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EU court strikes down sanctions extension against former Russian senator

Evidence used by Brussels to justify the continued sanctioning of Oleg Tkach was insufficient, the bloc' General Court has ruled

Published 23 Sep, 2026 16:06 | Updated 23 Sep, 2026 17:10

The EU has failed to provide sufficient evidence to keep a former Russian official on its sanctions blacklist, the bloc's General Court ruled on Wednesday. The decision came a day after the EU removed two Russian businessmen from the list as part of a deal to extend restrictions on thousands of others.

The court annulled the September 2024 and September 2025 extensions of sanctions against former Russian Senator Oleg Tkach, who represented Kaliningrad Region in the Federation Council from 2004 to 2022. He was also involved in publishing, founding and chairing Olma Media



Former Russian senator Oleg Tkach. © council.gov.ru

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The EU first sanctioned Tkach in March 2022 over his vote to ratify treaties with the Donetsk and Lugansk People's Republics, which later became part of Russia following referendums rejected by Ukraine and most Western countries. The case centered on whether the EU Council had grounds to keep extending the restrictions after Tkach left office.

According to Wednesday's ruling, the Council failed to demonstrate that Tkach retained close ties to Russian authorities. The court also found that his failure to publicly oppose Russia's military operation in Ukraine did not, by itself, constitute continued support for the authorities.



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Brussels had also cited Tkach's publishing background, including his links to Olma Media Group and textbook publisher Prosveshcheniye. However, the court found the evidence insufficient to establish his current role or influence at the companies.

The ruling does not affect the EU's most recent sanctions extension from March 2026, which Tkach is challenging separately. He argues that condemnation based on his former Senate position is outdated and that the Council's evidence is unreliable and lacks a *"sound factual basis."*

He has also argued that the measures are disproportionate.

A day before Wednesday's ruling, the EU agreed to remove Russian businessmen Alisher Usmanov and Mikhail Fridman from its sanctions list. Both had previously mounted legal challenges related to EU restrictions, while Fridman has also filed a multibillion-dollar arbitration claim against Luxembourg.

READ MORE: [EU drops Usmanov from sanctions list after infighting](#)

Their removal came as part of a compromise to renew sanctions against around 3,000 other individuals and entities for three years, until September 2029, replacing the bloc's usual six-month renewal cycle.

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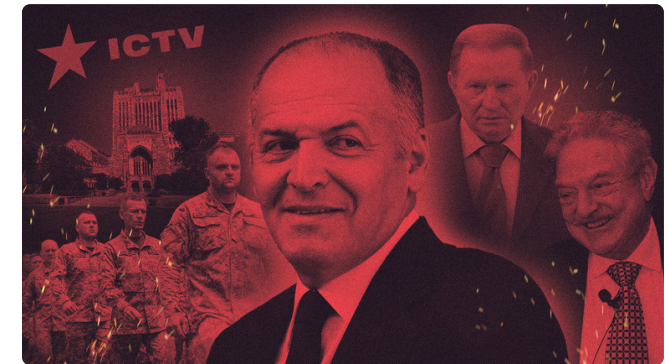
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Russia not preparing for war with Europe – Putin

Western claims of a Russian threat are a “deliberate” attempt to inflame tensions, the president has said

Published 25 Sep, 2026 17:28 | Updated 25 Sep, 2026 18:47

Moscow is not preparing for military action against European countries, President Vladimir Putin has said, dismissing claims of a Russian threat as an attempt to inflame tensions.

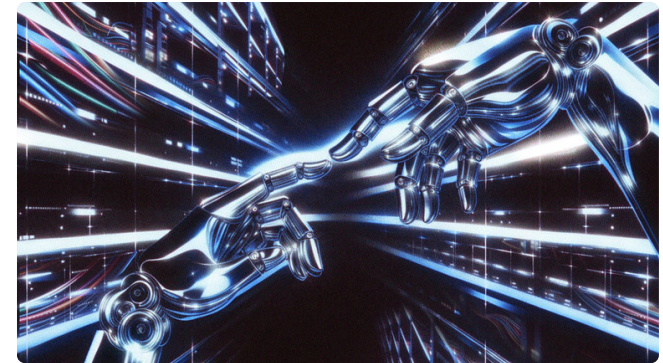
Speaking to the media on the sidelines of the 12th United Cultures Forum in St. Petersburg on Friday, Putin said European countries were fueling tensions in order to continue supporting Ukraine.

He accused “*aggressive circles*” in Europe of seeking to use Ukraine as “*cannon fodder*” to constrain Russia’s development.

Putin described [remarks](#) by the Estonian Defense Minister Hanno Pevkur about a possible conflict with



Russian President Vladimir Putin, September 25, 2026. © Sputnik / Sofya Sandurskaya



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Russia as a *“provocation,”* and referred to statements about the benefits of a preemptive attack on Russia as *“political clownery.”*

0:00

28:2

“The circus has left, but the clowns remain,” he said.

Putin also addressed the prospect of renewed talks with Kiev, saying Moscow would base any decision on Russia’s own interests.



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According to the president, Ukraine has been actively raising the prospect of a ceasefire, including on attacks against energy infrastructure, as well as an end to the blockade of Russia’s Black Sea coast, while continuing its own strikes on Russia.

Russia responded to attacks on civilian, Putin said, particularly pointing to the *“mass”* Ukrainian attack on Moscow on September 20, as well as attacks on residential buildings and election officials. He described Russia’s retaliation as *“sensitive and destructive”* for Ukrainian forces.

“They must feel these retaliatory strikes by Russia and understand that no provocative actions, no escalation of the situation will lead to the result they want. They will only make their position worse,” the Russian president said.

According to Putin, claims that Moscow intends to attack Europe are being used to justify continued spending on Ukraine to European citizens.

“This is complete nonsense,” he said.

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