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Putin Urges Europe to Do More to Help Ukraine, End Gas Dispute

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President Vladimir Putin urged European Union leaders on Thursday to do more to help Ukraine through its economic crisis and said Moscow was ready for consultations with Europe over Kiev's gas debts.

"The Russian Federation is still open to continue consultations and work together with European countries in order to stabilize the situation," Putin said in a declaration to foreign leaders.

"We also hope that the European Commission will more actively engage in the dialogue in order to work out specific and fair solutions that will help stabilize the Ukrainian economy."

He said state-controlled exporter Gazprom had been forced to demand Ukraine pay in advance for gas as of June after its debt for Russian gas supplies reached $3.5 billion.

Moscow has twice reduced gas supplies to Kiev during price disputes, causing disruptions

in supplies to Europe, which takes about half of the gas it imports from Russia through Ukraine.

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