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NATO suspends cooperation with Russia over Ukraine crisis

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NATO Tuesday announced new measures to intensify cooperation with **Ukraine** and suspend all practical civilian and military cooperation with Russia.

According to a statement released by the foreign ministers from the 28-nation, US-led alliance, the bloc plans to seek closer cooperation with Ukraine and to promote the country's defence reforms through capacity building and capability development programs.

NATO Secretary-General Anders Fogh Rasmussen said Russia's actions meant there could be no "business as usual".

"So today, we are suspending all practical cooperation with Russia, military and civilian," he told a news conference.

German Foreign Minister Frank-Walter Steinmeier said NATO's future relationship with Russia would depend, among other things, on whether Russia started withdrawing troops from the Ukrainian border.

Ministers also ordered military commanders to draw up plans for reinforcing NATO's defences to shore up confidence among the alliance's Eastern European members, including former Soviet republics in the Baltics.

The measures could include sending NATO soldiers and equipment to Eastern European allies, holding more exercises, ensuring NATO's rapid-reaction force could deploy more quickly, and reviewing NATO's military plans. Military planners will come back with detailed proposals within weeks, a NATO official said.