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Gazprom Wants New EU Negotiations Over Opal Pipeline

By The Moscow Times

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The company logo of Russian natural gas producer Gazprom is seen on an advertisement installed on the roof of a building in St. Petersburg.

Russian natural gas producer Gazprom said Wednesday it had failed to reach a deal at talks with the European Commission on the Opal gas pipeline and wants new negotiations.

The European Union executive had delayed until at least the end of this month a decision on whether to allow Russia greater access to the pipeline in northeastern Germany.

Gazprom has only limited access to the pipeline under a European Union law which seeks to prevent energy suppliers from dominating infrastructure.

"Gazprom is initiating new talks with the newly elected lineup of the European Commission when it is ready," spokesman Sergei Kupriyanov said.

The new Commission takes office on Nov. 1.

Access to the pipeline is important for increasing Russian gas supplies via Nord Stream as Opal runs through Germany to the Czech Republic and connects to Nord Stream.

Western analysts as well as Russian officials have said that giving Russia more access could help improve EU energy security.

Russia, Ukraine and the Commission were meeting in Brussels on Wednesday in the latest round of talks on a dispute over pricing and unpaid debts in which Moscow has halted natural gas supplies to Kiev.

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