



Gas crisis: Is Gazprom really expecting Europe to take its side against Ukraine?

Posted by [Jerome a Paris](#) on January 14, 2009 - 1:00am in [The Oil Drum: Europe](#)

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[Gazprom says Ukraine blocking resumed gas flows](#)

MOSCOW, Jan 13 (Reuters) - Russian gas monopoly Gazprom (GAZP.MM) said Ukraine was blocking gas flows to Europe across Ukrainian territory on Tuesday. "We believed yesterday that the door for Russian gas was open but again it's been blocked by the Ukrainians," Gazprom export chief Alexander Medvedev [said]

It looks to me that Gazprom seems to be thinking that it had successfully managed to put the blame for the conflict on the Ukrainians, and was trying to push its advantage and finally separate the issue of payment for gas delivered to Ukraine from that of the transit of gas (thanks to the European monitors enlisted to put the blame on Ukraine for blocking further gas deliveries).

But it looks like we're back to square one: the Ukrainians will not accept to pay for the portion of the gas delivered by Gazprom, and will still hold transit hostage to impose that. It will be interesting to see Europe's reaction, but I don't see them taking sides in favor of Russia in this conflict.

I presume that Gazprom sees little downside to this, expecting that this will improve the prospects of its direct pipeline projects like Nordstream and Southstream, but this might be a bad miscalculation.

With the nuclear lobby strengthened in recent years, and wind industry actually able to deliver, it's quite possible that plans to move away from gas-fired power generation could finally take shape and make Europe, for almost the first time, focus on the demand side of the equation.

Gazprom's main asset has been its reliability. Its extended shenanigans in Ukraine (where their case, once again, is rather narrow and weak, altogether) are endangering this a lot more than they improve prospects for additional revenue from Ukraine.

Unless, of course, this is still about the sharing of the behind-the-scenes loot. In which case, Europe might wonder how private interests can hijack the highest decision-making levels of a country for so long...

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