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Gazprom, ExxonMobil, Oil: Business in Brief

By The Moscow Times

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Gazprom Talks Down Threat of European Gas Supply Disruptions

Gazprom assured European customers it would continue to supply their gas, after its threat to halts supplies to transit nation Ukraine next month over nonpayment.

Any shortfall would be the fault of Ukraine, chief executive Alexei Miller told Russian television.

Russia has warned that it will not supply Ukraine with gas in June unless Kiev pays in advance $1.66 billion by June 2.

"Gazprom will simply supply Ukraine as much as gas as it will have bought, and to the Russian border with Ukraine we will send as much gas as Europe should get and Ukraine should transit," Miller said in an interview on Rossia 24 television.

"It would be our Ukrainian partners' responsibility for a so-called unauthorized off-take. But Gazprom from its part will do everything to ensure that European customers have no problems," Miller said. *(Reuters)*

ExxonMobil Denies Reports of Pullout From Sakhalin-1 Project

U.S. energy giant ExxonMobil has no plans to pull out of the Sakhalin-1 project, an ExxonMobil official said Friday in response to a Russian news report.

Kommersant reported Friday that ExxonMobil might have to pull out of the project to develop the Sakhalin-1 oil and gas field in Russia's Far East if U.S. sanctions against Russia are toughened because of the Ukraine crisis.

"These rumors are groundless. This situation [sanctions] has neither an effect on our activity in Russia, nor on our investment plans in Sakhalin-1. We have no other plans than to go ahead with the project," the official said.

Energy Minister Alexander Novak said he had "no information" that ExxonMobil might leave the project. *(Reuters)*

Russia Aims to Reach Oil-for-Goods Deal With Iran in August

Energy Minister Alexander Novak said Friday that talks with Iranian Oil Minister Bijan Zanganeh in Moscow on Thursday had not produced a final agreement on a potential oil-for-goods deal between the countries.

"We did not reach a final agreement," Novak told reporters, adding that he hoped a deal could be agreed in time for an intergovernmental meeting in the autumn.

Reuters reported in April that Iran and Russia had made progress on a barter deal that could be worth up to $20 billion, under which Moscow would provide equipment and goods in exchange for Iranian oil. *(Reuters)*

EU Energy Commissioner Slams Plans for Sanctions Against Russian Energy Sector

European Energy Commissioner Guenther Oettinger said Friday that Russia is Europe's main trading partner in natural gas and that there should be therefore no sanctions against Moscow's energy sector over the crisis in Ukraine.

Sanctions against the Russian energy sector are "something that is inappropriate," Oettinger told reporters through an interpreter after a meeting of European Union energy ministers in Athens. *(Reuters)*

Steelmaker ArcelorMittal Comes Out Against Russia Sanctions

ArcelorMittal, the world's largest steelmaker, said it opposed sanctions and that the EU steel industry was lobbying the EU not to intensify measures against Russia over its actions in neighboring Ukraine.

The West has threatened to target sanctions at key sectors such as mining and gas if

the Kremlin disrupts Ukrainian elections later this month.

"Our company is not in favor of economic sanctions," Robrecht Himpe, ArcelorMittal Europe's head of business optimization said Thursday, adding that the industry was lobbying against them.

ArcelorMittal said that, as a company, it had not made any representations to governments or government officials over Russian sanctions.

"We have not seen cases where sanctions bring us forward. There is a risk they can snowball and a risk that the other side will fire back." *(Reuters)*

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