

No Breakthrough at Berlin Talks on Ukraine Conflict, Russia Says

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Dmitry Kozak, the Kremlin's envoy to the Normandy Group talks on eastern Ukraine. **Alexander Avilov / Moskva News Agency**

Russia and Ukraine failed to reach a breakthrough at marathon talks in Berlin aimed at ending the long-simmering conflict with pro-Moscow separatists in eastern Ukraine, the Kremlin's envoy said early Friday.

“Unfortunately, almost nine hours of negotiations ended without any visible, tangible results expressed in documents,” Kremlin envoy Dmitry Kozak [told](#) reporters during a late-night briefing.

His Ukrainian colleague Andriy Yermak [said](#) the four sides “were unable to agree on any joint document” but expressed hope that they will continue talks “very soon.”

“Everyone is determined to achieve a result,” Yermak said.

Kozak said Thursday’s talks, brokered by Germany and France, failed over differences

between Russia's and Ukraine's interpretations of a 2015 ceasefire deal known as the Minsk agreements.

Related article: [Russia, Ukraine Agree to Keep Ceasefire, New Talks Next Month](#)

The four nations have been working towards reaching a peace deal for eastern Ukraine since 2014 and are known collectively as the Normandy Group.

After previous talks in Paris last month, Moscow, Kyiv, Paris and Berlin [issued](#) a statement expressing commitment to “an unconditional respect for the ceasefire.”

The Berlin and Paris talks were aimed at ending the eight-year separatist conflict in eastern Ukraine and did not address the latest tensions over Russia's troop buildup near Ukrainian borders.

While French President Emmanuel Macron's meeting with Russian President Vladimir Putin this week raised hopes that tensions could soon be eased, the Berlin talks "killed those hopes," the Kommersant business daily [wrote](#).

Putin's spokesman Dmitry Peskov on Friday said Moscow is disappointed that the Berlin talks yielded no results, accusing Kyiv of failing to “fulfill its obligations” and Western governments of “issues with reading” the ceasefire deal.

Ukraine's President Volodymyr Zelenskiy said this week he expects to meet his Russian, French and German counterparts “in the near future.”

The Kremlin has so far rejected direct talks with Putin, and Kozak has said a four-way summit was “not on the agenda” currently.

Western countries have been concerned that Russia could use a flare up in fighting along the front between Ukrainian soldiers and separatists as a pretext to launch an invasion of its neighbor.

Russian lawmakers are expected to consider a motion recognizing the separatist-held regions known as the Donbas next week.

AFP contributed reporting.

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