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Moscow looking for ways to protect itself from destructive EU policy

10/14/2014

EU sanctions against Russia will be revised at the end of this month, the head of the EU delegation in Moscow Vygaudas Ušackas said, TASS reports.

"The sanctions will be revised at the end of this month. The decision will be made depending on the progress in Ukraine and the implementation of the Minsk agreements," said the diplomat.

"Depending on specific results for the implementation of the Minsk decisions, the EU will decide on the possible partial or total withdrawal of the sanctions. The most important thing is to have obvious progress," the official said.

Earlier, Ukrainian President Petro Poroshenko and German Chancellor Angela Merkel stated that there was no progress in the regulation of the Ukrainian crisis. According to them, the peace plan in Ukraine was in jeopardy.

German officials said that they saw no reason for lifting the sanctions. "At the moment, I see no reason to doubt the appropriateness of the effective sanctions," said German government spokesman Steffen Seibert. According to him, the withdrawal of Russian troops from the border

with Ukraine will not make the German government ease the sanctions against Russia, Der Spiegel wrote.

Previously, the EU discussed the question on the possible withdrawal of sanctions on September 30 in Brussels. Having heard the report on the implementation of the agreement on the settlement of the conflict, ambassadors of 28 EU countries decided not to lift the sanctions.

Russian Foreign Minister Sergei Lavrov said that Russia would be protecting itself against Western sanctions with the help of a long-term program of special measures. "All the measures that we need to take to protect ourselves from unlawful restrictions will, of course, be taken," Lavrov said in Moscow on Tuesday at a meeting with the heads of the companies that are part of the Association of European Businesses.

According to the minister, the long-term program is already being implemented. "The goal of the program is not to sit and wait for a year or two, but to rule out any possibility of experiencing a similar situation at any time in the future," said Lavrov.

"This does not mean that after this unhappy period in our relationship with you we will refuse to cooperate in the field of innovation and high technologies. Absolutely not. But we will be, at the same time, developing our own capabilities in key sectors of our economy, for our defense sector, to not become dependent, which our partners clearly try to abuse," said the Minister.

Lavrov also said that Russia sees the "negative impact" of Western sanctions, including for the process of cooperation in the field of high technologies. According to him, several special meetings were conducted to discuss the subject. The meetings were held with the participation of both the president and the government.

According to Lavrov, unilateral sanctions imposed by the EU against Russia will result in over 90 billion euros of losses - 40 billion euros this year and about 50 billion euros next year. Explaining these numbers, the head of the Russian Foreign Ministry referred to preliminary estimates of the European Commission.

"Russia, of course, is also suffering losses," Lavrov acknowledged. "But at the same time, the situation strengthens our resolve to concentrate resources, upgrade industries, infrastructure and generally work more effectively in all areas," said the minister.

According to Lavrov, the EU understands that business is losing money, but when it comes to relations with Russia, the EU puts politics above economics. "These statements, they are some

kind of anti-Marxist ones," the minister said. Earlier, the actions of Russia's European partners were always based on pragmatism, he added.

"The most important thing here is to escape from politicization and not to let politicians make the decisions that will put politics above economics," Lavrov said. He exemplified his point of view with the current state of affairs in the gas industry. According to the minister, Europe will not be able to do away without the Russian gas for a long time. "They try to convince you that you need to switch to shale gas and liquified natural gas supplies from the United States. Look at the economy of these proposals and at the economy of what Europe has now."

The head of the Russian Foreign Ministry also said that Russia was ready to discuss the creation of the free trade zone with the European Union. "We remain open to cooperation with other countries, other regional associations; we are ready to discuss the prospects of creating the free trade zone with the European Union; we are prepared for the consistent implementation of the model of integration," assured Lavrov.

At the same time, he said that Russia would not make concessions to individual European companies that disagree with Western sanctions. A representative of a Danish company voiced such a proposition at Lavrov's meeting with European businessmen.

The Russian minister noted that representatives of several European companies had already publicly offered Moscow not to apply restrictive measures against them, if they refuse to obey EU sanctions. "I know that such ideas were expressed in Italy. In Veneto (a region of Italy), business representatives took the initiative not to comply with the sanctions imposed by the European Union in that particular region. In return, they hoped that Russia would not apply restrictive measures against Veneto-based companies. I do not think one can make exceptions for separate companies," he concluded.

He urged the European businessmen, who wanted to continue working on the Russian market, to appeal to their governments and explain their interests to them. "You'd better stimulate governments (of the EU) to move in the right direction," said Lavrov. "In the end, politicians must protect interests of their citizens, including their business interests," he said.

Speaking about Russia's position in relation to Ukraine, Lavrov said that it was "the position of truth and justice." "We have taken the position of truth and justice, supporting the political settlement of the crisis on the basis of the interests of all regions, political groups and national minorities, taking account of legitimate rights of Russian and Russian-speaking population of Ukraine to maintain their usual lifestyle, - he said. - We also supported the free will of the people

of the Crimea, who strongly objected to another bloody Maidan scenario to repeat on the peninsula," said the Minister.

"Staying on the position of objectivity, it is impossible to say that Russia caused damage to the system of international relations in the Euro-Atlantic area, unless it is generally believed that some can impose their will on others and decide whom to pardon, and whom to punish," Lavrov said.