

Kiev Sending Representatives to Moscow to Talk Gas Payments

By [The Moscow Times](#)

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KIEV — Ukraine's energy minister acknowledged Wednesday that the country might have fallen behind in payments for monthly supplies of Russian gas but said he expected the matter to be settled with Moscow very soon.

Russian gas export monopoly Gazprom said Tuesday that Ukraine, which relies heavily on supplies of Russian gas, had failed to settle a \$882 million bill for August deliveries and demanded it be paid urgently.

Speaking to journalists, the Ukrainian minister, Eduard Stavitsky, said: "We have always paid up in dealings with our partners, and we will pay this time as well. ... Occasionally there can be, of course, misunderstandings and issues over timing. So there have been slight delays in payments."

Announcing a Naftogaz team was going to Moscow, he said he expected the matter to be

settled "today, at the latest tomorrow."

The new gas row with Russia has flared amid tension over Ukraine's plans to sign landmark agreements with the European Union on association and free trade next month — something that has dismayed its former Soviet master.

Obliquely referring to this, Stavitsky said, "I hope our partners will act according to business interests and not according to political ones."

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