The Moscow Times
30 YEARS
INDEPENDENT NEWS FROM RUSSIA

European Lawmakers Accuse Russia of Blocking Eastern Partnership on EU Agreements

By The Moscow Times

September 12, 2013



Saryusz-Wolski said that the European Parliament has agreed on measures to support Eastern Partnership countries under pressure from Russia.

Several senior European Parliament members have accused Russia of imposing sanctions on the Eastern Partnership (EaP) countries to prevent them from signing trade and visa agreements with the European Union.

European parliamentarians called for sanctions against Russia in light of its bans imposed this year on Moldovan wine, Ukrainian sweets and Belarussian pork. Russia's alleged manipulation of energy prices and its meddling in Armenia's relations with Turkey and the breakaway region of Nagorno-Karabakh have also been called into question.

The calls for sanctions came on the eve of the two-day EaP Summit in Vilnius, which started

Thursday. The Eastern Partners include Belarus, Ukraine, Moldova, Georgia, Armenia and Azerbaijan.

The European Parliament passed a resolution supported by five political groups that proposes taking several measures against Russia, including an embargo on the import of its spirits by EU countries, and a complaint to the World Trade Organization about "Gazprom's abuse of its dominant position on the EU gas market and its price manipulation to the detriment to EU consumers," parliament member Jacek Saryusz-Wolski said on his website.

Another measure involves building interconnected energy and gas grids to help deliver energy to countries being pressed by Russia, said Saryusz-Wolski, chairman of the parliament's delegation for relations with the NATO Parliamentary Assembly. He also suggested opening European markets to EaP goods, for example, wine.

Saryusz-Wolski described Russia's economic policies toward EaP countries as "pressure" that is "clearly in violation of WTO rules and encroaches upon EU interests."

In addition, Russia is "contesting" the European Union's desire to sign trade-liberalizing Association Agreements with the EaP, Saryusz-Wolski said.

Pawel Kowal, chairman of the EU-Ukraine Parliamentary Cooperation Committee, said that he supported Association Agreements and that it was "necessary to lift trade and visa barriers," with EaP countries, Interfax-Ukraine reported.

Elmar Brok, chairman of the parliament's Foreign Affairs Committee, said in parliament Wednesday that Russia's exploitation of "energy prices as an instrument for blocking a country's free choice" was "unacceptable."

Brok urged EaP countries to sign Association Agreements with the EU.

Libor Roucek, a Foreign Affairs Committee member, echoed his colleague's sentiments, saying "We don't need new cold wars in Europe," Interfax-Ukraine reported.

Original url:
https://www.themoscowtimes.com/2013/09/12/european-lawmakers-accuse-russia-of-blocking-eastern-partnership-on-eu-agreements-a27613