

Talks with President of France Emmanuel Macron

Vladimir Putin held talks with President of the French Republic Emmanuel Macron at the Kremlin.

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President of Russia Vladimir Putin: Mr President, Emmanuel,

It is a pleasure to see you.

Last time we met was two years ago and, of course, there is a backlog of issues that we can and should discuss in a direct format.

Still, over these years, our contacts have never been interrupted, and we remain in touch at all times. Moreover, despite the pandemic, bilateral trade is up. During the pandemic, it fell by 15 percent, but over 11 months of 2021 it grew by over 70 percent to reach pre-pandemic levels and, I think, even slightly exceeded them.

Our colleagues are working quite successfully in the political sphere, including the foreign ministries and a 2+2 meeting between our respective defence ministers and foreign ministers.

Relations in the humanitarian sphere are on the rise as well. We have held events that cover region-to-region cooperation. More than 150 events have been held, and this helps create a supportive environment for promoting relations between our two countries.

Here is what I would like to point out specifically: of course, I understand that we share concerns about security developments in Europe, and I want to thank you for the fact that France invariably and strongly participates in the development of fundamental decisions in this area.

This has been the case with our relations in recent years. It is symbolic that we are meeting today because a fundamental document, the agreement on special relations between

Russia and France, was signed 30 years ago today.

Notably, throughout these years, as I have mentioned, France has taken a very active part in addressing fundamental European security issues. Your predecessors did the same. France engaged in addressing the crisis that broke out after Georgia attacked South Ossetia, and in developing the Minsk agreements, and then organising the Normandy format. I appreciate the amount of effort invested by the current leadership of France and personally the President of France in resolving the crisis around the need to ensure equal security in Europe for an extended historical perspective, and in overcoming the challenges that are related to resolving the domestic crisis in southeastern Ukraine.

We discussed these matters over the telephone in great depth. I am aware that you have your own thoughts on this matter, and I am pleased to have the opportunity to meet with you in person to discuss these things.

Welcome, Emmanuel.

President of France Emmanuel Macron (retranslated): Thank you very much, Mr President, thank you very much, Vladimir.

Indeed, today is the 30th anniversary of resuming diplomatic relations, and I would like to reiterate that bilateral relations have made it possible to focus on many issues.

We have many hopes in the cultural, academic and scientific spheres. We hope to continue the Trianon Dialogue together and advance the economic agenda.

The critical situation in Europe is our shared concern, and our continent – you pointed this out – is in a critical situation, so we all need to act with great responsibility.

Together we laid the foundation for an open, straight, and full-fledged dialogue in 2019. Since then, there have been several exchanges of views in St Petersburg, Bregançon and other venues, and I believe this dialogue remains as relevant as ever.

We need this dialogue, because it is the only thing that, I think, can ensure genuine stability and security for the European continent. In this context, we have had several telephone conversations in recent weeks, as you mentioned. Despite the crisis, I had a chance to exchange views with President Zelensky about Ukraine, as well as to coordinate views with many Europeans and Allies, including the British, Americans and Canadians.

I think today's conversation can pave the way to de-escalation, which is where we should be heading. We are aware of the military-political situation and the Ukraine issue. You noted its importance, including the Normandy format, security issues in Belarus and the entire region, as well as important collective security issues, which we will cover later.

I am glad we have this opportunity to discuss these issues in depth, so that we can collectively begin to develop a practical response for Russia and the whole of Europe. A useful and practical response would be one that helps avoid war and build stability, transparency and trust for all.

Thank you very much for your warm welcome and for your time.

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