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## EU warns against redrawing Ukraine borders by force



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BRUSSELS, Aug. 12 – European Union leaders have declared that Ukraine’s borders must not be altered through force, just days before U.S. President Donald Trump and Russian President Vladimir Putin meet in Alaska to discuss the war.

In a joint statement signed by 26 of the bloc’s 27 leaders, the EU stressed that “the people of Ukraine must have the freedom to decide their future” and that the principles of territorial integrity and

sovereignty must be upheld. Hungary's Prime Minister Viktor Orban declined to sign, continuing his close alignment with Moscow and repeated opposition to EU military and financial support for Kyiv.

The statement reflects deep concern across Europe, especially among nations bordering Russia or with memories of Soviet occupation. Recent years have seen Sweden and Finland join NATO, Baltic states reintroduce conscription, and Poland commit billions to build a border barrier with Russia.

EU leaders rejected any legal recognition of territories seized by Russia, saying such recognition would set a dangerous precedent. Trump has suggested a potential "territory swap" in which Russia would keep Crimea and the Donbas in exchange for ceding Kherson and Zaporizhzhia.

Ukrainian President Volodymyr Zelensky dismissed the idea, insisting Kyiv would not surrender the Donbas, warning that withdrawal would give Moscow a staging ground for further attacks.

NATO Secretary-General Mark Rutte recently noted that while some territory may remain under Russian control, formal recognition is not on the table. Analysts say such recognition would require constitutional changes, a national referendum, and parliamentary approval—steps seen as politically impossible in the current climate.