

Gas Transit Pipeline Explodes in Ukraine

By [RT](#)

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An explosion has struck a pipeline in the central Ukrainian Poltava region. Witnesses say flames from the blast are up to 200 meter high.

“The explosion occurred at about 14:45 local time in a field,” the local police press-service said in a statement. Due to the “flame and the high temperatures,” it was “impossible to get closer to the epicenter.”

The “Brotherhood” natural gas pipeline (Urengoy-Pomary-Uzhgorod) is about one kilometer away from the nearest settlement. No injuries have been reported from the blast. Fire fighting crews have been deployed to the scene.

The blaze, which according to the Interior Ministry towered 100 meters high, was put out by “between 4 and 5 pm.”

Pipeline faucets have been temporary turned off, but transit of Russian gas to Europe is being realized through a reserve pipeline.

A preliminary investigation found the explosion was caused by ‘pipeline depressurization’.

Ukraine’s Interior Ministry also cites possible “terrorism” – based on locals “hearing two loud booms before the fire.”

But within just an hour of the blast Ukraine’s acting Interior Minister Arsen Avakov blamed Russia.

The Ministry [statement](#) decried “Sabotage of a gas pipeline in the Poltava region” as “another attempt by Russia to discredit Ukraine as a gas partner” but didn’t back up such a strong accusation with any additional information.

Operating since 1967, the “Brotherhood” is the largest consumer gas pipeline in Europe, clocking in at 4,451 km. It cuts through Ukraine and runs into Slovakia, where it diverges in two directions; with one part supplying gas to the Czech Republic, Germany, France and Switzerland, and the other to Austria, Italy, Hungary and several countries in the Balkans.

The aftermath of the gas pipeline explosion in Ukraine
pic.twitter.com/DNJSHG4oSY

— Russian Market (@russian_market) [June 17, 2014](#)

Whether the explosion affects gas supplies to Europe will be seen in the coming days, Russian gas giant Gazprom has said. At the same time, Ukrainian state gas pipeline and depot operator Ukrtransgas insists that the accident will not affect transit of Russian gas to European consumers. “[The explosion] clearly did not affect the gas flow,” a Ukrtransgaz spokesman said.

The Poltava region, where Ukraine’s oil and natural gas industry is concentrated, lies in the center of the country. This territory is under the protection of the Ukrainian army and has not been the scene of fighting between anti-government militias and government forces. Back in March, the leader of ultranationalist group Right Sector, Dmitry Yarosh, threatened to [destroy](#) Russian pipelines on Ukrainian territory to “deprive our enemy [Russia] of its source of income.”



Videos are available here: <http://rt.com/news/166532-gas-pipeline-blast-ukraine/>

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