

Czech president calls for compensating Ukraine for loss of Crimea

Opinion

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Milos Zeman may represent neither the majority opinion in his country nor official Czech state policy but that has certainly not slowed his pro-Russian pronouncements in European fora.

[file photo]

KYIV, Oct 11, 2017 - Czech President Milos Zeman called the Russian Federation's annexation of Crimea a *fait accompli* and suggested compensating Ukraine for the loss, Concorde Capital informed clients based on remarks Zeman made on Oct. 10 to the Parliamentary Assembly of the Council of Europe. "There will be some compensation for Ukraine, whether in a financial form, or with oil or natural gas," he said in his response to a Ukrainian MP, as reported by the eurointegration.com.ua news site. He acknowledged the annexation was illegal but said returning Crimea to Ukraine "will mean a European war." A war is also inevitable if Ukraine continues its efforts to return Crimea, he said. "We should avoid a European war and you should understand that," he said. Afterwards, the Czech Embassy in Ukraine clarified that Zeman was expressing his own personal opinion, and not the position of the Czech government. As its response, the Ukrainian delegation to the parliamentary assembly, led by First Vice Speaker Iryna Gerashchenko, condemned the remarks as horrific in its cynicism. "Ukraine is not going to trade its citizens, territory, sovereignty, honor or dignity," she wrote on her Facebook page. Concorde analyst Zenon Zawada added: "Zeman has long expressed his sympathies for the Russian position in this conflict, having called for legalizing the annexation and removal of sanctions against Russia. What's important to consider is that we expect these positions to grow in popularity within Europe as businesses continue to lose opportunities and Far Right parties keep growing in popularity. A strong performance by Russian-oriented parties in Ukraine's 2019 parliamentary elections could prompt Europe to begin to relax sanctions."

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