Kremlin Blanks 'Annexation' From German President's Speech on Crimea

October 26, 2017

Frank-Walter Steinmeier and Vladimir Putin / Kremlin Press Service

The Kremlin's transcript of a speech by German President Frank-Walter Steinmeier on Crimea edited his text to replace the word "annexation."

Western countries, including Germany, imposed economic sanctions on Russia after it annexed the Black Sea peninsula in March 2014.

In the first trip to Moscow by a German head of state since October 2010, President Frank-Walter Steinmeier said on Wednesday that ties between Russia and Germany were "far from normal."

"There are still open wounds and unresolved issues, first and foremost when it comes to the annexation of Crimea and the conflict in eastern Ukraine, which are a burden and remain a burden on our relationship," he said.

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Speaking alongside Russian President Vladimir Putin, Steinmeier stressed the need to repair bilateral ties and seek common ground.

"Our goal should be to overcome the major difficulties of the last years. We should confront these differences of views with more predictability, installing some minimum level of trust."

A transcript of the briefing on the Kremlin's website and a live translation on the Kremlin–funded RT television network's Ruptly service omitted the word "annexation" from Steinmeier's statement to the press.

Instead, the transcript of his speech on the Kremlin's website cited him as saying, "Crimea becoming part of Russia," and Ruptly's interpreter translated the word as "reunification."

Original url:
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