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EU Increases Gas Flows to Ukraine

By The Moscow Times

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An engineer oversees the gas distribution system in Kiskundorozsma, 170 kilometres south of Budapest, Jan. 15, 2015.

Ukraine's capacity to import natural gas from European Union countries is set to rise to around 40 million cubic meters (mcm) from 31.5 mcm on Saturday due to improved reverse flow capacity, European energy chief Maros Sefcovic said.

The European Commission has sought to boost EU capacity to switch pipelines to allow deliveries to Ukraine especially from Slovakia as part of efforts to create a stronger energy union in the region.

Ukraine has increasingly looked to the EU to help shore up its gas supplies after years of pricing spats with main supplier Russia, which last year cut off flows to Kiev for almost six months.

"Energy security in particular in central-east and south-east Europe and Ukraine is indivisible and of paramount importance for the European Commission," said Sefcovic, who

is European Vice President for Energy Union.

Reverse flows have received a major boost from the new Budince interconnection point between Slovakia and Ukraine.

Flows between the two countries began last September following a deal between Slovak transmission system operator Eustream and its Ukrainian counterpart Ukrtransgaz.

In addition, EU member Poland can send 4 mcm per day into Ukraine and Hungary has the capacity to send 16 mcm/day, although Polish reverse flows have not been used this year.

Hungarian flows were stopped last September, but resumed on Jan. 10 and are running at around 3 mcm per day, the Commission said.

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