

Deal Made With EU on Gas Pipeline Use

By [The Moscow Times](#)

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European Union officials and Russia have agreed on a deal on the use of Germany's OPAL link to Gazprom's Nord Stream gas pipeline, a Russian energy ministry spokeswoman said.

No one from the European Commission was available for immediate comment on the deal, which ends months of talks on the OPAL pipeline that runs from the offshore section of Nord Stream through Germany to the Czech border.

A deal could help improve tense relations between Russia and the EU, although the bigger issue of the European Commission's competition investigation into Gazprom is unresolved.

"The ministry and the EU have reached an agreement on the OPAL pipeline. The agreement is to the satisfaction of both sides. They aim to sign the deal by the end of October," a Russian spokeswoman said late Monday.

Two EU sources, speaking on condition of anonymity, said a working party meeting had reached a political deal, which still needed legal endorsement.

Neither the Russian ministry nor the EU sources disclosed details and would not say whether Russia was getting the full access to the pipeline that it had been demanding.

Relations between Russia and the European Union have been soured by EU efforts to introduce more competition and reduce Russian dominance of the bloc's gas market.

Gazprom's access to the 470-kilometer OPAL pipeline has been limited because of the EU's Third Energy Package legislation, which aims to prevent firms that already dominate supply from also controlling transport networks.

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