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Crimean Citizens to Get Russian Gas

By The Moscow Times

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Crimean Prime Minister has previously claimed that President Vladimir Putin encouraged Gazprom to complete peninsula-wide gasification efforts as soon as possible.

Nearly 30 percent of Crimean citizens without access to natural gas could benefit from a rapid gasification program announced by Crimean Prime Minister Sergei Aksyonov and supported by Russian energy company Gazprom.

"Gasification will begin on June 1," Aksyonov said, "I think we can handle it in a year, or a year and two months at maximum," Interfax reported on Wednesday. Aksyonov added that the program should be completed within 12 to 14 months with the help of Gazprom.

The issue of Crimean energy resources was brought into sharp focus following Russia's annexation of the peninsula in March. Crimea was dependent on Kiev for natural gas and other vital resources, and the issue of supply under Moscow is a major question as Russia pursues a variety of programs to integrate the new territory.

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Crimea is also facing a shortage of gasoline and diesel supplies resulting from its annexation, as the majority of its supplies were delivered overland from Ukraine. Russia has not yet been able to resolve the supply issue with the small oil terminal in the port city of Kerch, on the eastern side of the peninsula.

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