

## **EU-Russian Relations At 'Low Point' - March 23, 2021**

European Council President Charles Michel has told Russian President Vladimir Putin that relations between the European Union and Russia are “at a low point” with disagreements in “many areas,” which the Russian leader blamed on the bloc's "confrontational policies."

Michel and Putin spoke by telephone on March 22 after the EU imposed sanctions on two Chechen officials over rights abuses in Russia's North Caucasus region of Chechnya and ahead of a video conference of EU leaders on March 25-26 set to address EU-Russia ties.

Also the European Council statement said "EU-Russian relations can only take a different direction if there is sustained progress on issues like the implementation of the Minsk agreements” aimed at putting an end to the conflict in eastern Ukraine, where fighting between Ukrainian government forces and Moscow-backed separatists has killed more than 13,000 people since April 2014, as well as “stopping hybrid and cyberattacks” on EU member states, and “respect for human rights.”