

Moscow, Sofia nearing accord on gas line

by UPI

SOFIA, Bulgaria -- A Russian official said Moscow and Sofia, Bulgaria, could soon sign an agreement on the South Stream pipeline, which will transport Russian gas to Europe.

Russian Energy Minister Sergey Shmatko said the text of the agreement was fully correlated between the two sides and it is likely to be signed Monday when Bulgarian Prime Minister Sergey Stanishev visits Moscow, the Russian news agency Itar-TASS said Thursday.

The South Stream pipeline, to transport Russian gas under the Black Sea and across the Balkans to Italy, will be put into operation in 2015, Shmatko said.

Shmatko will represent Russia at a two-day international energy summit conference opening Friday in Sofia.

On Wednesday, the Russian newspaper Kommersant said Putin canceled a trip to Bulgaria in protest against the Nabucco gas pipeline that was likely to be a major topic at the Sofia conference.

The Nabucco pipeline is to be built by European Union countries to transport gas from Azerbaijan and Turkmenistan via Turkey to Western Europe.

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