

European Leaders Agree on 'Working Roadmap' in Donbass

October 20, 2016



German chancellor Angela Merkel, Russian President Vladimir Putin, French President Francois Hollande and Ukrainian President Petro Poroshenko at the chancellery in Berlin, Oct. 19, 2016. **Michael Kappeler / AP**

European leaders called for a “working roadmap” to peace in Ukraine’s Donbass region after Wednesday’s Normandy Format talks between Ukraine, Russia, Germany, and France.

In a summary statement, Ukrainian President Petro Poroshenko said the Minsk peace process was a “Ukrainian offer” that had been approved by Ukraine’s French and German partners.

“Instructions were given for the foreign ministers to approve the base of the roadmap draft by the end of November so that we will be able to give the basic points this map should contain,” Poroshenko said.

Poroshenko spoke about the need to fulfill all points of the Minsk peace agreement, including the importance of returning control of the border with Russia to Ukrainian authorities, and

the removal of foreign armed forces from Ukrainian territory.

German Chancellor Angela Merkel said that the new round of talks represented “progress toward peace.”

She told reporters that holding the four-way talks was the right thing to do so as not to “lose momentum.”

Not all observers shared the Ukrainian and German optimism, however. Former Ukrainian President Leonid Kuchma, Ukraine’s representative in informal talks with the separatists, called the talks “a step forward.” However, Kuchma suggested that the lack of a joint statement from all the participants suggests the participants have not yet reached a common position.

“Of course, it is a positive step toward an agreement regarding the preparation of the roadmap for the implementation of the Minsk agreements,” Kuchma said.

“Although, based on comments from the participants of the meeting, there is doubt, whether the roadmap has everything we need to provide peace in the Donbass,” he added.

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