

Russia Continues Boycotting 'Russophobic' PACE

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Russia will continue to boycott the Parliamentary Assembly of the Council of Europe in retaliation for sanctions imposed on it over its role in the Ukraine conflict, the deputy head of the Russian delegation to PACE said Monday.

Leonid Slutsky told the Interfax news agency on Monday that the Russian delegation would not attend the year's first PACE session, set to kick off in Strasbourg on Monday next week.

Russia would return to PACE only "on equal terms," Slutsky was cited as saying, demanding the restoration of the Russian delegation's full status.

"We will not stand any form of discrimination, and any sanctions taken against the Russian delegation are unacceptable," Slutsky said, citing earlier statements by State Duma Speaker Sergei Naryshkin.

Russia was stripped of its PACE voting rights in 2014 over the country's annexation of Crimea and its role in the Ukraine crisis. The sanctions also banned Russia from participating in

PACE's ruling bodies and monitoring missions.

Russia quit cooperation with the body in a tit-for-tat move, with the head of Russia's delegation to the council, Alexei Pushkov, accusing PACE of “Russophobia.”

PACE unites parliament deputies from 47 European countries that meet four times a year to give recommendations on human rights and other issues. The body also appoints judges to the European Court of Human Rights.

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