

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
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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 workaround 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.

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ELECTION 2026

Milwaukee-area Democrat plans run for governor

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A Milwaukee-area Democrat and union advocate has joined the race to be Wisconsin's next governor.

Ryan Strnad, of Mukwonago, plans to formally announce his candidacy on Wednesday with American Family Field as the backdrop, as he's worked there and at County Stadium selling beer during Milwaukee Brewers games since the 1980s when he was a teenager. Strnad told the Wisconsin State Journal Thursday he's running because he believes he can make a difference for the working class.

That includes eliminating the state's Right to Work laws and Act 10, which eliminated most collective bargaining for most public employees, he said.



Strnad

"I believe, with myself working two or three jobs, that I know firsthand about what the middle class and what the working class is thinking," Strnad said. "With my leadership, if I am governor, that I could really bring some grassroots efforts into legislation to make things better for working class citizens of Wisconsin."

Strnad, a former union steward who has worked as a machinist and the front desk at a dry cleaner, said he also supports abortion rights, "common sense" environmental regulations that don't harm businesses, policing and high-quality education.

Strnad has run for office just once before, in 2000, as a Republican when he challenged incumbent Rep. Jeff Plale for a seat in South Milwaukee. He changed party affiliation a year later because, he said, it better aligned with his pro-worker views.

In 2023, just months after Gov. Tony Evers took office for his second term, Strnad told the Milwaukee Journal Sentinel he planned to run for the seat if Evers didn't.

Strnad joins Lt. Gov. Sara Rodriguez on the Democratic side in the race for governor, although many more are said to be considering a run as the state prepares for its first open race for governor in 16 years. Those include Milwaukee County Executive David Crowley; Milwaukee Mayor

Cavalier Johnson; state Sen. Kelda Roys, D-Madison; Attorney General Josh Kaul; and Ben Wikler, former chair of the Democratic Party of Wisconsin.

Two Republicans, Washington County Executive Josh Schoemann and Whitefish Bay-area businessman Bill Berrien launched campaigns for governor earlier this summer.

Other Republicans who may be considering a run for governor next year include U.S. Rep. Tom Tiffany, R-Minocqua; Fond du Lac Attorney General Eric Toney; and business owner Eric Hovde, who lost his 2024 bid for U.S. Senate to incumbent Tammy Baldwin.

Party primaries will be held in August 2026 ahead of the November election.