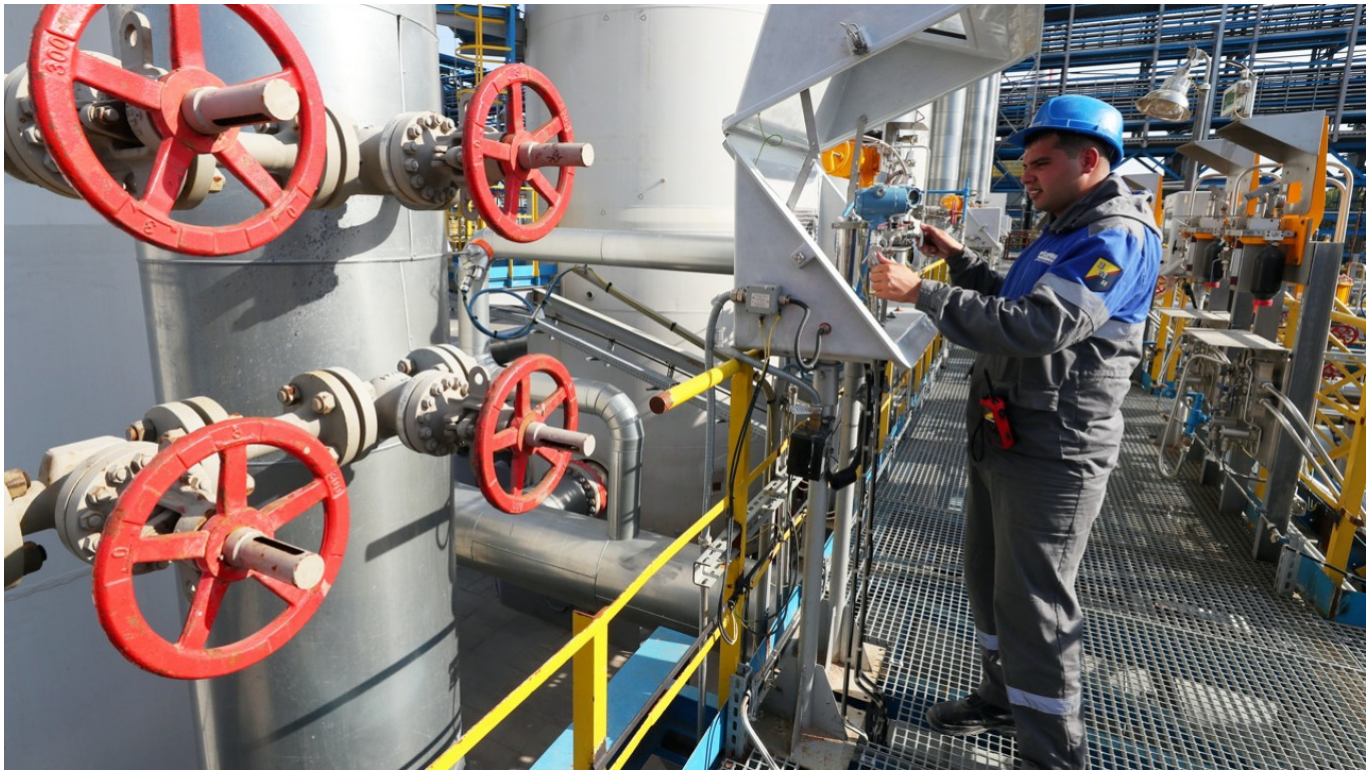
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Russia’s Gazprom Halts Gas Supplies to Poland, Bulgaria

By AFP

April 27, 2022



Slavyanskaya compressor station of the abandoned Nord Stream 2 gas pipeline in Leningrad region, Russia. **Peter Kovalev/TASS**

Russia's energy giant Gazprom said Wednesday it had stopped all gas supplies to Poland and highly dependent Bulgaria after not receiving payment in rubles from the two EU members.

President Vladimir Putin last month said Russia will only accept payment for deliveries in its national currency, with buyers required to set up ruble accounts or have their taps turned off.

Gazprom said in a statement it notified Bulgaria's state-owned gas operator Bulgargaz and Poland's PGNiG gas firm about the "suspension of gas supplies from April 27 until payment is made" in rubles.

"Starting April 1, payments for gas need to be made using new bank details, about which the counterparts were informed in a timely manner," Gazprom said.

The energy giant also warned that if Bulgaria or Poland make an "unauthorized withdrawal" of Russian gas that is transiting to third countries, "supplies for transit will be reduced by this volume."

Related article: Putin Warns EU Nations Need Ruble Accounts to Get Gas

The speaker of Russia's lower house of parliament Vyacheslav Volodin said it was the "right decision" to cut off gas to Poland and Bulgaria, and Russian lawmakers "support it."

The State Duma speaker said the leaders of the two countries did not want to "take advantage" of Putin's proposal to pay in rubles.

"Let them explain to their citizens how they will get out of this situation and whose interests they were guided by when making such a decision," he said.

Both Poland and Bulgaria — which is almost completely dependent on Russia for its annual consumption of gas — said they were notified by Gazprom on Tuesday that supplies would be cut off the next day.

Bulgaria's economy ministry said the country "fully met its obligations and has made all payments required under its current contract in a timely manner."

Prime Minister Mateusz Morawiecki said Poland's gas storage facilities were 76% full and that the country was ready to obtain necessary supplies from sources other than the Yamal pipeline.

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