

Russia Rejects Sarkozy's Suggestion to Lift Sanctions First

By [The Moscow Times](#)

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Nicolas Sarkozy

Russian Economic Development Minister Alexei Ulyukayev told journalists that Russia would not lift its counter-sanctions before Europe does, the Interfax news agency reported Thursday.

During the St. Petersburg International Economic Forum this week, former French President Nicolas Sarkozy called for the lifting of sanctions against Russia in order to ameliorate the ongoing crisis in Ukraine. Sarkozy noted that Russia should, as the “stronger” side in the conflict, act first in annulling their counter-sanctions.

Ulyukayev, however, said that option is not on the table. He reiterated that Russian counter-sanctions would stay in place — the Economic Development Ministry is planning to renew them until 2017.

On June 8, the French Senate adopted a resolution asking their government to reduce economic sanctions on Russia. The resolution is non-binding.

The United States and Europe imposed sanctions after Russia's annexation of the Crimean Peninsula in 2014. In response, Russia banned food imports from various Western countries.

Both Western sanctions and Russian counter-sanctions are harming the Russian economy, TASS reported, citing an April report published by the Association of European Businesses.

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