The Moscow Times
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INDEPENDENT NEWS FROM RUSSIA

Germans Don't Want More Sanctions Against Russia

By The Moscow Times

November 20, 2014



An exterior view of the German embassy in Moscow.

Most Germans oppose further economic sanctions against Russia, with many in the country's former communist east calling for the sanctions to be lifted altogether, a survey by German pollster Infratest dimap found.

Public opinion in Germany, the European Union's largest economy and Russia's biggest trading partner in the bloc, may be key to shaping the EU's sanctions strategy. German Chancellor Angela Merkel has spearheaded Europe's response to the Ukraine crisis.

When asked what should be done with U.S. and EU sanctions, 43 percent of respondents said the current sanctions are "appropriate," and 27 percent said they should be canceled altogether. Only 19 percent supported expanding the measures, which are meant to pressure Russia into ceasing support for separatists in eastern Ukraine.

Support for canceling sanctions varies across the country: 38 percent of eastern Germans polled wanted to see the measures lifted, while only 23 percent of western Germans did.

But while citizens may be against further sanctions, Merkel appears to be moving in the other direction. The German leader said the European Union is now considering further economic sanctions at a G20 summit in Brisbane earlier this month.

The sanctions have hit Germany particularly hard, bringing exports to Russia down more than 26 percent in August compared with the same period in 2013, according to Germany's Statistics Office.

The study surveyed 1,023 people across Germany aged 18 years or older on Nov. 17-19. The margin of error did not exceed 3.1 percent.

Original url:
https://www.themoscowtimes.com/2014/11/20/germans-dont-want-more-sanctions-against-russia-a41609