

Russian Duma Speaker Volodin Sets Conditions for Return to PACE

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Russian State Duma Speaker Vyacheslav Volodin (C) **Kremlin Press Service**

Russian State Duma Speaker Vyacheslav Volodin has [held talks](#) with Council of Europe Secretary Thorbjorn Jagland to discuss the possibility of resuming cooperation with the Parliamentary Assembly of the Council of Europe (PACE). But the conditions Volodin set for reengagement will not make the process easy.

Volodin thanked Jagland for his "consistent stance" on maintaining political dialogue with the Russian Federation, but also said the State Duma "does not consider Russia's return to PACE as goal in and of itself."

To resume cooperation with the European parliamentary body, Volodin called for the abolition of all "discriminatory measures" – and not only toward Russia.

Denying any country's delegation "the right to vote and excluding it from parliamentary work is unacceptable in any parliament and places the democratic foundations of this institution in doubt," he said.

In 2014, Russia was deprived of its voting rights in PACE due to its involvement in Crimea and eastern Ukraine. In addition to losing the right to vote, Russian delegates cannot participate in Council of Europe governance structures and monitoring missions. In protest, the Russian delegation refused to participate in the parliamentary assembly and has not returned to Strasbourg, where PACE is based, for two years.

In October, PACE Speaker Pedro Argramunt wrote a letter to Volodin expressing hopes that the Russian delegation would return in the future.

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