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The Paris Declaration: a tool to influence US policy

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On 6 January, another meeting of the so-called Coalition of the Willing was held in Paris (see: '*The Coalition of the Willing on security guarantees for Ukraine: less ambitious, more concrete*'), focusing on Western security guarantees for Ukraine in the event of a ceasefire. Representatives from more than 30 countries attended the meeting, including US envoys Steve Witkoff and Jared Kushner, as well as General Alexus Grynkewich, commander of US forces in Europe.

The participants signed the so-called Paris Declaration, which outlines the framework for future security guarantees (see Appendix). President Volodymyr Zelensky described the documents adopted in Paris as 'thorough' and as a signal that Europe and the Coalition of the Willing are serious about providing Ukraine with security guarantees. At the same time, he expressed disappointment that the parties had failed to reach an agreement on how to respond in the event of a renewed Russian attack.

The meeting in Paris aimed to demonstrate Europe's resolve to ensure that Ukraine can pursue peaceful development after the war with Russia and to present the United States as a guarantor of peace monitoring and a supporter of a European reassurance mission. Europe and Ukraine hope to influence President Donald Trump's stance and increase US pressure on Russia, anticipating that Moscow will reject any negotiated peace plan.

Commentary

- **The talks in Paris provided European countries with an opportunity to demonstrate initiative in the peace process, which until now has primarily involved the United States, Russia, and Ukraine.** Europe's leverage lies in its willingness to commit both financial and military resources in support of Ukraine. At the same time, only a small group of countries, led by the United Kingdom and France, has expressed readiness to deploy ground forces to Ukraine. According to French President Emmanuel Macron, these troops would be stationed on Ukrainian territory, but far from the front lines. However, several major countries have adopted a far more cautious stance, raising questions about the realistic foundations of any future reassurance mission.
- **After specifying their contribution to security guarantees, European countries are now awaiting a move from the US President. The presence of US officials at the Paris conference did little to dispel doubts about the Trump administration's willingness to pressure Russia into accepting negotiated solutions**, or to participate actively in providing security guarantees. So far, Washington's pressure on Moscow has been

insufficient. The absence of US signatures on the declaration itself casts doubt on the value of the verbal assurances made by Witkoff and Kushner regarding US involvement in preparing a stabilisation mission and enforcing Russian compliance with the peace terms once the war ends.

- **Ukraine viewed the meeting in Paris as another step in the ongoing process of refining security guarantees.** It welcomed the signed documents and the assurances regarding future financial support, as well as efforts to sustain the capabilities of Ukraine's armed forces, aimed at ensuring that they are able to repel any renewed assault. At the same time, the failure of its partners to make clear commitments on how they would respond to a renewed Russian attack – particularly the absence of US involvement, which is crucial for Ukraine – has created a sense of uncertainty. For this reason, the Ukrainian government insists on holding further consultations and urgently developing concrete mechanisms to implement the arrangements agreed in Paris, bearing in mind that Russia is likely to reject them in their current form.

Appendix. Provisions of the Paris Declaration

1. Establishment of a US-led ceasefire monitoring and verification mechanism.
   Any breaches of the ceasefire would be reviewed by a special commission composed of representatives from the Coalition of the Willing.
2. Commitment to continued military support for Ukraine, aimed at enabling Ukraine's armed forces to serve as the main guarantor of peace.
3. Creation of a multinational reassurance force under French and British command.
   In addition, on the sidelines of the summit, France, the UK, and Ukraine signed a letter of intent on the planned stationing of French and British troops in Ukraine. Individual countries will assume responsibility for specific components of the future mission: France and the UK pledged to deploy their ground forces – reportedly up to 15,000 troops combined; Turkey is expected to take charge of the naval component in the Black Sea; and Poland will oversee logistical support. A Ukrainian-US-European coordination cell has also been established within the coalition's headquarters in Paris, which has been operational since July 2025.
4. Legally binding, although broadly defined and open to interpretation, commitments by coalition members in the event of a renewed Russian attack, ranging from the imposition of additional sanctions to the 'use of military capabilities'.
5. Commitment to long-term military cooperation, including in the defence industrial sector.
   Ukraine will purchase military equipment from European partners using funds backed by a European loan (see: '*A bitter compromise over the EU's financial assistance to Ukraine*').
   The two sides will also develop joint arms production, including through the use of EU instruments (see: '*EDIP: more cooperation in the European defence industry*').