The Moscow Times
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INDEPENDENT NEWS FROM RUSSIA

Armenia Cannot Be in Both EU and Moscow-Led Customs Bloc, Putin Says

By AFP

April 02, 2026

Vladimir Putin and Armenia's Prime Minister Nikol Pashinyan. **kremlin.ru**

Armenia cannot be both a member of the European Union and the Russian-led Eurasian Economic Union, President Vladimir Putin told Armenia's Prime Minister on Wednesday.

Armenia has shifted its foreign policy away from Russia in recent years, in part because Moscow did not intervene militarily when Azerbaijan launched an offensive against ethnic Armenian separatists in September 2023.

The former Soviet republic froze its membership in the Russian-led CSTO security alliance in 2024 and, in the same year, expressed interest in joining the European Union, further deepening its rift with Moscow.

"We see that Armenia is discussing developing relations with the European Union, and we are completely calm about this," Putin said.

"But it should be obvious... Being in a customs union with the European Union and the Eurasian Economic Union is impossible. It's simply impossible by definition," he added.

Armenian Prime Minister Nikol Pashinyan said he was aware that being in the two unions was incompatible, but that pursuing both paths was possible "for now."

"When the processes develop to the point where a decision needs to be made, I'm confident that we — I mean the citizens of the Republic of Armenia — will make that decision, of course," he said.

Moscow and Yerevan are formally allies, but their ties have become increasingly strained under Pashinyan.

Armenia's foreign intelligence service warned earlier this year that "external actors" were trying to meddle in Armenian politics, in what analysts believe was a reference to Russia.

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