

Tax Increase on Gas Independents Could Happen More Slowly

By [The Moscow Times](#)

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Gazprom, whose headquarters are pictured above, has been gradually losing domestic market share to other gas producers.

Russia might increase taxes on independent gas producers more slowly than planned, bringing them into line with those paid by state-controlled Gazprom in 2017 or 2018 rather than the original goal of 2015, Vedomosti reported.

The newspaper, citing two government officials, said Tuesday that the energy ministry had proposed a new timetable for the rise in mineral extraction tax, or MET, for the independent producers.

An Energy Ministry spokesman declined to comment on the exact timing of the tax increases.

"It is reasonable to make the tax rates for the independents and Gazprom equal after the domestic prices and export prices reach the same level on the netback parity," he said.

Netback parity refers to an exact match of domestic and export prices, excluding transportation costs and export duties.

The country's domestic prices are regulated by the government, which is gradually raising them to the level of netback parity with the export prices.

According to the previous plan, MET for both Gazprom and the independents was expected to reach about 1,000 rubles (\$31.25) per 1,000 cubic meters by July 1, 2015, from 582 rubles and 265 rubles respectively as of Jan. 1, 2013.

Vedomosti, citing one government official, said the rates were expected to come into effect in 2017 or 2018, while the rate for non-Gazprom companies may be increased to 402 rubles after July 1, 2013, not 445 rubles as had been expected.

Gazprom has been gradually losing domestic market share. The company said Monday that it might halt gas purchases from independents, which it has been making to offset declining production.

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