

Greece Hopes for 5 Billion Euros From Russia as Debt Deadline Looms

By [The Moscow Times](#)

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Greek Prime Minister Alexis Tsipras

Greek Prime Minister Alexis Tsipras said Tuesday that Greece was hoping for a 3 billion to 5 billion euro (\$3.3-\$5.5 billion) advance from Russia if it struck a deal with Moscow on the Turkish Stream pipeline project.

Mired in a dispute with European Union and International Monetary Fund (IMF) creditors over debt repayments, Tsipras stepped up diplomatic overtures to Russia this month, visiting Moscow and hosting Alexei Miller, the head of Russia's state-owned gas producer Gazprom, in Athens.

Tsipras hopes to cash in on Russia's decision last year to abandon the South Stream gas pipeline project, which would have entered Europe through Bulgaria, in favor of one that would pipe Russian gas through Turkey to the Greek border beginning in 2019.

Greece is seeking an advance from Russia based on future profits that Athens would earn from shipping gas to Europe. Russia has not committed to providing any funds.

In an interview with Star television on Tuesday, Tsipras said he was confident of an early deal with the EU and IMF, after shaking up his negotiating team and sidelining his outspoken finance minister, Yanis Varoufakis, who has infuriated euro zone partners.

A debt payment to the IMF of about 750 million euros (\$815.5 million) falls due on May 12.

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