

Macron Dismisses Putin Demand for Gas Payments in Rubles

BRUSSELS — French President Emmanuel Macron on Friday dismissed Russian President Vladimir Putin's demand for Europe to pay for gas in rubles as he accused Moscow of trying to sidestep sanctions over its war on Ukraine.

Macron told journalists after an EU summit in Brussels that the Russian move "is not in line with what was signed, and I do not see why we would apply it."

Putin made the demand this week as Moscow struggles to prop up its economy in the face of debilitating sanctions imposed by the West over his invasion of Ukraine.

Macron said that "we are continuing our analysis work" following the Kremlin's maneuver.

But he insisted "all the texts signed are clear: it is prohibited. So European players who buy gas and who are on European soil must do so in euros."

"It is therefore not possible today to do what is requested, and it is not contractual," he said.

The French leader said he believed Moscow was using the step as "a mechanism to circumvent" EU sanctions against it for the assault on Ukraine.

Major gas buyer Germany has denounced the move and Chancellor Olaf Scholz on Friday reiterated that the contracts clearly stipulated how the gas should be paid for.

Europe is scrambling to reduce its reliance on Russian gas. It continues to funnel hundreds of millions of euros each day to Moscow in energy payments, which are currently outside the scope of the sanctions.

Some EU nations have called for the bloc to ban Moscow's key energy exports, but the move has so far been stymied by countries including Germany that remain too wary of the cost of cutting the cord.

Source:

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