
EU prolongs economic sanctions against Crimea

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The European Union has extended economic sanctions against Crimea for another year and said it still doesn't recognize Crimea's reunification with Russia calling it "illegal annexation".

The sanctions against Crimea and Sevastopol were extended until 23 June 2016, the EU said on Friday.

"As stated by the European Council on 19 March 2015, the EU continues to condemn the illegal annexation of Crimea and Sevastopol by the Russian Federation and remains committed to fully implement its non-recognition policy," says the EU communiqué.

The restrictions include a ban on imports from Crimea or Sevastopol into the EU, investment and tourism services as well as the export of certain products and technology to Crimean companies.

Details of the lengthening is expected to be published Saturday in the official journal of the European Union, a source told RIA.

Earlier in the week another European source warned the EU would make the decision Friday without any discussion. He explained that *"the strategy of non-recognition of Crimea joining Russia is permanent; this is why the restrictions that come as part of it are renewed automatically if the situation over the peninsula doesn't see drastic changes."*

Crimea rejoined Russia last March following a referendum where 96 percent of people voted in favor of reunification. The peninsula was then declared an independent sovereign state, the Republic of Crimea. The decision to hold a referendum was sparked by the Maidan protests that resulted in the ousting of President Viktor Yanukovich. Crimea then refused to recognize the coup-imposed government in Kiev.