

Europe insists Ukraine must be part of peace talks



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European leaders have reaffirmed their commitment to Ukraine, declaring that no peace talks with Russia can happen without Kyiv's direct participation.

In a joint statement, the UK, France, Italy, Germany, Poland, Finland and the European Commission stressed that Ukraine has the sovereign right to decide its own future. "International borders must not be changed by force," the leaders said, pledging continued diplomatic, military and financial support.

The statement comes ahead of Friday's planned meeting in Alaska between US President Donald Trump and Russian President Vladimir Putin. While Trump has suggested a possible trilateral meeting with Ukrainian President Volodymyr Zelensky, the event currently remains a US-Russia summit at Moscow's request.

Zelensky warned that any decisions made without Ukraine would be "dead decisions" and rejected suggestions of "swapping territories" as part of an agreement. "We will not reward Russia for what it has perpetrated," he said, adding that any such deal would only strengthen Moscow's position to resume the war.

Reports suggest Washington is exploring proposals for Russia to retain Crimea and the entire Donbas region — a move that European allies are resisting. French President Emmanuel Macron warned that European security is directly tied to the outcome and that Europe must be part of any final settlement.

On Sunday, Zelensky expressed gratitude for the solidarity shown by allies, emphasising the need for a "fair" end to the war and "reliable security foundations" for Ukraine and Europe.

US Vice-President JD Vance, visiting London this weekend, met with UK Foreign Secretary David Lammy and senior Ukrainian officials. Andriy Yermak, head of Zelensky's office, reiterated: "A reliable, lasting peace is only possible with Ukraine at the negotiating table."

The Alaska meeting would mark the first US-Russia presidential summit since 2021.