

Foreign Ministry Criticizes EU on Human Rights Ahead of Summit

By [The Moscow Times](#)

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The Foreign Ministry said Wednesday that respect for human rights was declining in the European Union, turning the tables once again on the West and its criticism of Moscow's rights record.

"We are seeing a certain deterioration in regard to safeguards on human rights in the EU member states," Konstantin Dolgov, the Foreign Ministry's special representative for human rights, said at a news conference. "Undoubtedly, during a financial and economic crisis, solving these problems will not become any easier."

He made his comments before leaving for Brussels to meet his EU counterpart, Stavros Lambrinidis.

European leaders have expressed concern over the jailing of members of punk band Pussy Riot, prosecutions of opposition figures and laws restricting protests and foreign-funded

organizations since President Vladimir Putin started a third term in May.

Putin, who is expected to meet EU leaders later this month for a twice-yearly summit, has said the West has no right to lecture Russia on human rights or use its concerns as an instrument of political pressure.

After years of Western criticism, the Foreign Ministry issued a report on human rights in other countries for the first time last year, focusing on allegations of abuse by U.S. authorities.

Dolgov was presenting the ministry's first report dealing solely with human rights in the EU, where Russia has complained of mistreatment of Russian-born children adopted in the EU and accused some bloc members of mistreating Russian-speaking minorities.

The report also cited allegations of abusive treatment of detainees, poor prison conditions and discrimination against ethnic minorities and migrant workers.

Dolgov said the EU should take more action to combat "all this ugliness that is unfortunately taking place and continuing in the European Union members in terms of not observing human rights, not observing democratic standards and in terms of not following the rule of law."

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