

Poland Cancels Year of Bilateral Celebration With Russia Over Ukraine

By [The Moscow Times](#)

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Ukraine's Prime Minister Arseny Yatseniuk (R) talks with Poland's Foreign Minister Radoslaw Sikorski during their meeting in Kiev, Ukraine.

2015 was meant to be a year devoted to the celebration of Polish and Russian cultural ties, but due to the increasingly dismal situation in Ukraine, Poland has called off the festivities.

"This is a decision of the government. Foreign Minister Radoslaw Sikorski and Culture Minister Małgorzata Omilanowska categorically decided that in the current political situation, and because of everything that is happening in Ukraine, in a situation in which a plane has been shot down, it will be impossible to hold the Year of Poland in Russia," the BBC reported Thursday, citing government spokeswoman Małgorzata Kidawa-Błońska.

As a result of the government's decision, all events that were set to be held as part of the year of bilateral celebration will be cancelled.

The Russian-Polish cross-cultural year was set in motion at a meeting between the two countries' foreign ministers in December 2013 in Warsaw. Its aim was to strengthen cultural ties between the two countries.

In the aftermath of the downing of Malaysia Airlines Flight 17 last week, a catastrophe that claimed 298 lives, Poland joined the chorus of other Western countries accusing Russia of having destabilized Ukraine and perpetuated the conflict in its east.

The European Union and the U.S. have imposed several rounds of sanctions against Russian officials over the ongoing crisis in Ukraine, which has intensified exponentially following Russia's annexation of Crimea in March.

After a much-disputed referendum was held to decide Crimea's fate, similar referendums were launched in other cities in eastern Ukraine, where pro-Russian separatists have taken up arms and refused to recognize the new authorities in Kiev, calling instead for integration into Russia.

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