

Concerned Russia Monitors EU Situation as Greek Debt Crisis Reaches Critical Point

By [The Moscow Times](#)

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People sit under a Greek national flag atop the Acropolis hill archaeological site in Athens, Greece.

Russia is concerned that the Greek debt crisis could have harmful consequences for the whole of the European Union, the Kremlin said on Monday.

"Moscow is watching developments in the European Union very closely in the context of the financial crisis in Greece," Kremlin spokesman Dmitry Peskov told a conference call.

Greece closed its banks on Monday after the breakdown of bailout talks with its foreign creditors. A government official said Athens would not pay a 1.6 billion euro loan installment due to the International Monetary Fund on Tuesday.

"We are concerned about the possible negative consequences for the whole of the EU," Peskov said.

Greek Prime Minister Alexis Tsipras has sought closer ties with Russia since taking office earlier this year, but the Kremlin said financial aid to Athens was not discussed when he visited St. Petersburg 10 days ago for talks with President Vladimir Putin.

Russia has deep financial problems of its own, as its economy reels from the double blow of low world oil prices and Western sanctions over the Ukraine crisis.

Russian Foreign Minister Sergei Lavrov told his Greek counterpart during a phone call later on Monday that Russia understood the actions of Tsipras' government.

Lavrov also expressed hope that Brussels would not implement "negative scenarios" and that Greece would overcome its current problems, Russia's foreign ministry said in a statement.

Greece will hold a referendum on Sunday asking citizens to decide whether to accept the austerity demands of its international lenders in return for more cash.

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