Putin Says Russia May Offer Fast-Tracked Passports to All Ukrainians

By [Reuters](#)

April 27, 2019

Andrey Lyubimov / Moskva News Agency

President Vladimir Putin said on Saturday Moscow was considering offering all Ukrainian citizens fast-tracked Russian passports, a move likely to anger some politicians in Ukraine which has been at war with pro-Russian separatists since 2014.

Putin made the statement days after signing an order to simplify the procedure for obtaining a Russian passport for residents of separatist-controlled eastern Ukraine, prompting calls from Kiev for more international sanctions.

Related article: [Putin Simplifies Russian Citizenship Process for Eastern Ukrainians](#)

Five years of war between Ukrainian troops and Russian-backed forces have killed 13,000 people despite a notional ceasefire signed in 2015.

Putin's earlier move was seen as a test for the Ukrainian president–elect, Volodymyr Zelenskiy, who won a landslide victory in Sunday's presidential election and has pledged to find a peaceful solution to the conflict.

Speaking in Beijing, Putin said Moscow was now considering extending its fast track passport scheme to the whole of Ukraine.

"We are considering whether to grant Ukrainian citizens our citizenship using a simplified procedure," Putin told reporters, without providing further details.

The Russian leader said he also wanted to know Zelenskiy's position on the conflict in eastern Ukraine, saying he had the impression that Zelenskiy would not implement the terms of a peace deal sealed in Minsk in 2015 despite Ukrainians being tired of the war.

"I'd discuss this matter with him with pleasure as I want to understand his stance," said Putin, who said Ukraine was overpaying for gas which it could get much cheaper if it signed a transit deal with Russia.

Original url:
https://www.themoscowtimes.com/2019/04/27/putin-says-russia-may-offer-fast-tracked-passports-to-all-ukrainians-a65413