

Putin and Juncker to Discuss Ukraine at St. Petersburg Forum

By [The Moscow Times](#)

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Jean-Claude Juncker

Russian President Vladimir Putin and President of the European Commission Jean-Claude Juncker are to discuss foreign policy and Russia-EU ties at the upcoming St. Petersburg Economic Forum, news outlet RIA-Novosti reported Thursday.

“It [the discussion] will be about the relationship between Russia and the European Union. It will be an exchange of views in regard to current regional problems and about Syria and Ukraine,” said Kremlin spokesman Dmitry Peskov.

The negotiations will be an opportunity to “develop dialogue amid existing disagreements,” Peskov said.

He also said that the Nord Stream-2 gas pipeline project was likely to be on the table, but couldn’t guarantee that it would be discussed. The project, designed to deliver gas to Europe

while bypassing Ukraine, was started by Russian gas giant Gazprom and a number of European energy companies in 2015.

The St. Petersburg Economic Forum, Russia's self-styled version of the Davos Economic Forum, will take place between June 16 -18. The event takes place shortly before EU member states are scheduled to make their decision on renewing anti-Russian sanctions on June 30.

Juncker's decision to attend the forum has faced resistance from other European leaders, the Politico website reported, citing diplomatic sources. A number of countries, including the US, are concerned that Juncker's visit could strengthen Putin's position before the sanction vote. Juncker is the first leader of an EU institution to visit Russia since sanctions were put in place in 2014.

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