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Ukraine recovery in Russia's national interest - Putin

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Speaking at VTB's Russia Calling! annual investment forum on Thursday, Putin said Russia's "*closest, fraternal*" nation is now in deep political and economic crisis, but Russia will help its neighbor to deal with it.

Putin expressed his hopes that the upcoming parliamentary elections in Ukraine, scheduled for October 26, will help the country resolve current problems, providing political stability. Ukraine's unity should be top priority for the vote, Putin noted, warning of language and ethnic discrimination.

*"We hope that all people, living in any corner of Ukraine, will have absolute rights, provided by the norms of international law and Ukrainian laws, no one will be discriminated on language, ethnic or religious grounds,"* Putin said, adding that Russia will assist with that in every possible way.

Despite the crisis and the "*tragedy*," particularly in the southeast of Ukraine, its people has always been and will remain Russia's closest nation, the president concluded.