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Lithuania Hits Gazprom With $1.9Bln Claim

By The Moscow Times

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VILNIUS, Lithuania — Lithuania's government said Wednesday it planned to file a 1.45 billion euro ($1.9 billion) claim against Gazprom, alleging that the world's largest natural gas company has hiked prices unfairly.

Government ministers said the size of the claim covers what the country has overpaid for natural gas since 2004, when Gazprom obtained a major stake in Lietuvos Dujos, the country's largest gas importer, and changed the formula for determining the gas price.

Prime Minister Andrius Kubilius noted that German and Polish companies have also initiated legal action against Gazprom.

"In this respect Lithuania is following suit. We have had several talks with Gazprom management and presented clear arguments, but to no avail," he told reporters.

Lithuania imports all its natural gas from Russia and has become more dependent on its eastern neighbor after closing a Soviet-era nuclear power plant in 2009. Since then, Lithuania has paid up to $490 per 1,000 cubic meters of gas, far higher than other European countries, according to the Energy Ministry.

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