

Russia Quits Cooperation with 'Russophobic' Council of Europe Assembly

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Debating Chamber in Strasbourg, where the Assembly meets when it's in plenary session.

Russia has suspended cooperation with the Parliamentary Assembly of the Council of Europe in a tit-for-tat move, accusing the council of making "xenophobic statements" and staging a "parade of Russophobia."

Head of Russia's delegation to the council, Alexei Pushkov, told newspaper Izvestia on Tuesday Russia would abstain from participating in the upcoming sessions of the body, known as PACE, until the sanctions imposed on its delegation over the political situation in Ukraine were lifted.

The announcement comes a week after State Duma Speaker Sergei Naryshkin sent the European body a letter asking for the rights of the council's Russian delegation to be

returned in a bid to "restore trust."

Asked in the Izvestia interview what Russia stood to lose by temporarily suspending cooperation with PACE, Pushkov said Russia would only miss out on "a parade of Russophobia."

"[Russia] will not be listening anymore to statements on how democratic the Kiev regime is," Pushkov, who also heads the State Duma's international affairs committee, said, "or how no one in Ukraine wants federalization, how there are no fascist organizations there and that the country is as 'united as ever.' "

"We also lose out on the chance to listen to xenophobic statements: like "the Russian people are very kind — they first offer you tea, and will then put a knife into you," Pushkov said.

The sanctions imposed by PACE in April due to the country's annexation of Crimea, stripped the Russian delegation of the right to vote and banned it from participating in its ruling bodies and monitoring missions until January 2015.

PACE unites parliament deputies from 47 European countries that meet four times a year to give recommendations on human rights and other issues, and also elect judges of the European Court of Human Rights.

Russia contributes 23 million euros to the Council of Europe's budget annually, making it one of top five donors. Following the sanctions, the Russian delegation hinted it might ask to retract this year's contribution.

See also:

[Naryshkin Urges Council of Europe to Take Russia Back](#)

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