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France's Macron Calls for Re-Engagement With Putin

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Emmanuel Macron. © **European Union**

French President Emmanuel Macron said Friday he believed it would be "useful" for Europe to re-engage with Russian President Vladimir Putin as U.S. President Donald Trump pushes for a quick peace deal in Ukraine.

"I believe that it's in our interest as Europeans and Ukrainians to find the right framework to re-engage this discussion," he said, adding that Europeans should find the means to do so "in coming weeks."

"Otherwise, we'll end up talking amongst ourselves with [U.S.] negotiators who will engage with the Russians alone, which isn't ideal," Macron said.

The Trump administration is meanwhile engaged in shuttle diplomacy with Europe and Ukraine on one side and Russia on the other to adopt a U.S.-proposed peace deal.

Putin's special economic envoy Kirill Dmitriev will reportedly travel to the U.S. again this

weekend to discuss any changes to the American-authored plan following U.S. talks with Ukrainian and European officials in Berlin this week. Kremlin spokesman Dmitry Peskov said Thursday that Moscow was preparing for contacts with the U.S. to learn about the results of those talks.

Macron spoke with reporters Friday after EU leaders in Brussels reached a middle-of-the-night agreement to lend Ukraine 90 billion euros ($105.4 billion) to plug its looming budget shortfalls.

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They failed to agree on using frozen Russian assets amid opposition from Belgium, as well as pro-Russian EU members Slovakia and Hungary. Elsewhere, Moscow is seeking damages in its arbitration court over the potential use of its frozen assets.

Macron spoke with Putin for the first time since the full-scale invasion of Ukraine in July, urging him to agree to a ceasefire as soon as possible. The Russian leader maintained his stance, which he outlined in the summer of 2024, that any peace deal should be long-term and address the "root causes of the Ukrainian crisis."

European leaders have previously pushed back against calls for direct talks with Putin, citing his apparent lack of interest in genuine peace talks.

AFP contributed reporting.

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