Russian Border Checks Tightened, Ukrainian Truckers Say

By The Moscow Times

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Russia has tightened up its customs controls on the border with Ukraine, holding up commercial shipments in measures similar to those witnessed last fall, Ukraine's international trucking association has said.

Russia's new restrictions, which came into force amid ongoing protests in Ukraine against its Moscow-backed government, took effect Tuesday, "according to unofficial information," the trucking association said in a statement posted to their website

The heightened checks have caused Ukrainian trucks with export shipments to line up at the border, where Russia may keep them for up to 15 days while it processes customs paperwork, the statement on the association's website said.

Similar restrictions were enacted on the border between the two countries last August, when

Russia was asserting political pressure on Ukraine to abandon its planned association deal with the European Union in favor of closer ties with Moscow.

Ukraine finally pulled out of the EU deal in November, prompting massive street protests that soon turned against the administration of President Viktor Yanukovych.

Moscow had offered Yanukovych's government a $15 billion loan in December, and President Vladimir Putin told an EU–Russian summit in Brussels on Wednesday that the Kremlin was planning to deliver on its promise, despite Yanukovych's recent dismissal of the Cabinet in a concession to the protesters.