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EU Imports of Russian LNG Surge to Highest Level Since Ukraine Invasion

By AFP

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Gazprom's Chayanda oil and gas field. **Kirill Kukhmar / TASS**

The European Union's imports of Russian liquefied natural gas climbed to their highest levels since early 2022 in the first quarter of this year, according to a report by the Institute for Energy Economics and Financial Analysis (IEEFA).

Russian gas shipments to Europe by pipeline have largely stopped since the full-scale invasion of Ukraine, and Brussels has committed to ending all imports of Russian oil and gas by the end of 2027.

However, several EU countries, including Belgium, France and Spain, continue to purchase Russian LNG transported by sea tankers.

According to the IEEFA report, the EU imported 6.9 billion cubic meters of Russian gas in the first three months of the year, a 16% increase from the first quarter of last year and the

highest volume since 2022.

The IEEFA told AFP that this trend accelerated in April, with imports rising 17% year-over-year. Russia now maintains its position as the EU's second-largest LNG supplier, accounting for roughly 14% of the total market.

The surge in Russian gas imports comes as governments scramble to secure energy supplies amid the ongoing closure of the Strait of Hormuz, through which a fifth of global oil and gas normally flows.

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To fill the void left by Russian pipeline gas, EU nations have turned aggressively toward the United States, with American LNG imports more than tripling between 2021 and 2025.

In the first quarter of this year alone, imports of U.S. LNG jumped 27%.

Analysts at the institute project that the U.S. will become the EU's largest gas supplier this year and could account for 80% of all LNG imports by 2028, despite American gas being the most expensive option for European buyers.

"Europe's shift from pipeline gas to LNG was meant to provide security of supply and diversification," said Ana Maria Jaller-Makarewicz, the IEEFA's lead energy analyst for Europe.

"Yet disruptions caused by the war in the Middle East and an overreliance on U.S. LNG show that Europe's plan has failed on both counts," she added.

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