

Ukraine Boosts Gas Imports From Slovakia to Replace Russian Volumes

By [The Moscow Times](#)

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KIEV — Ukraine increased its purchase of natural gas imports from Slovakia by 41 percent on Tuesday, boosting its storage supplies, transport monopoly Ukrtransgaz said.

Cash-strapped Ukraine is now buying most of its natural gas from Slovakia after halting imports from Russia three weeks ago due to a pricing dispute.

It was unclear whether the increase on Tuesday was due to price factors or other reasons.

A spokesman for Ukrtransgaz said the company would import 24 million cubic meters (mcm) of Slovakian gas on Tuesday, up from 17 mcm in previous days.

He said Ukraine, which had 12.6 billion cubic meters (bcm) of gas in reserve as of July 21, would pump a total of 40 mcm of gas per day into storage on Tuesday, compared with 30–32

mcm so far this month.

Ukraine's Energy Minister, Volodymyr Demchyshyn, said that pumping at a daily rate of about 30 mcm meant that Ukraine would be around 4 bcm below its reserves target of 18-19 bcm by the start of the cold season in mid-October.

With Ukraine's economy close to bankruptcy due to years of economic mismanagement and fighting against pro-Russian rebels in the country's east, officials say Kiev is facing a shortage of money for gas purchases.

Demchyshyn said the ministry was in talks to borrow \$1 billion from international institutions, including the World Bank and the European Bank for Reconstruction and Development.

"Without attracting resources from abroad we can reach the level of 14.5 bcm and [if we want] to increase it to 19 bcm we will need another \$1 billion," Demchyshyn said in a televised briefing on Tuesday.

Ukrainian energy officials say Ukrtransgaz needs to store about 60 mcm of gas per day to ensure it has enough gas to meet demand during the winter and to guarantee the transit of Russian gas via Ukraine to Europe.

About half of the gas that Europe imports from Russia comes via Ukraine. Ukraine and Russia have said the suspension will not affect gas transit to Europe.

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