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# More EU Sanctions Against Russia 'Unlikely' Despite Ukraine Tensions

By The Moscow Times

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European Union foreign ministers are unlikely to step up sanctions against Russia next week over its involvement in destabilizing eastern Ukraine, EU diplomats said Wednesday.

EU foreign ministers meet on Monday in Brussels and Ukraine, which said it was redeploying troops in the east because of fears separatists will launch a new military offensive, is the main topic on their agenda.

A cease-fire agreed by the pro-Russian rebels and government forces more than two months ago is now all but dead, and Western fears of a return to all-out conflict are growing.

"The council [of foreign ministers] will not go for further sanctions despite turmoil and elections," one EU diplomat said and two others expressed similar views.

U.S. General Philip Breedlove, NATO's Supreme Allied Commander Europe, said the alliance had seen Russian troops and tanks entering Ukraine in the past few days, confirming reports

by international observers.

"The existing sanctions are painful for Russia, and they are likely to be sharpened only if the EU has no other choice," a second EU diplomat said. "We are not there yet, although at some point we might be."

The Sept. 5 cease-fire followed weeks of fierce fighting between government forces and separatists who rebelled in mainly Russian-speaking eastern Ukraine against the rule of Kiev's Western-looking government eight months ago.

The truce has been violated daily, and increasingly since the rebels held what the West and Ukrainian President Petro Poroshenko said were illegitimate leadership elections on Nov. 2. The death toll has passed 4,000 since the truce was agreed, with Kiev accusing Moscow of sending more troops last week.

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