

EU Extends Sanctions for Russia Over Crimea, Donbass

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The European Union has [extended economic sanctions](#) against Russia for the annexation of Crimea and its support of rebels fighting government troops in eastern Ukraine for another six months.

The decision continues EU restrictions on economic activity that could benefit Russia's defense, financial or energy sectors until Jan. 31, 2019. Crimean businesses have seen specific sanctions, with the EU [prolonging](#) a ban on EU-based companies investing in the peninsula until June 23, 2019.

A third set of sanctions extended [this year](#) freezes the assets of 150 people and 38 companies in connection with Russia's activities in Crimea and Ukraine until Sept. 15, 2018.

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The Kremlin rejects assertions that its annexation of Crimea was against international law, and [maintains](#) that the Black Sea peninsula rejoined Russia in line with a referendum that Ukraine and Western powers [do not recognize](#). Russia also [denies](#) that it has sent any soldiers to Ukraine.

Russian officials warned the EU in June that extending sanctions could destabilize efforts for peace in the war-torn Donbass region of Ukraine. “Let me say it straight about what effect this will have... negative,” Vladimir Chizhov, Russia’s envoy to the EU, said in a [release](#) from the state-run TASS news agency.

Ukrainian President Petro Poroshenko thanked the Council of the European Union in a [Facebook post](#) on Thursday for extending the sanctions. “I highly appreciate the member states’ solidarity and support of Ukrainian independence and territorial integrity,” wrote Poroshenko.

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