

Opinions differ on what would be an alternative to Russian gas, but experts are unanimous in their assessment that there are no quick fixes. 160 billion cubic meters of gas arrive in Europe annually from Russia, which is 40 percent of the total imports needed for supply, and that fact forced Europe to think about alternative energy sources.

The EU is preparing measures to reduce its reliance on Russian energy, and the main task that the authorities of European countries are trying to respond to is what would happen if Russia “turned off” the gas supply. Serbia is also facing great challenges, **Euronews** writes today.

US Deputy Assistant Secretary of State for European and Eurasian Affairs Gabriel Escobar recently said that the United States “encouraged Serbia to consider alternatives to Russian gas, including renewable energy sources and liquefied natural gas” when it comes to energy security. For the interlocutors of Euronews Serbia, however, this is a political message that is not heard for the first time. However, they point out that the possibility of Serbia giving up Russian gas and turning to American liquefied natural gas (LNG) and renewable energy sources is not easily achievable, especially in the near future.

Why? The answer to that question primarily concerns **the lack of alternatives to Russian gas**, not only for Serbia, but for the whole of Europe, and although some outlines of alternative solutions still exist, they are not enough to cover all needs.

What did Escobar actually say? In his address to the US Senate Foreign Relations Subcommittee, he said that “if the US manages to reduce the share of Russian gas in the Western Balkans, the result would be great economic opportunities for US energy companies in terms of moving the region towards more renewable energy sources.”

Energy expert **Milos Zdravkovic** told Euronews Serbia that everyone who buys wants as many suppliers as possible and that it would be good for Serbia to have more supply routes, but that the geographical position of Serbia and the whole of Europe is such that we depend on gas from Russia, he is the only one who can reach our country by land. In addition, liquefied gas would cost us 1.6 times more, because the technology of its extraction and transportation is different, and there is no infrastructure with which it could be transported to our country.

“We do not only get gas from that country through Russia, nor Europe, but about 30 percent of that gas is from Azerbaijan, Kazakhstan, Uzbekistan and Turkmenistan. Europe consumes about 300 billion cubic meters of gas a year, and 200 billion comes from Russia,” Zdravkovic said.

He points out that diversification of gas supply, as recommended by the US administration, cannot be implemented at this time.

The president of the Gas Association of Serbia, Vojislav Vuletić, also believes that in the next 15 years, there will be no other gas on the market for us, except Russian gas.

“It is impossible for our consumers to replace Russian gas with someone else,

because there is simply not enough of it from other sources, nor is there a route to reach it. Escobar can talk and suggest it, but we are in trouble if we take it seriously. “It is impossible to do that at the moment. It would be best if there were ten bidders and supply routes, so that we could negotiate and lower the price, but that does not exist and the only thing we have is Russian gas,” Vuletic points out.

However, the director of the Secretariat of the Energy Community of Southeast European countries, Artur Lorkovski, believes that Serbia already has several options to provide gas on regional markets. Lorkovski said that the Trans Adriatic Pipeline, which connects Greece, Albania and Italy across the Adriatic Sea, wants to expand its capacity, but wants Serbia and others to show interest.

He answered the question of the journalists how he commented on the fact that Serbia recently started the construction of the Nis-Dimitrovgrad gas pipeline in the hope that it will receive Azerbaijani gas and liquefied natural gas from Alexandroupolis, but that Serbia is not planned to deliver gas from the TAP gas pipeline.

LNG from Greece is already there, and Serbia could, if the Horgos gas interconnection point between Serbia and Hungary was open to others to reserve its capacities, buy gas from Central European gas hubs. As I said – since the war in Ukraine continues exalts, my advice would be to seriously explore alternatives to Russian gas combined with genuine market reforms, “said the new director of the Energy Community Secretariat for Policy.

He noted that in recent months, the situation on world energy markets, especially in Europe, has been described as a “perfect storm” exacerbated by what he said was the Russian invasion of Ukraine, 021 writes.