

Yanukovych Urges EU Deal at UN

By [The Moscow Times](#)

September 25, 2013

The  Moscow Times

Ukrainian President Viktor Yanukovych continued to push for his country's integration into the European Union and increased standing in the United Nations during a visit to New York for the 68th session of the UN General Assembly this week.

Yanukovych called European integration the “defining vector of development” for Ukraine in an address to the assembly, adding that an agreement on association and free trade with the EU would be “an important instrument for increasing the prosperity of Ukrainian citizens,” RIA Novosti reported.

In spite of the fierce opposition of Russia, which is trying by fair means and foul to pull Ukraine into a customs union of ex-Soviet states, Yanukovych confirmed plans to sign the agreement at November's Eastern Partnership conference in Vilnius, Lithuania during a meeting Tuesday with the presidents of Poland, Slovakia, Estonia, Latvia, Bulgaria, Croatia and Slovenia.

While former Ukrainian Prime Minister Yulia Tymoshenko is still in prison, however, the deal

is far from certain. Tymoshenko is presently serving a seven-year sentence for abuse of office on charges that the EU considers to be politically motivated.

Yanukovich told journalists Wednesday that the matter would be decided only after Pat Cox and Aleksander Kwasniewski of the European Parliament announced the results of their monitoring of Tymoshenko's trial on Oct. 21.

Russia, Ukraine's largest trading partner, responded to news of the potential agreement with threats to impose "protective" economic measures against a hypothetical influx of cheap goods. In August, Russia demonstrated its ability to cause chaos by employing stringent border checks that virtually shut down Ukrainian imports for a six day period.

Possibly in an effort to appease Russia, Ukrainian Prime Minister Mykola Azarov said Wednesday that his country was ready to join almost 70 agreements signed by members of Russia's customs union.

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