

DOTHAN EAGLE

Monday, August 18, 2025

WHERE **YOUR STORY** LIVES

dothaneagle.com

WAR IN UKRAINE

EUROPEAN LEADERS TO JOIN TALKS



ASSOCIATED PRESS

European Commission President Ursula von der Leyen, right, and Ukraine's President Volodymyr Zelenskyy participate in a news conference Sunday at EU headquarters in Brussels, Belgium.

Envoy: Putin to allow security guarantees in eventual deal

**SAMYA KULLAB, JILL COLVIN
AND JOHN LEICESTER**
Associated Press

KYIV, Ukraine — European and NATO leaders announced Sunday they will join President Volodymyr Zelenskyy in Washington for talks with President Donald Trump on ending Russia's war in Ukraine, with the possibility of U.S. security guarantees now on the negotiating table.

Leaders from France, Britain and Germany are rallying around the Ukrainian leader after his exclusion from Trump's summit on Friday with Russian President Vladimir Putin. Their pledge to be at Zelenskyy's side at the White House on Monday is an apparent effort to ensure the meeting goes better than the last one in February, when Trump berated Zelenskyy in a heated Oval Office encounter.

"The Europeans are very afraid of the Oval Office scene being repeated and so they want to support Mr. Zelenskyy to the hilt," said retired French Gen. Dominique Trinquand, a former head of France's military mission at the United Nations.

"It's a power struggle and a position of strength that might work with Trump,"

he said.

Special U.S. envoy Steve Witkoff said Sunday that Putin agreed at the meeting in Alaska with Trump to allow the U.S. and European allies to offer Ukraine a security guarantee resembling NATO's collective defense mandate as part of an eventual deal to end the 3½-year war.

"We were able to win the following concession: That the United States could offer Article 5-like protection, which is one of the real reasons why Ukraine wants to be in NATO," he told CNN's "State of the Union." He added that it "was the first time we had ever heard the Russians agree to that" and called them "game-changing."

Article 5, at the heart of the 32-member military alliance, states that an armed attack against one of the members shall be considered an attack against all members.

Witkoff, who had joined Secretary of State Marco Rubio for the talks Friday at a military base in Alaska, offered few details on how such an agreement would work. But it appeared to be a major shift for Putin and could serve as a workarround to his long-standing objection to Ukraine's potential NATO membership.

Outlining some of the details about the private discussions, Witkoff also said Russia agreed to enact a law that it would not "go after any other European countries and violate their sovereignty. And there was plenty more."

European Commission President Ursula von der Leyen, speaking at a news conference in Brussels with Zelenskyy, said "we welcome President Trump's willingness to contribute to Article 5-like security guarantees for Ukraine. And the 'Coalition of the willing' — including the European Union — is ready to do its share."

Von der Leyen was joined Sunday by French President Emmanuel Macron, British Prime Minister Keir Starmer and German Chancellor Friedrich Merz in saying they will take part in Monday's talks at the White House, as will secretary-general of the NATO military alliance, Mark Rutte.

The European leaders' demonstration of support could help ease concerns in Kyiv and in other European capitals that Ukraine risks being railroaded into a peace deal.

Please see **UKRAINE**, Page A2

Federal judge refuses to block Alabama law banning DEI initiatives

KIMBERLY CHANDLER—ASSOCIATED PRESS

A federal judge on Wednesday declined a request to block an Alabama law that bans diversity, equity and inclusion initiatives in public schools and the teaching of what Republican lawmakers dubbed "divisive concepts" related to race and gender.

U.S. District Judge David Proctor wrote that University of Alabama students and professors who filed a lawsuit challenging the law as unconstitutional did not meet the

legal burden required for a preliminary injunction, which he called "an extraordinary and drastic remedy." The civil lawsuit challenging the statute will go forward, but the law will remain in place while it does.

The Alabama measure, which took effect Oct. 1, is part of a wave of proposals from Republican lawmakers across the country taking aim at DEI programs on college campuses.

The Alabama law prohibits public schools from funding or sponsoring any DEI program. It also prohibits

schools from requiring students to assent to eight "divisive concepts" including that fault, blame or bias should be assigned to a race or sex or that any person should acknowledge a sense of guilt, complicity or a need to apologize because of their race, sex or national origin.

Six professors and students at the University of Alabama filed a lawsuit arguing that the law violates the First Amendment by placing viewpoint-based restrictions on what educators teach. The lawsuit also said the law unconstitution-

ally targets Black students because it limits programs that benefit them.

Professors said they had altered what they taught in their classes in the wake of the law and the university's guidance about it. A professor said he reduced coverage of the Black Power movement, the Black Lives Matter movement and the white nationalist movement in the wake of the law. Another said five students had made complaints suggesting that the interdisciplinary honors program she administered had potential conflicts with the new

legislation.

The university also shuttered designated spaces for the Black Student Union and a resource center for LGBTQ+ students in the wake of the law.

Proctor wrote that a professor's academic freedom does not override a university's decisions about the content of classroom instruction.

"Importantly, SB 129 does not banish all teaching or discussion of these concepts from campus or, for

Please see **DEI**, Page A2