



By: Tomorrow's Affairs Staff

# Alaska as a political test – Europe sets borders, Trump seeks a quick agreement



The meeting between Donald Trump and Vladimir Putin, **scheduled** for 15 August in Alaska, will take place within a framework that Europe has carefully crafted before any negotiating table is set.

The joint **statement** by Macron, Meloni, Mertz, Tusk, Starmer, Ursula von der Leyen and Stubb formally welcomes the American initiative for peace in Ukraine, but behind the diplomatic support, there is a clear intention to attach precise political and security conditions to this process.

These conditions consist of three basic pillars. The first is that negotiations will only begin once a ceasefire or a significant reduction in fighting on the ground has been achieved.

The second is the demand that Ukraine must be an equal **participant** in the process and that no decision can be made without it.

The third point is the prohibition against changing internationally recognised borders by force, with explicit reference to the UN Charter, the Helsinki Final Act, and the Budapest Memorandum.

All of this follows the continuation of military and financial support for Kyiv, including the "coalition of the willing," as well as the maintenance of existing restrictive measures against Russia.

## The current line of contact as a starting point for negotiations

The most sensitive wording of the declaration concerns the current line of contact, which, according to the European leaders, should only be a starting point for negotiations.

Formally, this does not mean recognising a border change, but politically it means accepting the reality on the ground as the initial framework.

If it is not clearly defined as only a technical coordinate for the separation of forces,

without prejudging the status, this formulation can become the basis for "cementing" the territorial state.

## Supporting the European conditions lends legitimacy to the negotiations

President Zelenskyy **welcomed** the declaration of the European leaders without reservation and emphasised that the end of the war must be just and that Ukraine will not exchange territory.

Kyiv is thus consolidating two principles that are of key political and military importance for the country: the right to veto any agreement and renunciation of internationally recognised borders.

Supporting the European conditions also lends legitimacy to the negotiations and creates a framework within which the subsequent agreement must operate.

## Deal-first logic versus guarantees-first strategy

The actual format of the meeting in Alaska is currently **bilateral** at Moscow's request, and this is the first sign of a gap between the European approach and Trump's negotiating dynamics.

From the US President's **statements** so far, a "deal-first" approach is evident - the desire to reach a political agreement quickly, even if it is a framework agreement, followed by the development of guarantees and verification mechanisms.

Such a sequence favours the political effect but harbours serious security risks. The line of contact can become a de facto border, and the security guarantees remain unclear or are delayed.

The European response to this logic is clear: first guarantees and verification, and only then

a political gesture.

In practice, this means establishing a robust system of bilateral security agreements with key Western countries, specialised coalitions for air defence, artillery, technical, and medical support, and multinational verification missions on the ground, which would take place outside the UN Security Council but at Ukraine's invitation.

**Any violation of the agreement would automatically lead to the reintroduction of restrictions and their tightening**

A key component of such an agreement would be a sanctions mechanism with clearly defined triggers: any violation of the agreement would automatically lead to the reintroduction of restrictions and their tightening.

The risk of a "Minsk 3" is real here. If an agreement emerges from a quick political bargain without prearranged security mechanisms, the result will be a frozen conflict with a high potential for a new war.

Such an **outcome** would suit Moscow, as it would allow the consolidation of territorial gains and the preparation of new operations. For Ukraine, this situation would lead to political destabilisation and a decrease in combat readiness, while for Europe, it would result in a new round of crisis within a year.

## Probabilities of agreement

There are three basic scenarios for the outcome of the Alaska meeting.

The first, with an estimated probability of around 30%, is a ceasefire agreement accompanied by concrete guarantees and verification. Such an outcome would give Ukraine a break without weakening deterrence and allow for reconstruction.

The second, with a probability of around 50%,

is a quick ceasefire without clear guarantees, which would lead to a frozen conflict and a likely return to hostilities within 6–12 months.

The third, less likely option, at around 20%, is the complete absence of an agreement, which would mean the continuation of the war but also the preservation of the West's political cohesion and the continuation of military aid to Kyiv.

**If Moscow speaks of "recognising the reality on the ground", this means that the agreement does not contain the necessary safeguards**

In the coming days, the composition of the delegations, the eventual formal **inclusion** of Zelensky in the negotiations, the terminology used in the joint statements ("ceasefire" versus "armistice"), the way in which the status of the line of contact is defined, the references to international legal acts, and any signalling regarding the sanction regime will need to be carefully monitored.

Moscow's reaction will be particularly important: if it speaks of "recognising the reality on the ground" immediately after the meeting, this means that the agreement does not contain the necessary safeguards.

## A strategic window for a third actor to enter

China's role, although formally outside this process, could **become** an important factor in the stability of the agreement. So far, Beijing has skilfully balanced between supporting Moscow and maintaining trade channels with the West.

If China believes that the frozen conflict gives it long-term leverage over Europe and the US, it could quietly sabotage any initiative that leads to a lasting peace.

It would do so not through open opposition,

but through selective economic and military-technical moves towards Russia, thereby maintaining its capacity for a new cycle of war.

To ignore this factor in the Alaska negotiations would be to leave open a strategic window through which a third actor with its own interests, outside the West-Russia framework, can enter.



*If China believes that the frozen conflict gives it long-term leverage over Europe and the US, it could quietly sabotage any initiative that leads to a lasting peace - Wang Yi with Ursula Von der Leyen*

Another point that remains almost imperceptibly outside the focus of public debate is the potential impact of the agreement on the countries of Central and Eastern Europe.

Poland, the Baltic states and Finland have already signalled that they will not accept a solution that allows Russia to renew its military offensive.

If they come to the conclusion that Alaska leads to a "soft" agreement, they are prepared to independently increase military support for Ukraine, even beyond the official line of the EU and NATO.

Such a move would leave the unity of the alliance formally intact, but in practice it would create a parallel security architecture within Europe, which would change the way European security policy is created and implemented in the long term.

From political rhetoric to

## lasting guarantees

The meeting in Alaska is essentially a test of the willingness of the key players to avoid the trap of a quick and superficial agreement that would only temporarily calm the fronts.

For Trump, it is an opportunity to prove his ability to achieve "historic peace".

For Putin, it is a chance to preserve his territorial gains through negotiations.

**For Europe and Ukraine, the challenge is to keep the process within the framework of international law**

For Europe and Ukraine, the challenge is to keep the process within the framework of international law, with guarantees that are not limited to political rhetoric but have operational force from day one.

Without them, Alaska will only produce a photo session and a brief peace, not a stable solution.