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Europe

Head of Ukraine's Naftogaz accuses Russia of blackmailing Europe over gas

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The head of Ukraine's state energy company Naftogaz Yuriy Vitrenko addresses the media during a news conference in Kyiv, Ukraine October 18, 2021. REUTERS/Gleb Garanich

KYIV, Oct 18 (Reuters) - The head of Ukraine's state energy company Naftogaz on Monday said Russia was trying to blackmail Europe into certifying its Nord Stream 2 pipeline by keeping natural gas supplies lower.

Both the Kremlin and gas giant Gazprom have repeatedly said Russia is meeting all the requests for gas supplies from European customers.

"All specialists understand that Gazprom deliberately does not supply additional volumes of gas to the European market," Naftogaz's Yuriy Vitrenko told a televised briefing.

"Everyone understands that this (additional) gas exists, everyone understands that Gazprom is deliberately delaying the supply of this gas, blackmailing Europe in order to obtain the Nord Stream 2 certification," he added.

Vitrenko also said Naftogaz had filed a request with the German regulator for leave to participate in the process for certifying the Nord Stream 2 pipeline.

"Our request for intervention is based on our assessment that the Nord Stream 2 project is in breach of EU law," he said, adding that the pipeline was designed to increase Europe's reliance on Russian gas and weaken European energy security.

Analysts have said that Gazprom has not booked larger volumes in a move to push for the Nord Stream 2 gas pipeline, which is awaiting regulatory clearance from Germany to start gas exports. [read more](#)

At an auction on Monday, Gazprom did not book any additional gas transit volumes via Ukraine for November, but booked about a third of offered additional gas transit capacity

via the Yamal-Europe pipeline via Poland. [read more](#)

The Russian company has the right to book extra transit capacity in addition to already agreed volumes. It has mostly refused to buy significant spare capacity via Ukraine this year.

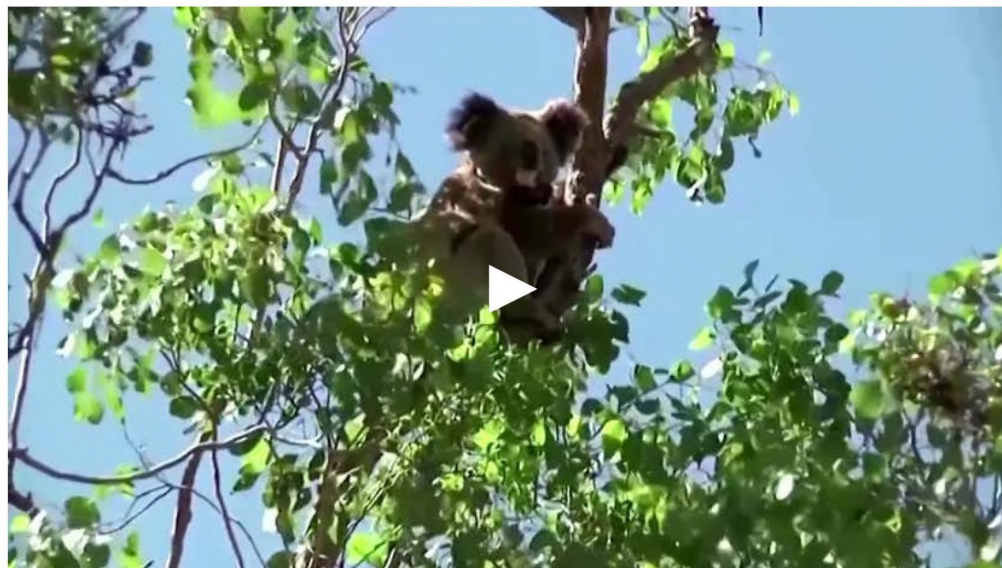
Gazprom and Ukraine agreed a five-year deal on Russian gas transit to Europe at the end of 2019 after prolonged talks, complicated by political tensions between the two ex-Soviet republics.

Vitrenko said Ukraine is able to transit up to 140 billion cubic metres (bcm) of gas to Europe annually, while the volume could stand at around 40 bcm in 2021.

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