

# *Russia Condemns 'Destructive' Sanctions after EU Extension*

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Moscow, March 20 (RHC)-- The Russian government has condemned EU's economic sanctions as "destructive" after European leaders agreed to extend sanctions on the Eurasian country until the end of the year. European Union leaders agreed to tie the sanctions to the implementation of the Minsk ceasefire agreement reached in February, between pro-Russian rebels and Ukraine.

The EU imposed sanctions on Russia over its alleged role in the Ukraine conflict and the annexation of Crimea. The February deal outlines a plan for Ukraine to regain control of its eastern border from the rebels by the end of 2015. Russian President Vladimir Putin said this week that sanctions had been damaging for Russia's economy but were not fatal.

Kremlin spokesman Dmitry Peskov said Russia would continue to pursue its national interests and engage in creative matters, not destructive matters such as sanctions rhetoric.

"One only has to look at the examples of Cuba, South Africa and now Iran to see that sanctions are only one means to an end, of which there are many, and are in fact counterproductive if too readily pursued," he said.

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