fell. At the same time, Transneft's deputy head announced that after the first section of the BTS-2 pipeline (running from Unecha to the port in Ust-Luga) is activated, as is planned for the end of 2011, Russia will cease transmitting oil via the Naftoport in Gdansk (since the beginning of this year, it has sent 2 million tonnes of Russian and 4 million tonnes of Kazakh oil there). Arustamov maintained that the new route for oil transmission will be a guarantee of security against political blackmail from Minsk, since the BTS-2 pipeline will be able to replace the Druzhba pipeline running through Belarus.

After transit is halted through Odessa-Brody and Naftoport, the Druzhba pipeline will be the only route for Russian oil exports which is not completely under Russian control. However, after the BTS-2 is activated, Moscow will be able to stop sending oil through the northern branch of Druzhba (via Belarus and Poland to Germany). <WojK>