



By: TA | AP Brief

EU leaders appeal to Trump to defend Europe's security interests



European Union leaders appealed to U.S. President Donald Trump to defend their security interests at a key **summit** with his Russian counterpart Vladimir Putin later this week over the war in Ukraine.

The Europeans are desperate to exert some **influence** over a Friday meeting that they have been sidelined from. It remains unclear whether even Ukraine will take part. Trump has said that he wants to see whether Putin is serious about ending the war, now in its fourth year.

But Trump has disappointed U.S. allies in Europe by saying that Ukraine will have to give up some Russian-held territory. He also said that Russia must accept land **swaps**, although it remains unclear what Putin might be expected to surrender.

The Europeans and Ukraine are wary that Putin, who has waged the biggest land war in Europe since 1945 and used Russia's energy **might** to try to cow the EU, might secure favorable concessions and set the outlines of a peace deal without them.

The overarching fear for European countries is that Putin will set his sights on one of them next if he wins in Ukraine.

In a statement early on Tuesday, the leaders said that they "welcome the efforts of President Trump towards ending Russia's war of aggression against Ukraine." But, they underlined, "the path to peace in Ukraine cannot be decided without Ukraine."

"A just and lasting peace that brings stability and security must respect international law, including the principles of independence, sovereignty, territorial integrity and that international borders must not be changed by force," they said.

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Ukrainian President Volodymyr Zelenskyy has

rejected the idea that Ukraine must commit to give up land to secure a ceasefire. Russia holds shaky control over four of the country's regions, two in the country's east and two in the south.

In Ukraine, a Russian missile attack on a Ukrainian military training facility left one soldier dead and 11 others wounded, the Ukrainian Ground Forces posted on Telegram. Soldiers rushing to shelters were hit with cluster munitions, according to the Ukrainian Ground Forces.

Meanwhile, Russia appeared to be on the verge of taking an important city in the Donetsk region, as its forces were reported to be rapidly infiltrating positions north of Pokrovsk.

Military analysts using open source information to monitor the battles say the next 24-48 hours could be critical. Losing Pokrovsk would hand Russia an important battlefield victory ahead of the summit. It would also complicate Ukrainian supply lines to the Donetsk region, where the Kremlin has focused the bulk of its military efforts.

"A lot will depend on availability, quantity and quality of Ukrainian reserves," Pasi Paroinen, an analyst with the Finland-based Black Bird Group, wrote in a post on X late Monday.

A demonstration of European unity

On Monday, Trump repeated that "there'll be some land swapping going on." He said that this would involve "some bad stuff for both" Ukraine and Russia. His public rehabilitation of Putin — a pariah in most of Europe — has unnerved Ukraine's backers.

Trump was also critical of Zelenskyy, noting that Ukraine's leader had been in power for the duration of the war and said "nothing happened" during that time. He contrasted that with Putin, who has wielded power unchallenged in Russia for decades.

It's unclear whether the Europeans were unsettled by Trump's assertion that he would be traveling to Russia on Friday to meet Putin.

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The summit is taking place in the U.S. state of Alaska, which was colonized by Russia in the 18th century until Czar Alexander II sold it to the U.S. in a land deal in 1867.

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Trump did not confirm whether he would take part, but he did say: "I'm going to get everybody's ideas" before meeting with Putin.

Tuesday's statement was also meant to be a demonstration of European unity. But Hungarian Prime Minister Viktor Orbán, who is Putin's closest ally in Europe and has tried to block EU support for Ukraine, did not endorse it. He was the only one of the bloc's 27 leaders who refused to do so.