
Putin: Gas supplies to Europe could suffer in 3-4 days if Kiev doesn't pay

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“Gazprom has been fully complying with its obligations under the Ukraine gas supply contract and will continue doing that,” Putin told reporters after talks with the president of Cyprus on Wednesday. *“The advance payment for gas supply made by the Ukrainian side will be in place for another three to four days. If there is no further prepayment, Gazprom will suspend supplies under the contract and its supplement. Of course, this could create a certain problem for [gas] transit to Europe to our European partners.”*

However, Putin expressed the hope that it would not come to that, stressing that *“it depends on the financial discipline of our Ukrainian partners.”*

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He noted that Russia's ministers and the CEO of Gazprom have "*actively*" reminded Ukraine of the looming deadline.

On Tuesday, Gazprom's CEO Alexey Miller reminded Ukraine's state-owned Naftogaz of the gas prepayment. Miller said that Ukraine had not paid for March deliveries and warned that Kiev was risking an early termination of the advance settlement and a supply cutoff.

"It takes about two days to get payment from Naftogaz deposited to a Gazprom account. That's why a delivery to Ukraine of 114 million cubic meters will lead to a complete termination of Russian gas supplies as early as in two days, which creates serious risks for the transit to Europe," Miller said.

Putin said that Gazprom had breached no contract terms of gas supplies to border points to eastern parts of Ukraine.

"It has become known to us that Kiev suspended gas supplies [to Lugansk and Donetsk regions] referring to the alleged damage to gas pipelines," Putin said.

"At the same time, Gazprom is fulfilling the contract signed back in 2009 and an addendum to it made in October last year. In full compliance with this contract, it supplies gas to Ukraine under advance payments made for the volumes, which Ukraine needs."

Putin indicated that these contracts also stipulated border points. *"Gazprom is not breaching any provisions,"* he added.

"As for the damage to the gas pipeline, I don't know for certain, but I know that these regions are home to about 4.5 million people. Just imagine that these people may be left without gas supply during the winter period. In addition to the hunger, there as is already stated by the OSCE and the humanitarian disaster, just imagine these people may also be left without gas supply," Putin said.
