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Energy Envoy Václav Bartuška is trying to derail the multibillion-dollar gravy train that Russian and Ukrainian officials in the natural-gas business have been riding. He indicated on [Czech Radio](#) that although the two countries are embroiled in a gas dispute, they've been colluding to extort \$4.2bn from the EU to fill Ukraine's storage tanks. Another big crisis is looming this winter, he said, because too many people are stealing too much gas money over there. He argued that the EU shouldn't give Ukraine a single dollar, because it's Gazprom's duty to deliver its gas to the EU's door. The question, though, is whether the EU will heed his words. What will it do if importers like RWE are slapped with big take-or-pay penalties by Gazprom because industrial customers are unable to honor their own take-or-pay gas contracts? A payoff to Kiev might avoid a chain reaction with ugly consequences for everyone.

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