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Kremlin Rejects European Role in Upcoming Abu Dhabi Talks

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Chief Russian negotiator and Kremlin adviser Vladimir Medinsky. **Sputnik / Mikhail Metzel / Pool via REUTERS**

Russia on Monday pushed back against European involvement in upcoming peace talks, insisting that a planned meeting in Abu Dhabi this week with Ukrainian and U.S. representatives will exclude officials from the European Union.

"As for the presence of Europeans, you know that the Americans have their own channels of communication with the Europeans, as do the Ukrainians," Kremlin spokesman Dmitry Peskov said when asked whether Europe had secured a spot at the negotiation table.

American and Ukrainian negotiators are "in all likelihood constructing their own coordination mechanism" with European representatives, Peskov added.

EU Commission President Ursula von der Leyen said earlier on Monday that the "EU will be present alongside our partners" at the upcoming peace talks, which take place on Tuesday and Wednesday. She did not provide further details.

A European official told AFP that national security representatives from the EU, NATO, as well as France, Germany and the U.K. plan to be in the UAE capital during the negotiations.

Ukrainian President Volodymyr Zelensky appeared to confirm European involvement in the talks by saying he held a call with von der Leyen on Monday, during which they "coordinated our positions regarding the meeting in Abu Dhabi."

"We are doing everything to ensure the trilateral format delivers results," Zelensky wrote in a post on X.

Ukraine's European allies have voiced growing concerns that the Trump administration might try to negotiate over their heads by working directly with Russia on a post-war security arrangement.

In Abu Dhabi, Kremlin adviser Vladimir Medinsky, an arch-conservative who previously served as Russia's culture minister, will once again serve as the chief negotiator of the Russian delegation. Military and intelligence officials, as well as Deputy Foreign Minister Sergei Ryabkov, will also participate.

AFP contributed reporting.

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