

Putin Tells Investment Forum Russia Wants Good Ties, Respect

By [The Moscow Times](#)

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President Vladimir Putin told foreign businessmen on Thursday that Russia wanted to improve ties with other countries but must be treated as an equal and its interests respected.

"Russia is ready to broaden multi-faceted contacts with all partners on the basis of true equality and respect for one another's interests," Putin said in a telegram welcoming participants to the St. Petersburg International Economic Forum.

He is due to attend the forum, Russia's answer to Davos, on Friday. A showcase event that is meant to tell investors and governments that Russia is open for business, the conference is being held this year during a standoff with the West over the future of the former Soviet republic of Ukraine.

The United States and European Union have imposed sanctions on officials, lawmakers and companies close to Putin over Russia's annexation of Crimea from Ukraine and could impose

more if Moscow disrupts Ukraine's presidential election on Sunday.

Putin's statement reiterated a main plank of Russia's foreign policy by demanding equal treatment from the United States and others, and saying it will not sacrifice its interest for the sake of better ties.

Putin suggested that Russia does not want to be isolated.

"Only by acting together, taking account of mutual interests and building on the constructive ties that have been established over decades can the international community move forward and provide for further global development," he said.

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