The Moscow Times
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Ukraine's Naftogaz Accuses Russia of Failing to Deliver Pre-Paid Gas

By The Moscow Times

February 24, 2015



An engineer checks the gas distribution system in Beregdaroc, one of several points where Russian gas crosses into the European Union Feb. 10, 2015.

KIEV — Ukrainian state energy firm Naftogaz has accused Russia's Gazprom of failing to supply gas that Kiev had paid for in advance, days after Moscow said it was sending some supplies for Ukraine directly to regions held by rebels.

A dispute over Russian gas supplies and pricing for Ukraine has played out behind the scenes throughout the past year while Ukrainian forces have battled pro-Russian separatists in a war that has killed more than 5,600.

After cutting off Ukraine's gas for six months, Moscow resumed supplies in late-2014 when the two sides signed an interim agreement, under which Kiev would pay off some debt for past deliveries and pre-pay for supplies for the winter.

Naftogaz said Monday that the Russian firm had broken this deal by delivering only 47 million cubic meters (mcm) of a 114 mcm order that Kiev had paid for in advance last Thursday.

The Ukrainian company said it had sent a notice of the breach of contract to the Ukrainian government and the European Commission in Brussels which had helped broker the deal. Russia is Europe's main gas supplier, and the EU is keen to ensure that supplies that transit Ukraine are not interrupted.

Last week Ukraine cut back supplies of gas to regions held by pro-Russian rebels, and Moscow began supplying gas to the separatist regions directly for the first time.

A Gazprom spokesman said at the time that the supplies to the rebel regions were being shipped under the contract with Naftogaz. Gazprom and Russian officials did not immediately respond to a request for comment on Monday.

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