

Ukraine Gas Talks Postponed, Russia Says

By [The Moscow Times](#)

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Talks between the European Commission and Russia over the supply of gas to Ukraine have been postponed until next week, the Energy Ministry said Thursday, as ties between Moscow and Brussels hit a new low.

The ministry said the negotiations on resolving a gas pricing dispute between Russia and Ukraine, which has led Gazprom to cut off Ukraine's gas, were postponed at the request of the EU's executive body, the European Commission.

A spokeswoman for the Commission said it had not confirmed the talks, because they did not fit in with Energy Commissioner Günther Oettinger's schedule.

"We are currently looking into possible dates," spokeswoman Sabine Berger said.

Oettinger and Russian Energy Minister Alexander Novak had said they would meet late this

week as part of efforts to restart three-way talks involving Moscow, Kiev and Brussels.

Ukraine depends on Russia for more than half of its gas needs. The nation is also the transit route for about half of the gas Russia supplies to the European Union, which counts on Gazprom for about 30 percent of its consumption.

Previous pricing disputes between Moscow and Kiev resulted in knock-on disruptions for EU customers, but no nation has reported problems since Russia cut supplies to Ukraine last month, and the amount of gas in storage is ample.

The gas row has complicated a wider conflict over Russia's seizure of Ukraine's Crimea region earlier this year and Kiev's decision to seek closer ties with the European Union, rather than Moscow.

Relations worsened on Thursday after the EU and the U.S. announced tougher sanctions on Russia, which Prime Minister Dmitry Medvedev denounced as "evil," and Kiev said a Russian jet had shot down one of its warplanes.

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