

Russia Rebuffs German Minister's Suggestion to Revive G8

By [The Moscow Times](#)

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German Foreign Minister Frank-Walter Steinmeier

Hours after Germany's foreign minister on Thursday suggested that Russia could be readmitted to the G8, a senior Russian official appeared to rebuff the notion, saying Moscow would rather work with emerging economies than the rich nation's club, from which it was suspended last year following the annexation of Crimea from Ukraine.

Russian Deputy Foreign Minister Sergei Ryabkov said Thursday that Russia was not seeking reentry to the G8, news agency RIA Novosti reported.

"The G8 format was not always that productive, working in the BRICS and G20 is much more interesting for us," RIA quoted him as saying.

The G8 was formed when Russia was invited into the G7 by members Britain, Canada, France, Germany, Italy, Japan and the United States in 1998. In recent years the broader G20, which

includes developing economies such as Brazil, India, China and South Africa — which, with Russia, are referred to as the BRICS — has risen in importance to rival the older G7 club.

Ryabkov's statement followed comments by German Foreign Minister Frank-Walter Steinmeier, which seemed to soften Germany's official line and leave the possibility open for the revival of the G8 group with Russia's involvement.

"I believe that we cannot have an interest in keeping the G7 format a G7 format in the long term," Steinmeier, whose Social Democrats (SPD) rule in coalition with Chancellor Angela Merkel's conservatives, told journalists, according to the Reuters news agency.

"A look at the world shows that we need Russia as a constructive partner in a number of conflicts," he said, citing the Middle East as an example.

It was not clear whether Ryabkov's comments were intended as a response to those of Steinmeier.

The G7 meets this weekend.

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