

Ukraine's Naftogaz Slashes Russian Gas Imports in February

By [The Moscow Times](#)

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Ukraine's state oil and gas company, Naftogaz, has slashed gas imports from Russia's Gazprom to 28 million cubic meters per day as of Feb. 24 from 147 million, two Russian industry sources told said Tuesday.

They said Naftogaz had gradually reduced its imports from 147 million cubic meters as of Feb. 1, but did not offer a reason for the cuts.

Upheaval in Ukraine which has seen the opposition take power and the country's president, Viktor Yanukovich, flee over the weekend has stirred fears that Moscow may use gas transit and prices to influence its neighbor.

Prime Minister Dmitry Medvedev hinted on Monday that gas prices, reduced as part of a Russian bailout in December, may revert to higher levels.

Ukraine consumes about 55 billion cubic meters of gas each year, and more than half is imported from Russia. Gazprom exported 161.5 billion cubic meters of gas to Europe last year.

A Gazprom official declined to comment on Naftogaz import volumes but said Russian gas transit to Europe was unaffected.

In December, Russia agreed to reduce the gas price for Kiev to \$268.50 per 1,000 cubic meters, a cut of about one third from about \$400 which Ukraine had paid since 2009. Under the deal, gas prices are revised quarterly.

Eduard Stavytsky, Ukraine's acting energy minister, said on Tuesday that Kiev had paid off \$1.68 billion of its gas debts to Russia as of Feb. 24 out of a total \$3.3 billion in 2013 and 2014.

The last dispute over gas pricing between Russia and Ukraine caused shortages in Europe over the winter of 2009.

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