

# Tymoshenko's Tax Trial Delayed Until March 5

By [The Moscow Times](#)

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KIEV — A Ukrainian court on Tuesday delayed the tax evasion and embezzlement trial of former Prime Minister Yulia Tymoshenko after she refused to attend the hearings, citing poor health.

Tymoshenko, the main political opponent of President Viktor Yanukovich, was sentenced to seven years in prison in October 2011 in a separate abuse-of-

office trial but has been treated in a state-run hospital since last May for back trouble. Her case has soured Ukraine's diplomatic ties, with many in the West viewing it as an example of selective justice and urging her release.

"The hearings are delayed until March 5," Interfax quoted Judge Kostyantyn Sadovsky as telling the court in the city of Kharkiv.

Tymoshenko's second trial, based on charges that date back to the 1990s when she ran a large gas trading business, has been repeatedly delayed since last April due to her refusal to attend.

Her initial conviction was related to a 2009 gas supply deal with Russia that she brokered as prime minister. Yanukovich's government says the contract saddled Ukraine with exorbitantly priced fuel and is dragging down the economy.

In the second case, she has been charged with dodging taxes and plotting to embezzle state funds.

Later this week, another Ukrainian court is due to start pretrial hearings in a third case against Tymoshenko for allegedly ordering a contract killing of a local businessman and parliament deputy in 1996.

Tymoshenko, 52, one of the leaders of the 2004 Orange Revolution protests that derailed Yanukovich's first bid for presidency, has dismissed all charges against her as a vendetta by the president.

Tymoshenko has served twice as prime minister since the Orange protests and ran against Yanukovich in the 2010 presidential election, losing in a close run-off.

After her initial conviction, the European Union shelved planned landmark deals with Ukraine on political association and free trade.

Brussels has said it could sign the agreements this year if Ukraine addresses the issue of selective justice along with other concerns.

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