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Lavrov Accuses EU's Tusk of Stirring Tension Over Ukraine

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Russian Foreign Minister Sergei Lavrov attends the 28th Session of the Human Rights Council at the United Nations in Geneva.

Russian Foreign Minister Sergei Lavrov accused European Council President Donald Tusk and Brussels bureaucrats on Tuesday of stirring up tensions between Moscow and the bloc over the crisis in Ukraine.

Lavrov told reporters Tusk had "apologized" that the European Union had not acted as quickly over Moscow as the United States during a meeting with U.S. President Barack Obama on Monday — though no such comments appeared in White House or EU accounts of the talks.

Tusk, who did not immediately respond to Lavrov's comments, is the former prime minister of Poland, one of the strongest critics of Russia's role in the turmoil in Ukraine and an advocate of stronger sanctions against Moscow over the conflict.

"Through the ... process of building consensus, EU members themselves need to define the

limits of conduct for officials who sit in Brussels and make statements for all 28 member states," Lavrov said.

"For now it so happens that the European Union's bureaucracy in Brussels is purposefully stirring up confrontation between Russia and the European Union," he added, at a press conference in Moscow with visiting Spanish Foreign Minister Jose Manuel Garcia-Margallo.

Washington, NATO and Brussels accuse Moscow of driving a separatist rebellion in eastern Ukraine, arming the pro-Russian fighters and reinforcing their ranks with Russian troops. Russia has repeatedly denied direct involvement.

Lavrov said Brussels officials were trying to complicate "the normalization of ties between EU states and Russia, which is sought by many countries, including Spain."

The Spanish minister said he did not see any further tightening of economic sanctions already imposed on Russia over Ukraine as a fragile cease-fire was generally holding in the east of Ukraine.

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