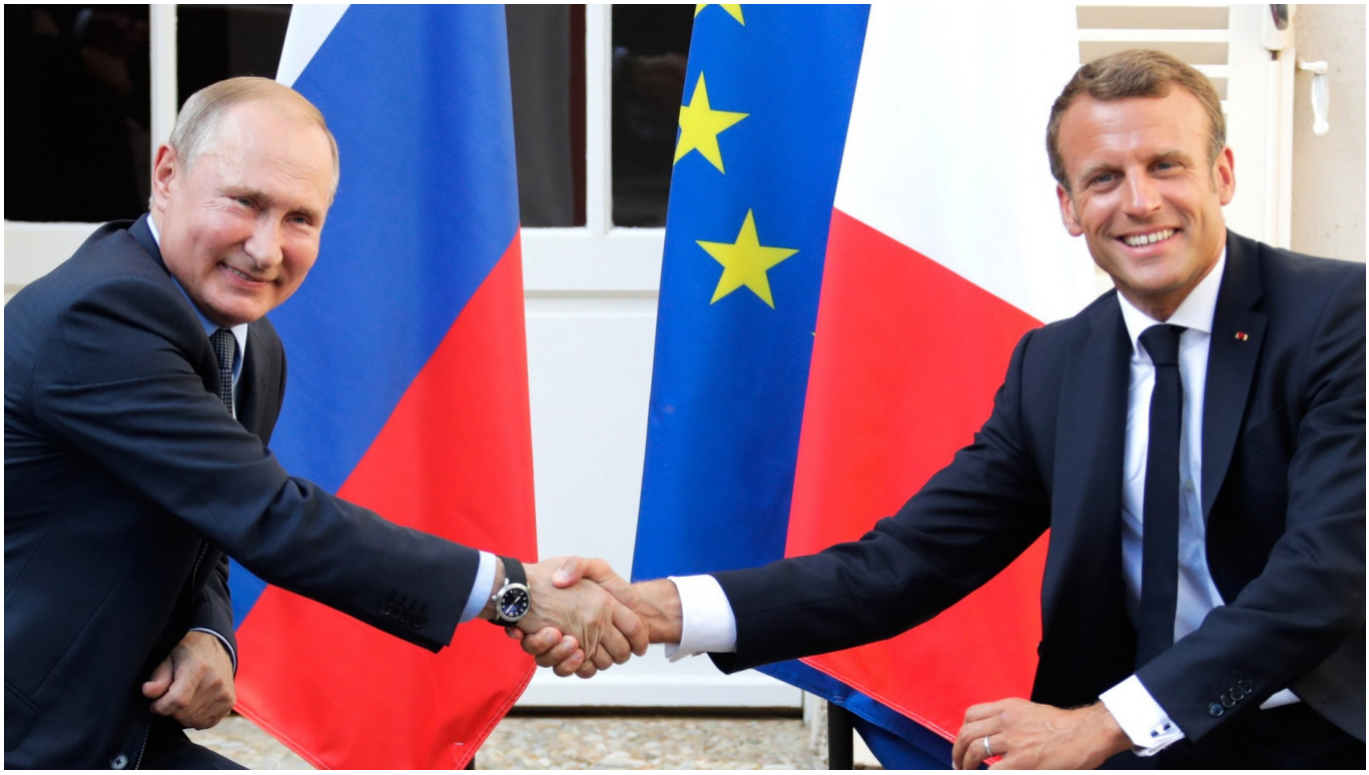
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Macron Demands 'Targeted Sanctions' on Moscow

By AFP

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French President Emmanuel Macron has positioned himself as a key broker between Moscow and the West. **Kremlin.ru**

French President Emmanuel Macron on Monday condemned the Kremlin's move to recognize two eastern Ukrainian separatist regions as independent, urging the European Union to agree new sanctions against Moscow.

"The president condemns the decision.... He is demanding an emergency meeting of the UN Security Council as well as the adoption of targeted European sanctions," the French presidency said in a statement.

"This is clearly a unilateral violation of Russia's international commitments and a breach of Ukraine's sovereignty," it added.

The statement was issued after Macron chaired a meeting of France's defence and security

council to assess the situation in Ukraine.

Related article: Putin Recognizes Independence of Pro-Russia Separatists in Ukraine

Russian President Vladimir Putin earlier recognized the independence of the two separatist regions in eastern Ukraine, defying warnings from the West this could trigger sweeping sanctions.

Macron had engaged in frenetic diplomacy on Sunday in a bid to broker a summit between Putin and U.S. President Joe Biden to ease the soaring tensions over Ukraine which have raised fears of a Russian invasion of its neighbor.

But the idea so far has only met with a lukewarm response from the Kremlin.

There was no mention of continued diplomatic contacts in the Elysee statement.

French officials have previously said that the situation in eastern Ukraine is dangerous but every chance must be used to prevent war.

Earlier Monday, Macron again spoke with Putin as well as Ukrainian President Volodymyr Zelensky, the presidency said earlier.

He also spoke twice with German Chancellor Olaf Scholz, and conferred with European Council President Charles Michel and EU Commission head Ursula Von der Leyen.

Earlier Monday, France had announced that Russia's Foreign Minister Sergei Lavrov would meet his French counterpart Jean-Yves Le Drian in Paris on Friday.

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