

Lithuania Taking Gazprom to Court to Get Better Price

By [The Moscow Times](#)

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VILNIUS — Shareholders of Lithuanian utility Lietuvos Dujos voted on Thursday to seek arbitration over a gas price dispute with sole supplier Gazprom, as it aims to pull down some of the highest prices in Europe.

The move was initiated by the Lithuanian government, which holds 17.7 percent of Lietuvos Dujos, and backed by its biggest shareholder, Germany's E.ON, with 38.9 percent, which shifted its alliance to the government. Gazprom, which has 37.1 percent, voted against.

"An extraordinary shareholders meeting ... has decided to initiate arbitration against natural gas supplier Gazprom in order to lower the too high price of gas," Lietuvos Dujos said in a statement.

The gas utility, the main retail supplier in the nation of 3 million people, said it had failed so far to negotiate more favorable prices from Gazprom, the world's top gas producer and the

supplier of a quarter of Europe's gas needs.

Gas prices to Lithuania were among the highest in the European Union last year, data from the European Commission showed, and exceeded those of its Baltic neighbors.

The Commission has been investigating Gazprom since September 2012 on suspected anti-competitive behaviour, including overcharging customers and blocking rival suppliers.

"Gazprom's supplies to Lietuvos Dujos at much higher prices than to Latvia, Estonia, and higher than for Germany," the energy ministry said in a statement.

"This is harmful to our consumers, our economy, and it also harms Lietuvos Dujos, which loses its customers and faces shrinking gas consumption," it added.

The Lithuanian government had already filed another case against Gazprom before the international arbitration court in Stockholm, seeking compensation of 5 billion Lithuanian litas (\$2 billion) for past pricing.

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