The Moscow Times
30 YEARS
INDEPENDENT NEWS FROM RUSSIA

Putin Recognizes Crimea as a 'Sovereign and Independent' State

March 18, 2014

Vladimir Putin has formally recognized Crimea as independent state.

President Vladimir Putin has formally recognized Crimea as independent state, after the overwhelming majority of the peninsula's voters chose to secede from Ukraine and join Russia.

In a decree published on the Kremlin website late Monday night, Putin said that "taking into account the will expressed by the people of Crimea" at the Sunday referendum, the republic of Crimea should be recognized "as a sovereign and independent state."

The decree, which was effective immediately, paves the way for the possible absorption of Crimea into Russia, said Dmitry Vyatkin, the State Duma envoy to the Constitutional Court, RIA Novosti reported.

"The recognition of independence is a step toward the subsequent procedures, specified by the federal constitutional law about the procedure of incorporating into the Russian Federation of new regions," Vyatkin said.

The Ukrainian government, European Union countries and the U.S. have all decried the balloting as a sham. Voters were given just two weeks to contemplate their choices, amid the heavy presence of Russian troops, and with television coverage limited to Russia's state-run broadcasters.

The referendum ballots gave voters no option for voting against joining Russia, with the choices on the ballot limited to secession to Russia or rewriting Crimea's constitution to give the region greater autonomy from Ukraine.

More than 83 percent of Crimea's eligible voters cast ballots in the referendum, most of them ethnic Russians. Nearly 97 percent of the votes were in favor of joining Russia, Crimean election officials said.

Original url:
https://www.themoscowtimes.com/2014/03/18/putin-recognizes-crimea-as-a-sovereign-and-independent-state-a33064