

Kremlin Says No Politics in Moldova Gas Talks

By [AFP](#)

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Gazprom Management Committee Chairman Alexei Miller. **Valery Sharifulin / TASS**

The Kremlin said Wednesday that talks with Moldova's pro-European government on gas prices are "exclusively commercial" and denied any political pressure was involved.

Moldovan Deputy Prime Minister Andrei Spinu was due to meet with the head of Russia's state-controlled energy giant Gazprom, Alexei Miller, in St. Petersburg on Wednesday.

Spinu's government has declared a state of emergency and imported gas from outside Russia – its Soviet-era master – for the first time in its history after Gazprom hiked prices for the impoverished country.

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Kremlin spokesman Dmitry Peskov said Wednesday's talks will have an "absolutely

commercial nature."

"There is no politicization here and there cannot be," he said.

Russian President Vladimir Putin said this month that allegations from European capitals that Moscow was using energy as a geopolitical weapon were "politically charged babble that have no grounds."

Moldova's contract with Gazprom ran out at the end of September. A deal has been reached for October but the Moldovan government said Moscow is sending far less gas to the country than usual.

Last week, Russian media reported that Gazprom is threatening to cut the country off if it does not settle its debts and sign a new contract by December.

Before heading to Russia, Spinu said he will demand "transparent and fair prices" from Gazprom at the talks.

Wedged between Romania and Ukraine, the country of 2.6 million receives gas from Russia via its pro-Moscow separatist region of Transnistria and Ukraine.

It signed a contract with Poland for natural gas deliveries this week, in what the government hailed as "the first acquisition of gas from alternative sources in Moldova's history."

Moldova's Prime Minister Natalia Gavrilita – who took office in August and vowed closer ties with the EU – was in Brussels on Wednesday.

She said she will be seeking supplies from EU countries, who are also dealing with skyrocketing gas prices that some in Europe have blamed on Moscow.

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