

Russia open to dialogue, Putin Invites G7

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President Vladimir Putin invited the countries of the Group of Seven (G7) to Russia and assured that Moscow is open to dialogue with its members, during his speech on Thursday at the Eastern Economic Forum.

'In its day, the last G8 was going to be held in Russia. We remain open and if our partners want to come, we will be delighted. It was not we who postponed (that summit) but our partners,' Putin said in the plenary session of the event in this coastal city of the Russian Pacific.

The head of the Kremlin pointed out that any dialogue format is always useful.

'It is always positive to exchange opinions, also when the voice is raised. From what I understand, this is what happened in the G7 (August summit in Biarritz, France) and still remains useful. Therefore, we do not refuse any kind of cooperation', he added.

Before and during the last G7 summit, made up of the United States, Germany, Canada, France, Italy, Japan and the United Kingdom, US President Donald Trump insisted that Russia should return to the format.

However, he doubted the convenience of inviting Putin to the 2020 meeting that will be in his country and acknowledged that, although some members support him, there is no unanimity for Moscow to return to the table.

The initiative has also been raised previously by Italy and Japan, whose prime minister, Shinzo

Abe, also participated in the plenary session of the Eastern Economic Forum, said he had addressed the issue of re-entering Russia to the G7 at its last summit.

Abe acknowledged that 'Russia plays an important role in solving international problems. That is why I addressed this issue of Russia's return to format. '

Asked about the possibility of expanding the G7 or G8, Putin considered that Turkey along with India and China could participate in a broader format similar to the Group of Seven.

He said Turkey deserves to be a member of an international group of the G7 type, taking into account 'its role in international and regional affairs.'

The Russian leader revealed that he recently had a conversation with his Turkish counterpart, Recep Tayyip Erdogan, who regretted that Putin had not raised the issue of Turkey's participation in the G7. (PL)

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