

Yanukovych to Skip EU Event

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KIEV — Ukrainian President Viktor Yanukovych may visit Moscow on the day of a European Union-Ukraine summit in Kiev next month, a source in his administration said Wednesday after the bloc exerted pressure over a jailed opposition leader.

The sides planned to initial agreements on political association and trade at a summit on Dec. 19, but Brussels has warned Ukraine that the deals may be jeopardized if Yanukovych's foe, former Prime Minister Yulia Tymoshenko, remains in jail.

"Yanukovych may visit the EurAsEC council meeting in Moscow on Dec. 19," the source said without elaborating or disclosing whether this would rule out his participation in the EU summit. EurAsEC is a Russian-led economic bloc made up of several former Soviet republics where Ukraine has an observer status.

Tymoshenko was sentenced to seven years in prison last month for overstepping her powers in forcing through a 2009 gas deal with Russia. She has denied any wrongdoing and said the trial was part of Yanukovych's campaign to neutralize the opposition.

The EU has largely sided with Tymoshenko, saying it regarded her prosecution as politically

motivated and calling for her release so that she could compete in the 2012 parliamentary election.

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