

EU Promises Sanctions on Russia for Recognition of Separatists

By [AFP](#)

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EU Commission head Ursula von der Leyen has promised to levy sanctions on Russia. **Renew Europe / Flickr (CC BY-ND 2.0)**

European Union leaders on Monday denounced Russian President Vladimir Putin's decision to recognize the independence of Ukraine's separatist regions and warned the bloc will react with sanctions.

"The recognition of the two separatist territories in Ukraine is a blatant violation of international law, the territorial integrity of Ukraine and the Minsk agreements," EU chiefs Ursula von der Leyen and Charles Michel each tweeted.

"The EU and its partners will react with unity, firmness and with determination in solidarity with Ukraine," they said.

In a joint statement, von der Leyen and Michel said: "The Union will react with sanctions

against those involved in this illegal act."

Related article: [Putin to Recognize Ukraine Separatist Territories as Independent – Kremlin](#)

Just before Putin signed the decrees recognizing the two pro-Russian rebel-held parts of Ukraine and signing them on to a "mutual assistance" pact with Russia, EU foreign policy chief Josep Borrell warned that sanctions would ensue.

Borrell said he would "put the sanctions on the table" for EU foreign ministers to decide whether to adopt them if Putin went ahead.

The EU has also warned it will impose unprecedented sanctions on Moscow if it invades Ukraine after it deployed an estimated 150,000 soldiers to the border.

Von der Leyen early Monday told Germany's ARD broadcaster that "if Vladimir Putin starts a war, we will respond with the most powerful lever we have: Economic and financial sanctions, because the economy is Russia's weak point."

She said: "Financial sanctions would mean that Russia would be virtually cut off from international financial markets."

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