

France and Germany to Jointly Monitor Ukrainian Cease-Fire

By [The Moscow Times](#)

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French Minister of Defense Jean-Yves Le Drian listens as U.S. Secretary of Defense Chuck Hagel speaks during a joint news conference following their meeting at the Pentagon in Washington.

PARIS — France expects to launch a joint operation with Germany "in the coming days" to monitor a cease-fire between the Ukrainian army and separatists in the east of the country, the French defense minister has said.

Last month, France and Germany offered to deploy drones as part of efforts by the Organization for Security and Cooperation in Europe (OSCE) to reinforce monitoring of the cease-fire in Ukraine, and a German government source said Saturday that Berlin was considering deploying soldiers.

"We are studying with Germany how we can together reinforce monitoring of the cease-fire and the buffer zone," Jean-Yves Le Drian said Sunday in an interview with RTL radio and news channel LCI.

He confirmed that France and Germany, which are in discussions with the OSCE, would offer drones but did not mention the deployment of soldiers or give further details.

Ukraine's military accused Russian-backed separatists of again violating the month-old cease-fire on Sunday, saying their forces came under attack in several parts of the east including the airport at the big city of Donetsk.

Le Drian reiterated that the delivery of the first of two French helicopter carriers sold to Russia would depend on the situation in Ukraine in the coming weeks.

France has been under pressure from allies to back out of the deal, which is seen as strengthening Russia militarily at a time when it is accused by the West of supporting the rebels in eastern Ukraine. The first of the two Mistral ships is due to be delivered on Nov. 1.

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