

REPUBLIC OF BULGARIA
[Coat of arms of the Republic of Bulgaria]
MINISTRY OF ENVIRONMENT AND WATER

DECISION

ON ENVIRONMENTAL IMPACT ASSESSMENT
No. 7-5/2013

Pursuant to Article 99 para 2 of the Environmental Protection Act, Article 19, para 1 of the *Ordinance on the conditions and order for performance of environmental impact assessment* (“EIA Ordinance”) and in conjunction with Article 31 of the Biodiversity Act and Article 39, para 12 and 13 of the *Ordinance on the conditions and order for performance of assessment of the compatibility of plans, programmes, projects and investment proposals with the subject and objectives for preservation of protected territories* (Ordinance on Compatibility Assessment),

I HEREBY APPROVE

The implementation of investment proposal for ‘**Development of South Stream Gas Pipeline on the territory of the Republic of Bulgaria**’ along Variant 1 of the western route of the gas pipeline.

Contracting authority: South Stream Bulgaria AD
Seat: city of Sofia, 8, Tri Ushi Str.

Short description of the investment proposal:

The Investment Proposal for development of South Stream Gas Pipeline on the territory of the Republic of Bulgaria is a part of the South Stream Project comprising a gas pipeline from Russia across the marine waters of the Black Sea and the Balkan Peninsula for supply of Russian natural gas to the countries in Central and East Europe. The gas pipeline which is the subject of the Investment Proposal is intended for gas transmission from the connection point with the marine part of the South Stream Gas Pipeline on the Black Sea coast to the connection point with the South Stream Gas Pipeline on the territory of the Republic of Serbia. The initial point of the gas pipeline is the first welding stitch in front of the receiving gas terminal fence, property of the contracting authority, located at about 2.6 km to the west of the Black Sea coast near Pasha Dere area. The end points of the pipe on the territory of the Republic of Bulgaria are the point of crossing of the gas pipeline of the state border between Republic of Bulgaria and the Republic of Serbia (in the area of Vrashka Chuka border checkpoint) and the connection points to the National and Transit Gas Transmission Networks at Provadia Gas Distribution Station (GDS).

The gas transmission system within the South Stream Gas Pipeline on the territory of the Republic of Bulgaria includes the following main technological elements:

- Receiving terminal “Pasha Dere”;

- Transiting gas pipeline “Black Sea – Republic of Serbia border” (laid underground) with operating pressure of 9.8 MPa and approximate length of 540 km (540.8 km under Option 1 or 539.9 km under Option 2), comprising: trunkline and by-passes (loops) developed with pipes having diameter of DN1400; pipeline valves, shutdown safety valves of the compressor stations (CS); starting switch assemblies of CS installed along with the starting valve assemblies and receiving the inner-pipe devices (IPD); connections DN1000 between the trunkline and the loops, valve assemblies for starting and receiving the purification pistons and the loop (by-pass) inspection tools;

- The gas pipeline branch “km 2- km 61” from the South Stream transmission gas trunkline for connection to the gas transmission system of the Republic of Bulgaria in the area of CS Provadia, with operating pressure of 7.4 MPa, length of the gas pipeline route - 59 km, developed with pipes having diameter DN1400;

- Compressor stations Varna, Lozen and Rasovo providing the necessary parameters of the transported gas at the end point of the transmission gas pipeline. The compressor stations will be equipped with gas turbine units (GTU) with rated heating capacity of 89 MW for each of the four GTU;

- Gas distribution assembly in Provadia at the end point of the gas pipeline branch “km 2-km 61”;

- Line valve stations along the linear part of the gas pipeline located at a distance not longer than 30 km.

The total capacity of South Stream Gas Pipeline is 63 billion m³/y. From Gas Distribution Unit Provadia, at the end point of the gas pipeline branch “km 2- km 61” with operating pressure 7.36 MPa, gas shall be supplied into the transit gas pipeline network of the Republic of Bulgaria, as well as into the national transmission pipeline of the country.

The gas pipeline will include one or two parallel pipes (in accordance with the relevant section’s design) with diameter DN1400, and the connections between them will be developed via pipes having diameter DN1000. Parallel to the main pipe, at 7 metres on both sides thereof, two fibre optic cables will be located. The gas pipeline branch from km 2 to km 61 is from the Receiving Terminal to CS Provadia (gas pipeline connection to the gas transmission system on the territory of the Republic of Bulgaria).

The route of the gas pipeline passes to the north of the Balkan mountain, in the middle part of the Danube plain. The landforms are smooth, without abrupt height differences. The gas pipeline runs from east to west across 11 administrative areas – Varna, Shumen, Targovishte, Razgrad, Russe, Veliko Tarnovo, Pleven, Lovech, Vratsa, Montana and Vidin. The main construction activities related to the development of the pipeline are:

- Tracing of construction route and gas pipeline axis;
- Preparation for construction of the construction strip;
- Removal of soil layer and ground leveling;
- Arranging the pipes in the working strip;
- Preparation of pipes;
- Excavation of trench;
- Welding of pipes, non-destructive testing of welds, insulation of welds;
- Laying of pipes in the trench;
- Backfilling;
- Hydraulic testing of the gas pipeline sections;
- Crossing of obstacles;
- Installation of stop valves;
- Corrosion protection;
- Reclamation of the construction zone;
- Marking with sign posts.

The development of the gas pipeline will be carried out underground. The gas pipeline will be laid mainly in parallel to the land forms of the area. The minimum distance between the gas trunkline and the gas pipeline by-passes is planned to be 18 m. The turning of the pipeline into horizontal and vertical plain is executed via elastic pipe bending of the pipes, through cold bend knee pipes, prepared onsite along the route and via factory-produced knee pipes. The burying of the pipe up to its upper forming line is envisaged to be not less than: 0.6 m in rocky soils; 1.0 m – under the river bottom elevation, but not less than 0.5 m away from the forecast erosion line; 2.0 m – away from the rail's foot of the railroad or 1.4 m away from the level of the road pavement, but not less than 0.5 m away from the bottom of drain ditches; 1.0 m – in other conditions.

The construction activities related to the development of the gas pipeline are carried out within a construction strip having width of up to 45 m upon laying of 1 pipe in lands with agricultural designation and up to 32 m in lands from the forest stock. Upon laying of 2 pipes the width of the strip is up to 66 m in lands with agricultural designation and up to 50 m in forest stock lands. In sections which are subject to restrictions (water objects, protected areas within the ecology networks Natura 2000) the construction strip and easement are reduced in order to limit the negative impacts from the construction on sensitive areas.

The activities during the gas pipeline operation include:

- Natural gas transportation;
- Automated control and management of the gas transmission system (trunkline and facilities) through automated control system (SCADA);
- Maintenance of the equipment and facilities and repair activities;
- Maintenance of the gas pipeline servitude.

The servitude area is intended for construction, operation and repairs of the gas pipeline and cables. The route servitudes are as follows:

- 1 pipe - with diameter over DN 1000: strips having width of 17.5 m each on both sides of the gas pipeline axis. Total width of the servitude strip - 35 m;
- 2 pipes – in lands of non-agricultural designation and unfit for agricultural production and state forest stock lands for diameter over DN 1000: two strips external to the route, parallel to the axis of the end gas pipelines having width of 17 m each. The minimum distance between the pipes is 18 m. Total width of the servitude strip - 52 m.
- 2 pipes – in lands with agricultural designation (upon removal and recovery of the fertile soil layer) for diameter over DN 1000: two strips external to the route and parallel to the axis of the end gas pipelines having width of 17 m. The minimum distance between the pipes is 32 m. Total width of the servitude strip - 66 m.

The crossing of water objects is envisaged to be executed via trench method while taking into account the ecological restrictions for the rivers: Provadiyska, Vit, Tsibritsa, Lom, Yantra and Iskar, is recommended for the passage to be executed by way of non-trench method – slant directional drilling.

For the supplies of material and technical resources (MTR) for the construction up to the point of cargo acceptance, three transport modalities are planned to be used: railway, water and road. For the implementation of transport activities during the construction there shall be used the existing road network in the vicinity of the route and the route servitude, after coordination with the owners.

During the construction of the gas pipeline it is envisaged to organize temporary sites and facilities, as in determining their location there has been selected the approach of deploying same outside protected areas and other sensitive areas, in order to bring the impact on environment to a minimum. The location of construction bases and temporary residential sites is selected in the proximity of the developed infrastructure of territories with designation allowing the performance of the activities to be carried out therein. The necessary water

quantities for each residential site shall be procured via supply of drinking water by water carriers from nearby populated areas after conclusion of a contract with the local WS&S company, with subsequent storage in polymer tanks.

Industrial water – water from car washes and repair bases shall be stored in tanks, an integrated part of modular system, and periodically cleaned by authorized companies. Domestic wastewater shall be collected in water-tight abstraction pits and/ or buried tanks, an integrated part of the modular system. Same shall be repumped and transported by authorized companies with which contracts shall be concluded for treatment of domestic and fecal waters. Rainwater formed at the sites is conditionally clean and will flow out freely on the terrain.

Temporary construction bases and residential sites shall be supplied with electric energy independently of the power distribution grid, through diesel generator. The temporary bases will be established along the route consecutively (the time for relocation is about 1 week) in planned locations in the proximity of the gas pipeline route, depending on the construction performance schedule.

For each crossing of water object by way of slant directional drilling there shall be envisaged the arrangement of 2 sites (on both sides of the water object).

Access roads with connection to the existing road network of the Republic of Bulgaria are planned to all technological site grounds under investment project (IP) “South Stream Transmission Gas Pipeline on the territory of the Republic of Bulgaria”: CS Varna, CS Lozen, and CS Rasovo, receiving terminal Pasha Dere, gas distribution station Provadia, the starting and receiving stations of purification and inspection devices of the gas pipelines and of the gas pipeline loops. For access to the sites of the pipeline valve assemblies and shutdown safety valve assemblies the use of country roads is envisaged.

The power supply to the sites from the trunkline part of the gas pipeline will be from external source or from own power source. The power supply to the sites at the receiving terminal Pasha Dere and the compressor stations Varna, Lozen and Rasovo will be provided by own power supply stations. For the provision of backup power supply automatic diesel plants will be envisaged. For the remaining sites: gas distribution station Provadia, line valve stations, starting/ receiving valve assemblies of the purification pistons and inspection tools, power supply will be provided via complex transformer points, installed in separate block-containers for power supply and for back-up power source, continuous power supply systems are envisaged with integrated accumulator batteries. For emergency power supply to the linear sites there will be used mobile automated diesel power stations.

For power supply to compressor station Rasovo, compressor station Lozen and gas distribution station Provadia there will be used the existing external water supply networks located in the proximity of the CS sites which satisfy the domestic and drinking water needs as well as the firefighting needs of the technological sites

As water supply source for compressor station Varna and receiving terminal Pasha Dere the construction of an independent water source is planned (drilling well). The sewage system of CS is envisaged to collect and discharge waste waters for treatment to the wastewater treatment station located on the compressor station site. On each CS site there shall be constructed domestic and rainwater sewage networks.

The control and management of the gas pipeline will be carried out through a central dispatcher point (CDP) of the gas transport enterprise (GTE) in the city of Sofia. The automated control of the entire complex will be executed via ACS (automated control system) of the pipeline of GTE. For data transmission along the length of the gas pipeline and the exercise of control and management of the sites included in its composition linear telemechanic system (LTS) is planned.

For securing the centralized remote monitoring and control of the compressor stations of CS Varna, CS Lozen and CS Rasovo there shall be installed ACS units of the pipeline of the gas transporting enterprise, as information exchange is to be ensured between ACS and CDP.

The operation life of South Stream Gas Pipeline is minimum 50 years.

In a situation of stopping the operation of the gas pipeline the alternatives for decommissioning of the gas pipeline itself and of its facilities are the following:

- Conservation of the gas pipeline and dismantling the facilities;
- Dismantling of the gas pipeline and removal of all parts thereof.

Main characteristics of the options for the gas pipeline route:

Alternative gas pipeline route – Option 1:

The length of the gas pipeline for Option 1 is 540.8 km. The starting point of the route is in Kitkata area, at about 6 km in a southwestern direction from Galata residential estate of the city of Varna and at about 2.6 km in the western direction from the Black Sea coast in Pasha Dere area.

The gas pipeline starts from the site (at km 0+000 of the route) planned for deployment of the equipment of RT Pasha Dere and CS Varna, at a minimum distance from populated areas and settlements - 2.98 km, to villa park Priseltsi - 2,43 km. The site is located within the boundaries of protected area BG0002060 Galata, as no protected territories and other sensitive areas are affected.

The site of CS Lozen is located within agricultural areas (at km 208.1 of the route), at a minimum distance from populated areas - 2.32 km. The site does not affect any protected areas within ecological network Natura 2000 and protected territories.

The site of CS Rasovo is located in agricultural territories (at km 458.4 of the route), at a minimum distance from populated areas - 2.13 km. The site does not affect any protected areas from the ecological network Natura 2000 and other protected territories.

The total area of the territories affected by the servitude of the gas pipeline, cables and technological sites is **30 612 daa**¹, the designation of the areas being as follows (as per cent of the total area):

- Agriculture: 94.50%
- Forestry and logging: 4.73%
- Populated areas: 0.00%
- Surface waters: 0.40%
- Mineral extraction: 0.01%
- Transport: 0.36%.

The route of the gas pipeline under Option 1 crosses 17 protected areas, as follows: BG 0000104 Provadia – Royak Plateau, BG 0000173 Ostrovche, BG 0000610 Yantra River, BG 0000240 Studenets, BG 0000181 Vit River, BG 0000613 Iskar River, BG 0000508 Skut River, BG 0000614 Ogosta River, BG0000336 Zlatiya, BG 0000503 Lom River, BG 0000521 Makresh, BG 0000498 Vitbol, BG 0000500 Boynitsa, BG 0002060 Galata, BG 0002038 Provadia – Royak Plateau, BG 0000240 Studenets, and BG 0002009 Zlatiyata.

The total length of the passage across protected areas for Option 1 is 60.506 km (11.2% of the total length of the route).

¹ Daa, or decare (1 decare=10 ares).

Alternative gas pipeline route – Option 2:

The length of the gas pipeline along Option 2 is 539.9 km. The starting point of the route is at about 4.7 km in the southwestern direction from Galata residential estate in the city of Varna, and at about 2.4 km in the northwestern direction from the Black Sea coast at Pasha Dere.

The gas pipeline starts from the site (at km 0+000 of the route), planned for receiving terminal. The site is within the borders of protected area BG0002060 Galata. CS Varna is located on a separate site (at km 4+800 of the route), at a minimum distance from populated areas – 0.95 km. No protected areas and other sensitive zones are affected.

The site of CS Lozen is situated in agricultural areas (at km 208.7 of the route), at a minimum distance from populated areas - 1.4 km. The site does not affect any protected areas from the ecological network Natura 2000 and protected territories.

The site of CS Rasovo is located in agricultural areas (at km 462.3 of the route), at a minimum distance from populated areas - 1.76 km. The site does not affect any protected areas within ecological network Natura 2000 and protected territories.

The total area of the territories affected by the servitude of the gas pipeline, cables and technological sites is **30 679 daa**, the designation of the areas being as follows (as per cent of the total area):

- Agriculture: 92.68%
- Forestry and logging: 6.50%
- Populated areas 0.00%
- Surface waters: 0.44%
- Mineral extraction: 0.00%
- Transport: 0.37%.

The route of the gas pipeline in Option 2 crosses 20 protected areas, as follows: BG 0000104 Provadia–Royak Plateau, BG 0000173 Ostrovche, BG 0000610 Yantra River, BG 0000239 Obnova Karaman Dol, BG 0000240 Studenets, BG 0000181 Vit River, BG 0000613 Iskar River, BG 0000627 Konun Dol, BG 0000508 Skut River, BG 0000614 Ogosta River, BG0000336 Zlatiya, BG 0000503 Lom River, BG 0000518 Vurtop Dol, BG 0000521 Makresh, BG 0000498 Vitbol, BG 0000500 Boynitsa, BG 0002060 Galata, BG 0002038 Provadia-Royak Plateau, BG 0000240 Studenets and BG 0002009 Zlatiyata.

The total length of passage across protected areas is Option 2 – 71.812 km (13.3 % of the length of the route).

The gas pipeline route in both options **does not affect protected areas in the meaning of the Protected Areas Act.**

Given the provision of Article 31 (1) of the *Biodiversity Act* and Article 2 (1) i. 1 of the Compatibility Assessment Ordinance, the Investment Proposal is subjected to assessment of its compatibility with the subject and objectives of protection in the protected areas. After judging on grounds of Article 39 (3) of the CA Ordinance that **there is a probability** for the Investment Proposal to exert significant negative impact on natural habitats, populations and habitats of species that are subject to conservation within the protected areas and the instructions given as per Article 39 (5) of said Ordinance, a report for assessment of the degree of impact on protected areas (DIAR) is prepared. The expected impacts of the Investment Proposal (IP) on the subject and objectives of the protected areas are reviewed and assessed in detail in DIAR.

Due to the following motives (factual grounds):

1. The presented EIA Report reviews the existing status of the environment components and factors and analysis is performed of the expected impacts from the implementation of the

Investment Proposal on environment and human health. The risk factors are identified. On grounds of the performed detailed research, taking into consideration the results of the expected impact on the components of environment, after equally based examination of the two route options, the team of experts that has prepared the environment impact assessment of the Investment Proposal concludes that both Options for gas pipeline route and location of the sites for the facilities are viable if the respective measures are implemented. Taking into account the fact that in Option 1 the expected impact on the components: “Biodiversity” (including flora and fauna); “Noises, vibration and radiations”, “Landscape”, as well as on the elements of the ecological network Natura 2000 is proven as being smaller than in Option 2, the team of experts suggests that an improvement should be made as regards the implementation of the Investment Proposal as per Option 1, due to the following:

- The impact of the construction phase on ambient air quality is direct, short-term, temporary, reversible, without cumulative effect, restricted within the limits of the construction route;

- The impact of the operation phase on ambient air quality is direct, permanent, reversible, without cumulative effect, restricted within the area of the sites of compressor stations Varna, Lozen, Rasovo, receiving terminal Pasha Dere and distribution station Provadia;

- The impact of the construction phase on the quality of surface water and groundwater is direct, short-term, temporary, reversible, without cumulative effect, restricted within the limits of construction sites;

- The impact of the operation phase of the Investment Proposal on the quality of surface water and groundwater is direct, permanent, reversible, without cumulative effect, restricted within the area of the intake chambers on the sites of compressor stations Varna, Lozen, Rasovo, receiving terminal „Pasha Dere”and gas distribution station Provadia;

- The impact on soils during the construction is assessed as direct, short-term, temporary, without cumulative effect, reversible;

- Based on the performed analysis of the expected impact on soils and on the method of sustainable use, it can be concluded that with observance of the measures for restriction of the negative impact Option 1 recommended by the Report is admissible in terms of the soil component;

- The forecast noise levels in populated areas in the proximity of the sites for construction or receiving terminal Pasha Dere, CS Varna (CS 1), CS Lozen (CS 2) and CS Rasovo(CS 3) are lower than the limit values of noise in populated areas and residential territories under Ordinance No. 6 of 26.06.2006 referring to night periods for the following options of design solutions:

- receiving terminal Pasha Dere– Option 1;

- Compressor station Varna – Option 1;

- Compressor station Lozen – Option 1;

- Compressor station Rasovo – Option 1 and Option 2.

- The analysis of the results from the calculations of the forecast noise levels in the course of operation of receiving terminal Pasha Dere and CS Varna, CS Lozen and CS Rasovo shows:

- for receiving terminal “Pasha Dere”and CS Varna from an acoustic viewpoint it is recommended to be chosen a site with location under Option 1;

- for CS „Lozen” from an acoustic viewpoint it is recommended to be chosen a site with location under Option 1;

- for CS Rasovo from an acoustic viewpoint it is recommended to be chosen a site with location under Option 1 or Option 2;

- The forecast levels of infrasound and low-frequency noise within the octave frequency bands 16 Hz, 31.5 Hz for all studied populated areas, located in the proximity of the areas within which RT Pasha Dere is to be constructed – Option 1, CS Varna – Option 1, CS Lozen – Option 1, CS Rasovo - Option 1 and Option 2 are lower than the limit for perception of infrasound and low frequency noise as per the standards DIN 45680 and ISO 226.2003;

- The forecast levels of low frequency noise within the octave frequency band of 63 Hz for all studied populated areas, located in the proximity of the areas within which RT Pasha Dere is to be constructed – Option 1, CS Varna – Option 1, CS Lozen – Option 1, CS Rasovo - Option 1 and Option 2 exceed by 2 dB to 4 dB, or are lower than the limit of perception of low-frequency noise as per DIN 45680 and ISO 226.2003;

- The forecast levels of infrasound within the octave frequency band of 16 Hz for all studied populated areas, located in the proximity of the areas within which RT Pasha Dere is to be constructed – Option 1, CS Varna – Option 1, CS Lozen – Option 1, CS Rasovo- Option 1 and Option 2 are by 45 dB to 50 dB lower than the limit of subjective perception of sound as per the standards DIN 45680 and ISO 226.2003 and by 32 dB to 37 dB lower than the used in the assessment sanitary norms for populated areas and residential territories;

- The ground vibrations generated by the compressor units operation in compressor stations Varna, Lozen and Rasovo do not create conditions of discomfort and do not pose any threat to people, including on the compressor station sites;

- The expected impacts from waste generated during the construction and operation will be temporary (during the construction phase), permanent (during the operation phase), insignificant and reversible. The territorial scope of the impacts will be large inasmuch the gas pipeline with its servitude crosses the entire territory of the country;

- The implementation of the measures within the “waste” section will lead to prevention of the negative impact of waste on natural and social environment;

- Within the construction stage the gas pipeline route under Option 1 is more favourable in respect of the impact on landscape due to the following considerations:

- smaller number of areas within the ecological network Natura 2000 are affected;

- smaller number of areas from forest landscape are affected and the expected visual impact from the loss of trees will be smaller;

- The process of operation of the gas pipeline under Options 1 and 2 is not related to any impact on the landscape components. It is not expected that considerable, negative, direct, visual, or any other type of impact will occur. Only local or indirect impacts are possible during the maintenance of the gas pipeline, the adjoining buildings and facilities, by the presence of machines in the course of clearing the servitude areas crossing the forest and agrarian landscape;

- The expected insignificant impact on landscape during the construction and operation of South Stream Gas Pipeline does not restrict the implementation of the Investment Proposal.

- The implementaton of the Investment Proposal does not affect any protected areas;

- There are no existing grounds based on which to claim that by the construction and operation of the site there will be inflicted any significant negative impacts on the flora and fauna if the measures for prevention, reduction and where possible – termination of the harmful impacts on biodiversity – are observed;

- No significant impact is expected during the gas pipeline construction and operation (Option 1 and Option 2) on monuments of immovable cultural heritage upon implementation of the prescribed conservation measures;

- No residual impacts are expected from the IP implementation on monuments of immovable cultural heritage. Negative impacts may be expected only in the event of failures and the related recovery activities;

- Within the construction stage the impact on the geological base is assessed as direct, short-term and reversible, without cumulative effect. According to the assessment made, the impact on the geological base does not restrict the Investment Proposal implementation;

- Upon implementation of the Investment Proposal no significant unfavourable cumulative impacts are expected, due to accumulation of impact from other projects within the impact zone;

- Given the observance of the effective regulatory requirements and of the measures and recommendations for restriction of the established adverse impacts, the implementation of the Investment Proposal is admissible from the perspective of the health risks for the potentially affected population;

- The normal and failure-free construction, operation and decommissioning of the Investment Proposal is not expected to result in any significant and substantial health risks for the potentially affected population;

- In a long-term perspective, improvement of air quality is expected in a local (along the linear part of the route), national and cross-border aspect due to the increased consumption of natural gas instead of other fossil fuels;

- It is expected with the implementation of the Investment Proposal to be created new direct and indirect job positions during the construction of the gas pipeline and additional infrastructure. A part of these job positions will be preserved also during the operation phase;

- The implementation of the Investment Proposal will give an impetus to the development of local small businesses, will make the settlements more attractive to live in;

- The possibility for construction and development of gas distribution networks in the municipalities along the route of South Stream Gas Pipeline on the territory of Bulgaria will lead to increase in investment activity and attractiveness of the regions.

2. The development of the South Stream Gas Pipeline and the diversification of the routes for natural gas supply are consistent with the objectives embedded in the Energy Strategy of the Republic of Bulgaria until year 2020. The gas pipeline implementation will contribute to the establishment of Bulgaria as a significant factor in natural gas transmission to the EU. The security of gas supply for the country, the region and the EU will be augmented significantly through diversification of the natural gas routes and sources.

3. By Decision No. 876/02.12.2011 of the Council of Ministers, South Stream Gas Pipeline, within its section to be constructed on the territory of the Republic of Bulgaria, is declared a site of national significance and national site.

4. The gas pipeline being the subject of the Investment Proposal will be connected to the existing National Gas Transmission System of Bulgaria, whereby it will secure the supply of the amount of natural gas, planned for consumption in the country.

5. The performed compatibility assessment of the Investment Proposal relative to the subjects and objectives of the affected protected areas provides a possibility for adopting a decision pursuant to Article 39 (12) of the CA Ordinance. As per the performed assessment the implementation of the alternative route **under Option 1 (Alternative 1)**, which is to be executed **in accordance with the technology proposed by the contracting authority**, has the least negative impact on the subject and objectives of conservation in the protected areas within the network Natura 2000, as follows:

A. The construction, commissioning, operation and decommissioning of the gas pipeline, including as regards the expected cumulative impact along with other plans, programmes, projects and investment proposals and after risk assessment, **will not exert any significant**

negative impact on the objectives and subject (species and habitats) of conservation in the affected protected areas, through the implementation of the general and specific measures specified below, since:

1. The attainment of the objectives for conservation of the protected areas will not be obstructed;
2. No significant reduction of the area of natural habitats and species habitats will occur in the areas, no increase in their fragmentation will set in, neither a change in their conservation status;
3. The distribution, number and density of the species populations and the balance between them will not be distorted, including in relation to their conservation status;
4. The dynamics of the interrelations which determine the structure and/ function of any one of the affected protected areas will not be changed;
5. No loss or deterioration to a significant degree will occur in respect of the abiotic components that are of key significance for the protected areas;
6. The coherence of the ecological network Natura 2000 in Bulgaria will not be distorted.

A.1. BG0000104 “Provadia-Rovak Plateau” under Alternative 1:

1.1. The implementaton of IP in all of its stages will lead to lasting harm of 4,159 daa, or 0,114 % of natural habitat 91H0* - *Pannonian forests with Quercus pubescens* (in combination 91H0 x 91G0) and 79,502 daa, or 0,0881% of natural habitat 6240* -*Sub-Pannonic steppic grasslands (in combination 6240x 6210)*, which is regarded as insignificant in terms of degree.

1.2. Natural habitats 91I0* *Euro-Siberian steppic woods with Quercus spp.*, 91M0 *Pannonian-Balkan turkey oak –sessile oak forests*, 91S0* *West-Pontian beech forests*, 91W0 *Moesian beech forests* and 91Z0 *Moesian silver lime woods*, 8210 *Calcareous rocky slopes with chasmophytic vegetation*, 8310 *Caves not open to the public*, 9180 * *Tilio-Acerion forests of slopes, screes and ravines* and 9150 *Termophile beech forests (Cephalanthero-Fagion)* will not be directly or indirectly affected in a negative manner, since the route does not pass across them or across areas in their proximity.

1.3. There will be a lasting harm of 0,01% of the habitats of the Schreiber’s bat (*Miniopterus schreibersi*), of 0,05% of the habitats of the greater horseshoe bat (*Rhinolophus ferrumequinum*) and of the lesser mouse-eared bat (*Myotis blythii*), of 0,06% of the habitats of the lesser horseshoe bat (*Rhinolophus hipposideros*) and the greater mouse-eared bat (*Myotis myotis*), and 0,07% of the habitats of Geoffroy’s bat (*Myotis emarginatus*), which is regarded as insignificant in terms of degree, given their representation in the area.

1.4. Lasting harm will be inflicted on 0,015% of the habitats of the stag beetle (*Lucanus cervus*), great Capricorn beetle (*Cerambyx cerdo*) and *Morimus asper funereus*, which after approx. 30-35 years, upon recovery of the damaged areas of natural habitat 91H0*, the residual lasting impact on the three species of target beetles will decrease by 4,2 daa, or the residual percentage of permanently destroyed habitats will be 0,0165%.

1.5. For all the remaining species being subject of conservation in the area, there will be no lasting harm of their habitats. Within the short period of partial harming of the habitats of some of the species, including in respect of cumulative impact, the impact will be insignificant and after implementation of mitigating measures immediately after completion of the construction, there will be no residual harm of their habitats.

1.6. IP will not exert any significant negative impact on the plant species finds of *Moehringia jankae* and *Centaurea jankae*, since its route does not cross such finds, or any areas in their proximity.

A.2. BG0000173 “Ostrovche” as per alternative 1:

2.1. The implementaton of IP will lead for a long period of time to direct destruction of 0,8% of natural habitat 91M0 *Pannonian-Balkanic turkey oak –sessile oak forests* in the protected area, which is regarded as insignificant in terms of degree and will be neutralized after 30-35 years, with observance of the planned restoration measures of areas equal to those being harmed (71,4 daa).

2.2. The Investment Proposal does not pass across or in the proximity of any habitats being protected in the area: 91E0* *Alluvial forests with Alnus glutinosa and Fraxinus excelsior (Alno-Pandion, Alnion incanae, Salicion albae)*, 6110* *Rupicolous calcareous or basophilic grasslands of the Alysso-Sedion albi*, 6210* *Semi-natural dry grasslands and scrubland facies on calcareous substrates (Festuco-Brometalia) (*important orchid sites)*, 6510 *Lowland hay meadows (Alopecurus pratensis, Sanguisorba officinalis)*, 9180* *Tilio-Acerion forests of slopes, screes and ravines*, 91G0* *Pannonic forests with Quercus petraea and Carpinus betulus*, 91H0* *Pannonic forests with Quercus pubescens*, 91I0* *Euro-Siberian steppic woods with Quercus spp.* and 91Z0 *Moesian silver lime forests*, as a result of which no negative impact whatsoever, is expected in respect thereof.

2.3. There will be affected 0,17% of the forest habitats, which are potential habitats of the wolf (*Canis lupus*), but given its flexibility, it does not constitute a negative impact in a significant degree.

2.4 For the two tortoise species lasting harm of habitats is also expected up to 0,17% related to deciduous and mixed forests as their potential habitats. The transformation of forest into grassland habitats will create a larger mosaic distribution of the potential habitats and will probably have a positive effect on them.

2.5. For the remaining species affected by IP, which are subject of conservation in the protected area, no lasting and irreversible harm of the habitats will occur, inasmuch they will be restored after the completion of the construction activities.

A.3. BG0000231 “Belen Forest” as per Alternative 1 :

3.1. IP in all its stages will not lead to any direct destruction of natural habitats, being subject of conservation in the protected area, including species habitats, or to harming of any key elements of the protected area, since the route passes outside of its boundaries.

3.2. Out of the species being the subject of conservation within the area disturbance of the wolf (*Canis lupus*) is expected, including as a result of the cumulative impact, which is temporary and reversible, and is insignificant in terms of degree.

A.4. BG0000610 “The Yantra River” as per Alternative 1:

4.1. The route of IP does not pass across or in the proximity of Natural habitats 1530* *Pannonic salt steppes and salt marshes*, 3150 *Natural eutrophic lakes with Magnopotamion or Hydrocharition - type vegetation*, 6110* *Rupicolous calcareous or basophilic grasslands of the Alysso-Sedion albi*, 6240* *Sub-Pannonic steppic grasslands*, 6250* *Pannonic loess steppic grasslands*, 8210 *Calcareous rocky slopes with chasmophytic vegetation*, 9180* *Tilio-Acerion forests of slopes, screes and ravines*, 91F0 *Riparian mixed forests of Quercus robur, Ulmus laevis and Ulmus minor, Fraxinus excelsior or Fraxinus angustifolia, along the great rivers (Ulmunion minoris)*, 91G0* *Pannonic woods with Quercus petraea and Carpinus betulus*, 91H0* *Pannonic woods with Quercus pubescens*, 91I0* *Euro-Siberian steppic woods with Quercus spp.*, 91M0 *Pannonian-Balkanic turkey oak –sessile oak forests*, 91W0 *Moesian beech forests*, 91Z0 *Moesian silver lime wood*, as a result of which no negative impact, whatsoever, is expected on them.

Within the scope of the route there are four natural habitats. Three of them - 3260 *Water courses of plain to montane levels with the Ranunculion fluitantis and Callitricho-*

Batrachion vegetation and mosaic of 6430 x 3270 – *Hydrophilous tall herb fringe communities of plains and of the montane to alpine levels* and *Rivers with muddy banks with *Chenopodium rubri* p.p. and *Bidention* p.p. vegetation*, given the selected technology (directional drilling), will not be affected directly or indirectly in a lasting manner. From the fourth habitat - 91E0* *Alluvial forests with *Alnus glutinosa* and *Fraxinus excelsior* (Alno-Padion, *Alnion incanae*, *Salicion albae*)*– there will be destructed 0,338 daa, which equals 0,27% of its area in the territory. For the reduction of this impact, even though insignificant in degree, a mitigation measure is envisaged, taking into account its priority of conservation.

4.2. The impacts on some species of bats are related only to the partial harming of insignificant part of their potential feeding habitats - 0,047% for the Mediterranean horseshoe bat (*Rhinolophus euryale*), greater horseshoe bat (*Rhinolophus ferrumequinum*), Barbastelle (*Barbastella barbastellus*), Geoffroy's bat (*Myotis emarginatus*), greater mouse-eared bat (*Myotis myotis*), Mehely's horseshoe bat (*Rhinolophus mehelyi*), lesser horseshoe bat (*Rhinolophus hipposideros*), 0,044% for Shreiber's bat (*Miniopterus schreibersi*), 0,105% for Behcstein's bat (*Myotis bechsteini*), lesser mouse-eared bat (*Myotis blythii*) and Blasius's horseshoe bat (*Rhinolophus blasii*).

In the worst scenario the impacts on some of the mammals being subject of conservation in the area is brought to affecting 0,036% of the potential terrestrial habitats of the otter (*Lutra lutra*), of 0,005% of the potential habitats of the marbled polecat (*Vormela peregusna*) and 0,029% for the wolf (*Canis lupus*), which are insignificant in terms of duration and disturbance. For the remaining species of mammals no negative impact is registered. After the reclamation of the terrains affected by construction in the zone, residual impact with harming of habitats of the marbled polecat (*Vormela peregusna*) will not occur.

4.3. With the reclamation of the construction route there will be eliminated the disturbance and negative impacts on the habitats of those dependant on humid environment - European pond turtle (*Emys orbicularis*), *Triturus dobrogicus*, *Triturus karelinii*, fire-bellied toad (*Bombina bombina*) and the yellow-bellied toad (*Bombina variegata*). The remaining protected species of amphibians and reptiles in the zone will not be influenced negatively.

4.4. The construction and operation, given the selected method of crossing the Yantra River, will not lead to any negative impacts, such as mortality of specimens of the protected fish species, loss of their habitats or deterioration of their quality and fragmentation. For the stage of introduction and decommissioning negative impacts which are minimal in terms of degree are possible on fish, restricted to a few square metres only in the sections in which waters will be abstracted for hydraulic testing and purification of the gas pipeline.

4.5. The route of the gas pipeline in all its stages does not affect the suitable habitats of the stone crayfish (*Austropotamobius torrentium*), stag beetle (*Lucanus cervus*), great capricorn beetle (*Cerambyx cerdo*), *Morimus funereus* (now also known as *Morimus asper funereus*) and the longicorn rosalia (*Rosalia alpina*) and no negative impacts will be exerted on them. With the selected method of crossing the Yantra River by slant directional drilling there will be inflicted no harm to the habitats of theodoxus (*Theodoxus transversalis*), thick-shelled river mussel (*Unio crassus*), and therefore, no negative impacts are expected, such as specimen mortality, loss of habitats, deteriorated quality of the habitats, fragmentation.

A.5. BG0000240 “Studentets” as per Alternative 1-A:

5.1. The implementation of Alternative 1-a will not lead to any significant negative impact, including cumulative one, on Natural habitats 3260 *Water courses of plain to montane levels with the *Ranunculion fluitantis* and *Callitricho-Batrachion* vegetation*, 6430 *Hydrophilous tall herb fringe communities of plains and of the montane to alpine levels*, 6210* *Semi-natural dry grasslands and scrubland facies on calcareous substrates (Festuco-Brometalia)* (*important orchid sites), 91E0* *Alluvial forests with *Alnus glutinosa* and *Fraxinus excelsior* (Alno-Padion, *Alnion incanae*, *Salicion albae*)*, 91GO* *Pannonic woods with*

Quercus petraea and *Carpinus betulus*, 91M0 Pannonian-Balkan turkey oak –sessile oak forests and 91IO* Euro-Siberian steppic woods with *Quercus* spp. and *Himantoglossum caprinum*, since given the selected method of crossing the Vit River, upon the overall implementation of the IP natural habitats will be affected to an insignificant degree in a direct and lasting manner through the appropriation of an area of 4,43 daa (0,40%) of 91E0* Alluvial forests with *Alnus glutinosa* and *Fraxinus excelsior* (Alno-Padion, Alnion incanae, Salicion albae), 2,2 daa (0,23%) of 91G0 Pannonic woods with *Quercus petraea* and *Carpinus betulus*, 7,55 daa (0,19%) 91IO Euro-Siberian steppic woods with *Quercus* spp. and 14,34 daa (0,03%) of 91M0 Balkan-Pannonic turkey-oak-sessile oak forests in the protected area, and the harming of habitat 6210 Semi-natural dry grasslands and scrubland facies on calcareous substrates (*Festuco-Brometalia*) during the construction activities is 26,7 daa (0,26%), which is temporary and reversible. The rest of the habitats will not be influenced negatively in a direct or indirect manner.

Including other intentions within the limits of the zone, cumulative impact is accounted only on habitats 6210* and 91M0, as the quantitative calculations again show a lack of significant negative impact, because a total of 0,36% of the grassland habitat will be harmed reversibly and in a lasting manner – a total of 0,1% of the forest habitat.

5.2. The construction of the pipeline will cause short-term and completely reversible harm after completion of the construction as regards minimum areas of terrestrial habitats that are suitable for the fire-bellied toad (*Bombina bombina*) - 0,005% and the yellow-bellied toad (*Bombina variegata*) - 0,003%, as well as for the European pond turtle (*Emys orbicularis*), which is an impact of insignificant degree. Identical in terms of degree, duration and state will be the impact also on tortoises - spur-thighed tortoise (*Testudo graeca*) and Hermann's tortoise (*Testudo hermanni*) upon destruction of 81 daa (0,04%) from the potential habitats – highly sparse mixed deciduous woods and oak forest. With the selected alternative in this protected zone no impact will be exerted on the habitats of (*Triturus karelinii*).

5.3. The implementation of IP in all of its stages, taking into consideration also the cumulative impact, will exert insignificant negative impact in terms of degree in respect of the European souslik (*Spermophilus citellus*), Romanian hamster (*Mesocricetus newtoni*), marbled polecat (*Vormela peregusna*) and steppe polecat (*Mustela eversmanni*) in the protected area, since there will be reversible appropriation of respectively, 0,08%, 0,29%, 0,53% and 0,41% of their habitats.

Taking into account the independent and cumulative impact of other intentions within the limits of the zone, the impact on the otter (*Lutra lutra*) will be expressed on 0,6 % of the potential habitats. Considering the circumstance that they are on an area that is smaller than one individual section of the otter, the impacts are temporary and recoverable; their degree is determined as insignificant.

The lasting decrease of deciduous woodland area by the gas pipeline within the zone will lead to reducing the number of sanctuaries for the forest species, such as the bat species Behcstein's bat (*Myotis bechsteini*) and Barbastelle (*Barbastella barbastellus*) by 0,09 %, as well as by 0,77% (along with other intentions in the zone) of the feeding habitats of these two species and of the greater mouse-eared bat (*Myotis myotis*), the Mediterranean horseshoe bat (*Rhinolopus euryale*), Geoffroy's bat (*Myotis emarginatus*), the lesser horseshoe bat (*Rhinolophus hipposideros*), the greater horseshoe bat (*Rhinolophus ferrumequinum*), Mehely's horseshoe bat (*Rhinolophus mehelyi*) and Schreiber's bat (*Miniopterus schreibersii*). Harming of pasture lands and bushes in the transition as potential feeding habitats for the bat species will be temporary and reversible, as in relation thereto, given the proposed measures, the negative impacts on this group is determined as insignificant.

5.4. Lasting harm will be inflicted on 249 daa (0,37 %) of the potential habitats of the stag

beetle (*Lucanus cervus*), great capricorn beetle (*Cerambyx cerdo*), *Morimus asper funereus*, longicorn rosalia (*Rosalia alpina*) and *Bolbelasmus unicornis* as a result of the decrease in the area of forest habitats, which is insignificant, given their representation in the zone. The remaining three species of the freshwater fauna, *theodoxus transversalis* ranging in the lower courses of the rivers Vit, Chernelka, and Sushitsa, the thick-shelled river mussel (*Unio crassus*) is distributed in the river from its estuary to Pleven and the stone crayfish (*Austropotamobius torrentium*) ranges only in two habitats in the upper courses of the rivers in Northern Bulgaria, and therefore, no negative impacts will result thereon by the implementation of the route.

5.5. The degree of impact of the route as per alternative 1-A in respect of fish is equal in degree to the one for the four affected target species - European bitterling (*Rhodeus amarus*), Mediterranean barbel (*Barbus meridionalis*), *Cobitis taenia* and *Sabanejewia balcanica*, being subject of conservation in the zone. The passage of the gas pipeline across the Vit River is by way of slant drilling and its construction will not exert any impact on the habitats of the specified species and the envisaged trench method for crossing the rivers Sushitsa and Chernelka presupposes impacts on local level on 0,036% of the locations suitable for them through a change in the natural character of the banks, modification of the bottom and the physical parameters of water, only during the construction, this being fully recoverable.

A.6. BG0000181 “The Vit River” as per Alternative 1:

6.1. The route of the gas pipeline does not pass across or in the proximity of habitats: 3150 *Natural eutrophic lakes with Magnopotamion or Hydrocharition - type vegetation*; 6110* *Rupicolous calcareous or basophilic grasslands of the Alyso-Sedion albi*, 6210* *Semi-natural dry grasslands and scrubland facies on calcareous substrates (Festuco-Brometalia) (*important orchid sites)*, 6240* *Sub-Pannonic steppic grasslands*, 6250* *Pannonic loess steppic grasslands*, 8210 *Calcareous rocky slopes with chasmophytic vegetation*, 91E0* *Alluvial forests with Alnus glutinosa and Fraxinus excelsior (Alno-Padion, Alnion incanae, Salicion albae)*, 91F0 *Riparian mixed forests of Quercus robur, Ulmus laevis and Ulmus minor, Fraxinus excelsior or Fraxinus angustifolia, along the great rivers (Ulmenion minoris)*, 91GO* *Pannonic forests with Quercus petraea and Carpinus betulus*, 91H0* *Pannonic forests with Quercus pubescens*, 91IO* *Euro-Siberian steppic forests with Quercus spp.*, 91M0 *Pannonian-Balkan turkey oak –sessile oak forests*, 91Z0 *Moesian silver lime forests*, as a result of which no negative impact whatsoever, is expected in respect of them.

In habitat 3260 *Water courses of plain to montane levels with the Ranunculion fluitantis and Callitriche-Batrachion vegetation* there will be affected an area of 0,284 daa, or 0,0379 % of their total representation in the protected area.

6.2. The impacts on the bats, being subject of conservation in the zone, including those cumulative, are brought down to temporary and reversible harm of 0,1% of feeding habitats, and such is also the disturbance caused by the implementation of the gas pipeline upon crossing the rivers that have the role of bio-corridors, so that the negative impact can be determined as insignificant.

During the construction and operation there will be harmed and temporarily fragmented 0,44 % of the potential habitats of the otter (*Lutra lutra*) in the zone, and with the accumulation of impacts by other intentions, in the worst scenario – not more than 0,9%, which does not presuppose a significant degree of negative impact.

The implementation of the gas pipeline and its operation will not exert any negative impact on the European souslik (*Spermophilus citellus*), since its route and elements do not affect any stocks or habitats that are suitable for it. Same refers also to the Romanian hamster

(*Mesocricetus newtoni*) and the steppe polecat (*Mustela eversmanni*). Individually and in combination with other intentions in respect of the marbled polecat (*Vormela peregusna*) a minimum harm in terms of area is accounted as regards suitable habitats (0,107%), and the disturbance for the latter three species will also be of insignificant degree.

The implementation of IP will affect reversibly 6 daa or 0,0147% of the habitats of the wolf (*Canis lupus*), and taking into account the impacts from other plans, programmes, projects, and investment proposals in the zone, this area equals 0,085% of the locations suitable for it, so that, given the species biology, no lasting distortion will occur in respect of its migration corridors, fragmentation and deterioration in the qualities of its habitats.

6.3. The harming of habitats by the implementation of IP under Alternative 1 will be respectively 0,011% of the suitable habitats for the spur-thighed tortoise (*Testudo graeca*), 0,01% - for the Hermann's tortoise (*Testudo hermanni*), and 0,032% - for *Elaphe sauromates*, and when we add the impacts from other plans, programs and projects (PPP)/IP – it will be accordingly 0,095%, 0,078% and 0,261%. Out of the terrestrial and aquatic habitats of the European pond turtle (*Emys orbicularis*) at Dubnishka Bara River there will be temporarily affected in a completely reversible manner 0,091%, as well as 0,0455% of the habitats of *Triturus karelinii*), up to 0,008% of those of the fire-bellied toad (*Bombina bombina*) and of the yellow-bellied toad (*Bombina variegata*). The cumulative impacts are calculated respectively at 0,085% for *Triturus karelinii*, 0,085% for the European pond turtle, 0,01% for the fire-bellied toad and for the yellow-bellied toad. The area calculations show, as well as the fragmentation which will be temporary and completely reversible, that the negative impact is insignificant.

6.4. Out of the protected 12 fish species, the section of the Dubnishka Bara River where the IP route will pass via the trench method does not offer appropriate habitats for the following species, being subject of conservation in the zone - *Aspius aspius*, Ukrainian brook lamprey (*Eudontomyzon mariae*), white-finned Gudgeon (*Gobio albipinnatus*), Balon's ruffe (*Gymnocephalus baloni*), striped ruffe (*Gymnocephalus schraetser*), European weather loach (*Misgurnus fossilis*), sabrefish (*Pelecus cultratus*), European bitterling (*Rhodeus amarus*), small streber (*Zingel streber*), big streber (*Zingel zingel*), *Cobitis elongata*, *Cobitis taenia*, *Sabanejewia balcanica* and big streber (*Zingel zingel*). The natural character of the river will be distorted within the working section, which is 0,001% of the potential habitats of the Mediterranean barbel (*Barbus meridionalis*)- negative impact, which is reversible, temporary and insignificant in degree, taking into account also the cumulative impact on the species habitat, equaling 0,002% thereof.

6.5. The total length of Alternative 1 across the protected area is 174 m as the section (open area and the Dubnishka Bara River) do not constitute a habitat of any target species of invertebrates and therefore, there will be no insignificant negative impacts in respect of them.

A.7. BG0000613 “Iskar River” as per Alternative 1:

7.1. IP in all its stages of implementation is not to affect habitats 3150 *Natural eutrophic lakes with Magnopotamion or Hydrocharition - type vegetation*, 6110* *Rupicolous calcareous or basophilic grasslands of the Alysso-Sedion albi*, 6430 *Hydrophilous tall herb fringe communities of plains and of the montane to alpine levels*, 91F0 *Riparian mixed forests of Quercus robur, Ulmus laevis and Ulmus minor, Fraxinus excelsior or Fraxinus angustifolia, along the great rivers (Ulmenion minoris)*, 91H0* *Pannonic forests with Quercus pubescens*, 91I0* *Euro-Siberian steppic woods with Quercus spp.*, 91M0 *Pannonian-Balkan turkey oak –sessile oak forests* and 91Z0 *Moesian silver lime forests*, and therefore no negative impact is expected in respect of them. The construction corridor site will directly and indirectly affect in a lasting manner 0,069% of the area of habitat 91E0* *Alluvial forests with Alnus glutinosa and Fraxinus excelsior (Alno-Padion, Alnion*

incanae, *Salicion albae*)) and a mosaic of the grassland habitat 6210 *Semi-natural dry grasslands and scrubland facies on calcareous substrates (Festuco-Brometalia)*, which is not subject of conservation in the zone with small fragments of habitat 6250* *Pannonic loess steppic grasslands*, the total area of which is about 1 daa. For the latter a cumulative impact is accounted from the implementation of the gas pipeline along with other PPP/IPs in the zone which is 0,12% of its area, there is a possibility for recovery and given the reversibility of the impact, it will be insignificant in degree.

7.2. There will be a temporary and reversible harm, given the implementation of mitigation measures, to 0,05 % of the habitats of *Triturus dobrogicus*, 0,03% for the spur-thighed tortoise, 0,02 % for the European pond turtle, the yellow-bellied toad and the fire-bellied toad.

7.3. In respect of bats, harmed in lasting manner will be forest habitats - 0,14% (3,3 daa) and in a temporary manner - 0,03% (13 daa) of pasture lands, and other open territories, being potential feeding habitats in the protected species. Barbastelle (*Barbastella barbastellus*) is the only species out of those protected in the zone, a typical forest inhabitant, for which a destruction of its tree sanctuaries is possible, but relative to its potential in the zone of habitats, this is an insignificant part. All other types of bats are cave species and the lack of sanctuaries in the construction corridor of the gas pipeline leads to the conclusion for the lack of any significant negative impact. The functions of the river as a natural bio-corridor will also be unharmed, given the selected method for laying the pipes across it.

The latter applies to the otter (*Lutra lutra*) as well, for which reversibly affected will be 0,35% of the individual section of a female specimen and 0,08% of the individual section of a male specimen (1,4 daa), and in a lasting manner only 0,249 daa in habitat 91E0. Upon the implementation of measures for supporting the recovery of 91E0, the lasting negative impact on the otter will be brought down to a minimum.

For the European souslik (*Spermophilus citellus*) – in a temporary and reversible manner there will be affected 6 daa of pasture lands (0,02%), for the Romanian hamster (*Mesocricetus newtoni*), the marbled polecat (*Vormela peregusna*) and the steppe polecat (*Mustela eversmanni*) - 11 daa (0,02%) of open habitats. For the remaining species being subject of conservation in the protected area no harm of habitats is anticipated. Taking into account the cumulative effect, the negative impacts on European souslik is on 0,048% of the areas suitable for it and on 0,28% for the other three species. Their disturbance is of low degree of significance.

7.4. The natural distribution area of the species spur-thighed tortoise (*Testudo graeca*), *Elaphe quatuorlineata* and *Triturus karelinii* does not encompass the territory of IP and therefore there will be no negative impact on them. The impact on the potential habitats of the Hermann's tortoise (*Testudo hermanni*) is insignificant – 0,03% of these, up to 0,05% of these of *Triturus dobrogicus* and 0,02% of the water habitats of the European pond turtle (*Emys orbicularis*), the fire-bellied toad (*Bombina bombina*) and the yellow-bellied toad (*Bombina variegata*).

7.5 There will be no negative impact by the gas pipeline on small streber (*Zingel streber*), *Aspius aspius*, Mediterranean barbel (*Barbus meridionalis*), *Cobitis elongata*, *Cobitis taenia*, Balon's ruffe (*Gymnocephalus baloni*), striped ruffe (*Gymnocephalus schraetzer*), sabrefish (*Pelecus cultratus*), European bitterling (*Rhodeus sericeus amarus*) and *Sabanejewia aurata*, being subject of conservation in the zone, given the selected method of crossing the Iskar River.

7.6. The inference in the previous paragraph applies also to aquatic invertebrates being subject of conservation in the zone - *Theodoxus transversalis* and thick-shelled river mussel (*Unio crassus*). There are no old oak trees and stumps which are typical habitat for the four beetle species (*Lucanus cervus*, *Cerambyx cerdo*, *Morimus asper funereus* and *Rosalia*

alpina).

A.8. BG0000508 “Skut River” as per Alternative 1:

8.1. The Investment Proposal does not pass across or in the proximity of the following natural habitats 91E0* *Alluvial forests with Alnus glutinosa and Fraxinus excelsior (Alno-Padion, Alnion incanae, Salicion albae)*, 1530* *Pannonic salt steppes and salt marshes*, 3270 *Rivers with muddy banks with Chenopodium rubri p.p. and Bidention p.p. vegetation*, 91F0 *Riparian mixed forests of Quercus robur, Ulmus laevis and Ulmus minor, Fraxinus excelsior or Fraxinus angustifolia, along the great rivers (Ulmenion minoris)* and will not exert any negative impact on them. There will be a temporary, medium-degree harming of 0,270 daa (0,86%) of natural habitat 3260 *Water courses of plain to montane levels with the Ranunculion fluitantis and Callitricho-Batrachion vegetation*, which is completely reversible within one or two vegetation periods.

8.2. Out of the predominantly transit and feeding habitats of the long-fingered bat (*Myotis capaccinii*), the only type of bat being protected in the zone, 0,05% will be harmed, which will be completely restored so that the impact is insignificant.

In the region across which alternative 1 of the route passes, there are no habitats, that are suitable for the Romanian hamster (*M. Newtoni*), and therefore, no negative impacts on its populations and habitats are expected.

Out of the potential habitats of the otter (*Lutra lutra*) there will be harmed 1,1 daa or 0,073% of the habitats of the species in the zone.

8.3. In respect of the classes of reptiles and amphibians the gas pipeline will exert a negative impact on 0,4 daa (or 0,02%) of the habitats of the European pond turtle (*Emys orbicularis*), of *Triturus dobrogicus* and of the fire-bellied toad (*Bombina bombina*), which is insignificant in degree, locally and reversibly.

8.4. The implementation of IP does not affect any habitats that are suitable for *Gobio uranoscopus*, and therefore no negative impact on the species is expected. The tunneling of the river bed which will distort the natural character of the river in the working section will lead to local, short-term and reversible impact on 0,06 % of the habitats of the Mediterranean barbel (*Barbus meridionalis*), *Cobitis taenia* and the European bitterling (*Rhodeus amarus*), which after the implementation of mitigating measures will be additionally reduced.

8.5. For the stag beetle (*Lucanus cervus*) and longicorn rosalia (*Rosalia alpina*) within the passage of IP through the protected area no specimens and habitats are established and therefore, IP will not exert an impact on the species and their habitats within the protected area. The tunneling of a trench for laying the pipes of the gas pipeline will lead to temporary harm of 0,4% of the habitats of the thick-shelled river mussel (*Unio crassus*), which is insignificant in relation to the total area of the river in the zone and which will be quickly restored.

A.9. BG0000614 “Ogosta River” as per Alternative 1:

9.1. The implementaton of Alternative 1 of IP will lead to destruction of 0,49% of natural habitat 91E0* *Alluvial forests with Alnus glutinosa and Fraxinus excelsior (Alno-Padion, Alnion incanae, Salicion albae)*, 0,46% of natural habitats 3270 *Rivers with muddy banks with Chenopodium rubri p.p. and Bidention p.p. vegetation*, in combination with 6430 *Hydrophilous tall herb fringe communities of plains and of the montane to alpine levels* and 0,56% of 3260 *Water courses of plain to montane levels with the Ranunculion fluitantis and Callitricho-Batrachion vegetation*.

The other natural habitats 91Z0 *Moesian silver lime forests*, 3150 *Natural eutrophic lakes with Magnopotamion or Hydrocharition - type vegetation* and 6250* *Pannonic loess steppic*

grasslands, will not undergo any negative impact.

Taking into account also the cumulative effect from other PPP/IPs, identified only for habitat 91E0*, which equals 0,492% of its area in the zone, a conclusion can be drawn about the lack of any significant negative impact, including due to the fact that the harming of grassland habitats is not of long duration and is reversible.

9.2. Reversibly harmed will be 0,162% of the habitats suitable for the otter (*Lutra lutra*), which is an insignificant part relative to their representation in the zone, taking into account also the cumulative impact and taking into account the proposed measures.

On the territory of IP there are no habitats of the Romanian hamster (*Mesocricetus newtoni*) and the European souslik (*Spermophilus citellus*), since only agricultural lands are affected with significant involvement of natural vegetation, aquatic and riverside habitats, which are not habitats of these species.

9.3. The terrain of the route does not contain any suitable habitats for the yellow-bellied toad (*Bombina variegata*), Hermann's tortoise (*Testudo hermanni*) and *Elaphe sauromates*, so that no negative impact thereon will be exerted. The passing of the gas pipeline across aquatic and humid terrestrial habitats of the species European pond turtle (*Emys orbicularis*), *Triturus dobrogicus*, *Triturus karelinii* will lead to temporary and reversible harming of respectively 0,143% and 0,075% for the tritons, which is insignificant in degree. If this impact is supplemented by other PPP/IPs as well, then the aggregate impact on amphibian habitats reaches 0,63%,

9.4. The implementation of IP in all its stages will exert insignificant negative impact, including a cumulative one, on the habitats of the Mediterranean barbel (*Barbus meridionalis*) and *Cobitis taenia*, European bitterling (*Rhodeus amarus*), *Cobitis elongata*, white-finned Gudgeon (*Gobio albipinnatus*), *Sabanejewia aurata* and *Aspius aspius*, since they will be reversibly harmed and only while the construction is in progress, 0,109% of these in the zone, without interrupting the bio-corridor function of the river.

For the fish species Ukrainian brook lamprey (*Eudontomyzon mariae*), Balon's ruffe (*Gymnocephalus baloni*), striped ruffe (*Gymnocephalus schraetser*), European weather loach (*Misgurnus fossilis*), sabrefish (*Pelecus cultratus*), small streber (*Zingel streber*), big streber (*Zingel zingel*) and Danube herring (*Alosa pontica*) no individual and cumulative negative impacts are anticipated.

9.5. Within IP there are no suitable conditions for distribution of the four target types of beetles – bolbelasmus (*Bolbelasmus unicornis*), stag beetle (*Lucanus cervus*), *Morimus asper funereus* and longicorn rosalia (*Rosalia alpina*). Even tree species that are typical for their habitats are not represented so that there will be no negative impacts on these species of invertebrates.

Given the nature of the Investment Proposal negative impacts will be exerted on *Theodoxus transversalis* and the thick-shelled river mussel (*Unio crassus*), in respect of which temporarily and reversibly will be affected 0,076% of their habitats so that the impact will be of no significant degree.

A.10. BG0000336 "Zlatiya" as per Alternative 1:

10.1. The implementation of IP as per Alternative 1 will lead to direct destruction and indirect harm in a total of 0,64% of the only protected natural habitat 6250* *Pannonic loess steppic grasslands*, which is insignificant impact, given its ability to recover within a few vegetation seasons.

10.2. During the construction there will be destroyed 10 daa (0.8%) of habitats of the European souslik (*Spermophilus citellus*) and 234 daa (0.84 %) of these of the Romanian hamster (*Mesocricetus newtoni*), but given the implementation of the proposed mitigating measures, the negative impacts thereon will be insignificant.

10.3. No habitats of the species *Elaphe sauromate* are established within the route of the gas pipeline and therefore, no negative impacts on the species are expected. IP will be developed following a method which presupposes only harming of terrestrial habitats for the European pond turtle (*Emys orbicularis*), which equals 7,6 daa - 0,6% of all of its terrestrial habitats in the zone. The impact is temporary and reversible and upon implementation of mitigating measures during the reclamation, the habitats will be recovered within 2-3 vegetation seasons. The same impact in the same degree will also be suffered by *Triturus dobrogicus* and the fire-bellied toad (*Bombina bombina*).

10.4. The selected method of crossing the Tsibritsa River by slant directional drilling will not exert any negative impact (specimen mortality, loss of habitats, deteriorated quality of the habitats, fragmentation) on the fish fauna and the conservation status of the species being subject of conservation - *Cobitis taenia*, *Sabanejewia balcanica*, European bitterling (*Rhodeus amarus*) and *Cobitis elongata*.

10.5. By the selected method of crossing the Tsibritsa River no negative impacts will be caused to the thick-shelled river mussel (*Unio crassus*) and *Theodoxus transversalis*.

A.11. BG0000336 “The Lom River” as per Alternative 1:

11.1. Given the selected method of crossing the Lom River by way of directional drilling and keeping the servitude line of the route, directly and lastingly will be affected 91E0* *Alluvial forests with Alnus glutinosa and Fraxinus excelsior (Alno-Padion, Alnion incanae, Salicion albae)*, represented in combination with (70%-30%) with 6430 *Hydrophilous tall herb fringe communities of plains and of the montane to alpine levels* over an area of 0,418% of its representation in the zone, which is insignificant in degree of negative impact. The natural habitats which are conservation targets in the zone - 6510 *Lowland hay meadows (Alopecurus pratensis, Sanguisorba officinalis)*, 91G0 *Pannonic woods with Quercus petraea and Carpinus betulus*, 91M0 *Pannonian-Balkan turkey oak –sessile oak forests* and 91Z0 *Moesian silver lime forests* are not identified within the scope of IP and therefore, its implementaton is not to exert any negative impact thereon and habitats 3260 *Water courses of plain to montane levels with the Ranunculion fluitantis and Callitricho-Batrachion vegetation* and 6430 *Hydrophilous tall herb fringe communities of plains and of the montane to alpine levels* will not be affected, given the selected technology of crossing the river.

11.2. The development of the gas pipeline will not exert any lasting and irreversible impact on the sanctuaries and feeding habitats of the protected species of bats, as well as on the bio-corridor functions of the river.

11.3. The potential habitat of the otter (*Lutra lutra*), which will be distorted during the commissioning is of small area - 2,4 daa (the width of the route being 66 m), which is 0,4% of all potential habitats within one individual section for a female specimen and 0,13% of one individual section for a male specimen. The disturbance during the construction will be short-term, without an impact on the species' population, provided that the planned measures are complied with.

For the European souslik the harmed areas will be a total of 3,2 daa (0,09%) of its habitats, and for the Romanian hamster the respective harmed habitats of the total habitat area of the species in the zone will be 0,21%, but the impact is reversible and short-term in an insignificant degree, provided that the measures are implemented.

Greatest impact on the wolf species (*Canis lupus*) will be exerted during the construction activities, due to the lasting destruction and harming of forest and bush formations which form its habitat on an area of 26 daa or 0,21 % of the species' habitats in the zone, but this is insignificant in degree since both the migration corridors fragmentation and the disturbance

are of temporary duration.

11.4. The selected method of crossing the Lom River by way of slant directional drilling will not affect the habitats of the fire-bellied toad (*Bombina bombina*), and therefore no impact is expected on its population or habitat, as well as of *Elaphe sauromates*, due to the lack of habitats for these species on the route of the gas pipeline.

The areas which will be temporarily affected by the construction activities and for the Hermann's tortoise (*Testudo hermanni*) are 24,8 daa or 0,19% of the total areas of all habitats of the species. As regards fragmentation, temporary restriction of local migrations is expected, as well as affecting individual territories of certain specimens. The impact is manifested during the period of construction and is fully reversible and insignificant in degree of influence on the local population in the protected area.

The construction of the gas pipeline route does not influence the aquatic habitats of the European pond turtle (*Emys orbicularis*), due to the selected method of passing and the disturbance will be temporary and reversible. A short-term, local, reversible and insignificant is only the impact on 1,8 daa or 0,04% of the terrestrial habitats of the species *Triturus dobrogicus*, since no optimal habitats are affected and small standing water bodies and finds and the negative impacts on its population will be limited through the implementation of mitigating measures.

11.5. Upon the implementation of IP, given the selected method of passing in all stages, no significant degree of negative impact is expected on the populations and habitats of *Aspius aspius*, Mediterranean barbel (*Barbus meridionalis*), *Cobitis taenia*, Romanogobio kessleri, *Romanogobio uranoscopus*, striped ruffe (*Gymnocephalus schraetzer*), European bitterling (*Rhodeus sericeus amarus*) and *Sabanejewia aurata* in the protected area.

11.6. There will be no negative impact also on the populations and habitats of *Theodoxus transversalis*, the thick-shelled river mussel (*Unio crassus*), stag beetle (*Lucanus cervus*), great capricorn beetle (*Cerambyx cerdo*), *Morimus asper funereus* (presently known as *Morimus asper funereus*) and longicorn rosalia (*Rosalia alpina*) in the protected area.

A.12. BG0000521 "Makresh" as per Alternative 1:

12.1. The route of the Investment Proposal does not pass across or in the proximity of Natural habitats: 6110* *Rupicolous calcareous or basophilic grasslands of the Alysso-Sedion albi*; 91H0* *Pannonic forests with Quercus pubescens*; 91I0* *Euro-Siberian steppic woods with Quercus spp.* and 91Z0 *Moesian silver lime forests*, as a result of which no negative impact, whatsoever, is expected in respect of them.

The route of Alternative 1 affects natural habitat 91M0 *Pannonian-Balkan turkey oak – sessile oak forests*. The directly and indirectly affected area of the habitat is 75,793 daa or 0,857% of its representation in the zone, as for the reduction of such impact, a specific mitigating measure is envisaged.

12.2. The activity of the gas pipeline development will have a very slight negative impact due to the loss of 0,62% of the feeding habitats of the bat species feeding in the forest areas. For the zone there will be no negative impact on caves and other sanctuaries of cave bat species, neither any specimen mortality therein. Even though no old hollow trees are identified within the gas pipeline route, the typical forest species *Barbastella barbastellus* is the most probable to have sanctuaries, located in hollows/ barks of trees. The impact of the destruction will be alleviated since a zone-specific mitigating measure is envisaged for reducing the construction route so that the definitive destruction of feeding habitats for the greater mouse-eared bat (*Myotis myotis*), Mediterranean horseshoe bat (*Rhinolophus euryale*), Geoffroy's bat (*Myotis emarginatus*), lesser horseshoe bat (*Rhinolophus hipposideros*), greater horseshoe bat (*Rhinolophus ferrumequinum*), Mehely's horseshoe bat (*Rhinolophus mehelyi*), Schreiber's bat (*Miniopterus schreibersii*), *Barbastella*

(*Barbastella barbastellus*), will be 0,596%.

On the territory of the IP there are no habitats of the Romanian hamster (*Mesocricetus newtoni*), the European souslik (*Spermophilus citellus*) and the marbled polecat (*Vormela peregusna*), since the passing is effected through a forest habitat which is unsuitable for the target species.

12.3. Also, the route does not pass across any habitats that are suitable to the target species European pond turtle (*Emys orbicularis*), *Triturus dobrogicus*, the yellow-bellied toad (*Bombina variegata*) and the fire-bellied toad (*Bombina bombina*), and therefore no negative individual and subsequently cumulative impacts on their populations and habitats are expected.

Lasting harm of forest habitats and their transformation into grasslands after the construction activities will lead to destruction of 0,50% of the potential habitats of the Hermann's tortoise (*Testudo hermanni*), as after the implementation of mitigating measures the negative impact will be reduced to a minimum.

The interruption of the migration corridors within the individual territories is short-term and temporary and the effect is assessed as insignificant.

12.4. The research of the territory of the protected area, across which the alternative passes, has established that there are no habitats of the two fish species and therefore, no negative impact on their populations or habitats is anticipated.

12.5. The longicorn rosalia (*Rosalia alpina*) inhabits mainly beech forests in the mountains and prefers more humid woods and therefore, no influence on the species is expected, as well as on its populations, and habitats, as a result of the implementation of IP. The existence of old trees in the zone makes it a suitable habitat for the stag beetle (*Lucanus cervus*), the great capricorn beetle (*Cerambyx cerdo*) and *Morimus funereus*, so that the construction will affect 0,62% of all their habitats in the zone.

A.13. BG0000498 "Vidbol" as per Alternative 1:

13.1. The route of the Investment Proposal does not pass across or in the proximity of habitats - 6110 *Rupicolous calcareous or basophilic grasslands of the Alyso-Sedion albi*, 3510 *Lowland hay meadows*, 9150 *Medio-European limestone beech forests of the Cephalanthero-Fagion*, 91E0* *Alluvial forests with Alnus glutinosa and Fraxinus excelsior (Alno-Padion, Alnion incanae, Salicion albae)*, 91G0* *Pannonic forests with Quercus petraea and Carpinus betulus*, 91H0* *Pannonic forests with Quercus pubescens*, 91F0 *Riparian mixed forests of Quercus robur, Ulmus laevis and Ulmus minor, Fraxinus excelsior or Fraxinus angustifolia, along the great rivers (Ulmion minoris)* and 91Z0 *Moesian silver lime forests*. No direct or indirect negative impacts are expected on the specified habitats, being the subject of conservation in the zone.

Within the section of impact, habitat 6430 *Hydrophilous tall herb fringe communities of plains and of the montane to alpine levels* is in combination with 3260* *Water courses of plain to montane levels with the Ranunculion fluitantis and Callitriche-Batrachion vegetation* in ratio 70:30, as the affected area is 0,02% of the total area of the habitats in the zone, but since the impact is temporary, only for the duration of the construction, local and reversible within a longer time period, its impact degree is low.

Lastingly, for the continuous period of operation, natural habitat 91M0 *Pannonian-Balkan turkey oak –sessile oak forests* on an area of 4,1525 daa - 0,3772% of its area in the zone, will be directly destroyed and indirectly affected, this being insignificant in terms of impact degree.

13.2. Subject of conservation in the zone are the following cave-preferring species - lesser horseshoe bat (*Rhinolophus hipposideros*), greater horseshoe bat (*Rhinolophus ferrumequinum*), Mehely's horseshoe bat (*Rhinolophus mehelyi*), Blasius's horseshoe bat

(*Rhinolophus blasii*), Mediterranean horseshoe bat (*Rhinolophus euryale*), greater mouse-eared bat (*Myotis myotis*), lesser mouse-eared bat (*Myotis blythii*), Schreiber's bat (*Miniopterus schreibersii*), long-fingered bat (*Myotis capaccinii*) and Geoffroy's bat (*Myotis emarginatus*), in respect of which only potential feeding habitats will be affected by the temporary harming of 0,25% (0,27% along with the cumulative effect by other PPP/ IP) of agricultural areas with significant involvement of natural vegetation and lastingly affected will be 0,18% (0,19% along with the cumulative effect) of deciduous forests in the zone, which is assessed as a low degree of negative impact. The same is the impact on the feeding habitats of Barbastelle (*Barbastella barbastellus*), which is a typical forest species, but given the circumstance that Alternative 1 passes across sections with predominantly short trees and bushes and separate larger trees – mainly hybrid poplars, its sanctuaries will not be harmed.

13.3. The impact on the otter (*Lutra lutra*) is local, short-term and reversible, insignificant in terms of degree, as the implementation of the intention will lead to occupying 0,12% (2,3daa) of the potential habitats in the zone due to the clearing of trees and bushes with deep root system upon the passage of the gas pipeline by way of trench method across the Vidbol River. The total cumulative load of the assessed IP along with other PPP/ IPs within the borders of the zone amounts to 0,19% of the habitats suitable for the otter, an area that is smaller than the individual section of a single specimen.

The implementation of IP does not affect any stocks of European souslik or habitats suitable for the Romanian hamster (*Mesocricetus newtoni*) and the European souslik (*Spermophilus citellus*), and therefore no negative impact on the populations and habitats of the two species in the protected area is expected. In the zone there are habitats suitable for the marbled polecat (*Vormela peregusna*). Given the disruption of the normal soil structure and thereby, of the plant community, on 18 daa (0,16 %) there will be a reversible negative impact. Upon implementation of mitigating measures for supporting the restoration of the grassland habitats during the reclamation, the impact will be reduced.

The impact of the gas pipeline implementaton on the wolf (*Canis lupus*) is insignificant, given the affecting of 0,19% of its natural habitats, while taking into account also the cumulative impacts on the species and on the habitats.

13.4. The areas of the habitats of the species Hermann's tortoise (*Testudo hermanni*) in the protected area, which will be temporarily affected by the construction activities, are 0,17%, which is insignificant, because it will be short-term, temporary and within the individual territories.

The impact on habitats of the species European pond turtle (*Emys orbicularis*) in the zone, is 0,03 % of the suitable habitats, as this negative impact is short-term and reversible. The crossing of the Vidbol River by way of trench method will not affect optimal habitats – small standing water bodies as optimal habitats and finds of *Triturus dobrogicus* and *Bombina bombina*, and only 0,03 % of the river habitat and the negative impact will be decreased to a minimum upon implementation of the proposed measures.

The route of IP does not pass across any potential habitats of the species *Elaphe sauromate*, so that there will be no negative impact on its population and habitats.

13.5. The impact on the Mediterranean barbel (*Barbus meridionalis*), *Cobitis taenia*, white-finned Gudgeon (*Gobio albipinnatus*) and *Sabanejewia balcanica* will be expressed during the excavation of tunnels in the river bed and the disruption of the natural character of the Vidbol River in the working section through harming of 0,08 % of their habitats. This impact, as well as the fragmentation, are temporary and reversible.

In this section of the Vidbol River there are no suitable habitats for *Aspius aspius*, *Cobitis elongata*, Ukranian brook lamprey (*Eudontomyzon mariae*), Balon's ruffe (*Gymnocephalus baloni*), striped ruffe (*Gymnocephalus schraetser*), small streber (*Zingel streber*) and big streber (*Zingel zingel*), so that the IP implementation will not exert any impact on them.

13.6. Within the section of the expected impact there will be affected no suitable habitats for the species *Austropotamobius torrentium*, *Theodoxus transversalis*, *Lucanus cervus*, *Cerambyx cerdo*, *Morimus asper funereus* and *Rosalia alpina*, and therefore no negative impacts are anticipated on their populations in the protected area.

The impacts on the thick-shelled river mussel (*Unio crassus*) are restricted on 0,4 daa of a total of 450 daa (0,0009%) of the suitable habitats in the river – a small area determining the impact as lower in terms of degree.

A.14. BG0000500 “Boynitsa” as per Alternative 1:

14.1. The route of IP does not pass across and does not affect natural habitats 91E0* *Alluvial forests with Alnus glutinosa and Fraxinus excelsior (Alno-Padion, Alnion incanae, Salicion albae)*, 3260 *Water courses of plain to montane levels with the Ranunculion fluitantis and Callitriche-Batrachion vegetation*, 6110* *Rupicolous calcareous or basophilic grasslands of the Alyso-Sedion albi*, 6510 *Lowland hay meadows*, 9150 *Medio-European limestone beech forests of the Cephalanthero-Fagion*), 91G0* *Pannonic forests with Quercus petraea and Carpinus betulus*, 91H0* *Pannonic forests with Quercus pubescens*, 91I0* *Euro-Siberian steppic woods with Quercus spp.* and 91Z0 *Moesian silver lime forests*, as a result of which no negative impact on these is anticipated (directly or indirectly).

The implementaton of IP as per the selected alternative will lead to destruction of 0,0986% of natural habitat 6430 *Hydrophilous tall herb fringe communities of plains and of the montane to alpine levels* in the protected area, which will be fully recovered in a natural manner after the completion of construction, so that the impact is of low degree.

14.2. The gas pipeline development does not harm or destroy any sanctuaries of any of the target bat species, since there will be affected no caves, rock recesses and other locations typical for cave-preferring bats, as well as old woods preferred by the forest species. A harm will be inflicted on small areas of potential feeding habitats for this group, accordingly 0,039% for the Schreiber’s bat (*Miniopterus schreibersii*), 0,6% for the lesser mouse-eared bat (*Myotis blythii*), 0,132% for the greater mouse-eared bat (*Myotis myotis*), Geoffroy’s bat (*Myotis emarginatus*) and the Mediterranean horseshoe bat (*Rhinolophus euryale*), 0,018% for the long-fingered bat (*Myotis capaccinii*), 0,4% for the Blasius’s horseshoe bat (*Rhinolophus blasii*), 0,208% for the Mehely’s horseshoe bat (*Rhinolophus mehelyi*), 0,601% for the greater horseshoe bat (*Rhinolophus ferrumequinum*) and 0,134% for the Behcstein’s bat (*Myotis bechsteinii*). The existence of vast areas with similar parametres beyond the route of the gas pipeline renders this type of negative impact insignificant.

Insignificant will also be the impact on habitats of the otter (*Lutra lutra*), because in a temporary and reversible manner will be harmed 0,3% of the aquatic habitats upon the trench method of crossing the Boynitsa River and 0,283% of the suitable terrestrial areas.

During the construction the European souslik’s stocks and habitats will not be affected and this species (*Spermophilus citellus*) will not be subjected to any negative impacts. There will be affected 0,27% of the potential habitats of the Romanian hamster (*Mesocricetus newtoni*) and 0,3% of these of the marbled polecat (*Vormela peregusna*), which, given the implementation of the envisaged measures, will be restored. In this respect, the negative impact will be insignificant, including when taking into account the cumulative impact by other proceeded PPP/IPs.

14.3. The Boynitsa River, in the location of its intersection with IP, is not a suitable habitat for the fire-bellied toad (*Bombina bombina*), *Triturus dobrogicus*, the grass-snake species *Elaphe sauromates* and the European pond turtle (*Emys orbicularis*). No negative impacts are expected for these species.

The negative impacts on the Hermann’s tortoise (*Testudo hermanni*) will occur mainly

during the stage of construction of the gas pipeline and are related to the appropriation and partial harming of 0,133% of the suitable habitats of the species and 0,62%, including cumulative impact. The impact is insignificant, short-term, fully recoverable and after reclamation the terrain will be completely suitable for inhabiting by the species.

14.4. The implementation of IP in the protected area within its overall scope (construction, operation, commissioning and decommissioning) will not exert any negative impact on the habitats of the species Mediterranean barbel (*Barbus meridionalis*), European bitterling (*Rhodeus sericeus amarus*) and *Sabanejewia aurata*, being subject of conservation, because in the section of crossing the Boynitsa River, the river is shallow, having small width and does not offer any suitable fish habitats.

13.5.[sic!] IP does not pass across any habitats of invertebrates, being the subject of conservation in the zone, with the exception of such for the forest insects – the beetles great capricorn beetle (*Cerambyx cerdo*), *Morimus asper funereus* and the stag beetle (*Lucanus cervus*) and the butterfly *Dioszeghyana schmidtii*. The negative impact is brought to 0,04% of their habitats due to the cutting of an opening for the gas pipeline through the forest, which is accounted as insignificant in degree.

A.15. BG0000103 “Galata“, BG0000138 “Kamenitsa”, BG0000627 “Konun Dol“ and BG0000518 “Vurtop Dol“ as per Alternative 1:

15.1. The Investment Proposal as per this alternative circumvents the protected areas; it does not pass across or in the proximity of any natural habitats and finds of plant species, being subject of conservation therein, so that there will be no negative impacts on the protected areas.

15.2. The remoteness of the gas pipeline route from the cited four protected areas is a reason for the conclusion about the lack of any significant negative impact – direct or indirect – on the species and their habitats being protected therein.

Conclusion on the degree of impact on the protected areas on national level:

1. The negative impacts harming an area of each natural habitat in the specified protected areas in a per cent ratio relative to the areas of this natural habitat in all protected areas within NEM Natura 2000 under Council Directive 92/43/EEC of 21 May 1992 on the conservation of natural habitats and of wild fauna and flora are as follows:

- a. 31,74 daa or 0,002593% for natural habitat 6210;
- b. 2,313 daa or 0,002383% for natural habitat 6430;
- c. 79,502 daa or 0,0208% for natural habitat 6240*;
- d. 5,467 daa or 0,001429% for natural habitat 6250*;
- e. 1,414 daa or 0,003971% for natural habitat 3260;
- f. 5,651 daa or 0,01729% for natural habitat 91E0*;
- g. 2,2 daa or 0,0007193% for natural habitat 91G0*;
- h. 7,55 daa or 0,00293% for natural habitat 91I0*;
- i. 4,2 daa or 0,00776% for natural habitat 91H0*;
- j. 162,8 daa or 0,004408% for natural habitat 91M0.

The impacts on natural habitats 6210, 6430, 6240*, 6250* and 3260 will be temporary and completely reversible for the period of construction, up to a few (1-2) vegetation seasons, after the reclamation. Their restoration will take place in a natural manner and in some of the protected areas it will be supported also by indicated measures for specific biologic reclamation of the terrains affected by the construction of the gas pipeline.

The impacts on natural habitats 91E0*, 91G0*, 91I0*, 91H0* and 91M0 will occur during the period of construction preparation and for the entire period of operation of the UP, as they will be lasting impacts, related to the servitude maintenance requirements. For all of the

last specified natural habitats mitigating measures are planned to support their restoration within the full area of their partial harming by IP in other parts of the protected areas, in which such impact is present and after 30 years the natural habitats will be completely restored and in their full areas in which they have been conserved in the protected areas prior to the IP's impact. After the specified periods there will be no residual impact to any one of the natural habitats affected by the implementation of IP. The specified impacts on natural habitats, which will be temporary till their restoration to their initial areas within the protected areas, will lead to insignificant negative impacts in this aspect on the protected areas, in which they are subject of conservation, including as regards negative cumulative impact in combination with other plans, programmes, projects and investment proposals, as per the detailed analyses and conclusions for each one of the protected areas indicated in DIAR in which natural habitats are affected.

2. The percentage of harming of areas from the habitats of species, being subject of conservation in each single protected area, by the implementation of the definitively selected Alternative 1 (for protected area Studenets Alternative 1-a) of IP in all of its stages and after the application of mitigating measures, are specified to the final conclusions on the IP impact for each protected area. The lasting harms by the implementation of IP to habitats of species which are subject of conservation in the protected areas, will be related to the removal of trees and bush vegetation during the construction preparation and for the entire period of operation of the IP due to the requirements for keeping plants without deep root system within the IP servitude. Due to the aforesaid, lasting harms will be inflicted to the species otter (*Lutra lutra*), wolf (*Canis lupus*), the forest invertebrates and bats related to forest habitats. The typically forest bats in the protected areas affected by IP, for which the appropriation of territories of such nature is directly related to their reproduction are only Bechstein's bat (*Myotis bechsteinii*) and Barbastelle (*Barbastella barbastellus*). For the bat species for which the forest territories are feeding habitats there will also be lasting harm, and for the species feeding in both open and forest territories there will be a transformation of certain feeding habitats into such of the other type. All bats being subject of conservation in the affected protected areas with the exception of the said two species, are cave-preferring (breeding in caves, buildings and other underground habitats) bats and for them the IP implementation will not result in any harming of stocks and reproduction locations. The impacts on open feeding habitats of the bats (with the exception of bushes) are temporary and reversible for the period of construction preparation until the restoration of the terrain after the reclamation, within one or two vegetation seasons. The impacts on aquatic feeding habitats are temporary upon crossing the rivers by IP following the trench method, and are also reversible.

The impacts on feeding bush habitats will be a transformation of one type of open feeding habitats into another such, and no residual impact will occur in this aspect for the bat species feeding in bush-covered or other open areas.

The impacts on the habitats of all species, being subject of conservation, affected by the IP implementation in the affected protected areas are temporary and reversible, related to the period of construction and recovery of the harmed terrain after the reclamation, including by the envisaged mitigating measures for specific biological reclamation. For all species, being subject of conservation in the affected protected areas for habitats, the temporary or lasting negative impacts by the overall implementation of the IP will not lead to any significant negative impact thereon, including as regards the cumulative effect of IP in combination with other plans, projects and investments proposals affecting the relevant protected areas.

The negative impacts with lasting harm on areas of forest and bush habitats of species, being subject of conservation in the affected protected areas, in per cent ratio relative to the areas of their habitats in all protected areas for habitats, are as follows:

- a. 0,0008902% of habitats of the otter (*Lutra lutra*);
- b. 0,000439% of habitats of the wolf (*Canis lupus*);
- c. 0,002047% of habitats of the longicorn rosalia (*Rosalia alpina*);
- d. 0,002285% of habitats of *Osmoderma eremita*;
- e. 0,004332% of habitats of *Bolbelasmus unicornis*;
- f. 0,00005351% of habitats of *Dioszeghyana schmidtii*;
- g. 0,005444% of habitats of the stag beetle (*Lucanus cervus*) and of the great capricorn beetle (*Cerambyx cerdo*);
- h. 0,003159% of habitats of *Morimus asper funereus*;
- i. 0,002504% of the forest habitats of the bat species inhabiting such habitats and 0,003312% of the bush feeding habitats of the bat species using such territories as feeding habitats.

After the restoration in other parts of the protected areas of the destroyed during the construction and the maintenance of the servitude strip areas of natural habitats 91E0*, 91G0*, 91I0*, 91H0* and 91M0, after a period of about 30 years the lasting harm to the habitats of certain species will be completely eliminated or reduced to:

- a. 0,0003123 % for the otter (*Lutra lutra*);
- b. 0,0001936 % for the wolf (*Canis lupus*);
- c. 0,001849% for the longicorn rosalia (*Rosalia alpina*) and *Bolbelasmus unicornis*;
- d. 0,00005351% for *Dioszeghyana schmidtii*;
- e. 0,002303% for the stag beetle (*Lucanus cervus*), the great capricorn beetle (*Cerambyx cerdo*) *Morimus asper funereus*;
- f. 0,001501% of the forest habitats of the bat species populating such habitats.

B. The implementaton of the Investment Proposal in its entirety (construction, commissioning, operation, decomissioning) under **Alternative 1** for all protected areas with the exception of protected area BG0000240 “Studenets” under **Alternative 1a**, including as regards the cumulative impact by other plans, programmes, projects and investment proposals, given the implementation of the general measures for all protected areas and of the specific measures, **will not exert any significant negative impact on the birds**, conserved in protected areas BG0002060 “Galata”, BG0002038 “Provadiya-Royak Plateau”, BG0002009 “Zlatiyata” and BG0000240 “Studenets” and the objectives of the areas across which the route passes, since:

1. The achievement of the conservation objectives will not be obstructed, given the circumstance that no changes will be caused in vital factors determining the functions of the habitats or the ecosystems used by the species of birds, being subject of conservation;
2. There will be no changes in the dynamics of the interconnections determining the structure and/ or function of the protected areas, because there is no reduction of the area of the key habitats for the bird species, being subject of conservation;
3. No change will result in the conservation status of the bird species, being subject of conservation, since the factors that support them and their habitats will not be changed;
4. The implementaton will not cause any reduction of the population of the bird species, being subject of conservation;
5. No significant increase of the fragmentation of habitats of bird species being subject of conservation will occur;

B.1. BG0002060 protected area “Galata” as per Alternative 1:

1.1. The implementaton within the boundaries of BG0002060 protected area “Galata” for all stages of the Investment Proposal will cause weak to medium residual negative impacts, related to the destruction, harming and fragmentation of habitats and disturbance, which can be minimized by the general and specific measures for the zone. The residual impact after their implementation is the destruction of 0,12% of the habitats of the species: European

roller (*Coracias garrulus*), Ortolan Bunting (*Emberiza hortulana*), red-backed shrike (*Lanius collurio*), lesser grey shrike (*Lanius minor*), barred warbler (*Sylvia nisoria*), olive tree warbler (*Hippolais olivetorum*), Eurasian eagle-owl (*Bubo bubo*), 0,69% for grey-faced woodpecker (*Picus canus*), white-backed woodpecker (*Dendrocopos leucotos*), middle-spotted woodpecker (*Dendrocopos medius*), black woodpecker (*Dryocopus martius*), semicollared flycatcher (*Ficedula semitorquata*), 0,81% for levant sparrowhawk (*Accipiter brevipes*), short-toed eagle (*Circaetus gallicus*), western marsh harrier (*Circus aeruginosus*), pallid harrier (*Circus macrourus*), Montagu's harrier (*Circus pygargus*), red-footed falcon (*Falco vespertinus*), *Hieraetus pennatus*, black kite (*Milvus migrans*), woodlark (*Lullula arborea*) and tawny pipit (*Anthus campestris*), Euraisan nightjar (*Caprimulgus europaeus*), black stork (*Ciconia nigra*), European honey buzzard (*Pernis apivorus*), Eurasian sparrowhawk (*Accipiter nisus*), Eurasian buzzard, Eurasian kestrel (*Falco tinnunculus*) and Eurasian hobby (*Falco subbuteo*).

1.2. Purple heron (*Ardea purpurea*), little egret (*Egretta garzetta*), *Ixobrychus minutus*, great egret (*Egretta alba*), Arctic loon (*Gavia arctica*), *Gelochelidon nilotica*, slender-billed gull (*Larus genei*), Mediterranean gull (*Larus melanocephalus*), little gull (*Larus minutus*), black-crowned night heron (*Nycticorax nycticorax*), common shag (*Phalacrocorax aristotelis desmarestii*), pygmy cormorant (*Phalacrocorax pygmeus*), Eurasian spoonbill (*Platalea leucorodia*), (*Plegadis falcinellus*), Levantine shearwater (*Puffinus yelkouan*), pied avocet (*Recurvirostra avosetta*), little tern (*Sterna albifrons*), Caspian tern (*Sterna caspia*), common tern (*Sterna hirundo*), sandwich tern (*Sterna sandvicensis*), wood sandpiper (*Tringa glareola*), which populate aquatic habitats, humid zones and marine waters, do not have any suitable habitats on the IP territory and therefore, there will be no negative impact on them, whatsoever.

B.2. BG0002038 "Provadia-Royak Plateau" as per Alternative 1:

2.1. After application of the envisaged mitigating measures, the implementaton within the boundaries of the protected area will directly affect for a long period of time 0,039% of the forest habitats (feeding and nesting) of the European honey buzzard (*Pernis apivorus*), the short-toed eagle (*Circaetus gallicus*), 0,017% of deciduous forests suitable for the grey-faced woodpecker (*Picus canus*), the Syrian woodpecker (*Dendrocopos syriacus*), the middle-spotted woodpecker (*Dendrocopos medius*), the black woodpecker (*Dryocopus martius*), the Eurasian buzzard, and the Eurasian sparrowhawk (*Accipiter nisus*), 0,011% of the forest habitats suitable for the Euraisan nightjar (*Caprimulgus europaeus*), 0,04% for the woodlark (*Lullula arborea*), 0,027% bush habitats and outskirts of forests for the lesser grey shrike (*Lanius minor*), the red-backed shrike (*Lanius collurio*), the barred warbler (*Sylvia nisoria*) and the ortolan bunting (*Emberiza hortulana*), which is an insignificant per cent of their representation in the zone as habitats of birds, that are subject of conservation.

2.2. Upon the overall implementation of IP there will be temporarily and reversibly affected feeding and nesting habitats, as follows: 0,17% or habitats of the long-legged buzzard (*Buteorufinus*), white stork (*Ciconia ciconia*), Egyptian vulture (*Neophron percnopterus*), lesser spotted eagle (*Aquila pomarina*), *Hieraetus pennatus*, golden eagle (*Aquila chrysaetos*), black kite (*Milvus migrans*), European roller (*Coracias garrulus*), Eurasian hobby (*Falco subbuteo*), Eurasian kestrel (*Falco tinnunculus*), 0,11% humid meadows for the corn crake (*Crex crex*), 0,48% steppic rocky habitats of Eurasian thick-knee (*Burhinus oedicnemus*), 0,01% of the habitats of the Eurasian eagle-owl (*Bubo bubo*), 0,053% of the habitats suitable for the calandra lark (*Melanocorypha calandra*) and the tawny pipit (*Anthus campestris*). The quantitative determination of the impact harm provides grounds to draw a conclusion on its insignificant degree.

2.3. Insignificant will be the impact on migrating bird species - red-footed falcon (*Falco*

vespertinus), Montagu's harrier (*Circus pygargus*), western marsh harrier (*Circus aeruginosus*), northern harrier (*Circus cyaneus*), pallid harrier (*Circus macrourus*), greater spotted eagle (*Aquila clanga*), levant sparrowhawk (*Accipiter brevipes*), golden eagle (*Aquila chrysaetos*) and black kite (*Milvus migrans*), due to appropriation of 0,17% feeding habitats.

2.4. Great cormorant (*Phalacrocorax carbo*), common sandpiper (*Actitis hypoleucos*), little ringed plover (*Charadrius dubius*), little grebe (*Tachybaptus ruficollis*), little egret (*Egretta garzetta*), great white pelican (*Pelecanus onocrotalus*), black-crowned night heron (*Nycticorax nycticorax*), bank swallow (*Riparia riparia*), common kingfisher (*Alcedo atthis*), great cormorant (*Phalacrocorax carbo*), glossy ibis (*Plegadis falcinellus*), little ringed plover (*Charadrius dubius*), little grebe (*Tachybaptus ruficollis*) and grey heron (*Ardea cinerea*) are species related to aquatic environment and their suitable habitats are not affected, given the selected method of crossing the Provadiya River during the IP implementation, so that no negative impact will be exerted on them.

2.5. For the rest of the species, being subject of conservation in the protected area, such as osprey (*Pandion haliaetus*), red kite (*Milvus milvus*), black stork (*Ciconia nigra*), imperial eagle (*Aquila heliaca*), peregrine falcon (*Falco peregrinus*), merlin (*Falco columbarius*), common crane (*Grus grus*), pied wheater (*Oenanthe pleschanka*), steppe eagle (*Aquila nipalensis*), European bee-eater (*Merops apiaster*) and northern lapwing (*Vanellus vanellus*) there will not be harmed any potential nesting or feeding habitats, including locations for clustering and concentration during migration, so that there will be no significant negative impact.

B.3. BG0002009 "Zlativata" as per Alternative 1:

3.1 The implementaton under Alternative 1 within the boundaries of the protected area after application of the planned mitigating measures will exert a temporary and reversible impact on 0,21% nesting habitats for ground-nesting bird species, being subject of conservation – northern lapwing (*Vanellus vanellus*), calandra lark (*Melanocorypha calandra*), tawny pipit (*Anthus campestris*), greater short-toed lark (*Calandrella brachydactyla*) and the woodlark (*Lullula arborea*).

3.2. For bird species nesting in bush habitats, such as the red-backed shrike (*Lanius collurio*), lesser grey shrike (*Lanius minor*), barred warbler (*Sylvia nisoria*), European roller (*Coracias garrulus*), Syrian woodpecker (*Dendrocopos syriacus*) lastingly affected will be 0,5% of the nesting locations – an impact that is insignificant in terms of degree.

3.3. The main impact that is expected during the construction for the migrating and hibernating birds is a temporary and reversible appropriation of 0,21% of the feeding habitats for Eurasian sparrowhawk (*Accipiter nisus*), Eurasian buzzard, Eurasian kestrel (*Falco tinnunculus*), Eurasian hobby (*Falco subbuteo*), red-footed falcon (*Falco vespertinus*), merlin (*Falco columbarius*), Montagu's harrier (*Circus pygargus*), European roller (*Coracias garrulus*), pallid harrier (*Circus macrourus*), northern harrier (*Circus cyaneus*), western marsh harrier (*Circus aeruginosus*), short-toed eagle (*Circaetus gallicus*), white stork (*Ciconia ciconia*), Euraisan nightjar (*Caprimulgus europaeus*), lesser spotted eagle (*Aquila pomarina*), lesser white-fronted goose (*Anser erythropus*), levant sparrowhawk (*Accipiter brevipes*), great bustard (*Otis tarda*), common crane (*Grus grus*), European honey buzzard (*Pernis apivorus*), black kite (*Milvus migrans*) and *Buteo rufinus*.

3.4. For the rest of the species, being subject of conservation in the protected area, such as the Purple heron (*Ardea purpurea*), little egret (*Egretta garzetta*), *Ixobrychus minutus*, *Botaurus stellaris*, great cormorant (*Phalacrocorax carbo*), mallard duck (*Anas platyrhynchos*), garganey (*Anas querquedula*) and grey heron (*Ardea cinerea*), Eurasian coot (*Fulica atra*), common moorhen (*Gallinula chloropus*) and water rail (*Rallus aquaticus*) no negative impact is expected in respect of their habitats.

B.4. BG0000240 “Studenets” as per Alternative 1a:

4.1. The IP implementaton under Alternative 1-a, after application of the envisaged mitigating measures, will affect directly and for a long time period 0,14 % of forest habitats (feeding or nesting) of the Eurasian eagle-owl (*Bubo bubo*), woodlark (*Lullula arborea*), Euraisan nightjar (*Caprimulgus europaeus*), levant sparrowhawk (*Accipiter brevipes*), European honey buzzard (*Pernis apivorus*), lesser spotted eagle (*Aquila pomarina*), short-toed eagle (*Circaetus gallicus*), grey-faced woodpecker (*Picus canus*), Syrian woodpecker (*Dendrocopos syriacus*), middle-spotted woodpecker (*Dendrocopus medius*), black woodpecker (*Dryocopus martius*), Eurasian buzzard and the Eurasian sparrowhawk (*Accipiter nisus*) and 0,16% of the bush habitats and forest outskirts of the lesser grey shrike (*Lanius minor*), red-backed shrike (*Lanius collurio*) and barred warbler (*Sylvia nisoria*), a negligible part relative to their total representation in the zone.

4.2. Upon the construction, commissioning, operation, and decommissioning of the gas pipeline it is expected to be affected temporarily and reversibly 0,18 % of the habitats of the tawny pipit (*Anthus campestris*), European roller (*Coracias garrulus*) and the Montagu’s harrier (*Circus pygargus*), 0,08% of the habitats of *Buteo rufinus*, white stork (*Ciconia ciconia*) and Ortolan Bunting (*Emberiza hortulana*).

4.3. The analysis of the degree of impact of IP on migrating species shows appropriation of feeding habitats – 0,14% of the red-footed falcon (*Falco vespertinus*), Montagu’s harrier (*Circus pygargus*), western marsh harrier (*Circus aeruginosus*), northern harrier (*Circus cyaneus*), *Hieraetus pennatus*, black kite (*Milvus migrans*), merlin (*Falco columbarius*) and the osprey (*Pandion haliaetus*), an insignificant part of the total area in the zone.

4.4. For the rest of the species, being subject of conservation in the protected area, such as the little ringed plover (*Charadrius dubius*), white-winged tern (*Chlidonias leucopterus*), Eurasian hobby (*Falco subbuteo*), common moorhen (*Gallinula chloropus*), corn crake (*Crex crex*), Caspian gull (*Larus cachinnans*), black-headed gull (*Larus ridibundus*), black tern (*Chlidonias niger*), whiskered tern (*Chlidonias hybridus*), wood sandpiper (*Tringa glareola*), common tern (*Sterna hirundo*), purple heron (*Ardea purpurea*), *Ixobrychus minutus*, Eurasian coot (*Fulica atra*), black-crowned night heron (*Nycticorax nycticorax*), Squacco heron (*Ardeola ralloides*), great egret (*Egretta alba*), black stork (*Ciconia nigra*), little egret (*Egretta garzetta*) and osprey (*Pandion haliaetus*) no negative impacts are identified.

B.5. Impacts on birds such as **destruction of eggs, nests (hollows) and nestlings** will be insignificant in degree, given the implementation of the set measures.

B.6. Disturbance as a negative impact will be expressed at the most in their temporary banishment from the habitats during the construction, after which, taking into account birds’ biology, they will be occupied again.

Conclusion on the degree of impact on the protected areas for conservation of wild birds on a national level:

- The harms to habitats of bird species for the indicated protected areas are expressed in lasting harms of nesting and transit (night locations) habitats in the forest and bush areas. The harm will be lasting, due to the requirements for maintaining the IP servitude for the entire period of its operation. For the bird species being subject of conservation in the aforesaid 4 protected areas, which nest in open spaces (pastures, meadows, agricultural lands, etc.) and for which the forest and bush areas territories are not nesting habitats, or such for spending the night, the lasting destruction of the latter throughout the period of implementation and operation of IP will lead to the transformation of these territories into suitable open-space nesting and feeding habitats for the great majority of the bird species. The transformation will start with the construction preparation and will finish with the

recovery of the terrains after reclamation, within one or two vegetation seasons.

- A temporary impact on habitats will be exerted for the bird species that use the open-space territories affected by the gas pipeline for nesting, feeding or transit habitats. Lasting harm to open-space areas, as bird habitats, will be caused by the permanent on-ground elements of the IP (receiving terminal, compressor station, etc.). As per the detailed analyses and definitive conclusions for each one of the 4 protected areas in habitats of species or the temporary harm with recovery of the species habitats will not lead to significant negative impacts, including cumulatively, on the bird species being subject of conservation in the protected areas as per Council Directive 2009/147/EC (79/409/EIO) on the conservation of wild birds.

- The lasting (residual) harm of species habitats in per cent relative to the area of their habitats in all protected areas under Directive 2009/147/EC (79/409/EIO) of the national ecological network Natura 2000 upon implementaton of the selected IP alternative, per classes of ground cover, is as follows:

- a. 0,000197% from the open-space habitats of European roller (*Coracias garrulus*), ortolan bunting (*Emberiza hortulana*), olive tree warbler (*Hippolais olivetorum*), Eurasian eagle-owl (*Bubo bubo*), woodlark (*Lullula arborea*) and tawny pipit (*Anthus campestris*); 0,0235% from the open-space habitats of the red-backed shrike (*Lanius collurio*), lesser grey shrike (*Lanius minor*), barred warbler (*Sylvia nisoria*);

- b. 0,00178% from the habitats of the corn crake (*Crex crex*);

- c. 0,000197% from the open-space habitats and 0,0029% from the forest ones of the black stork (*Ciconia nigra*), western marsh harrier (*Circus aeruginosus*), Montagu's harrier (*Circus pygargus*);

- d. 0,000197% from the open-space habitats and 0,00417% from the forest ones of the levant sparrowhawk (*Accipiter brevipes*), European honey buzzard (*Pernis apivorus*), short-toed eagle (*Circaetus gallicus*), red-footed falcon (*Falco tinnunculus*), Eurasian kestrel (*Falco tinnunculus*) and the Eurasian hobby (*Falco subbuteo*);

- e. 0,000197% from the open-space habitats and 0,00415% from the forest ones of the pallid harrier (*Circus macrourus*);

- f. 0,000197% from the open-space habitats and 0,00284% from the forest ones of *Hieraaetus pennatus*, Eurasian buzzard and black kite (*Milvus migrans*);

- g. 0,000197% from the open-space habitats and 0,00342% from the forest ones of the Euraisan nightjar (*Caprimulgus europaeus*);

- h. 0,00000148% from the forest habitats of the lesser spotted eagle (*Aquila pomarina*) and the osprey (*Pandion haliaetus*);

- i. 0,0029% from the forest habitats of the white-backed woodpecker (*Dendrocopos leucotos*) and semicollared flycatcher (*Ficedula semitorquata*);

- j. 0,00342% from the forest habitats of the grey-faced woodpecker (*Picus canus*), middle-spotted woodpecker (*Dendrocopos medius*), black woodpecker (*Dryocopus martius*) and the Eurasian sparrowhawk (*Accipiter nisus*);

- k. 0,00132% from the forest habitats of the red kite (*Milvus milvus*) and the greater spotted eagle (*Aquila clanga*) and

- l. 0,000711% from the forest habitats of the Syrian woodpecker (*Dendrocopos syriacus*).

- For all other bird species, being subject of conservation in the affected protected areas, reviewed in the EIA Report, no harm will be inflicted on habitat areas, or the harms will be only temporary for the period of construction and will subsequently be restored within one or two vegetation seasons.

6. According to Statement of Basin Directorate for Water Management (BDWM) – Black Sea Region (outgoing ref. No. 24-00-2842/2/26.09.2011) and BDWM – Danube Region (outgoing ref. No. 4638/20.09.2011), the Investment Proposal is admissible from the

viewpoint of achieving the environmental objectives and measures for attainment of good status of waters and their protection zones, embedded in the River Basin Management Plans (RBMP) of the Black Sea and the Danube regions. The Investment Proposal under option 1 does not affect belt 1 of sanitary protection zones around water sources and drinking and domestic water supply facilities, as well as such in procedure.

7. By its Statement with outgoing ref. No. 04-09-13/13.05.2013, the Ministry of Health gives a positive assessment of the report as it reasons on grounds of the EIA documentation that no health risk for the population is expected by the implementation of the Investment Proposal given the compliance with all regulatory requirements and recommendations specified in the EIA Report. In relation to the written statement submitted by the contracting authority to the Ministry of Environment and Water (MEW) on the proposals, recommendations and objections made as a result of public discussion, same has been delivered to the Ministry of Health for issuance of statement on grounds of competence. In response, the Ministry of Health, by letter with outgoing ref. No.04-09-13/19.08.2013, informs MEW that it is of the opinion that in the IP implementation no arising of health risk for the population is expected, given the observance of all regulatory requirements, the recommendations indicated in the EIA Report for not allowing or minimizing any possible adverse impacts, as well as the conditions of this Decision, being obligatory for the phases of design, construction and operation of the gas pipeline.

8. For the plants CS Varna, CS Lozen and CS Rasovo an assessment is performed in respect of the consumption of water, energy, basic raw materials and hazardous substances for generation of product heating unit [MWh] (for fuel installations); quantity and type of harmful substances released in the ambient air (including parameters of the releasing devices), wastewaters and water objects, quantity and type of the industrial and hazardous waste formed by the plant. Based on the submitted data, in accordance with Article. 99a (1) of the Environment Protection Act, the implementation of the best available technologies is confirmed for plants CS Varna, CS Lozen and CS Rasovo, object of the Investment Proposal.

9. During the construction and operation of the gas pipeline no harmful cross-border impact on environment is expected, both on Serbian and Romanian territory. In pursuance of the provisions of the EIA Convention in cross-border context, the Republic of Bulgaria has notified the Republic of Serbia as party concerned by the UP on Bulgarian territory. By Letter No. 353-02-950/2012-02 dd. 23.10.2012 an official response on the Serbian part is received that the Republic of Serbia will not participate in the Bulgarian EIA procedure for the Southern Stream Project since no harmful cross-border impact is expected on the environment on Serbian territory by the implementation of the project.

The Republic of Bulgaria has notified Romania as a party affected by the IP on Bulgarian territory. In response, the Romanian party has expressed a wish to participate in the EIA procedure. In the course of the procedure Romania is provided with the terms of reference for the scope of EIA, in reply to which, by Letter No. 76/RP/14.02.2013, the Ministry of Environment and Climate Change of Romania has informed MEW that it will not participate in the EIA procedure for IP on Bulgarian territory.

10. During EIA procedure consultations with stakeholders are conducted on the EIA procedure. Public access is provided to the EIA Report and all appendices thereto and public discussion meetings are held in the period from 01.07.2013 to 25.07.2013 in the municipalities determined as affected – Varna, Avren, Beloslav, Vetrino, Provadia, Loznitsa, Targovishte, Popovo, Shoumen, Kaspichan, Novi Pazar, Hitrino, Byala, Gorna Oryahovitsa, Pavlikeni, Polsky Trumbesh, Strazhitsa, Pleven, Dolna Mitropoloiya, Dolni Dubnik, Iskar, Knezha, Levsky, Pordim, Brusartsi, Vulchedrum, Medkovets, Yakimovo, Lovech, Letnitsa, Kozloduy, Mizia, Oryahovo, Vidin, Gramada, Dimovo, Kula, Makresh, Ruzhintsi.

On the public discussion meetings in the municipalities of Dimovo, Ruzhintsi, Yakimovo, Mizia, Oryahovo, Iskar, Dolna Mitropolia, Levsky, Letnitsa, Gorna Oryahovitsa, Pavlikeni, Kaspichan, and Strazhitsa, no issues have been broached. On the public discussions in the municipalities of Avren, Beloslav, Vetrino, Provadia, Loznitsa, Targovishte, Popovo, Shoumen, Novi Pazar, Hitrino, Byala, Polski Trumbesh, Pleven, Dolni Dubnik, Knezha, Pordim, Polski Trumbesh, Pleven, Polski Trumbesh, Pleven, Dolni Dubnik, Knezha, Pordim, Brusartsi, Vulchedrum, Medkovets, Lovetch, Kozloduy, Vidin, Gramada, Kula, and Makresh, some issues are broached on the implementation of IP, but no objections are raised. On the public discussion meeting in Varna there have been discussed mainly issues related to the expected impact from noise, vibrations and infrasound during the operation of the compressor station Varna and of the receiving terminal and the ensuing risk to human health, as some written statements by citizens and companies in relation thereto. Responses have been provided to the questions asked during the public discussion meetings and the submitted written statements on the part of representatives of the team of experts who have prepared the EIA Report and DIAR and by the contracting authority.

For the period of conducting the public discussion, including within the seven-day term after the last meeting on 25 July 2013 over 20 written statements are lodged on respect of the EIA Report and the appendices thereto (as some of them have identical content, since their authors have presented same at various stages of the public discussions and before various institutions). In pursuance of the requirements under Article 17 (5) of *the Ordinance on the conditions and order for performance of environment impact assessment* on 05.08.2013, a written statement has been submitted to MEW (incoming No. OVOS-1144) by the contracting authority on the proposals, recommendations, opinions and objections resulting from the public discussion of the EIA Report, as in accordance with Article 17 (6) of the EIA Ordinance, the contracting authority is of the opinion that no supplements are needed to the EIA Report for IP, since no other possible ways for implementation of the Investment Proposal based on the necessary technical, ecologic, health and other arguments are proposed. The written recommendations from the submitted statements concerning the introduction of additional measures for noise reduction are reflected in this Decision.

Within the envisaged in the CA Ordinance one-month term (as of 25 June 2013) for access of the public to the EIA Report, as well as within the public discussion of the EIA Report with DIAR as per the procedure provided for under the EIA Ordinance, no motivated written statements falling within the assumption of Article 39 (10) of the CA Ordinance, accordingly, Article 17 (7) of the EIA Ordinance.

11. By its Decision I-5/2013 dated 28.08.2013, the Supreme Expert Ecology Board proposes the approval of the implementation of the investment proposal

and under the following conditions:

I. For the design phase:

1. To be prepared Environment Management Plan (EMP) which is to incorporate all requirements of the national legislation and the mitigating measures, necessary to be implemented during the various phases of the project in order to prevent, and if not possible, restrict, the impact on the components and factors of environment. The plan is to include also the conditions and measures of this decision. The plan shall be coordinated with the Regional Inspectorate of Environment and Water (RIEW)-Varna, RIEW-Shoumen, RIEW-Russe, RIEW-Veliko Tarnovo, RIEW-Pleven, RIEW-Montana and RIEW-Vratsa, for the section of the gas pipeline on the territory controlled by the respective RIEW, the Environment Executive Agency, BDWM-Black Sea Region and BDWM-Danube Region. EMP shall be provided to the controlling authorities upon request.

2. Within three months after the preparation of EMP there shall be drawn up a Plan for restoration of the partially harmed natural habitats, including outside the protected areas, as per the EIA Report, containing example methodologies for the various habitats applied in DIAR, as for all forest habitats their restoration shall be performed on other appropriate territories outside the gas pipeline servitude.
3. To be elaborated appropriate transport schedule during the construction for provision of a linear route and of the permanent site (compressor stations, line valve stations, etc.) with materials, machines, consumables, etc., by restricting the passage across populated areas.
4. To be elaborated a detailed plan for hydraulic testing which shall be agreed with the relevant basin directorate, while taking into account the following: the water abstraction for the hydro-test is to be performed as per the ecological minimum of the water body; if a possibility exists, to be envisaged a multifold use of one and the same water for testing of separate sections of the gas pipeline; the discharge of the hydro-test waters shall be carried out in surface water from the same catchment area; if the discharged water is with altered composition, the necessary treatment of discharged water shall be ensured.
5. The technical design shall be complied with *Ordinance No. 4/2006 on restriction of the harmful noise through noise insulation of buildings in their designing and on the rules and norms in execution of buildings as regards the noise emitted during construction*, including incorporating measures for decreasing the noise impact on residential areas throughout the construction period.
6. The selection of the particular model of gas turbine units during the conducting of the tender procedures shall be carried out in accordance with the confirmed best available technologies and while taking into account their noise characteristics – level of acoustic power and vibration.
7. In the course of designing the compressor stations there shall be provided the following measures for noise reduction: installation of the gas turbine units in noise-insulated hangars with noise absorption for decreasing the noise; installation of the gas turbine units on massive vibration insulating foundations; main tracing of the pipelines in the receiving terminal and the compressor stations underground whenever this is technologically and technically possible; installation of efficient mufflers of the gas release and gas suction pipelines of the gas turbine units; increasing the efficiency of the mufflers on the spark plugs for unloading the pipelines; selection of gas turbine units with low noise level; underground installation of the connection valves; noise insulation of open pipes and fixtures on the territory of the receiving terminal and the compressor stations; use of noise-absorbing screens over the open fixtures and heaters of the gas;
8. All types and elements of the noise-generating equipment for which the implementation of noise-protection measures is needed, shall be provided with noise-absorbing cases.
9. In planning the construction, the calendar plan-schedule for performance of the construction and installation works shall be complied with the time restrictions and bans on performing building activities, in compliance with the measures envisaged under i. IV of this Decision.
10. For archeological sites (69 in number) with numbers: 001/1000; 003/1002; 004/1003; 005/1004; 006/1005; 007/1006; 008/1007; 009/1008; 010/1009; 012/1011; 014/1013; 015/1018; 016/1014; 018/1016; 019/1017; 21/2001; 22/2002; 24/2005; 26/2007; 27/3001; 29/3003; 30/3004; 31/3005; 32/3006; 33/3007; 34/3008; 36/3010; 37/3011; 38/3012; 40/3014; 41/3015; 42/3016; 043/4000; 044/4001; 045/4002; 046/4003; 048/4005; 050/4007; 052/4009; 057/5021; 058/5020; 059/5019; 062/5016; 063/5012; 064/5011; 066/5007; 069/5003; 070/5002; 071/5001; 072/5000; 76/6021; 79/6018; 80/6017; 81/6016; 82/6012; 83/6011; 84/6010; 85/6009; 86/6005; 087/7000; 088/7001; 103/7043; 105/7046; 108/7052; 110/7055; 111/7057; 116/7076; 117/7078; 120/7084 (numbered according to Table 3 under

Chapter XII of the EIA Report), there shall be performed preliminary archeological research prior to the commencement of the construction.

11. For archeological sites (4 in number) with numbers - 013/1012; 25/2006; 28/3002; 119/7083 (numbered as per Table 3 under Chapter XII of the EIA Report), there shall be performed complete research within the servitude of the gas pipeline, prior to the commencement of the construction.

12. For archeological sites (9 in number) with numbers - 053/4010; 089/7002; 092/7026; 100/7034; 101/7035; 102/7036; 107/7048; 112/7062; 124/7088 (numbered as per Table 3 of Chapter XII of the EIA Report), there shall be performed a complete research, prior to the commencement of the construction.

13. The sites for storage of waste shall be complied with the requirements to the sites as per the ordinances under Article 13 (1) and the ordinance under Article 43 (1) of the *Waste Management Act* (WMA).

14. Wastes formed during the construction and operation of the site shall be classified as per the procedure provided for under the ordinance under Article 3 of WMA.

15. There shall be ensured separate collection and haulage of the excavated earth masses and wastes from the construction and demolition and no mixture between them shall be allowed.

16. The construction of the facilities for storage of hazardous substances on the sites of CS Varna, CS Lozen and CS Rasovo shall be performed in accordance with the general requirements for storage under Article 6 under the Ordinance on the order and method for storage of hazardous chemical substances and mixtures, and after the performance of safety assessment for the storage on each single site in accordance with Article 9 (4) of the same ordinance.

II. During the construction:

1. There shall be observed the bans envisaged under Article 118a of the *Water Act* (WA), as well as the bans and restriction on activities in belts II and III of the sanitary-protections zones, specified in Appendix No. 2 to *Ordinance No. 3/16.10.2000 on the conditions and order for research, design, validation and operation of the sanitary-protection zones around water sources and drinking and domestic water supply facilities and around mineral water sources used for healing, prophylactic, drinking, and hygiene needs*, namely: activities leading to indirect discharge of hazardous substances of the ground surface and between the ground surface and water level.

2. There shall be observed the requirements of WA in relation to the permission regime for use of water object in the development of a linear infrastructure, crossing water objects, for water abstraction from water sources of water for the hydro-test and for other purposes, for discharge of water used for the hydro-test, for horizontal directional drilling, for drainage of trenches and sites. The competent authority for issuance of the above permits is the relevant BDWM.

3. In the special protection water zones under Article 119 a (1) i. 5 of WA there shall be carried out felling of riverside trees only in the areas of the servitudes of the linear transport and energy infrastructure.

4. There shall be carried out a reconstruction of the affected channels and facilities of the irrigation and drainage systems.

5. Upon performance of the excavation works for archeological sites (16 in number) with numbers -002/1001; 011/1010; 017/1015; 20/2000; 23/2003; 35/3009; 39/3013; 047/4004; 049/4006; 051/4008; 74/6023; 75/6022; 091/7017; 104/7044; 109/7054; 118/7079 (numbered as per Table 3 of Chapter XII of the EIA Report), monitoring is to be performed in the course of the construction.

6. Archeological site No. 78/6019 (column) shall be relocated to a museum.
7. The construction works in the proximity of site No.73/6024 (well from the Enlightenment period) shall be agreed with the local administration.
8. The waste formed by the construction of the sites shall be delivered, based on written contracts, to persons holding the relevant document under Article 35 of WMA;
9. There shall be ensured separate collection and haulage of the excavated earth masses and construction and demolition waste without allowing their mixing. The storage of construction waste shall be performed only on separate individual sites;
10. The route for transporting of construction waste to the relevant plant/ facility for treatment thereof shall be coordinated with the mayor of the respective municipality;
11. There shall be measured the noise levels and there shall be determined the total acoustic power and noise levels of CS Varna, CS Lozen and CS Rasovo in the impact locations, as per the requirements of the “Methodology for determining the total acoustic power emitted in the environment by industrial enterprise and determining the level of noise in the impact location” prior to the commissioning. If necessary, there shall be determined and implemented noise protection measures.
12. The technical and recovery activities after the construction of the gas pipeline shall be performed in accordance with *Ordinance No. 2 of 2 February 2009 on afforestation and inventories of forest crops, Ordinance No. 1 of 12 January 2004 on combating erosion and landslides in the forest stock and building fortification facilities and Ordinance No. 26 on reclamation of distorted areas, improvement of weakly productive lands, removal and utilization of the humus layer.*
13. The contracting authority shall deliver to the Environment Executive Agency applications for issuance of a complex permit for the operation of CS Varna, CS Lozen and CS Rasovo. The information in the applications shall be compatible with the values of the best available technologies parametres, as described in the submitted assessment under Article 99a (1) of the Environment Protection Act.
14. Prior to the commencement of the operation, the operator/ operators of CS Varna, CS Lozen and CS Rasovo shall prepare their own assessment of any possible cases of immediate threat of ecological damages and inflicted ecological damages, having content as per Appendix No.1 to Ordinance No. 1/2008 on the type of preventive and sanitary measures in the cases envisaged under the law as regards the responsibility for prevention and rectification of ecological damages and on the minimum amount of the expenses for the implementation thereof (promulgated in SG, issue 96/07.11.2008) and to submit same to the respective RIEW – Varna, RIEW – Veliko Tarnovo and RIEW - Montana.
15. Prior to the commissioning of the new facilities, the operator/ operators of CS Varna, CS Lozen and CS Rasovo shall perform an assessment of the safety of storage of hazardous chemicals for each facility as per Article 9 (5) of the Ordinance on the order and method for storage of hazardous chemical substances and mixtures.

III. During the operation and at decommissioning:

1. Organization shall be established and control shall be exercised on the collection, storage and treatment of generated waste while complying with the requirements set in the regulatory framework on waste management.
2. Monitoring shall be performed on the emissions released in ambient air by the release devices of the compressor stations.
3. Periodic monitoring shall be conducted on the quality of the discharged treated domestic wastewater from the sites of the compressor stations.

4. Periodic monitoring shall be conducted through measurement of the noise levels and there shall be determined the emitted by RT Pasha Dere, CS Varna, CS Lozen and CS Rasovo total acoustic power and noise levels in the impact locations, as per the requirements of *Methodology on determination of the total sound power emitted in the environment by industrial enterprise and determination of the noise level in the impact location*". If necessary, noise protection measures shall be determined and implemented.

5. The third octave levels of infrasound and low-frequency noise in the populated areas and settlements (villa and resort zones and other areas intended for individual and public recreation), situated in the proximity of the sites of RT Pasha Dere, CS Varna, CS Lozen and CS Rasovo) and to assess and analyze the acoustic situation therein.

6. Control shall be exercised on the efficiency of the performance of the implemented noise protection measures on the sites of the compressor stations through measurements of the noise levels and determination of the emitted by CS total acoustic power and noise levels in the impact locations. If necessary, noise protection measures are to be determined and implemented.

7. A report shall be prepared containing an assessment of the results from the recovery activities and the effect from the implemented mitigating measures through accounting of the results from the restoration of the natural habitats, of the placed bat houses, of the restored habitats of reptiles and of the European sousliks, of the nesting finds of birds of prey along the route, in PA BG0000173 Ostrovche (invertebrates and wolves), PA BG0000521 Makresh (invertebrates), the fish fauna in the rivers with trench crossing (Osum, Ogosta, Skut, Archar, Vidbol, Beli Lom, Cherni Lom), as well as assessment of the results from the recovery activities and the effect of the implemented mitigating measures for BG0002060 Galata, BG0002038 Provadia-Royak Plateau, BG0002009 Zlatiyata and BG0000240 Studenets. The report shall be prepared based on three-year monitoring and shall be submitted to MEW/ National Nature Protection Service.

8. The alternative for the gas pipeline decommissioning shall be selected in accordance with the regulatory framework on environment prior to the expiry of the service life of the gas pipeline or upon arising of a necessity from suspension of its subsequent operation, while taking into consideration the alternative assessed in DIAR by way of conservation of the gas pipeline (without taking the pipes out) and the proposed measures in this decision, if no amendments have been made to the subject and objectives of protection of the assessed protected areas.

IV. Measures under Article 96 (1) i. 6 of the Environment Protection Act

No.	Measures	Period /phase of performance	Result
1.	The maintenance of construction mechanization and transport vehicles, as well as their charging with fuels, shall be performed on specialized sites equipped for that purpose.	design, construction	Protection of soils and groundwater from pollution.
2.	The used construction machines and mechanization shall cover the EURO 5 standards.	construction	Restriction of gas and dust emissions. Protection of human health .
3.	To restrict the passing across populated areas of the traffic servicing the construction. Upon passing across populated areas (by way of exception) to restrict the intensive traffic at night	construction	Restriction of dust and has emissions from the construction traffic. Protection of human health.

	(in the period 23:00 – 07:00 h.).		
4.	There shall be used noise insulating screens (if necessary) on the construction route at the side of the populated areas – the villages of Krivnya, Tutrakantsi, Konstantinovo, Dobri Voynikovo, located in the proximity of the gas pipeline (up to 300 m), including on the road in the area of the village of Priseltsi.	construction	Provision of comfort for the inhabitants of nearby populated areas.
5.	Upon welding, special pavilions (tents) shall be used to restrict the adverse light emission. Same shall be ventilated (with natural and artificial ventilation) in order to lead out welding gases.	construction	Provision of healthy and safe occupational conditions for the welders.
6.	The removed humus and earth masses during the construction shall be disposed separately and subsequently shall be used for reclamation of the distorted terrain.	construction	Decrease of the losses of valuable soils, protection of soil fertility.
7.	For slanted terrain, shallow furrow shall be formed in parallel to the earth embankments in order to take in the water flowing out during heavy rainfalls.	construction	Protection of the disposed humus soil from undermining and erosion.
8.	When backfilling the gas pipeline, the following sequentiality shall be observed: * Filling earth masses from the humus free horizon in a reduced volume; * Filling of the soil from the humus layer in its full volume.	construction	Fast recovery of the productive function of soil. Stabilization of soil structure..
9.	The construction works on building CS 3 and the section of the route from CS to the end of the gas pipeline: • Shall be completed if possible during the drier periods of the year (summer and autumn); • The machine work shall be suspended in case of rainfall amounts over 20 mm till the time of sufficient drying of the soil (establishment of non-plastic status).	construction	Restriction of secondary soil compaction.
10.	Within the section from km 156 to km 158 with identified European souslik stock, the construction shall be performed either beyond the period November – June, or after translocation of the European souslik stock (1 June -1 October).	construction	Preservation of the population of <i>Spermophilus citellus</i> and lowering the mortality of specimens..
11.	No construction activities shall be performed in the following sections of the route: 2 – 4 km;124-126 km; 162-163 km; 198-199 km;223.-224 um; 326-327 km;470-471 km;490-491 km;497-498 km;526-527 km during the breeding period of the birds from 20 March to 10 July.	construction	Lowering of the disturbance and of the compromising of the birds' nesting season.
12.	The contracting authority shall organize the performance of clearing the areas from trees and bush vegetation (felling, eradication) within the construction corridor, out of the breeding period of	construction	Minimization of the mortality of nests and hatchings of nesting birds.

	<p>the birds from March to July in the following sections: km 7.000 – 7.800; km 10.900 – 11.200; km 11.100 –11.700; km 12.700 – 13.800; km 19.700 – 20.500; km 22.900 – 24.200; km 26.900 – 28.500; km 64.900 – 66.000; km 66.800 – 67.100; km 80.800 – 83.000; km 96.300 – 97.300; km 127.400 – 127.500; km 131.300 – 132.500; km 133.500 – 134.600; km 138.500 – 138.900; km 141.100 – 141.500; km 150.600 – 152.300; km 157.000 – 158.200; km 159.000 – 163.500; km 166.700 – 167.000; km 196.600 – 199.000; km 202.300 – 204.000; km 208.800 – 209.600; km 222.400 – 225.000; km 225.800 – 228.600; km 229.500 – 230.500; km 240.300 – 240.800; km 242.100 – 242.800; km 246.500 – 247.400; km 255.800 – 256.000; km 258.600 – 258.700; km 271.100 – 271.200; km 277.100 – 278.600; km 300.000 – 300.200; km 312.800 – 313.100; km 313.600 – 313.700; km 315.800 – 316.100; km 347.400 – 347.600; km 363.300 – 364.600; km 369.600 – 372.100; km 402.300 – 405.600; km 409.000 – 410.300; km 459.700 – 459.900; km 467.100 – 469.600; km 471.000 – 471.900; km 488.000 – 488.400; km 490.300 – 491.100; km 493.800 – 495.100; km 501.600 – 504.100; km 506.400 – 508.700; km 515.100 – 516.000; km 522.000 – 522.600; km 526.000 – 527.700.</p>		
13.	<p>Restoration of partially harmed habitats of <i>Canis lupus</i> from km 197 to km 199 . Creation of bush buffers at every 1000 m around and transversely to the route, by using species with shallow root system, typical for the region. Main species: 1: Blackthorn (<i>Prunus spinosa</i>) „4“ Wild privet – (<i>Ligustrum vulgare</i>) „2“, (<i>Cotinus coggygria</i>) „2“, (<i>Euonymus europaeus</i>) „2“ - 70 -200 pcs./daa. Substituting species 2: Hawthorn (<i>Crataegus monogina</i>, <i>Cornus mas</i>, <i>Cornus sanguinea</i>).</p>	construction	Conservation of the population of <i>Canis lupus</i> and lowering the mortality of specimens.
14.	<p>Restoration of the harmed habitat of <i>Triturus karelinii</i> –at km 224: The contracting authority engaged experts herpetologists, biologists, hydro-engineers, etc., and carries out in the proximity of the current habitat of the triton restoration of a new appropriate habitat with an area larger than that existing now (min. 60 m²), the necessary hydrological regime and adaptability for <i>Triturus karelinii</i>. The restoration of the habitat is carried out prior to the commencement of the construction activities at km 224. The relocation of the population is carried out following a validated methodology during the period April –May.</p>	construction	Protection of the population of <i>Triturus karelinii</i> and lowering the mortality of specimens.

	Periodic monitoring during the first year. The contracting authority is to place an information signboard in the humid zone area.		
15.	Within the route, the contracting authority is to assign to a scientific research establishment the elaboration and implementation of a plan for temporary or permanent relocation of the significant from in terms of conservation species <i>Limonium bulgaricum</i> to a suitable habitat. The plan is to be agreed in advance with and approved by RIEW Veliko Tarnovo.	construction	Protection of the conservationally significant species <i>Limonium bulgaricum</i> .
16.	The contracting authority conducts an obligatory inventory one month prior to the start of the preparation of the route and the construction activities for each particular section (including the protected areas), by engaging experts-biologists /experts (per main groups of animals and a botanists) for planning of activities for lowering the mortality and loss of conservationally significant plant, ground-nesting and other bird species, bats, reptiles, amphibians and mammals.	construction	Species protection.
17.	Within the protected areas the construction route is to be surrounded by fences (for each construction section of 3 km) of the pipeline with a thick fence with height of 50-60 cm (or a mesh with openings not larger than 1,5 cm), dug in min. 5 cm. After completion of the backfilling of the trenches in the respective section, the fences shall be removed.	construction	Restriction of the entering of animal species on the building site.
18.	Within the protected areas the movement and crowding of people and machines is to be carried out only within the construction route and the accompanying infrastructure; disposal of construction and excavated materials – only within the construction route or at the sites designated for such purpose.	construction	Lowering the additional harming of neighbouring habitats, of the disturbance, of specimen mortality, of the loss of nests and eggs..
19.	For protected areas from A.1. to A.14; there shall be provided preliminary collection and storage of good-quality seed and vegetation materials of local indigenous origin, suitable for subsequent use upon restoration activities.	construction	Protection of species and habitats
20.	The performance of felling and construction activities in protected areas BG0000613 Iskar River, BG0000240 Studenets, BG0000521 Makresh, BG0000498 Vidbol are to be carried out beyond the breeding period of bats from 1 May to 30 July and the hibernation period from 1 November to 15 March. If these activities are performed during the autumn, the felling should not be interrupted so as to prevent the forest	construction	For the purpose of minimizing the loss and disturbance of forest bat species - Barbastelle (<i>Barbastella barbastellus</i>), Behcstein's bat (<i>Myotis bechsteinii</i>)

	species of bats from occupying the sanctuaries. During the progressing of the felling to zones within the sections of BG0000240 Studenets from km 321 - 324 and from km 326,6 -327,2; BG0000613 Iskar from km 369,7 - 372; km 373-374; BG0000498 Vidbol from km 508,3 - 508,6 and BG0000521 Makresh from km 506,8 - 508,3 the attendance of a biologist is necessary.		
21.	There shall be organized and conducted and inventory of the terrain from 1 May to 1 October by a herpetology expert in the following sections of the protected areas BG0000104 Provadia-Royak Plateau from km 54-60; BG0000173 Ostrovche - km 159-160,5; km 161,2-163,5; km 165,3-165,5 and km 166,7-167; BG0000240 Studenets - km 321-324; km 326,6-327,2 and km 336,1-336,7; BG0000181 Vit River - km 347,4-347,5; BG0000613 Iskar River - km 371-372 and km 373-374; BG0000498 Vidbol - km 508,2-508,55; BG0000500 Boynitsa - km 526,1-527,25 .	construction	Minimizing the loss of tortoises .
22.	The construction as per open (trench) method for passing of the gas pipeline across the rivers Vidbol, Dabnishka Bara, Ogosta, Skut, Osum, Beli Lom, Cherni Lom, Chernelka, Sushitsa, Archar within the boundaries of the protected areas is to be carried out beyond the breeding period of fish (from 1 April to 15 August.).	construction	Minimization of the loss of amphibians, European pond turtles and fish.
23.	Crossing river objects (the rivers of Vidbol, Archar, Dubnishka Bara, Ogosta, Skut, Osum, Beli Lom, Cherni Lom, Chernelka, Sushitsa, Malki Lom, Boynitsa and Archar within the boundaries of the protected areas) by the trench method are to be carried out without dredgers , as in the river bed there shall be placed temporary partitions accelerating the sedimentation process or filters following the construction route (e.g., bales with weights), in order to decrease water muddling	construction	Reduction of the quantity of non-dissolved substances in waters and restricting the negative impact on aquatic organisms, including mortality.
24.	The construction activities in protected area BG0000521 Makresh and BG0000173 Ostrovche shall be performed until 19:00 h.	construction	Lowering the mortality of forest invertebrates - (Lucanus cervus) and bats.
25.	Around permanent roads and permanent on-ground elements of the UP within the protected areas there shall be laid a mineral layer in order to lower the probability of fires and destruction of natural habitats, species habitats and specimens.	construction	Restricting the loss of natural habitats, specimen and species habitats.
26.	In protected areas BG0000104 Provadia-Royak Plateau, BG0000173 Ostrovche, BG0000240 Studenets, BG0000521 Makresh and BG0000500 Boynitsa on the place of felled forests and bush	construction	Increasing the mosaic of habitats for the species

	formations the terrain is not to be reclaimed with commercial grass mixtures, but with grass species for restoring pastures and meadows.		
27.	Within the protected areas after completion of the construction activities in pastures and meadows, the contracting authority shall organize the restoration of vegetation that is maximal close to the natural one as a suitable habitat for small mammals, reptiles and amphibians (feeding base and micro-habitat) in the section: km 54-55; km 58-58,5; km 156, 5 to km 157,5; km 161,2-163,5; km 165,3-165,5; km 166,7-167,1; from km 277 to km 279, km 321-324; km 326,6-327,2; km 336,1-336,7; km 347+400 - 347+574; km 371-372; from km 373 to 374, km 436+800 – 437+300; km 471 - 471,5; km 508,2-508,55 and km 526,1-527,25, from km 526,50 - 526,6 and from km 526,9 - 527,2.	construction	Lowering to a minimum the harming effect of the construction activities on the habitats of the European souslik, Romanian hamster, tortoises, European pond turtle, etc..
28.	Within the protected areas for the rivers Vidbol, Archar, Dubnishka Bara, Ogosta, Skut, Osum, Beli Lom, Cherni Lom, Chernelka, Sushitsa, Malki Lom, Boynitsa, Archar and Kriva Bara, the restoration of the banks shall be performed in such a manner as not to allow their eroding and infiltration of hard particles in the river bed. Upon restoration of the river bank there shall be installed anti-erosion partitions from closed type containers filled with earth mass. For restoration of the plant cover are to be used seeds of the species typical for the region. Slopes without vegetation and soil shall be fortified with biotextile cloths on biodegrading base and a mixture of perennial grass seeds.	construction	Restricting the erosion of banks and muddling the waters. Restoration of partially harmed river habitats, including for species, such as the otter.
29.	Within the deciduous forest sections in each of the areas BG0000173 Ostrovche – at km 159, km 160 and km 161, BG0000240 Studenets at km 321-324 and km 326,6-327,2, BG0000613 Iskar River at km 370,2-371) and BG0000521 Makresh at km 507-508 of the construction route there shall be left 3 pcs/ ha of the biggest felled tree trunks in the construction route.	construction	Reducing fragmentation, creation of conditions for improvement of the feeding base of forest invertebrate species
30.	Bat houses shall be placed in the forest habitats in protected area BG0000240 Studenets (at km 327, km 321 and km 324) – 20 houses; BG0000613 Iskar (at km 369 - 372) - 6 houses; BG0000521 Makresh (at km 507,5) -10 houses and BG0000173 Ostrovche (at km 159-160 and km 162) - 10 houses after consultation with an expert for their type and deployment scheme.	construction	Improving the habitats of Bechstein's bat (<i>Myotis bechsteinii</i>), Barbastelle (<i>Barbastella barbastellus</i>), as well as the species of the <i>Pipistrellus</i> genus.
31.	The planting of bush buffers at every 1000 m,	construction	Restoration of the partially

	with local small bush species having shallow root system around and transversally to the servitude of protected area BG0000173 Ostrovche at km 159, km 163 and km 197 and in protected area BG0000503 Lom River at km 468 and km 469 and km 490 and km 491.		harmed habitats of the wolf (<i>Canis lupus</i>) and decreasing their fragmentation.
32.	Within the protected areas the hydraulic tests of the gas pipeline through water abstraction from the rivers Provadiyska, Kriva Bara, Beli Lom, Cherni Lom, Tsibritsa, Lom, Archar, Iskar, Yantra, Osum, Ogosta and Vit shall be carried out beyond the periods of shallow water of the rivers and the fish breeding period (not within the period from 1 April to 15 August). Upon returning the waters from the hydraulic test into the rivers, the release is not to be effected in a strong ejection, but at a slow speed or with a speed lower than the speed of water abstraction (0,1 m ³ /s) at the same place from which it has been abstracted.	construction	Provision of minimum ecological quantity of water in the river and lowering the loss of specimens from the fish fauna, amphibians, invertebrates, and preservation of the aquatic organisms' habitat.
33.	<u>For protected areas from A.1. to A.14:</u> Upon hydraulic tests there shall be placed a fence of meshes with dimensions of up to 4x4 m on the place where the water is abstracted from the rivers, whereby to restrict the accidental catching of specimens (fish, reptiles, and amphibians). The meshes must reach the bottom of the river and their total area immersed in the water must not be smaller than 10 m ² , forming a circle or square. Mesh opening - maximum 5 mm. The pipe for water abstraction is to be located in the centre of the fenced area.	construction	Restricting the loss of aquatic organisms.
34.	Eradication of ruderal and invasive species from the grassland habitats in the sections from km 54 to km 60 till the second year after the reclamation and recovery measures.	construction	Assisting the restoration of the affected natural habitats and species habitats.
35.	<u>For protected areas from B.1. to B.4.:</u> Planning and conducting of construction activities and reclamation beyond the breeding period of the birds (from 20 March to 10 July)	construction	Lowering of the disturbance, loss of specimens and of the compromising of the birds' nesting season. .
36.	Upon developing the route no blasting works are to be carried out in rocky and stony areas in which there have been identified habitats of endangered petrophile and steppic bird species and in the period from 1 August to 30 September for protected areas BG0002060 Galata, BG0002038 Provadia-Royak Plateau, BG0000240 Studenets and BG0002009 Zlatiyata and the sections at km 22,9-24,2; 26,9-28,5; 64,8-66; 66,7-67,1; 501,6-504,1 and the nesting habitat in protected area Ostrovche at km 162.	construction	Lowering the disturbance of birds.

37.	The installation and dismantling of temporary facilities for hydraulic testing of the gas pipeline through water abstraction from the rivers Provadiyska, Tsibritsa, and Vit shall be carried out beyond the periods of shallow water of the rivers and the breeding period of the birds (from 20 March to 10 July).	Construction	Reducing the disturbance of birds.
38.	The maintenance of the servitude strip through clearing of plants with deep roots is to be performed beyond the breeding period of the birds (from 20 March to 10 July) in protected areas BG0002060 Galata, BG0002038 Provadia-Royak Plateau, BG0000240 Studenets and BG 0002009 Zlatiyata.	construction	Reducing the disturbance of birds.
39.	<u>For protected areas from B.1. to B.4.:</u> The sites for deployment of facilities for purification and degassing shall be situated only within the servitude of the gas pipeline on the same places which have been used for commissioning. Abstraction of water for purification of the pipe and other IP elements is to be carried out only from the rivers determined for the commissioning (Provadiyska, Tsibritsa and Vit).	construction	Reducing the loss of species habitats.
40.	The reclaiming of vacated areas shall be performed in accordance with the specific nature of the reclamation, envisaged after the construction for each single protected area.	construction	Assisting the restoration of habitats suitable for birds.
41.	<u>For BG0000104 Provadia-Royak Plateau:</u> The construction activities shall be implemented after translocation of specimens of the European souslik from the stock at km 55-57 (July-October) and leading tortoises out of the construction corridor (the activity is performed from 1 May to 1 October). Assisting the restoration of 130 daa of partially harmed habitat 6240* <i>Sub-Pannonic steppic grasslands</i> from km 55 to km 57 and from km 59 to km 60 of the gas pipeline, of 5 daa of partially harmed habitat 91H0* <i>Pannonic forests with Quercus pubescens</i> .	construction	Protection of species and habitats.
42.	<u>For BG0000173 Ostrovche:</u> Assisting the restoration of partially harmed habitat 91M0 <i>Pannonian-Balkan turkey oak – sessile oak forests</i> through new afforestation of 71,4 daa outside of the route and laying the pipes in the zone, in suitable ruderalized or harmed terrain by recommendation of experts.	construction	Protection of species and habitats.

43.	<p><u>For BG0000173 Yantra River:</u></p> <p>Assisting the restoration of partially harmed habitat 91E0* <i>Alluvial forests with Alnus glutinosa and Fraxinus excelsior (Alno-Pandion, Alnion incanae, Salicion albae)</i> through new afforestation of 0,3 daa outside the route of the laid pipes in the protected area, in suitable ruderalized terrain in the protected area by recommendation of experts.</p>	construction	Protection of species and habitats.
44.	<p><u>For BG0000239 Obnova-Karaman Dol:</u></p> <p>At km 278 the construction activities are to be performed after relocation of the stock of the European souslik from 1 June to 1 October or the construction activities are to be performed out of the period of reproduction and the period of hibernation of the European souslik from November to June, as the selected alternative shall be specified in the Environment Management Plan (EMP).</p>	construction	Protection of the European souslik
45.	<p><u>For BG0000240 Studenets:</u></p> <p>The European souslik stock is to be relocated from km 338 to km 340 at the village of Sadovets during the period from 1 June to 1 October, or the construction is to be banned from November to June, as the selected alternative shall be specified in the Environment Management Plan (EMP).</p> <p>Assisting the restoration of 0,3 daa of the partially harmed natural habitat 6430 in the area of the Chernelka River;</p> <p>Assisting the restoration of forest habitats partially harmed by the construction activities through the establishment of an identical habitat on a new terrain in the zone by recommendation of experts - 4,5 daa of 91E0 *, 7,55 daa of 91I0*, 2,2 daa of 91G0* and 14daa of 91M0.</p>	construction	Protection of species and habitats.
46.	<p><u>For BG0000613 Iksar River:</u></p> <p>Assisting the restoration of partially harmed habitat 91E0* <i>Alluvial forests with Alnus glutinosa and Fraxinus excelsior (Alno-Pandion, Alnion incanae, Salicion albae)</i> through new afforestation of 0,3 daa outside of the route for laying the pipes, in the zone, in suitable ruderalized terrain by recommendation of experts.</p>	construction	Protection of habitats.
47.	<p><u>For BG0000614 Ogosta River:</u></p> <p>Assisting the restoration of habitat 91E0 * <i>Alluvial forests with Alnus glutinosa and Fraxinus excelsior (Alno-Pandion, Alnion incanae, Salicion albae)</i> through new afforestation of 0,2 daa</p>	Construction and operation	Protection of habitats.

	outside the route of the gas pipeline by recommendation of experts.		
48.	<p><u>For BG0000336 Zlatiya:</u></p> <p>The construction activities shall be performed beyond the breeding period of the European souslik - 15 March. – 1 June and the hibernation period – 1 October – 1 March, or after the relocation of the stock of European sousliks at km 436,5, which shall be performed before the breeding period or the hibernation period from November to June, as the selected alternative shall be specified in the Environment Management Plan (EMP).</p> <p>Assisting the restoration of 6 daa of the partially harmed habitat – 6250* <i>Pannonic loess steppic grasslands</i> through grass planting.</p>	Construction and operation	Protection of species and habitats.
49.	<p><u>BG0000503 Lom River:</u></p> <p>The construction activities are to be implemented beyond the breeding period from 15 March to 1 June and the hibernation period from 1 October to 1 March of the European souslik and after relocation of the European souslik stock at km 471,3 out of said periods, as the selected alternative shall be indicated in the Environment Management Plan (EMP).</p> <p>Assisting the restoration of the partially harmed 91E0* <i>Alluvial forests with Alnus glutinosa and Fraxinus excelsior (Alno-Pandion, Alnion incanae, Salicion albae)</i> through new afforestation in the zone of 0,5 decares outside of the gas pipeline route by recommendation of experts.</p>	Construction and operation	Protection of species and habitats.
50.	<p><u>For BG0000521 Makresh:</u></p> <p>The construction activities in the zone are not to be performed during the period from 15 April to 31 August in order to lower the mortality of the species <i>Lucanus cervus</i>, <i>Cerambyx cerdo</i> and <i>Morimus asper funereus</i>, being subject of conservation in the protected area.</p> <p>The construction route and the operation servitude of the gas pipeline are to be decreased to 50 m from km 506,8 to km 508,1, in order to reduce the percentage of harm to natural habitats 91M0 <i>Pannonian-Balkan turkey oak –sessile oak forests</i> and the habitats of species being subject of conservation (<i>Testudo hermanni</i>, <i>Lucanus cervus</i>, <i>Cerambyx cerdo</i> and <i>Morimus asper funereus</i>). The measure has a positive</p>	Construction and operation	Protection of species and habitats.

	<p>effect on all species being subject of conservation and being affected by the IP.</p> <p>Assisting the restoration of partially harmed habitat 91M0 <i>Pannonian-Balkan turkey oak-sessile oak forests</i> through landscape afforestation of 75 daa outside the route of laying the pipes, in suitable ruderalized terrain in the zone by recommendation of experts.</p>		
51.	The plant coverage onto the embankment in the trench shall be maintained in good condition.	operation	Restricting the development of erosion processes
52.	In all sections in which building of new facilities of the power distribution grid is necessitated or the replacement thereof is underway, there shall be placed devices preventing any collision with birds.	operation	Protection of birds.
53.	The contracting authority shall plant 310 daa of forests outside the protected area Galata BG0002060 after coordination with the municipalities.	operation	Restoration of forests
54.	<p><u>For protected areas from A.1. to A.14:</u></p> <p>The purification and degassing sites shall be deployed only within the gas pipeline servitude on the same places which have been used for commissioning, water abstraction (for purification) to be performed only from the rivers which are designated for the commissioning (Provadiyska, Kriva Bara, Beli Lom, Cherni Lom, Tsibritsa, Lom, Archar, Iskar, Yantra, Osum, Ogosta, and Vit) for the purpose of lowering the loss of natural habitats and species habitats. The water abstraction for purification of the gas pipeline upon decommissioning beyond the period of shallow water and the fish breeding period (1 April – 15 August).</p>	decommissioning	Protection of species and habitats.
55.	<p><u>For protected areas from A.1. to A.14:</u></p> <p>All activities for dismantling, conservation of the gas pipeline, as well as all the accompanying activities shall be performed in compliance with all above mentioned restrictions to the construction and with implementation of the measures specified for the stage of preparation of and the construction itself, without measures for assisting the restoration of the natural habitats for the purpose of decreasing the harm and loss of natural habitats and species habitats and specimen mortality.</p>	decommissioning	Protection of species and habitats.
56.	<p><u>For protected areas from B.1. to B.4.:</u></p> <p>The dismantling of all elements of IP necessary for the conservation of the gas pipeline and all accompanying activities shall be</p>	decommissioning	Decreasing the disturbance на birds

performed beyond the breeding period of birds – from 20 March to 10 July in order to decrease the mortality and disturbance of species.		
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This decision refers only to the Investment Proposal that has been the subject of the performed EIA pursuant to the order of the Environment Protection Act. Upon extension or amendment of this investment proposal the contracting authority must promptly notify MEW at the earliest possible stage.

Pursuant to Article 99 (8) of the Environment Protection Act the Decision on EIA shall lose its legal effect if within a term of 5 /five/ years as of the date of its issuance no implementation of the Investment Proposal has started.

Upon change of the contracting authority, the new contracting authority pursuant to Article (7) of the Environment Protection Act shall notify MEW on a mandatory basis.

Upon establishment of non-fulfillment of the conditions and measures contained in the EIA Decision, the responsible persons shall be held liable under Article 166, i. 2 of the Environment Protection Act.

The concerned persons may appeal the decision following the order of the Code of Administrative Procedure within 14-day term after its notification.

On grounds of Article 60 (1) of the Code of Administrative Procedure, the contracting authority South Stream Bulgaria AD submitted to MEW a request with ingoing ref. No. OBOC-1144/05.08.2013 for admission of provisional enforcement of the EIA decision on investment proposal for “Construction of South Stream Gas Pipeline on the territory of the Republic of Bulgaria” as per Option 1 of the gas pipeline route.

After I have reviewed the request of the company, which motivates in detail the protection of especially important state and public interests related to the timely implementation of the Investment Proposal, I find that same are justified by the presence of the following prerequisites:

Protection of especially important state and public interests related to the timely implementation of the project, since an actual danger exists for the late execution of the decision to entail significant harms in the meaning of Article 60 (1) of the Code of Administrative Procedure.

By inter-governmental Agreement dated 18.01.2008, executed between the Government of the Republic of Bulgaria and the Government of the Russian Federation on cooperation in the development of gas pipeline for transit of natural gas across the territory of the Republic of Bulgaria (ratified by law passed by the 41st National Assembly on 25.07.2008, SG issue 69 of 2008, effective as of 12 August 2008), the association of the company South Stream Bulgaria AD is envisaged as well as the implementaton of the Investment Proposal, subject of the EIA Report and the appendices thereto. By the aforesaid agreement each of the parties has assumed a commitment to assist to the joint company (South Stream Bulgaria AD) for obtaining all necessary permits related to the design and construction of the gas pipeline. South Stream Bulgaria AD is associated in 2010 with the objective of design, construction and operation of gas pipeline system on the territory of the Republic of Bulgaria, a part of cross-border pipeline system, which has become publicly known with the name “South Stream”. Shareholders in the company with equal number of shares (50%) are Bulgarian Energy Holding EAD and OAO Gazprom. Bulgarian Energy Holding EAD is a single member business company with state ownership, the capital of which is 100% owned by the Bulgarian state, which exercises its rights of sole owner through the Minister of Economy and Energy.

By Decision of the Council of Ministers No. 876/02.12.2011, on grounds of § 5, i. 62 of the Additional provisions to the Spatial Development Act and § 1 of the Additional provisions to the State Ownership Act, South Stream Gas Pipeline in the section which is to be constructed on the territory of the Republic of Bulgaria, is declared a site of national significance and national site.

The project will bring exceptional benefits for Bulgaria, the more substantial among which are embedded in the motives of the aforesaid inter-governmental agreement, namely, the establishment of Bulgaria as a significant factor in the transmission of natural gas to EU; considerable increase of securing the gas supplies for the country, the region and EU through diversification of the routes (second route), providing direct connection between a main producer (Russia) and a main consumer (EU); satisfaction of the rising demand of natural gas in EU through increasing the capacity of EU for import of natural gas; supporting the development of the national gas transmission network which will accelerate gasification on the territory of the country and especially in the regions and municipalities along the route, which to date do not have an access to natural gas; by the implementation of South Stream Gas Pipeline revenues are expected from the transmission of natural gas and from the investment on Bulgarian territory; modernization of the energy sector, increasing energy efficiency and decreasing the pollution and carbon emissions; opening of approx. 2500 new job positions during the construction, and a possible lowering of the natural gas price in Bulgaria. In addition, the Republic of Bulgaria has assumed a commitment to support the timely implementation of the project the purpose of which is the increase of the energy security of Bulgaria and Russia, and also of the other countries in Europe through diversification of the routes for supply of natural gas to the European markets.

The admission of provisional enforcement will protect the especially important state interest in the timely implementation of the project, since it will provide an opportunity for taking actions in investment designing and construction permitting, as well as implementation of the objectives embedded by the state on a national and European scale in order to not to allow any infringement of especially substantial interests in view of the harms which the state and society will suffer as a result thereof.

Now and therefore, finding the request by the contracting authority tenable, as well as given that the prerequisites set under Article 60 (1) of the Code of Administrative Procedure are present,

I HEREBY ORDER

To be admitted the provisional enforcement of this decision for the purpose of protecting especially important state and public interest.

This order is subject to appealing before the Supreme Administrative Court following the order of the Code of Administrative Procedure within three days as of its notification.

Date: 30 August 2013

MINISTER: *[illegible signature]*

ISKRA MIHAYLOVA

[Round seal of the Ministry of Environment and Water
of the Republic of Bulgaria]