

Energy Infrastructures

# PECOB'S ENERGY POLICY STUDIES

## DRUZHBA

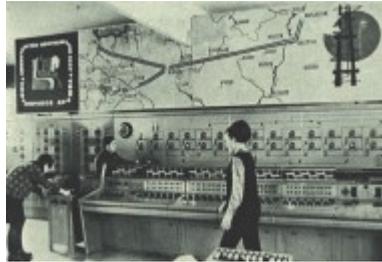
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## THE DRUZHBA PIPELINE

In 1958, at the 10th meeting of COMECON, USSR officials gathered Polish, Hungarian, Slovak, Czechoslovaks and East German representatives in Prague to expose one of the most ambitious oil infrastructure project ever designed.



Picture 1 Druzhba pipeline control room

### The geographical dimension

Conceived mainly to strengthen energetic ties with Soviets' Eastern satellites, the Druzhba (friendship) pipeline stretched for 5,327 km, connecting fields in the Volga region to Eastern Europe. The Russian/Belarusian section of the pipeline starts in Almetievsk (where it collects oil coming from the Ural, Caspian and West Siberia regions) and reaches Belarus in Mozyr, where it further splits into two main trunks. This first part of the project was meant not only to connect the extraction fields with Eastern countries, thus meeting their growing demand for energy, but also to bring oil to the refineries located in the Western part of the USSR and to reach the Baltic ports (Mažeikiai and Ventspils) for export.

From Mozyr, the route is divided into two more sections, the Northern and Southern corridors. The Northern part reached the GDR through Poland, ending in the German town of Schwedt with further connections with the Gdansk export facilities and the MVL pipeline in Germany to be built on the way. The Southern corridor on the other hand reaches Slovakia via Ukraine with a junction in Bratislava that leads North towards Czechoslovakia, and South towards Hungary.

### Technical aspects

The implementation phase of the project started in 1960, after having decided that every country was responsible for the completion of respective sections of

the pipeline, and that these sections were to remain property of the countries involved.

Pipes were mainly manufactured in Russia and Poland and fittings in Czechoslovakia. The GDR provided for pumps and Hungary for automation and communication systems. In a separate deal with Italian Eni, USSR received 250 thousand tons of steel pipes in the same year.<sup>1</sup>

The diameter of the first pipes deployed ranged between 11 and 27 inches, supported by 173 pumping units and 31 pumping stations capable of maintaining a flow of 7,000 cubic meters per hour.<sup>2</sup>

When in 1964 the overall project was successfully completed, the total costs amounted to 400 million rubles (12, 7 million \$) , with the deployment of 730 000 tons of 530, 630, 720, 820 and 1020 mm pipes. Oil reached Czechoslovakia for the first time in 1962, then by Hungary in September 1963 and Poland/GDR in November/December 1963. Full pipeline capacity reached 2 million barrels per day.<sup>3</sup>

## Economical and Political implications

The first main achievement brought by the realization of the Druzhba pipeline is a significant reduction (20 to 25%) of the costs of oil transport previously performed mainly on railroads. Export volumes also significantly increased (from 33.2 to 56.6 mill. metric tons between 1960 and 1964)<sup>4</sup>, in line with Eastern European growing energy hunger, and subsequently with stronger Western interest in Russian oil, especially after the 1967 Suez crisis. Pipelines are often seen as a way to "crystallize" energy relations between countries, and this is particularly true for Eastern Europe after the construction of the Druzhba pipeline. Furthermore, the implications of crystallized energy relations are not only evident in nowadays Eastern overdependence on Russian oil and gas (after the building up of the Bratstvo gas pipeline) , but also in price policies. While before the 60's Soviet Russia had almost always been opposed (some would say "contained") as an oil exporter by Western majors, the USSR's main tool to enter non-COMECON markets was to set prices below the level set by the Western oil cartel. However, at the beginning of the 60's two major events occurred in the international oil market, namely the creation of OPEC in 1960 and the growing influence of Enrico Mattei and his very personal fight against Western oil firms.

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<sup>1</sup> N.Perrone – Obiettivo Mattei: Petrolio, Stati Uniti e politica dell'Eni (Gamberetti, 1995)

<sup>2</sup> A.M. Shammazov, B.N. Mastobajev, R.N. Bakhtizin (UGNTU), A.E. Soshchenko (OJSC AK Transneft) Truboprovodny Tansport Nefti (1946-1991) - 2001

<sup>3</sup> Pipelines international – Druzhba Pipeline (2009)  
[http://pipelinesinternational.com/news/druzhba\\_pipeline/008045/](http://pipelinesinternational.com/news/druzhba_pipeline/008045/)

<sup>4</sup> Data from Venshni Torgovli Rossii, Department Tamozhenny sbor'

The "Friendship" pipeline may be seen as the result of a new international environment, where Soviet Russia was then ready to deploy its weight as an energy superpower through a step-by-step global policy, namely a first consolidation of existing energy relations within the COMECON through Druzhba, and later with increasing prices in the Eastern camp and parallel attempts to reach Western markets.<sup>5</sup>

In this sense, the Druzhba project can be seen as the starting platform for future enhancing of USSR energy relations. In fact, the Druzhba pipeline will continuously be subject to expansion projects in the following years, and its initial shape in the 60's is one of the main bases of nowadays oil network distribution in North/Eastern Europe.

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<sup>5</sup> M.I.Goldman – The Soviet Union (Daedalus, n.104 issue n.4, 1975)