

Germany raps U.S. over astronomical gas prices amid energy crisis

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Germany's Economy Minister Robert Habeck

Berlin, October 7 (RHC)-- The German economy minister has criticized the United States for charging too much for its gas exports to the country, which is trying to wean itself off Russian gas supplies. "Some countries, even friendly ones, are achieving astronomical prices in some cases," Robert Habeck told the Neue Osnabruecker Zeitung newspaper. "This naturally brings problems with it, which we have to talk about," he added.

Russia has either choked up or lessened its gas exports to the rest of the Europe in protest at the continent's sanctions against Moscow over its February-present military operation in Ukraine. Early last month, Russia said gas supplies to Europe via the Nord Stream 1 pipeline would not resume in full until the Western countries reached a collective decision and lifted sanctions.

Making the announcement, the Kremlin spokesman, Dmitry Peskov, blamed the European Union, the UK, and Canadian sanctions for Russia's failure to deliver gas through the key pipeline. He said the sanctions had caused a "pumping problem" by preventing the pipeline's units from being duly serviced.

The Nord Stream 1 and 2 gas pipelines link Russia and Europe via the Baltic Sea. Later in September, the pipelines were hit by unexplained leaks. Moscow put the onus on the West and its sanctions again, with Peskov saying, "It is the collective West -- in this case the European Union, Canada and Britain -- that are to blame for the situation reaching this point."

Russia used to supply 55 percent of Germany's gas. To fill the gap, Berlin has started investing in the more expensive liquefied natural gas (LNG). Now, Germany and its fellow EU members depend on the US, which is currently providing 45 percent of the continent's LNG supplies.

"The US turned to us when oil prices shot up, and as a result national oil reserves were also tapped in Europe," Habeck said. "I think such solidarity would also be good for curbing gas prices," he added.

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