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EU, U.S. Ease Sanctions Against Belarussian President Alexander Lukashenko

By The Moscow Times

October 30, 2015



Belarus' President Alexander Lukashenko

The European Union will suspend sanctions for four months against Belarussian President Alexander Lukashenko and 170 other individuals from Oct. 31, according to an EU Council statement.

The EU sanctions — involving assets freezing and visa bans — will be suspended until the end of February next year, according to the statement published in the Official Journal of the European Union on Friday.

The decision was taken after Lukashenko released the country"s remaining political prisoners on Aug. 22 and amid warmer relations between the EU and Belarus, the statement said. Following the EU report, the U.S. Treasury said Friday it would now allow most transactions

with nine Belarussian sanctioned entities for a period of six months starting from Oct. 31, the BBC reported.

Commenting on the matter, Konstantin Kosachev, head of the Russian Federation Council''s Foreign Affairs Committee, said the removal of sanctions against Lukashenko could mean that the West is attempting to lure Russia''s ally away, the TASS news agency reported Friday.

Lukashenko was re-elected to a fifth term in office earlier this month.

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