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Kremlin Confirms France Has Restored 'Technical-Level' Contact With Russia

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Vladimir Putin and Emmanuel Macron meet at the Kremlin just days before the invasion of Ukraine in February 2022. **kremlin.ru**

The Kremlin confirmed Tuesday that France and Russia have resumed "technical-level" dialogue as French President Emmanuel Macron continued to call on European leaders not to allow themselves be sidelined by the United States in Ukraine peace talks.

"Yes, there have indeed been contacts, and we can confirm that," Kremlin spokesman Dmitry Peskov told reporters. "If there is the desire and the necessity, they could help fairly quickly reestablish dialogue at the highest level."

Peskov said Moscow has not yet seen any clear indication that such a desire exists. "That said, we did take note of President Macron's statement about the need to establish relations with Russia. We find such statements encouraging," he said.

Last week, Macron dispatched his top foreign policy advisor to Russia to meet with Kremlin aide Yury Ushakov. His advisor reportedly conveyed the message that Europe would not

“rubber-stamp” any Ukraine peace agreement and that decisions affecting European security must involve European leaders.

“What did I gain? Confirmation that Russia does not want peace right now,” Macron said in an interview published Tuesday. “But above all, we have rebuilt those channels of discussion at a technical level.”

“My wish is to share this with my European partners and to have a well-organized European approach” in diplomacy with Russia, Macron said, adding that Europe should be talking to President Vladimir Putin directly “so as not to depend on third parties.”

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Macron last spoke with Putin in July, his first conversation with the Russian leader since the full-scale invasion of Ukraine. During the call, Putin reiterated his position that any settlement must be long-term and address what he calls the “root causes of the Ukrainian crisis.”

The French president has since said that communication with the Kremlin is necessary to negotiate post-war security guarantees. He previously said preparations to resume dialogue with Putin were being conducted “transparently” and in coordination with Ukrainian President Volodymyr Zelensky and European allies.

On Tuesday, Peskov said completely cutting off contact between Russia and Europe is “illogical, counterproductive and harmful for all sides.”

“Russia has always supported maintaining dialogue, which, in our view and in our firm belief, can help address the most pressing and complex issues,” he told reporters. “These problems will not resolve themselves, and confrontation will not help solve them either.”

Peskov also said that, apart from France, other European countries have not shown any interest in resuming dialogue with Russia.

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