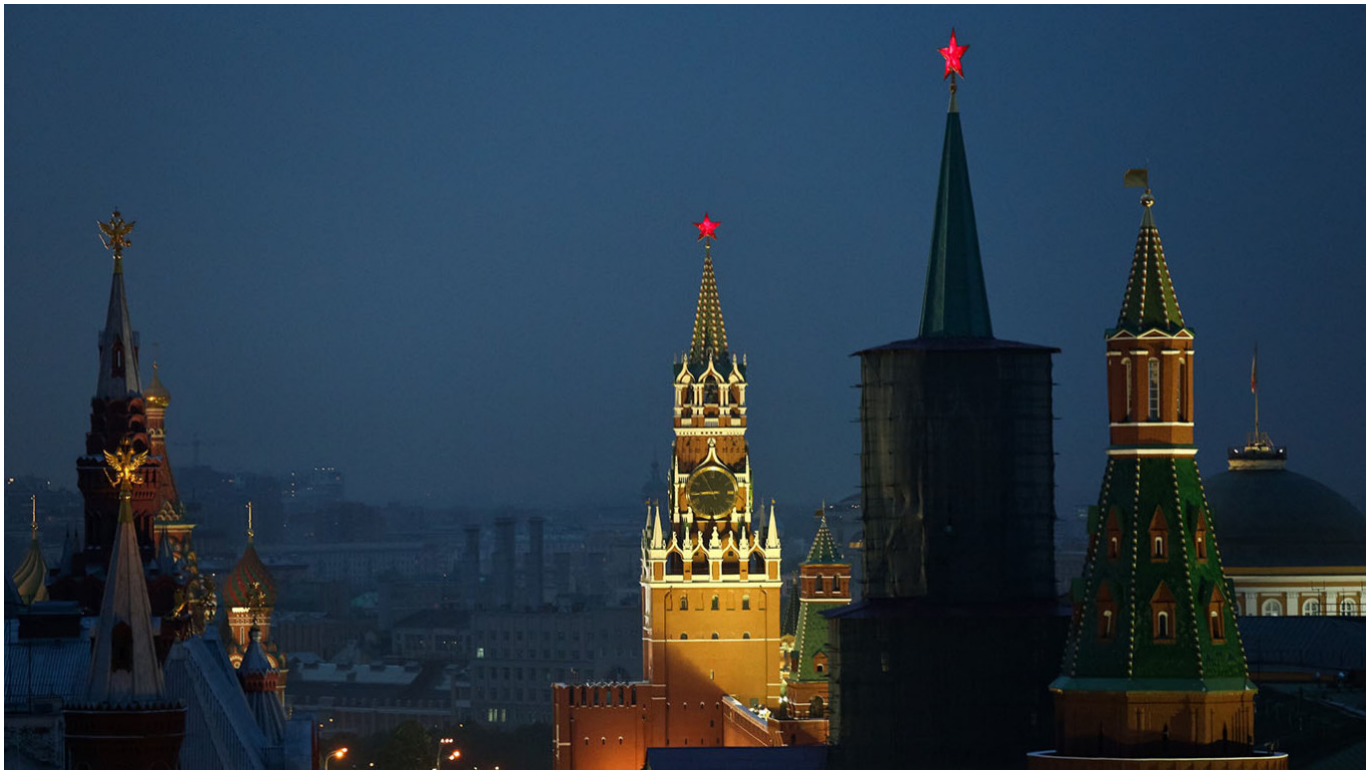
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EU Has Made Diplomatic 'Contacts' With Kremlin, Official Says

By AFP

June 17, 2026



Kirill Zykov / Moskva News Agency

The office of EU chief António Costa has had "brief" diplomatic contacts with the Kremlin to open channels of communication, Brussels said Wednesday, as Europe debates whether to talk to Russia about ending the Ukraine war.

"In the past few weeks, brief contacts at diplomatic level were made to open communication channels but nothing was discussed on substance," an EU official said on condition of anonymity.

Discussions on Europe re-engaging with Moscow have become louder amid deadlocked U.S. efforts to halt the war in Ukraine while President Donald Trump's attention has been consumed by Iran.

Ukraine's President Volodymyr Zelensky — who is due to join EU leaders at a summit in

Brussels Thursday — has pushed for Europe to play a more active role.

"In any future scenario, the EU has specific interests that will need to be defended, therefore it is important to have established diplomatic channels with Russia," the EU official said.

"The EU is not a mediator. It supports Ukraine in its efforts to achieve a just and lasting peace."

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The official said that European Council president Costa — who chairs meetings of EU leaders — "has been coordinating closely with European leaders on possible engagement with Russia and the issues to be discussed when the right moment comes."

British, French and German ambassadors to Russia last week urged direct talks between Moscow and Kyiv in a rare meeting at Russia's Foreign Ministry last Thursday.

Trump at a G7 meeting involving Zelensky in France on Tuesday said Moscow should "make a deal" to end its war on Ukraine.

Zelensky said Vladimir Putin had rejected an offer of a meeting at the G7 but said he had also suggested to Trump that he could meet the Russian leader in the United States.

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