

EU Ministers Extend Economic Sanctions Against Russia by 6 Months

By [The Moscow Times](#)

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An European Union flag flutters outside the European Commission headquarters in Brussels.

LUXEMBOURG — European Union foreign ministers extended economic sanctions on Russia until Jan. 31 on Monday, keeping up pressure on Moscow to help resolve the Ukraine conflict.

The ministers meeting in Luxembourg approved a six-month extension of the sanctions, which were "introduced in response to Russia's destabilizing role in eastern Ukraine," an EU statement said.

The ministers ratified a decision taken by officials last week.

Kremlin spokesman Dmitry Peskov said last week that Russia's reaction to the EU decision would be based on the "principle of reciprocity," suggesting that it would extend counter-sanctions that include a ban on Western food imports.

The sanctions on Russia's energy, defense and financial sectors, originally imposed in July

2014 for one year, were the EU's toughest response to Moscow's annexation of Ukraine's Crimea region and what the EU says is Russia's support for separatists in eastern Ukraine.

EU leaders agreed in March that economic sanctions on Russia would stay until the Minsk ceasefire deal in Ukraine is fully implemented, but delayed taking a decision to formally extend the sanctions.

The Minsk agreement sets a year-end deadline for Ukraine to regain full control over its border, a goal the EU is pushing strongly. Fighting has broken out again in eastern Ukraine despite the agreement.

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