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Ukraine Says Russia's Gazprom is Creating 'Gas Deficit' in Europe

By AFP

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Gazprom is Russia's monopoly gas exporter. **Sergei Bobylev / TASS**

Ukraine said Wednesday it had complained to the EU against Gazprom, accusing the Russian energy giant of creating "an artificial deficit of gas" in Europe which has resulted in a price surge.

European gas prices rocketed Tuesday to all-time highs on strong winter demand and simmering geopolitical tensions between key supplier Russia and consumer nations.

Europe's reference Dutch TTF gas price jumped nearly 20 percent from Monday to hit 175.00 euros per megawatt hour in early afternoon trading.

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"Gazprom's actions are anti-competitive and have significant negative consequences for all

European consumers," Yuriy Vitrenko, head of Ukraine's state energy company Naftogaz, said in a statement.

"Gazprom sharply reduced its delivery of natural gas to the European spot market, despite growing market demand," Vitrenko added.

He also accused Gazprom of preventing other companies from supplying additional gas to Europe.

Naftogaz said that Gazprom seeks to "create an artificial deficit of gas to pressure the European Union into securing the rapid commissioning of the Nord Stream 2 pipeline."

The Ukrainian company said it filed a complaint with the European Commission against Gazprom "abusing its dominant position on the European gas market."

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The Nord Stream 2 pipeline via the Baltic Sea is set to double supplies of cheap natural gas from Russia to Germany, which the European Union's top economy says is needed to help it transition from coal and nuclear energy.

But critics say Nord Stream 2 will increase Europe's dependence on Russian gas and Ukraine has described the pipeline, which bypasses its territory and deprives it of transit fees, as a "geopolitical weapon".

German Economic Affairs Minister Robert Habeck warned Saturday of "severe consequences" for Nord Stream 2 from Russia to Germany if Moscow attacks Ukraine, amid reports that Moscow has again amassed troops near the border.

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