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Macron Says EU Needs Strategic Relationship With Russia on Defense

By Reuters

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Emmanuel Macron (Mike Bloomberg / Flickr (CC BY-NC-ND 2.0)

The European Union needs a strategic relationship with Turkey, including in defense matters, and should modernize its post-Cold War relations with Russia, French President Emmanuel Macron said on Thursday.

Macron is a strong advocate for a Europe that is able to defend its strategic interests and financial independence and respond to new global economic and defense situation brought on by Donald Trump's presidency in the United States.

He has sought to improve relations with Russia's President Vladimir Putin, although his efforts have been complicated by allegations of Russian meddling in elections from the United States to France and a nerve agent attack in Britain.

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"It is in our interest for the EU to have a strategic relationship with Turkey as well as with Russia that brings stability, that will in the long term and bring more strength and coherency," Macron said in a news conference in Helsinki alongside Finnish President Sauli Niinisto.

He said the EU's relations with Russia needed to be "brought up to date", using the Italian word "aggiornamento".

"I think that on matters like cybersecurity, defence, strategic relationships, we could envisage the outlines of a new relationship between Russia and the EU which is coherent with the direction Europe is headed in," Macron said.

"Stability in the whole region is in our interest."

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