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Russian Delegation Awaits New Decision on PACE Voting Rights

By The Moscow Times

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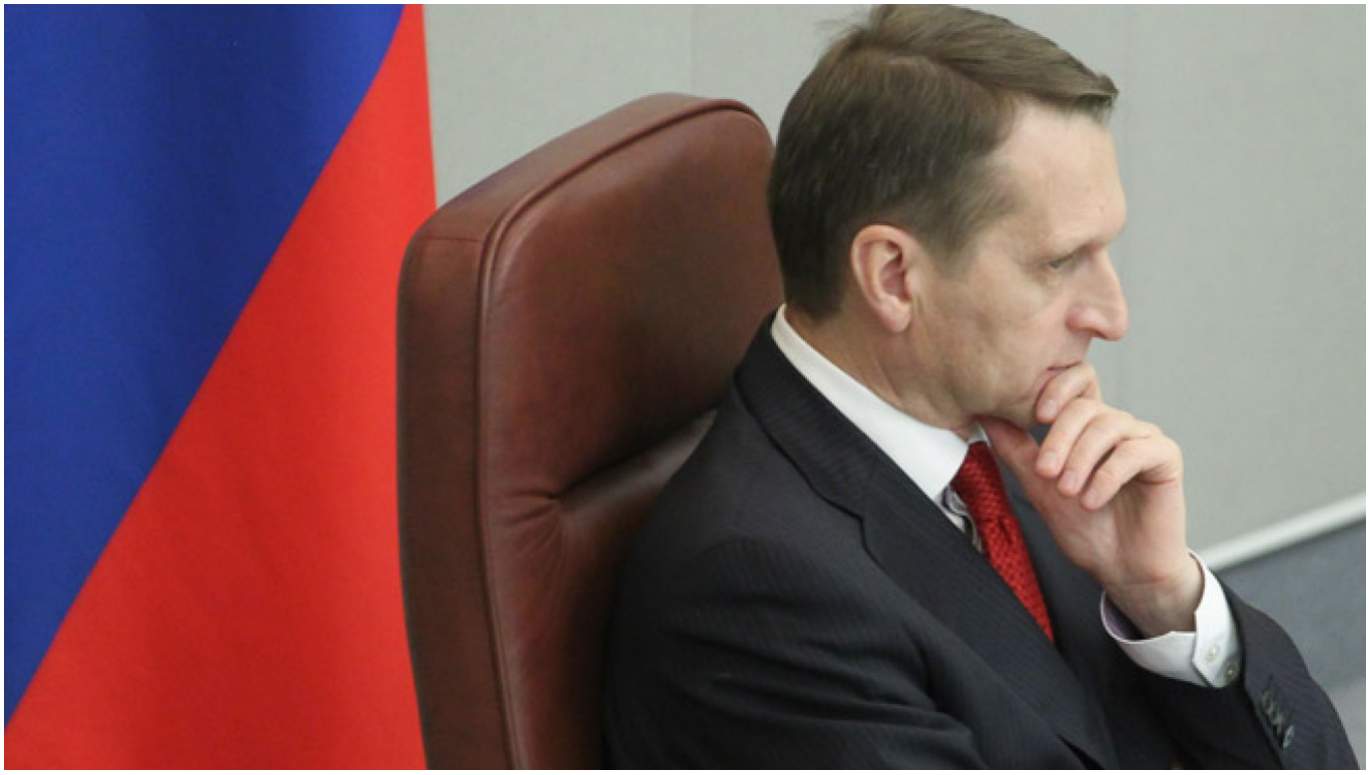

State Duma speaker Sergei Naryshkin is leading Russia's delegation to PACE in Strasbourg this week.

Russia is set to participate Monday in its first session at the Parliamentary Assembly of the Council of Europe (PACE) since it was stripped of its voting rights last year in connection with the Russian annexation of Crimea.

In April, PACE voted to suspend some of the Russian delegation's rights within the assembly, including its rights to vote and to participate in election-observation missions. At the time PACE released a statement condemning Russia's incorporation of the Crimean Peninsula into its federal fold, an action it said "constituted, beyond any doubt, a grave violation of international law."

PACE delegates are set to examine Russia's status within the assembly this week, in accordance with its annual renewal of the delegations' rights.

State Duma speaker Sergei Naryshkin, who is leading Russia's delegation to PACE in Strasbourg this week, told Russian media that the country would quit the assembly if the delegation's rights were not fully restored for the new session.

"We are going to the PACE session in extremely complex conditions: war was resumed by Kiev last week, but the West is threatening [to impose] new measures against us. It will be tough," Alexei Pushkov, the head of the Duma's international affairs and a PACE delegation member, tweeted Sunday. Notably, Kiev and the east Ukrainian insurgency have both blamed each other for renewed violence in the region in recent days.

Citing the Russian delegation to PACE, the Izvestia newspaper reported earlier this month that the assembly's Dutch delegation was in the process of drafting a new resolution aimed at stripping its Russian counterpart of its rights.

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