The Moscow Times
30 YEARS
INDEPENDENT NEWS FROM RUSSIA

European Leaders Urge More ‘Pressure’ on Russia Ahead of Trump-Putin Summit

By AFP

August 10, 2025



Traditional Russian wooden nesting dolls, Matryoshka dolls, depicting Russia's President Vladimir Putin and U.S. President Donald Trump. **Olga Maltseva/AFP**

European leaders urged more "pressure" on Russia overnight Saturday, after the announcement of a Trump-Putin summit to end the war in Ukraine raised concern that an agreement would require Kyiv to cede swathes of territory.

Presidents Vladimir Putin and Donald Trump will meet in the U.S. state of Alaska this Friday to try to resolve the three-year conflict, despite warnings from Ukraine and Europe that Kyiv must be part of negotiations.

Announcing the summit last week, Trump said that "there'll be some swapping of territories to the betterment of both" sides, without elaborating.

But President Volodymyr Zelensky warned Saturday that Ukraine won't surrender land to

Russia to buy peace.

"Ukrainians will not give their land to the occupier," he said on social media.

"Any decisions against us, any decisions without Ukraine, are also decisions against peace," he added.

Zelensky urged Ukraine's allies to take "clear steps" towards achieving a sustainable peace during a call with Britain's Prime Minister Keir Starmer.

European leaders issued a joint statement overnight Saturday to Sunday saying that "only an approach that combines active diplomacy, support to Ukraine and pressure on the Russian Federation to end their illegal war can succeed."

They welcomed Trump's efforts, saying they were ready to help diplomatically — by maintaining support to Ukraine as well as by upholding and imposing restrictive measures against Russia.

"The current line of contact should be the starting point of negotiations," said the statement, signed by leaders from France, Germany, Italy, Poland, Britain, Finland and EU Commission chief Ursula Von Der Leyen, without giving more details.

They also said a resolution "must protect Ukraine's and Europe's vital security interests," including "the need for robust and credible security guarantees that enable Ukraine to effectively defend its sovereignty and territorial integrity."

"The path to peace in Ukraine cannot be decided without Ukraine," they said.

National security advisors from Kyiv's allies — including the United States, EU nations and the UK — gathered in Britain Saturday to align their views ahead of the Putin-Trump summit.

French President Emmanuel Macron, following phone calls with Zelensky, Starmer and German Chancellor Friedrich Merz, said "the future of Ukraine cannot be decided without Ukrainians" and that Europe also had to be involved in the negotiations.

In his evening address Saturday, Zelensky stressed: "There must be an honest end to this war, and it is up to Russia to end the war it started."

A 'dignified peace'

Three rounds of talks between Russia and Ukraine this year have failed to bear fruit.

Tens of thousands of people have been killed since Russia launched its full-scale invasion of Ukraine in February 2022, with millions forced to flee their homes.

Putin, a former KGB officer in power in Russia for over 25 years, has ruled out holding talks with Zelensky at this stage.

Ukraine's leader has been pushing for a three-way summit and argues that meeting Putin is the only way to make progress towards peace.

The summit in Alaska, the far-north territory which Russia sold to the United States in 1867, would be the first between sitting US and Russian presidents since Joe Biden met Putin in Geneva in June 2021.

Nine months later, Moscow sent troops into Ukraine.

Zelensky said of the location that it was "very far away from this war, which is raging on our land, against our people."

The Kremlin said the choice was "logical" because the state close to the Arctic is on the border between the two countries, and this is where their "economic interests intersect."

Moscow has also invited Trump to pay a reciprocal visit to Russia later.

Trump and Putin last sat together in 2019 at a G20 summit meeting in Japan during Trump's first term. They have spoken by telephone several times since January, but Trump has failed to broker peace in Ukraine as he promised he could.

Fighting goes on

Russia and Ukraine continued pouring dozens of drones onto each other's positions in an exchange of attacks in the early hours of Saturday.

A bus carrying civilians was hit in Ukraine's frontline city of Kherson, killing two people and wounding 16.

The Russian army claimed to have taken Yablonovka, another village in the Donetsk region, the site of the most intense fighting in the east and one of the five regions Putin says is part of Russia.

In 2022, the Kremlin announced the annexation of four Ukrainian regions — Donetsk, Lugansk, Zaporizhzhia and Kherson — despite not having full control over them.

As a prerequisite to any peace settlement, Moscow demanded Kyiv pull its forces out of the regions and commit to being a neutral state, shun Western military support and be excluded from joining NATO.

Kyiv said it would never recognise Russian control over its sovereign territory, though it acknowledged that getting land captured by Russia back would have to come through diplomacy, not on the battlefield.

Original url:
https://www.themoscowtimes.com/2025/08/10/european-leaders-urge-more-pressure-on-russia-ahead-of-trump-putin-summit-a90146