

# Europe's Top Rights Body Urges Members to Declare Russia 'Dictatorship,' Putin 'Illegitimate'

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The Palais de l'Europe in Strasbourg. **Le Commissaire (CC BY-SA 4.0)**

Europe's top human rights body on Friday [passed](#) a resolution calling on its members to no longer recognize President Vladimir Putin as Russia's legitimate leader after his fourth term in office ends next year.

The Parliamentary Assembly of the Council of Europe (PACE) said Putin's 23-year rule as either president or prime minister "has turned the Russian Federation into a de facto dictatorship."

"[Dictatorships] constitute a threat to international peace and security and to the territorial integrity and political independence of their neighbors," PACE said, referring to Russia's nearly 20-month war against Ukraine.

The human rights body urged its members to recognize Putin as "illegitimate" and to "cease

all contact with him, except for humanitarian contact and in the pursuit of peace” after he is widely expected to secure a fifth term in office next year thanks to changes to Russia's constitution.

PACE said its 306-seat organization, which is composed of lawmakers from 46 European nations including non-EU members, voted unanimously on the resolution.

Russia was [kicked out](#) of PACE and its parent organization, the Council of Europe, after Putin ordered the invasion of Ukraine in February 2022.

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