The Moscow Times
30 YEARS
INDEPENDENT NEWS FROM RUSSIA

Italy's New Leader Calls for End to Anti-Russia Sanctions

June 06, 2018



Giuseppe Conte (Alessandro Bianchi / Reuters)

Italy's new prime minister has called for an end to anti-Russian sanctions in his first address to parliament after forming a coalition government, joining a growing number of European figures seeking closer ties with Moscow.

Giuseppe Conte was nominated last month by the anti-establishment 5-Star Movement and far-right League parties to lead their coalition government. The Kremlin has long been accused of boosting nationalist right-wing forces in France, Germany, Italy and the Netherlands.

Related article: Russian, European Far-Right Parties Converge in St. Petersburg

"We will support opening up to Russia [...] We will push for a review of the sanctions system, starting with those that risk humiliating Russian civil society," Italy's new Prime Minister

Conte told parliament on Tuesday as he sought a vote of confidence.

His comments came less than a week after Jean-Claude Juncker, the head of the EU's executive body, the European Commission, urged an end to "Russia-bashing."

Meanwhile in Germany, a mid-May poll by the ZDF broadcaster said that, at 36 percent against 14 percent, more Germans saw Russia as a reliable partner than the United States.

Russian President Vladimir Putin said during a visit to Austria on Tuesday that "everyone has an interest" in lifting sanctions because they harm both Russian and Western economies.

Austrian right-wing Chancellor Sebastian Kurz vowed not to break ranks with the rest of the EU on economic measures directed at Russia, but noted that "we hope that there is progress in eastern Ukraine to [...] lift the sanctions step by step."

Reuters contributed reporting to this article.

Original url:
https://www.themoscowtimes.com/2018/06/06/italys-new-leader-calls-for-end-to-anti-russia-sanctions-a61704