

Moscow to give 'appropriate' response to new EU sanctions

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Aleksandr Lukashevich said that the Malaysia Airlines MH17 crash in eastern Ukraine in July has been used as a pretext by the West to push through economic sanctions against Russia.

However, the true reasons behind the tragedy may not be revealed at all due to external pressure on the international commission investigating the MH17 crash, he said.

"It seems that the international commission – under pressure by certain Western powers – is deliberately delaying the investigation and not executing its duties, which is obvious to any aviation expert. As a result, the reasons for the tragedy may not be established and not announced at all," Russian Foreign Ministry spokesman Aleksandr Lukashevich said.

The EU has said that it will implement sanctions against Russia on Friday, which will [reportedly include](#) economic measures against Russia's energy sector.

EU leaders first said they would unleash the latest round of sanctions on September 9, but instead waited to gauge the effectiveness of the [ceasefire](#) agreed on September 5 by the Ukrainian government and rebel forces.

Many heads of state, including Chancellor Merkel, said the European Commission will have the ability to suspend the new economic restrictions if the ceasefire in Ukraine continues to keep peace.

In response to the EU's previous set of sanctions that targeted banks, energy, and weaponry,

Moscow [introduced](#) a one-year food embargo against the US, EU, Norway, Australia, and Canada that is estimated to block \$9 billion worth of agricultural exports to Russia.

President Putin's aide, Andrey Belousov, said that the second wave of Russian countermeasures in retaliation to Western sanctions may be to restrict the import of cars – especially, used ones – as well as some consumer goods.

The state will surely support Russian companies which will be hit by the Western sanctions, Belousov assured, adding that the government is currently developing means to promote such assistance.

Hopes for Ukraine crisis resolution

Moscow pins high hopes on the Russia-Ukraine-EU Contact Group's role in settling the Ukraine crisis, Lukashевич said.

"We hope that in this respect the Contact Group will be of good help and also an instrument to promote this process," he stressed.

According to the spokesman, *"everything is fragile"* in the southeast of Ukraine at the moment as there is growing evidence of Kiev consolidating military grouping in different parts of the country.

"We expect that [President Petro] Poroshenko and his team, as well as the self-defense forces, will be committed to the Minsk agreements", he said.

The joint military exercises by Kiev and NATO may *"jeopardize the shoring up of the Ukrainian peace process,"* the spokesman warned.

"The announced plans to conduct NATO joint maneuvers with Kiev in Ukraine by the end of the year come as a surprise," he said.
