

Condoms Disrupt Oil Pipeline Operations

By [The Moscow Times](#)

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The  **Moscow Times**

Condoms and baby pacifiers that ended up in the Druzhba pipeline broke oil meters and disrupted the pipeline's operations, Vedomosti reported Monday, as cited by Interfax.

Oil metering stations in the Slovak and Czech portions of the Druzhba pipeline, which pumps Russian oil to Europe, are out of order, an employee of one of the pipeline's operators told the publication.

The employee said operators noticed that the meters suddenly started to demonstrate much higher volumes of pumped oil than could pass through in a single moment.

Operators powered down the devices and launched the reserve systems. In doing so, they discovered condoms and pacifiers.

The unexpected finds, which happened Oct. 7 and Oct. 8, disrupted the operations of Slovak pipeline operator Transpetrol and later those of Hungarian operator MOL.

Domokos Szollar, a representative of MOL, confirmed that there was damage to the metering devices but said there were no shutdowns in the system. Szollar did not tell the newspaper what caused the problem.

Russian pipeline monopoly Transneft told Vedomosti that oil meters in Serbia and Hungary were out of order.

"We are aware of these breakdowns. We know that they are connected with rubber objects discovered in the oil flow," Transneft spokesman Igor Dyomin said.

He added that there have been no such problems in Russia, Ukraine or Belarus.

Transneft believes that the items were thrown in with additives that improve oil flow. In Dyomin's opinion, it was no accident that the rubber items ended up in the pipeline.

"For example, in Dagestan, where they steal oil, they pump water into the pipe under high pressure," he said. "In this case, rubber objects were thrown in, which led to a breakdown in oil metering devices. Therefore, it would be impossible to track how much oil was pumped out."

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