

Putin Discusses Russia's Gas Plans in Call to Greece's Tsipras

By [The Moscow Times](#)

June 05, 2015



Russian President Vladimir Putin (R) shakes hands with Greek Prime Minister Alexis Tsipras during their meeting at the Kremlin in Moscow on Apr. 8, 2015.

ATHENS / MOSCOW — President Vladimir Putin and Greek Prime Minister Alexis Tsipras discussed plans on Friday for a pipeline to carry Russian gas to Europe via Turkey and agreed to meet in Russia in two weeks, the Kremlin said.

It said the two leaders, who spoke by telephone, would meet at an annual business conference taking place in Russia's second city of St. Petersburg on June 18–20.

The Kremlin gave no details of the discussions on the pipeline dubbed Turkish Stream, which is planned as an alternative to the South Stream project scrapped by Moscow in December.

A visit by Tsipras to Moscow in April caused concern in some EU states that Greece could break ranks over economic sanctions on Russia, imposed over the Ukraine crisis, to secure

Russian funds to help it meet debt repayments.

But Putin and Tsipras said afterward that Greece had not made any request for aid.

Greece has delayed repayment of a loan to the International Monetary Fund and a deputy minister said Athens might call snap elections to break an impasse with lenders that threatens to push the country into bankruptcy.

Russian Finance Minister Anton Siluanov, speaking at a banking conference in St Petersburg, said the decision by Athens would not amount to a default.

"Together with the EU, Greece needs to find the right steps to allow Greece to cover its debt payments and, on the other hand, carry out structural reforms," Siluanov said.

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