

European Leaders Reject Sanctions Relief for Russia at Ukraine Summit in Paris

By [AFP](#)

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European leaders agreed at a summit in Paris on Thursday to tighten sanctions on Russia rather than ease them, as Britain and France outlined plans to send a “reassurance force” to Ukraine after any future peace deal.

French President Emmanuel Macron hosted the meeting with Ukrainian President Volodymyr Zelensky and European allies, seeking a coordinated policy after U.S. President Donald Trump’s direct talks with the Kremlin uneased leaders in Europe.

While the U.S. claims it is making tentative progress toward a ceasefire, a peace deal remains distant. The summit exposed divisions within a so-called “coalition of the willing,” as not all European states backed the French-British plan to deploy troops in a post-war Ukraine.

“He really wants to divide Europe and America, Putin really wants that,” Zelensky warned after the summit, urging Washington to take a more decisive stance against the Kremlin. He added that “everybody understood and understands that today Russia does not want any kind of peace.”

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Leaders at the Elysee Palace agreed that sanctions on Russia should not be eased, but rather intensified until peace is achieved.

“There was complete clarity that now is not the time to lift sanctions — quite the contrary,” British Prime Minister Keir Starmer said, adding that discussions focused on increasing pressure to support U.S. efforts to bring Russia to the negotiating table.

German Chancellor Olaf Scholz warned that lifting sanctions without a truce would be a “grave mistake.” So, too, did Zelensky criticize “very dangerous signals” suggesting some nations, including Saudi Arabia, might consider such a move.

Beyond sanctions, European leaders discussed military support for Ukraine, including the potential deployment of European troops. Macron confirmed that France and Britain were spearheading efforts to send a “reassurance force” after the fighting ends.

“It does not have unanimity today, but we do not need unanimity to do this,” Macron said, adding that a Franco-British delegation would soon travel to Ukraine for talks.

Macron stressed the force would not be a peacekeeping unit or a substitute for the Ukrainian army but would serve as a deterrent against future Russian aggression. However, not all European allies would participate due to logistical or political concerns.

Zelensky acknowledged ongoing uncertainty over the force’s structure, leadership and role, saying that “there are many questions... [but] so far, few answers.”

Italian Prime Minister Giorgia Meloni reiterated Rome’s refusal to send troops to Ukraine and called for U.S. involvement in future European discussions on the conflict.

Despite the differences, Starmer hailed the summit as a historic show of European unity: “This is Europe mobilizing together behind the peace process on a scale we haven’t seen for decades.”

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Ukraine has proposed a broad 30-day ceasefire through U.S. mediation, but Russia has set strict conditions for any such agreement, testing European patience.

On Thursday, Kyiv accused Russia of violating a U.S.-brokered agreement to refrain from striking energy infrastructure, citing an artillery attack that left Kherson without power.

Russia, meanwhile, claimed Ukraine had targeted energy sites — an allegation Ukraine rejected.

Zelensky called for U.S. intervention, saying “there should be a reaction from the U.S.” and that it was “unclear who is monitoring” the energy ceasefire.

The summit followed reports that Russia and Ukraine had discussed a possible Black Sea ceasefire in parallel talks with U.S. officials in Saudi Arabia.

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