

Putin and Merkel Stress Importance of Ukraine Cease-Fire in Phone Call

By [The Moscow Times](#)

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German Chancellor Angela Merkel (L) talks to Russian President Vladimir Putin as Ukrainian President Petro Poroshenko watches on, June 6, 2014.

Russian President Vladimir Putin and German Chancellor Angela Merkel have discussed the importance of maintaining the cease-fire in Ukraine in a phone conversation, the Kremlin said in a statement.

"The development of the Ukraine situation has been discussed, including the meticulous maintenance of the cease-fire by the sides of the inter-Ukrainian conflict and the efficient truce monitoring on behalf of the Organization for Security and Cooperation in Europe (OSCE)," the statement said Monday.

A spokesman for the German government, Steffen Seibert, said the two discussed the implementation of agreements made in Minsk on Sept. 5 about the peace plan for eastern Ukraine.

Merkel made clear to Putin that the complete withdrawal of Russian troops and securing the Russian-Ukrainian border were crucial for ensuring a solution to the conflict, Seibert said.

Merkel welcomed the compromise on free trade struck during trilateral discussions between Russia, Ukraine and the European Union, and called for the talks to continue, including on the gas price conflict between Russia and Ukraine, he said.

The European Union and Ukraine agreed Friday to delay the implementation of their free-trade pact until the end of 2015 in a concession to Russia, which is at loggerheads with Kiev over the conflict in eastern Ukraine.

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