

Spokesman Denies Putin Will Skip Russia-EU Summit

By [The Moscow Times](#)

November 12, 2012

The  Moscow Times

President Vladimir Putin will attend a Russia-EU summit next month, his spokesman said Monday, denying a report that Putin might send Minister Dmitry Medvedev in his stead.

"This statement in Nezavisimaya Gazeta is incorrect," spokesman Dmitry Peskov said, according to Itar-Tass.

Asked whether Putin planned to travel to Brussels to take part in the Dec. 21 summit, Peskov said he did.

Nezavisimaya Gazeta reported Monday that the EU side did not expect Putin to show up for the summit. Putin has traveled little from his suburban Moscow residence in recent weeks amid talk about back trouble and a CIS summit that Putin was supposed to attend but was postponed.

"We have information from the Russian delegation that Vladimir Putin will be absent at the summit," an EU source told Nezavisimaya Gazeta. "Can you imagine how this will look? European countries will be represented by leaders, and from Russia we'll have Medvedev."

European lawmakers have said they want the summit agenda to include tough questions about the 2009 prison death of anti-corruption whistle-blower Sergei Magnitsky, Russia's parliamentary and presidential elections, and a crackdown on opposition activists.

The last Russia-EU summit was held in St. Petersburg on June 2 and 3. At that summit, which Putin attended, participants addressed the economic crisis in Europe, civil unrest in Syria, Iran's nuclear program and other issues.

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