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EU Delays 18th Sanctions Package Against Russia Amid Slovak Objections

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Vladimir Putin and Slovakia's Prime Minister Robert Fico. **Alexander Shcherbak / TASS**

EU foreign ministers failed to reach an agreement on a new round of sanctions against Russia during a meeting in Brussels Tuesday, Reuters reported.

Europe's top diplomat, Kaja Kallas, remained hopeful that the 18th package of measures targeting Moscow could win approval on Wednesday, adding that the process now depends on Slovakia.

Slovakia withheld its support for the new sanctions, seeking specific guarantees concerning the EU's proposal to gradually end imports of Russian gas by Jan. 1, 2028.

Slovakia remains dependent on Russian gas imports and earns money from transit fees for supplies piped across its territory.

The fresh measures, which the European Commission put forward, include a ban on transactions with the Russian Nord Stream gas pipelines as well as with banks suspected of

helping Russia circumvent previous sanctions.

European diplomats have indicated that officials are also considering a floating price cap on Russian oil, set at 15% below the average market price of the preceding three months.

According to a letter from the European Commission, seen by Reuters, the Commission told Slovak Prime Minister Robert Fico that his concerns were being taken into account and that officials could provide assurances to prevent fuel shortages once the proposed deadline to end imports of Russian gas by 2028 takes effect.

AFP contributed reporting.

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