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Gazprom Says No Payment from Ukraine as Deadline for $2.2Bln Debt Nears

By The Moscow Times

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Ukraine has made no payments to Gazprom despite a midnight deadline to reduce its $2.2 billion debt for natural gas supplies, the Russian gas producer said Monday.

European Union officials will meet Ukraine's energy minister on Tuesday, and will review the bloc's own gas storage levels as fears grow that rising tensions between Moscow and Kiev might lead to a cutoff of gas supplies.

The Ukrainian government says Russia has increased the gas price for Kiev for political reasons in a crisis over Moscow's annexation of Crimea that has fueled East-West tensions.

A Gazprom spokesman declined to say what action, if any, the company would take if Kiev did not meet the deadline — which falls on the seventh day of each month — for settling its monthly bill.

"There have been zero payments from Ukraine," he said.

Ukraine has missed deadlines in the past without punishment but Gazprom has suggested it might ask Kiev to pay in advance for gas if it does not meet the monthly deadline.

Gazprom last week increased the gas price for Ukraine by 80 percent, to $485 per 1,000 cubic meters while it charges European clients between $370 and $380.

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