

G7 Ministers: Russia Sanctions Are Tied to Success of Minsk Agreements

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G7 foreign ministers pose as they sit at a table in the Hansemuseum on the second day of their meeting in the northern German city of Luebeck, April 15, 2015.

LUEBECK — Western sanctions against Russia can only be lifted once Moscow fulfills the cease-fire agreement signed in Minsk in February and respects Ukraine's sovereignty, foreign ministers said Wednesday.

"The G7 underlines the close linkage between full implementation of the Minsk Agreements and international sanctions," they said in a joint communique at the end of their meeting in the northern German city of Luebeck.

"Sanctions are not an end in themselves; their duration should be clearly linked to Russia's complete implementation of the Minsk agreements and respect for Ukraine's sovereignty."

The ministers welcomed Ukraine and Russia taking the first steps towards implementing the cease-fire but said there was a "need for substantial and rapid progress on outstanding elements."

They called on all parties to fulfill the agreement and urged "further and verifiable progress" towards respecting a cease-fire and withdrawing heavy weapons. Russia should make use of its "considerable influence" on the separatists, they said.

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