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Russia Says Ukraine's EU Membership 'Hardly Real' Possibility

By AFP

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Sergei Kiselev / Moskva News Agency

Russia dismissed the possibility of Ukraine joining the European Union as "hardly real" on Thursday, a day after the bloc's executive recommended opening formal membership talks with Kyiv.

Moscow's offensive on Ukraine has breathed fresh life into the EU's stalled push to take on new members, as Brussels looks to keep Russian and Chinese influence at bay.

In the Kremlin's first public reaction, President Vladimir Putin's spokesman said: "Most likely, we are talking about a carrot being dangled in front of a cart, so to speak."

"These are hardly real promises," Dmitry Peskov added.

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Kyiv launched its bid to become part of the European Union right after Moscow dispatched tens of thousands of troops in February 2022 in what Moscow calls a special military operation in Ukraine.

Russia has pushed against Ukraine's European ambitions since the fall of the Soviet Union.

Its attempts to keep Kyiv within its sphere of influence culminated in Ukraine's 2013-14 pro-EU revolution, triggered after the country's pro-Russian president refused to sign a cooperation agreement with Brussels.

Russia responded by seizing Crimea and backing separatist rebels in the east to launch a civil war against Kyiv.

The EU's 27 leaders still have to sign off on the plan to open talks — which would likely last many years — at a summit in December.

Admission to the EU is dependent on meeting strict entry criteria and requires unanimous support from all current members.

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