

Putin Blasts EU Statements On Sanctions Relief

By [The Moscow Times](#)

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Russian President Vladimir Putin

Russian President Vladimir Putin dismissed as “nonsensical” the European Union's naming the fulfillment of the Minsk peace deal on resolving the crisis in Ukraine as a condition for lifting sanctions against Moscow, the Interfax news agency reported Wednesday.

EU leaders had initially said that sanctions could be lifted if the Minsk deal, aimed at ending the fighting in eastern Ukraine, is implemented. But in the latest resolution this month, the European parliament named the return of Crimea, which Russia annexed from Ukraine in 2014, as a necessary condition for lifting sanctions against Moscow.

“It is nonsensical to link the lifting of EU sanctions with bringing the Minsk process to its full resolution, to its logical end, because, I repeat, the ball is not in Russia's court,” Putin was quoted by Interfax as saying.

Western governments accuse Russia of failing to deliver on its part of the Minsk deal, which includes a cease-fire in the nearly two-year-long war between Moscow-backed separatist insurgents in eastern Ukraine and Kiev government forces, and granting access to international monitors to the area.

But Moscow claims peace efforts have stalled because Kiev has failed to grant increased autonomy to the rebel eastern regions.

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