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# Putin finishes talks with Nehammer in Novo-Ogaryovo — Kremlin spokesman

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MOSCOW, April 11. /TASS/. Russian President Vladimir Putin and visiting Austrian Chancellor Karl Nehammer have finished their talks at the Russian president's residence in Novo-Ogaryovo, Putin's press secretary Dmitry Peskov told TASS on Monday.

"Yes, the meeting is over," he said. He did not say however how long the talks lasted.

It was the first contact between the two leaders after Nehammer took office late in 2021. Apart from that, Nehammer's visit was the first visit by an EU leader to Russia since the launch of the special military operation in Ukraine.

Peskov said earlier that "the main topic will be the situation around Ukraine, but, on the other hand, discussion of gas issues cannot be ruled out either, because this topic is very, very relevant for the Austrian side." He added that the conversation will be held behind closed doors, there will be no protocol filming and no press statements. According to the Kremlin spokesman, the closed format was chosen at the initiative of the Austrian side.

Meanwhile, a source familiar with Nehammer's trip to Russia told TASS that after the talks with Putin the chancellor plans to make a statement to the international press via video link at the Austrian Embassy in Moscow.

Earlier, Nehammer wrote on his Twitter account that he had informed European Commission President Ursula von der Leyen, European Council President Charles Michel, German Chancellor Olaf Scholz, Turkish President Recep Tayyip Erdogan and Ukrainian President Vladimir Zelensky about his plans to meet with Putin. According to him, Austria is militarily neutral, but it has a clear position on Russia's actions in Ukraine.

On February 24, Russian President Vladimir Putin announced a special military operation in response to a request for help by the heads of the Donbass republics. He stressed that Moscow had no plans of occupying Ukrainian territories, but aimed to demilitarize and denazify the country. Among Moscow's demands are Ukraine's neutral and nuclear-free status, Ukraine's recognition of Crimea as part of Russia and recognition of the sovereignty of the Donetsk and Lugansk Republics.

Russia and Ukraine have been having talks since February 28. The Russian delegation is led by presidential aide Vladimir Medinsky. Several rounds were held in Belarus. Later, talks continued in the online format. The next offline round was held in Istanbul on March 29.