

Former German Chancellor Schmidt Criticizes West's Russia Policy



Berlin, March 26 (RHC-Agencies) -- Former German Chancellor Helmut Schmidt has criticized the West for its Russia policy of imposing sanctions and stopping cooperation in the G8 amid the Ukraine crisis, according to media reports on Wednesday.

Schmidt told German newspaper Die Zeit that sanctions adopted by the European Union and the United States against Russia were "nonsense", saying further economic sanctions would fail to achieve their goal.

Economic sanctions mainly have symbolic meaning and would also hit Western countries, he noted.

The former chancellor also criticized the decision to suspend cooperation with Russia in the framework of the G8. "It would be ideal to get together now," he said.

The situation in Ukraine, Schmidt said, is "dangerous" because the West is "terribly upset," which leads to the same reaction in Russia.

Schmidt, who served as chancellor from 1974 to 1982 in what was then West Germany, is one of the most respected statesman in Germany.

Criticism of EU's Ukraine policy also came from former German Chancellor Gerhard Schroder.

He said the EU made "a mistake" by putting Ukraine, a culturally divided country, in an "either/or" situation with an association agreement, noting that sanctions would hurt Germany more than other countries.

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