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Gas Supply Cuts to Europe See Gazprom's Exports Down 24%

By The Moscow Times

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Gazprom has scaled down its gas deliveries to Poland, Slovakia, Austria and Hungary since September, Reuters reported.

Amid international tensions over the crisis in Ukraine, a steep drop in deliveries to Europe pushed Gazprom's total gas exports down 24 percent in September compared to a year prior, a report by UralSib Capital said Wednesday.

Exports to countries outside the former Soviet Union fell 18.6 percent year-on-year, following declines of 14 percent in July and August, the report said, citing preliminary data gathered by CDU TEK between Sept. 1 and 28. Exports to these areas had grown over the first two quarters of the year by between 1 and 2 percent.

Gazprom has scaled down its gas deliveries to Poland, Slovakia, Austria and Hungary since September, Reuters reported, in what has been widely viewed in the West as an attempt to put pressure on both Europe and Ukraine leading up to the critical winter months.

Gazprom cut off gas deliveries to Ukraine in June after the two sides failed to reach an agreement on the size of Ukraine's gas debt and price for future deliveries. The European Union has sought to mediate the gas conflict, as it receives about a third of its gas from Russia and about half of that volume via Ukraine.

EU member states Hungary, Poland and Slovakia have since been suppling Ukraine with gas, a decision that did not go unnoticed by Gazprom.

Experiencing a drop in gas deliveries, Poland temporarily suspended supplies to Ukraine last month in order to fill up its own tanks. Hungary last week suspended deliveries of gas to Ukraine "indefinitely," the BBC reported. Gazprom shortly after agreed to boost deliveries to Hungary, according to Reuters.

Gazprom head Alexei Miller had said in July that his company could "impose restrictions" if any reverse flow of gas towards Ukraine was detected, while the EU has repeatedly insisted that such deliveries are legal.

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